

Healthy ways to use canned and frozen vegetables

By Rachel Anderson

Canned and frozen vegetables are convenient options that can help you maintain a healthy diet without the added expense of produce going bad before you get a chance to use it. Here's how to incorporate them into your meals in healthy and delicious ways.

Both canned and frozen vegetables are typically processed shortly after harvesting, which helps preserve vitamins and minerals. For example, freezing can lock in nutrients, while canning preserves them through the sealing process.

Benefits

- **Convenience:** These options require minimal prep work, saving time in the kitchen.
- **Long shelf life:** Canned and frozen vegetables can last for months, making them a great staple for adding to meals.
- **Cost-effective:** Often more affordable than fresh produce, especially out of season, they provide a budget-friendly way to add variety to your diet.

Recipe ideas

- **Soups and stews:** Canned vegetables like tomatoes, corn, carrots and beans are perfect for adding to hearty soups and stews.
- **Stir-fries:** Add water chestnuts, baby corn or mushrooms to your stir-fried dishes for added flavor and texture.
- **Salads:** Add canned beans like chickpeas or black beans into salads for added protein and fiber. Canned corn or beets can also enhance the flavor and color of your salads.
- **Veggie dips:** Blend canned artichokes or roasted red peppers with Greek yogurt or tahini for a creamy, nutrient-rich dip that pairs well with whole-grain crackers or fresh veggies.
- **Smoothies:** Frozen spinach, kale, or even carrots can be added to smoothies for a nutrient boost.
- **Skillet sautés:** Sauté frozen vegetables like bell peppers, broccoli or mixed stir-fry veggies with olive oil, garlic and ginger for a quick side dish or topping for rice or quinoa.
- **Omelets and scrambles:** Add frozen spinach, bell peppers or onions to your morning omelet or scrambled eggs. This not only enhances the flavor but also adds essential nutrients to your breakfast.

- **Casseroles:** Add frozen vegetables like broccoli, spinach and mixed vegetables to your favorite casseroles.
- **Roasted veggie medley:** Toss frozen vegetables like cauliflower, carrots and Brussels sprouts with olive oil and your favorite seasonings, then roast them in the oven. This brings out their natural sweetness and makes a delicious side dish.

Tips

- **Check labels:** Choose canned vegetables with no added sugar and look for low-sodium options when available.
- **Rinse when possible:** Rinsing canned vegetables can help reduce excess sodium, making them an even healthier choice.
- **Add fresh herbs and spices:** Enhance the flavors of canned and frozen vegetables with fresh herbs, spices, and citrus to keep meals exciting and flavorful.
- If you have fresh vegetables that won't get used before they go bad, freeze them to use later.

Canned and frozen vegetables are versatile, nutritious options that can simplify meal preparation while ensuring you get your daily servings of veggies. By incorporating these healthy strategies, you can enjoy a variety of dishes that are both convenient and good for your health. So next time you're at the grocery store, don't overlook the canned and frozen aisles—they might just become your new kitchen staples.

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