

## Ask the Expert:

### The Truth About Canned and Frozen Foods

Written by Natalyn VanZee, Purdue University Dietetics & Nutrition, Fitness, and Health '26

Canned and frozen foods are economical and shelf stable options when it comes to purchasing fruits and vegetables. But how do the nutrients that they provide compare with fresh fruits and vegetables?

When foods are canned, the food inside is cooked to a temperature that will kill bacteria and the can is sealed so that pathogens can not enter. The foods can stay good for 12 to 18 months. On the other hand, freezing happens just after food is harvested at the peak degree of ripeness. All of the nutrients in the fruits and vegetables are preserved and will remain at high quality for 8 to 12 months.



Canned and frozen foods make it easy to keep extra food on hand for future meals. They are also very economical. Many canned and frozen foods are also pre-cooked meaning they can help to save time in preparing them. Here are some tips to help in choosing the most nutrient dense canned and frozen food options:

- Look for canned foods in water or in the fruits own juice; avoid foods canned in syrup
- Opt for canned foods with the lowest amount of sodium
- Look for frozen vegetables and fruits without sauces or sugars added
- Enjoy canned and frozen fruits and vegetables all year round!



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## Food Safety: Keeping Shelf-Stable Foods Safe

Written by Julia Balbach, Purdue University Public Health, Spanish, and, Foods and Nutrition '26

As cooler weather sets in, it is a great idea to start thinking about storing food. However, it is important to make sure you are packaging and storing food safely and in proper temperatures. Shelf stable foods are foods that can be stored for very long periods of time and do not need to be kept cold. Some examples are jerky, canned foods, rice, pasta, spices, and flour. Shelf stable foods must be treated by heat or dried to destroy bacteria that can cause food to go bad, or make you sick. Shelf stable foods can be in cans, dried or in retort pouches, which are packaged pouches that go through a heating process. Follow these tips to ensure your shelf-stable foods are stored correctly:



- Keep food in a dry, clean, and cool area
- Seal cookies and crackers in plastic bags and in airtight containers
- Flour and grains like rice and pasta can be kept up to six months in airtight containers.
- Check expiration dates to make sure food has not spoiled or if it will spoil soon.
- Low acid canned goods such as canned meat, stews, soups, and vegetables should be consumed between two to five years.
- High acid canned goods such as juice should be consumed between twelve to eighteen months
- Do not use canned goods that are heavily rusted, dented, swelled or puffed out, and/or leaking.

Source: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/shelf-stable-food#:~:text=Store%20canned%20foods%20>

## Masur Dal (Red Lentil with Onion)

### Directions

1. Rinse the lentils about two or three times.
2. In a bowl, combine the washed lentils with salt and 1 teaspoon of oil
3. Boil lentils until they feel soft. Add turmeric powder, cumin powder, and sugar to the boiled lentils. Mix well.
4. In a separate pan, add the rest of the oil. Once it is heated, add the onion until it turns light brown.
5. Add the lentils gradually into the pan and combine them with the onion.
6. Add in 1 cup of water and allow the lentils to boil for two minutes. Mix well and enjoy!

### Ingredients (6 servings)

- 1/2 cup dried lentils\*
- 6 teaspoons vegetable oil\*
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 1/2 cups water
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin powder
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 2 chili peppers



### Nutrition Facts (per serving)

Calories: 107  
Protein: 5g  
Carbs: 12g  
Fat: 5g

**\*foods included in the TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program)**

Sources: <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/masur-dal-red->

[myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/masur-dal-red-](https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/masur-dal-red-)

## Eating Right: Foods to Fight Iron Deficiency

Written by Mary Morgan Purdue University Dietetics and Nutrition, Fitness and Health '24 and Abby Rosborough Purdue University Biomedical Health Sciences, Nutrition, and Biology '26.

Iron is an essential mineral for the human body. It serves multiple body functions including oxygen transport and DNA synthesis. One of the main jobs of iron is to help allow the protein hemoglobin in red blood cells to carry oxygen to body cells. Iron deficiency happens when there is not enough iron for the red blood cells to do their job. If iron deficiency is not diagnosed and treated, it can lead to anemia, where not enough red blood cells are made. Common signs of anemia are fatigue, headaches, and pale skin.

The best way to prevent iron deficiency is to eat foods with enough iron. Iron rich choices are animal meat and iron-fortified cereals. The iron in animal meat is more easily absorbed by the body compared to iron from plant sources like broccoli, greens, and beans, yet these foods can still help add iron to the diet. Following the Dietary Guidelines and eating varied low-fat proteins like animal meats, legumes, and beans every week along with a mix of fortified grains, it will help you get the iron you need.







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This newsletter is edited by Emma Araya and Heather A. Eicher-Miller, PhD and is created by the Eicher-Miller Lab in the Department of Nutrition Science at Purdue University. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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IN THE NEWS

## In The News: October is Global Diversity Awareness Month

Written by Haley Mardsen, Purdue University Pharmaceutical Sciences, Nutrition Science '25

In a world that is constantly changing, it is important to acknowledge our differences. With the ease that technology offers us to share our lives, our cultures, and our thoughts; we can celebrate what makes us similar and what makes us unique. Every October is Global Diversity Awareness Month, and this gives us the opportunity to celebrate and support our Earth's many cultures, helping us to better understand and appreciate our world.

Food is a big part of our lives and an important part of identity. Food can bring people together; through passing down a family recipe, cooking a meal, or sitting down to eat together. Food is one of the most personal ways to connect with others, and it is a way we can understand how it makes us all unique.



Celebrate Global Diversity Awareness month this October by trying a recipe from another culture, experimenting with ingredients you have never tried, eating a new food, or visiting an international market for your groceries. Enjoy the food traditions from your heritage and culture and of those around you and far away too!

Source: <https://nationaltoday.com/global-diversity-awareness-month/#:~:text=Global%20Diversity%20Awareness%20Month%20every,on%20society%20as%20a%20whole>