

Beyond Baked Beans

Cheap healthy food for students,
singles and anyone else on a budget



10 cans you can't live without publication date: Sep 10, 2008

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If you're getting your storecupboard staples ready for uni don't forget to tuck in a few cans. The great advantage of cans in a student kitchen is that they don't take up your valuable fridge or freezer space and obviously don't go off so you've always got a tasty, nutritious meal to hand.

Nutritious? Sure. As [Canned Food UK](#), the organisation which represents can and canned food manufacturers points out, canned fruit and veg are often healthier than fresh because they're packed in peak condition. *And* they count as one of your recommended five a day.

They're also often cheaper than buying fresh or frozen. And quick to use when you're in a rush.

Here are 10 cans you can't afford to live without:

- **Pulses:** Canned pulses such as baked beans, chickpeas and kidney beans are a great source of energy and essential nutrients, as they are packed with protein and carbohydrates that release energy slowly. This helps you to concentrate throughout the day – and stay up into the early hours! (*Not that you'd do that of course . . .*) You can use them for quick snacks and salads such as [Chilli Baked Beans](#), [Basque Butterbean Stew](#) and [Mixed Bean and Crumbly White Cheese Salad](#)
- **Tomatoes:** Canned tomatoes are an essential store-cupboard item for everyone, including professional chefs. Not only are they nutritious, but canned tomatoes can be used for a huge range of recipes. Because tomatoes are canned straight after they are picked, they also retain more vitamins and minerals than fresh tomatoes. Try our [Easiest-ever Pasta Sauce](#) - much cheaper than buying a ready-made sauce.
- **Sweetcorn:** Studies have found that eating sweetcorn – which is rich in anti-oxidants – can reduce the risk of heart disease. Canned Food UK points out that it's an easy addition to a meal that might otherwise lack vegetables, (a tactful way of saying it's a good option for those of you who are veg-phobic). Good added to chowders and makes nice little fritters too. (Buy the unsweetened version)
- **Canned fruit:** Excellent for a quick breakfast or healthy pud, using canned fruit is as easy as peeling a

banana. During exams, boost your last-minute revision by eating brightly-coloured fruits such as blueberries and strawberries, which are packed with antioxidants that help to improve short-term memory. A good mix of fruit and veg also keeps the brain oxygenated, improving mental alertness. Remember fruit canned in fruit juice counts towards your 5-A-DAY!

- **Coconut Milk:** The essential ingredient for Thai red or green curries like [Will's Thai Green Curry](#) (Makes great rice puddings too - perfect if you're dairy intolerant.)
- **Tuna:** Where would students be without tuna? Rich in iron, it's a fantastic aid to concentration and general mood booster. Try our [Really Good Tuna Sandwich filling](#)
- **Sardines:** Packed with omega-3 fatty acids, canned oily fish such as sardines are perfect brain food and also contain plenty of calcium and protein. We all need to eat one portion of oily fish each week to keep our brains in shape. Don't think you like sardines? Try our [Sardine Tartine](#).
- **Dairy Desserts:** Mmmmm. Canned custard. Canned rice pudding . . . Instant gratification. Remember that low fat canned custard also counts towards the recommended 2 to 3 servings of dairy foods each day, and is a great source of calcium and protein. Mix it with fresh, sliced banana.
- **Soup:** For a quick lunch, heating up a can of soup takes some beating. Just ritz it up with a swirl of cream or a few chopped fresh herbs. Canned soup can also be added to casseroles or stews to bulk them out and add extra nutritional value to the meal.
- **Pie:** The very word pie makes us happy. OK it's not the most healthy meal ever but add a couple of helpings of veg like peas, carrots or greens (no spuds!) and you've got a balanced meal. Canned Food UK argues that chilled food loses its nutritional value as it sits on supermarket shelves, whereas canned food retains its goodness until you open the can. An advantage you mightn't have thought of.

Finally don't chuck away your empty cans - they are 100% recyclable and can be used over and over again to make more cans or other metal goods like fridges and cars!

For more recipes or info about canned food, visit www.cannedfood.co.uk, call 0800 24 33 64 or write to Canned Food UK, 1st Floor, Griffin House, 18 Ludgate Hill, Birmingham, B3 1DW.

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