



Canned Soup Makeover Tips

Canned soup is a great staple item to have on hand for a quick meal. Making a few additions can boost the nutrition and cut sodium content, which can often be much higher than our bodies need. Too much sodium can contribute to high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke. It's recommended that most Americans get no more than 2,300mg of sodium per day and an ideal limit is closer to 1,500mg per day. Less added sodium means better heart health!

It's easy to turn canned soup into something more delicious with just a few simple add-ins. For example, if you have veggies in the refrigerator that are about to go bad, don't throw them away. Add fresh (or frozen) vegetables to nearly any canned soup to add extra fiber and vitamins.

Try any of these suggestions or use them as inspiration to make your own creations. Whatever you decide, be creative and have fun! If you have any questions, feedback or want to share your inspirations, feel free to e-mail us at nutrition@hungertaskforce.org. We'd love to hear from you!

Any soup

- Nearly any type of canned soup – tomato, lentil, chicken, beef, bean – can be made more nutritious by tossing in a couple handfuls of fresh greens as you heat. You can use chopped kale, baby spinach, mixed greens, or whatever you have on hand. Onions, mushrooms, carrots, celery and peppers are all good options, too!
- Boost up the protein by adding some leftover rotisserie chicken, tofu, or even canned chicken. Just chop it up and add it in as the soup heats. Adding a couple of lightly beaten eggs can make a chicken noodle soup into a quick version of egg-drop soup.
- Any light, broth-based soup can fill you up a little more when you add in some cooked pasta, rice, barley or other grains. Use your imagination...and your leftovers!

Chicken soup

- Southwest: Before heating your chicken soup, add frozen or leftover corn. Place tortilla chips in a bowl, ladle soup over the chips, and top with diced avocado.
- Mediterranean: Add flavor, protein and fiber by including rinsed canned chickpeas (garbanzo beans), dried oregano, thyme, basil and parsley and crumbled feta cheese.
- Mimic your favorite Thai coconut chicken soup by heating plain chicken noodle soup with 1/2 can (or more, to taste) coconut milk and 1 teaspoon fish sauce. Just before serving stir in 1 tablespoon lime juice. Serve with lime wedges and chopped fresh cilantro.

Vegetable soup

- Add a spoonful of pesto just before serving for an extra boost of flavor.
- Add precooked mini meatballs and simmer for 8 to 12 minutes or until warmed through. If using frozen precooked meatballs heat in the microwave for 5 to 6 minutes or according to package directions. Stir into soup, simmer for 5 more minutes and serve.)

Pumpkin or butternut squash soup

- Add sliced precooked sausage and dried sage as you heat. For an extra flavor boost, crisp up fresh sage leaves by quickly frying in a small amount of oil. Drain on a paper towel and crumble fried sage leaves over soup when serving.

Bean soup

- Mix in cooked short pasta (elbow macaroni or shells) and 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme.
- Black bean soup: Stir in 1/2 to 1 teaspoon cumin (to taste) and 1/2 cup salsa into canned black bean soup as it heats. Serve topped with a dollop of sour cream. If you'd like, garnish with tortilla chips or add diced jalapeño to spice it up!
- White bean soup: White beans and shrimp are a classic Tuscan pairing. Defrost precooked frozen shrimp by placing in a colander and running cool water over them until no longer frozen. Add to white bean soup along with a sprinkling of dried Italian herb mix (to taste). Simmer 5 to 10 minutes or until shrimp are warmed through. Enjoy!

Beef soup

- Make an easy improvised version of French onion soup: Caramelize sliced onions in 1 tablespoon butter. Add the onions to beef soup. Melt shredded cheese on toast to float on top of soup at serving. Use a diced piece of toast for quick and easy "croutons."

Split pea soup

- Dice regular ham and crisp it in a pot with a drizzle of oil. Pour split pea soup over the meat and then heat for a more deeply flavored and savory bowl.

Stock

- Transform thin broths into egg-drop soup: Heat chicken or vegetable stock to a simmer. Whisk a couple eggs; drizzle into pot, whisking soup as you pour. Bonus: Add cubed tofu or diced chicken for extra protein. Toss in some spinach and grated carrots to add some vegetables.

Tomato soup

- Add a poached egg and Parmesan cheese. You can use milk to make a creamy tomato soup, too. This is a great way to get some extra dairy and calcium into your day.
- Bulk it up by adding a can of diced tomatoes and some basil. Or sauté some onions, garlic and sliced kale or spinach. Add to tomato soup and top with parmesan cheese.

Canned chili (with or without beans)

- Stir in diced tomatoes, sautéed onions and peppers, cooked ground meat and extra seasonings. Add in canned beans – black, pinto, great northern – whatever you have on hand! Cook up some pasta to serve it over and enjoy!