

Canned Beans

Easy Nutrition for WIC Moms



NUTRITION

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends adults consume 1½ cups of beans a week, yet the average weekly adult intake is less than one cup. In fact, beans are called out as a “food to encourage” because of their unique nutritional profile.

- ➔ The Institute of Medicine recommends canned beans in WIC packages.
- ➔ Canned beans make it very easy to consume 1½ cups each week.

From pinto to kidney beans, there is virtually no difference between the nutritional value of canned and bagged beans.

- ➔ Pinto beans are a good source of folate and manganese, relatively high in protein, and rich in vitamin B1. Kidney beans are high in fiber, iron and memory-boosting B1, release their energy slowly (meaning no sugar spikes), and contain a good amount of protein. [University of Illinois, 1997]

According to the USDA’s MyPlate guidelines, beans and peas are the only foods that fit into two groups: vegetables and protein. One-half cup of cooked beans is equivalent to one serving of vegetables.

- ➔ A serving of canned beans provides 20% or more of daily fiber needs.



VALUE

Canned foods often provide key nutrients at a lower cost compared to other forms. (J Nutr and Food Sci, 2012)

- ➔ When the cost of preparation time is taken into consideration, canned pinto beans cost \$1 less per serving as a source of protein and fiber than dried beans. This is because it takes about six minutes to prepare a can of pinto beans while it takes almost 2½ hours (soaking and cooking) for dried beans to be meal-ready.
- ➔ Of the most frequently consumed vegetables, beans and potatoes were the lowest cost sources of fiber and potassium. [Drewnoski A, Rehm CD, PLoS ONE 2013 8(5): e63277]



PREFERENCE

Beans, a diverse and nutrient-rich family of products, are eaten by a significant portion of the population. Two-thirds of all beans come from a can.

Thirty-five state WIC programs allow canned beans, recognizing their importance in providing a variety of nutritious options for moms.

- ➔ A study of Wisconsin’s WIC program after it allowed participants to substitute beans (dried or canned) for peanut butter found families liked the canned bean option, which study authors speculated could reduce overall fat intake among participants – a goal of the latest WIC food package changes. (Altarum Institute, Dec. 2011)
- ➔ Beans are a viable option for people with food concerns such as peanut allergies and gluten sensitivities.



CONVENIENCE

Canned foods are easy to prepare, requiring no to little re-heating, no special cooking skills and little advance planning, so busy WIC moms can get nutritious food on the table quickly.

- ➔ Of the nearly 10% of WIC participants who did not regularly purchase dry beans and peas, 12.2% said it was because they were “too much trouble to prepare” and 5% cited not knowing how to prepare them among their reasons. (WIC Survey, USDA/ FNS, April 2012)
- ➔ Research suggests one-third of Americans decide what to make for dinner at the last minute and choose to serve a particular dish because it requires little or no planning (Rutgers; Top Clin Nutr, 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, food processors and affiliate members that have joined together to drive increased consumption of canned foods by enhancing the perception of their numerous benefits, including nutrition, convenience, affordability and accessibility. 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/WIC.

