

SENIOR NUTRITION NEWS

October 2025

Eat Smart Idaho

Eat Smart with Canned Food

Canned foods are easy to store in your cupboard for a quick meal. Canned foods are processed at their peak ripeness which preserves their nutritional value and flavor. Here are answers to common questions about canned foods:



Is It Safe to Eat Food from Dented Cans?

Cans may become dented when they are bumped or fall in warehouses, stores, or your house. Some dents can cause leaks or allow harmful bacteria to get into the food inside. Check cans carefully before buying them or eating the food out of them. The food inside a slightly dented can is typically safe to eat. However, if the can has deep dents (the size of your finger) or dents with sharp points on its seam, throw it away. If you accidentally dent a can at home, open it right away and put the food into a storage container in your refrigerator to use within the next day or two.

Why Should I Clean the Lids of My Canned Foods?

Cleaning canned food lids before opening is recommended. The food inside the can is safe, but the outside of the can may have been exposed to germs during its journey from the factory to your kitchen. Wiping the lids before opening can stop any germs on the outside of the can from contaminating the food inside.

Canned Fruits & Veggies Brighten Up Any Meal!

Adding canned vegetables or fruit brings more nutrients and flavor to your meals.

How to Reduce Sodium & Added Sugar from Canned Foods

Canned foods can be high in sodium or added sugar. You can reduce the sodium in your canned vegetables by draining and rinsing them. When possible, choose low sodium or no salt-added varieties of canned vegetables. For canned fruit look for those canned in 100% fruit juice.



Three Can Chili

1 can low-sodium black beans (15 oz) 1 can low-sodium corn (15.5 oz)
1 can no-salt chopped tomatoes (14.5 oz) 1/2 red onion
Chili powder, cumin, and pepper, to taste 1/2 green bell pepper



1. Wash bell pepper, remove onion skin and pepper seeds. Chop both.
2. Place the contents of all three cans, undrained, in a large saucepan. Stir in the onion and pepper. Sprinkle with chili powder, cumin, and pepper, to taste. Cook over medium heat until thoroughly heated through. Serve hot and enjoy!

Healthy Tip: Consider adding other ingredients, like cooked ground beef or chicken, or chopped green onions, avocado, or low-fat sour cream for garnish.

Grilled Cheese Peach Sandwich

2 each whole grain English Muffins, split 4-8 slices Jack cheese
1 can (15 oz.) peach chunks, drained well



1. On a cooking sheet arrange drained peach chunks evenly on English muffins.
2. Cover peaches with cheese slices.
3. Toast in toaster oven or broiler until cheese is bubbly.
4. For an added crunch, toast English muffins before topping with cheese and peaches.

Sources: <https://extension.psu.edu/making-use-of-canned-foods>; <https://www.mealtime.org/open-faced-grilled-cheese-california-cling-peach-snack-sandwich/> retrieved 09/30/25

For Information on Eat Smart Idaho classes, contact the Nutrition Instructor in your county:

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North Central Idaho: Clearwater, Idaho, Latah,
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This work and material is supported and funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-SNAP and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. USDA and University of Idaho are equal opportunity providers.