

Busy? Canned and Frozen Fruits and Vegetables to the Rescue!

Why Pick Canned and Frozen Fruits and Vegetables?

- They are healthy, easy to use, and have a longer storage time.
- They are just as good for our bodies, if not better, than fresh fruits and vegetables. That's because canned and frozen fruits and vegetables are picked at the peak of freshness and then canned or frozen within hours after picking, which preserves their nutrients.
- They make meals easier! Having canned and frozen vegetables handy means less chopping for you to do.



How Can You Get the Most Out of Your WIC Cash Value Benefit?

- Child participants now receive \$25/month, pregnant and postpartum participants now receive \$44/month, and breastfeeding participants now receive \$49/month. Also, women breastfeeding multiple babies from the same pregnancy now receive \$73.50/month!
- Plan to buy only fresh fruits and vegetables you can eat before they go bad. Use most of you Cash Value Benefit (CVB) on canned and frozen fruits and vegetables that you can store for a long time.
- Before you go shopping, make sure you have plenty of room in your cabinets and freezer to store your canned and frozen fruits and vegetables.

Shopping Tips

- Pick canned vegetables with low sodium (salt) or rinse them with water before cooking to reduce the amount of salt.
- Don't buy cans with dents, bulges, cracks, or leaks. These may be signs of the bacteria that cause botulism.
- Buy canned foods that can be used for many different types of recipes (for example, tomato paste for soups and sauces).
- Frozen vegetables are your friend for busy weeknight meals. Just microwave them in a microwave-safe bowl for a quick side dish or toss them into soup for some extra nutrition.
- Frozen fruits can also be your breakfast friend. Thaw them in the microwave in a microwave-safe bowl and add them to oatmeal or leave them frozen and blend them into a smoothie.

Recipe Ideas

Simple Weeknight Vegetable Soup:

- In a big pot, combine cans of green beans, diced tomatoes, corn, mixed vegetables, and beans with fresh sauteed vegetables.
- Add herbs and spices of your choice like a bay leaf, basil, or thyme to taste.
- Add two cans of beef or chicken broth to the pot.
- Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and let simmer for 20 minutes.
- Serve with brown rice or a slice of cornbread for a warm and filling meal!



Stuffed Bell Peppers:

- Cook 1 cup brown rice and put it in a large mixing bowl.
- Drain and rinse 2-3 cans of vegetables of your choice (beans, corn, diced tomatoes, etc.) and mix into the rice.
- Add spices of your choice (cumin, chili powder, salt, pepper, etc.) and mix.
- Cut the tops off a few bell peppers, seed them, and remove the membranes. Fill them with the rice and vegetable mixture.
- Top with cheese and bake peppers at 400 degrees Fahrenheit until the cheese is warm and bubbly.
- You can also bake just the mixed vegetable filling until it's warm and then roll it into tortillas.
- Cooked stuffed peppers freeze well so try making a few ahead of time and putting them in the freezer for busy nights. Just heat and serve!