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Canned Food Myths – *Busted!*

Canned foods tend to get a bad rap and shoppers often are advised to avoid or limit purchases from the center aisles of their local food market. But the truth is canned foods offer great nutrition, value and convenience. The Canned Food Alliance commissioned a consumer survey to explore knowledge about canned foods and uncovered some common misperceptions.



Myth: *Canned foods don't count toward dietary goals.*

Fact: The nutrition in canned foods definitely counts toward meeting dietary goals. In fact, canned foods are a convenient, affordable way for Americans to achieve a healthy diet. Yet, less than half (42%) of Americans surveyed realize canned foods count toward the U.S. Department of Agriculture's dietary recommendations. The fact is all forms (fresh, frozen, canned and dried) of fruits, vegetables, beans, meats and seafood are recommended to ensure a proper balance of nutrients.

Myth: *Canned foods are high in sodium.*

Fact: There are hundreds of canned foods available in low- and no-sodium options. Nearly half (48%) of those surveyed are unaware that canned foods can be low in sodium. The fact is canned foods do not require salt or sodium for preservation, and manufacturers are increasingly answering the demand for lower sodium varieties of your favorite canned foods. Draining and rinsing canned food reduces sodium further by up to 41%.

Myth: *Canned foods are highly processed.*

Fact: Canned foods are minimally processed, but more than 58% of those surveyed think they require more processing than frozen or other packaged foods. After being picked at peak ripeness and quality, fruits, vegetables and beans travel to a local cannery to be cleaned, chopped, peeled and/or stemmed (if necessary). After the food is sealed, the cans are quickly heated to preserve the contents and to create an airtight seal to keep food fresh and safe until eaten.

Myth: *Canned foods are filled with preservatives.*

Fact: Canned foods do not require preservatives, yet more than 65% of Americans surveyed incorrectly think they do. Just as when canned at home, foods sold in steel cans are already cooked, so they do not need preservatives to prevent spoilage. In fact, most canned foods are preservative-free.

Myth: *Foods that come in cans are not as nutritious as fresh and frozen varieties.*

Fact: When it comes to nutrition, all forms count. Research shows many canned foods can be as nutritious, and in some cases, more nutritious than their fresh and frozen counterparts.¹ Still, more than half (62%) of Americans surveyed don't realize canned food is as nutritious as fresh and more than one-third (42%) don't realize canned food is as nutritious as frozen.

Americans rely on canned food to help feed their families. A majority of Americans prepare or eat meals made with canned foods at least a couple times a month (81%) and nearly two-thirds (61%) enjoy them at least three times a week.

Reasons for relying on canned foods include:

- **Accessible** – can always be kept on hand (91%)
- **Convenient** – are quick to prepare and serve (91%)
- **Affordable** – provide good value (74%)
- **Flavorful** – offer good taste (69%)



¹ Rickman, J., Barrett, D. and Bruhn, C. "Nutritional comparison of fresh, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables." Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture, Vol. 87, Issues 6 and 7, April and May 2007.

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.

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