

# Nutritional & Budget Guide

While food banks provide essential relief, many individuals rely on low-cost, nonperishable foods that may not always be the healthiest options.

So, how can we make better use of what’s available while improving our health?

## How to Make Processed & Nonperishable Foods Healthier

If you rely on canned, prepackaged, and processed foods, here are some simple ways to boost their nutritional value:

### 1. Reduce Sodium & Sugar

- Rinse canned vegetables & beans to remove excess sodium or sugar.
- Choose low-sodium or no-salt-added options when possible.
- Avoid sugary canned fruits—opt for fruit packed in water or natural juice.

### 2. Add Nutrients

- Mix canned vegetables with fresh or frozen veggies to increase fiber and vitamins.
- Pair boxed meals (like mac & cheese) with a protein source (canned tuna, beans, or eggs) and a vegetable for balance.
- Use canned beans as an affordable, protein-rich addition to soups, salads, and rice dishes.

### 3. Stretch Your Meals

- Cook one large meal (like a soup or casserole) that can last for multiple servings.
- Use rice, pasta, or lentils as budget-friendly fillers in dishes.
- Freeze leftovers for future meals instead of throwing them away.

## Meal Hacks & Tricks for Healthier Eating on a Budget

Here are three quick meal ideas to make processed foods healthier while stretching your budget:

### 🥘 1. DIY Canned Soup Upgrade

**Problem:** Canned soups are often high in sodium and lack fiber.

**Solution:** Add canned beans, frozen veggies, and brown rice to make a more nutritious, hearty meal.

### 🍝 2. Healthier Boxed Mac & Cheese

**Problem:** Boxed mac & cheese is low in protein and fiber.

**Solution:** Mix in canned tuna or chicken for protein, and stir in spinach or frozen peas for added nutrients.

### 🍲 3. Budget-Friendly Bean & Rice Bowl

**Problem:** Processed meals don’t always keep you full.

**Solution:** Combine canned black beans, brown rice, and canned tomatoes with garlic and spices for a filling, high-protein dish.

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## Every Meal & Every Effort Counts

Food insecurity is a challenge, but small steps can **make a big impact**. By making smarter choices with **canned & prepackaged foods**, stretching budgets wisely, and **staying active**, families can maintain better health—regardless of financial struggles.

### Easy & Healthy Recipe: Hearty Chili Using Canned Goods

This hearty, nutritious chili is packed with protein, fiber, and flavor—all using affordable canned and pantry staples!

#### **Ingredients:**

- 1 can black beans (drained & rinsed)
- 1 can kidney beans (drained & rinsed)
- 1 can diced tomatoes (low-sodium)
- 1 can corn (drained)
- 1 lb ground turkey or canned chicken (optional)
- 1 onion (chopped)
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp chili powder
- ½ tsp cumin
- ½ tsp black pepper

#### **Instructions:**

- 1 In a large pot, sauté onions (if using fresh).
- 2 Add ground turkey/chicken (or skip for vegetarian chili).
- 3 Stir in canned beans, tomatoes, and corn.
- 4 Add seasonings & simmer for 15 minutes.
- 5 Serve hot! Pair with brown rice or whole wheat bread for a complete meal.

#### **Budget Tip:**

- This chili makes 6-8 servings and costs less than \$1.50 per serving!

### Budget-Friendly Tips for Healthy Eating

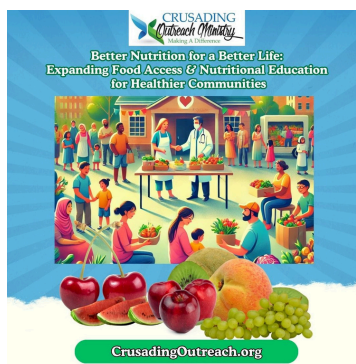
- ✓ Shop sales & use coupons—buy in bulk when possible.
- ✓ Use frozen veggies instead of fresh—they are just as nutritious but more affordable.
- ✓ Make your own snacks instead of buying pre-packaged ones (ex: homemade trail mix with peanuts & raisins).
- ✓ Plan meals ahead to avoid impulse spending on unhealthy, expensive items.


### Simple At-Home Exercises for a Healthy Lifestyle

A balanced diet is key, but staying active is just as important! Here are easy, no-equipment exercises to stay fit at home:

1. **Chair Squats** – Stand up & sit down 10-15 times to strengthen your legs.
2. **March in Place** – Do this for 2-3 minutes to get your heart rate up.
3. **Arm Circles** – Rotate your arms forward & backward for 1 minute to build strength.
4. **Step-Ups** – Use stairs or a sturdy box for 10-15 step-ups per leg.
5. **Wall Push-Ups** – Lean against a wall & push up/down 10-12 times.

**Tip:** Aim for 15-20 minutes of movement daily—even light activity can make a big difference!



 **Need more resources?** Visit [www.crusadingoutreach.org](http://www.crusadingoutreach.org) for food assistance programs, meal ideas, and wellness support!