

USING CANNED AND FROZEN FRUITS AND VEGATABLES

Canned and frozen fruits and vegetables are great to have on hand – they are nutritious alternatives to fresh produce and store much longer. You can incorporate them into meals to regularly enjoy fruits and vegetables, when fresh may not be an option. Although we often think of fresh produce as the healthiest choice, canned and frozen options can be just as healthful. Produce that will be canned or frozen is generally picked at peak ripeness and immediately processed, preserving much of the nutrition.

5 Benefits of Using Canned and Frozen Fruits and Vegetables

- **Affordability.** Frozen and canned produce can be more affordable than fresh produce. For instance, frozen berries may be less expensive than fresh ones.
- **Convenience.** Canned and frozen options can reduce meal prep time. Canned produce is already cooked and often just needs to be reheated. Frozen produce is often pre-cut, so it is ready to simply add to the pan and cook.
- **Long shelf-life.** Fresh produce has a much shorter shelf-life than canned and frozen options. Canned and frozen produce can help prevent the food waste that may happen when we forget about the fresh produce spoiling in the back of the refrigerator.
- **Refrigerator and freezer space.** Fresh and frozen produce are both tasty, nutritious options to include in your diet. However, a benefit of cans is that they do not take up space in a packed refrigerator or freezer.
- **Year-round availability.** Fruits or vegetables that are not in season can be hard to find and expensive. However, you can often find canned or frozen options all year long.



5 Tips for Choosing and Cooking with Canned and Frozen Fruits and Vegetables

- **Avoid added sugar.** Canned fruit often has added sugar. For the healthiest option, look for fruit canned in water or its own juice, not syrup. If you do choose fruit canned in syrup, drain before eating. Also check that frozen fruit does not contain added sugar.
- **Check the sodium.** Look for no or low-sodium options. You can also rinse foods before using to remove some of the excess sodium.
- **Choose some simple snacks.** Choose some options that only require reheating, to have available when hunger suddenly strikes or for those days you are too tired to cook. For instance, microwave or steam frozen edamame for a quick snack.
- **Look at the package.** Make sure cans are in good condition and look for frozen produce that does not have lots of ice crystals. Icy build-up could be a sign that the product was not stored well and may be freezer burned. Also, look at use-by dates to avoid purchasing products close to these dates.
- **Remember texture.** The texture of canned and frozen produce is different than fresh. For instance, canned and frozen options will not have the crunch of fresh produce. Instead of trying to serve canned or frozen produce as a crisp side with your favorite dip, incorporate it into cooked dishes, like casseroles.



Including fruits and vegetables in your diet is important, whether canned, frozen, or fresh. Choose what you prefer, and enjoy produce in a variety of ways.