

# PANTRY HEROES

## 5 CANNED FOODS TO ALWAYS KEEP ON HAND

Fruits, vegetables, beans and lean proteins are essential to any healthy diet; and when it comes to nutrition, all forms count. Always in-season canned fruits and vegetables make healthy eating easy and budget-friendly. And canned beans, fish and meat offer quick, affordable sources of protein and other important nutrients.

With no cleaning, chopping, seeding, peeling or soaking required, canned foods provide the ultimate convenience. Rely on them alone or combine with fresh or frozen foods for a tasty snack or meal anytime.

We call them “pantry heroes”...Americans just call them delicious.



### Beans

**Nutrition:** Low in fat and cholesterol free, one-half cup of canned beans provides between 20-30% of the daily recommended amount of fiber, depending on the variety.

**Value/Convenience:** Canned beans are affordable and quick to prepare. Pinto beans, for example, cost \$1 less per serving as a source of protein and fiber than bagged beans when cost of preparation time is considered. Already cooked in the can, they take just 6 minutes to be meal ready compared to 2.5 hours for dried beans.

**Recipe Tip:** Add a can of beans to your favorite chili or soup recipe, or to a fresh salad to boost flavor and nutrition.



### Diced Tomatoes

**Nutrition:** One-half cup provides 20% of the daily recommended amount of vitamin C, key to healthy immune function. The canning process also increases the antioxidant lycopene naturally found in tomatoes.

**Value/Convenience:** It is nearly 60% more expensive to obtain dietary fiber from fresh tomatoes than canned. Not only are canned tomatoes less expensive, they take less time to prepare.

**Recipe Tip:** Top nachos or tacos with canned diced tomatoes packed with green chiles to add flavor and avoid unnecessary chopping.



### Peaches

**Nutrition:** Vitamin C levels in canned peaches are 4 times higher than in fresh, and folate levels are 10 times higher compared to fresh.

**Value/Convenience:** The store price of a serving of canned peaches is about 39 cents less than an equal serving of fresh peaches and \$1.10 less than frozen peaches.

**Recipe Tip:** Freeze one can of sliced peaches in juice until solid and then blend with 1.5 cups of sugar-free lemonade and 6-ounces of low-fat or nonfat yogurt for a refreshing drink.

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## 5 CANNED FOODS TO ALWAYS KEEP ON HAND, cont.



### Tuna

**Nutrition:** A 3-ounce serving provides about 22 grams of protein or about 50% of the daily recommended intake for the average woman; 40% for the average man.

**Value/Convenience:** Offers a lower cost-per-nutrient for folate, protein and vitamin A compared to fresh and frozen forms when store price and prep time are factored in.

**Recipe Tip:** Drain canned tuna and toss into your favorite pasta sauce to help meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture's MyPlate recommendation to eat 8 ounces of seafood each week.



### Green Beans

**Nutrition:** Contribute fiber, vitamins A and C, potassium and folate, among other important nutrients.

**Value/Convenience:** When cost of preparation time is considered, canned green beans provide fiber and folate at a lower cost than fresh or frozen, and offer potassium at a comparable cost.

**Recipe Tip:** Add extra veggies into your family's meals by finely chopping canned green beans and mixing with ground meat when making meatloaf, hamburgers or meatballs.

## CAN-DO TIPS FOR MEAL PLANNING

To make the most of your kitchen pantry, consider these simple tips:

- Stock up on canned ingredients year-round; purchase fresh produce when in season
- Shop the center aisles of your grocery store for healthy options
- Store canned foods in a clean cabinet or pantry, rotating the newest purchases to the back
- Plan ahead; use canned foods already in your pantry to add convenience to everyday meals
- Check your pantry for ingredients when you need an impromptu meal
- Combine canned foods with fresh, frozen and/or dried ingredients for a delicious meal
- Check [Mealtime.org](http://Mealtime.org) for countless easy and convenient canned food recipes



### About the Canned Food Alliance

The Canned Food Alliance, a National Strategic Partner of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, is a consortium of steelmakers, can manufacturers, food processors and affiliate members. For more information about canned food research, facts, resources, the canning process, family mealtime solutions, recipes that use canned foods and more, visit [Mealtime.org](http://Mealtime.org).

### Sources:

Kapica C and Weiss W. Canned fruits, vegetables, beans and fish provide nutrients at a lower cost compared to fresh, frozen or dried. *J Nutr Food Sci*, 2012.  
Durst, R and Weaver G. Nutritional content of fresh and canned peaches. *J Sci Food Agric*, 2013.  
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