

Transform Canned Tuna Into A Meal

Canned tuna is a versatile pantry staple in many kitchens. Tuna reaps a big reward because it is protein-packed, inexpensive, and can last several years in the pantry. With recipes and some creativity, tuna can be used in casseroles, salads, wraps, pasta dishes, and more.

Canned tuna is a great source of lean protein along omega-3 fatty acids and essential vitamins and minerals. Whether canned tuna is packed in oil or water can affect its nutritional content. Canned tuna packed in oil tends to be higher in calories and fat than canned tuna packed in water.

The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend eating a variety of seafood at least twice a week. Including tuna in your diet is an easy and affordable way to increase your seafood intake.

Have you noticed the different types of tuna available when you walk down the grocery aisle? Here are some guidelines that may help you with tuna.

- Avoid damaged cans with dents or bulges
- Look for tuna canned in water rather than oil
- Compare sodium content – some tuna contains added salt, while others do not
- Light versus White/Albacore
 - Light – Tan to tan-pink flesh; softer texture and stronger flavor (often skipjack, yellowfin, or combo of tunas)
 - White /Albacore – White to light pink flesh; firm texture and light, mild flavor
- Chunk versus Solid – Chunk is smaller pieces; solid is large, whole pieces
- Oil-packed and Water-packed –Tuna packed in oil is richer in flavor compared to those packed in water. Consider how it will be used when choosing.
- Vacuum-sealed tuna pouches don't contain any added water.

Canned tuna is versatile. White or light, chunk or solid, oil- or water-packed, any variety will work just fine in any recipe that calls for canned tuna. But by narrowing down your options based on your preferences, you get to control a finished dish's specific flavor and texture.

Canned tuna is fully cooked, so it is safe to eat without cooking. Canned tuna can be eaten hot or cold.

The amount of mercury present depends on the type of tuna. In general, larger varieties of tuna, like bigeye and albacore, tend to be higher in mercury. Smaller tuna fish, like light tuna and skipjack, are lower in mercury. As canned tuna typically contains younger and smaller types, including light and skipjack, it is typically lower in mercury than frozen or fresh tuna filets.

Store unopened cans in a cool, clean, dry place. Canned or jarred tuna is shelf-stable for three to five years on average, while pouched tuna is normally only shelf-stable for three years. Always inspect cans for any signs of spoilage or contamination, such as sharp dents, cracking, leaking, or bulging. If cans have any of these signs or the contents have an off smell or color, it is best to throw them out to avoid potential foodborne illness.

Refrigerate leftover tuna within 2 hours of serving in a covered non-metal container for up to 2 days for best quality.

From quick lunches to afternoon snacks, canned tuna makes last-minute meals for busy weeknights a breeze. Discover delicious ways to turn a simple can of tuna into a feast for the whole family.

Canned tuna is a pantry powerhouse, so it's time to give it another chance. Whether it is breakfast, lunch, or dinner, tuna can be added to the menu for an easy and nutritious choice.