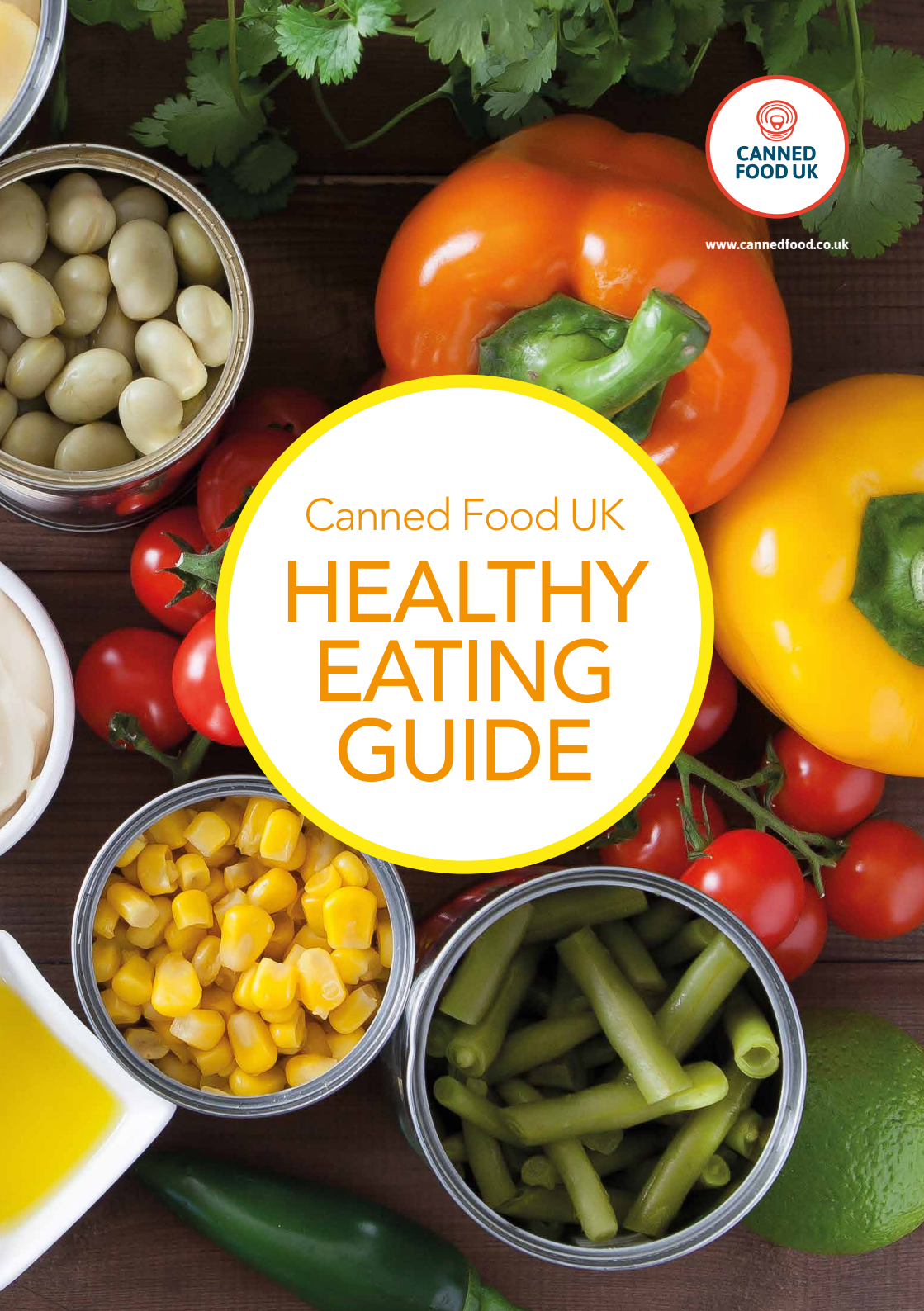

CANNED
FOOD UK
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Canned Food UK
HEALTHY
EATING
GUIDE



Canned Food UK

HEALTHY EATING GUIDE

We all know that what we eat can affect our health and wellbeing, but did you know that canned foods have an important part to play in helping you to choose a healthy balanced diet?

Canned foods provide important sources of essential nutrients and, as well as being convenient, can help you to eat a healthy balanced diet every day, even when you are on the go or short of time. Use our healthy eating guide showing how canned foods can fit into a healthy balanced diet to help plan your everyday store cupboard essentials.

The Canned Food UK Healthy Eating Guide is based on the Eatwell Guide, which defines the UK government's advice on healthy eating and represents how different foods contribute towards a healthy balanced diet. For more information visit: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide





The Canned Food UK Healthy Eating Guide

(based on the Eatwell guide)

The Canned Food UK Healthy Eating Guide is based on government advice about how to eat a healthy balanced diet. Choosing a variety of foods from each group including fresh, frozen and canned foods in the right amounts will help ensure you stay healthy. Canned foods can be a great source of nutrients and are super convenient and easy to incorporate into everyday meals.

Foods to include in each food group (including examples of canned foods):

FOOD GROUP	MESSAGE	PORTIONS	CANNED FOOD EXAMPLES	OTHER FOOD EXAMPLES
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates	Choose wholegrain or higher fibre varieties	Include at each meal	Canned potatoes, canned ravioli*, canned spaghetti in tomato sauce*, canned macaroni cheese*	Wholegrain rice, pasta, potatoes, breakfast cereals, breads and rolls
Fruit and vegetables	Eat at least five portions every day. Try choosing canned varieties in juice or water	A minimum of five servings a day	Canned carrots, canned sweetcorn, canned ratatouille, canned peas, canned mushrooms, canned green beans, canned mixed vegetables, canned tomatoes, canned cherries, canned apple, canned peaches, canned pears	Broccoli, oranges, strawberries, cauliflower, lettuce, cucumber, fresh tomatoes, onions, bananas, satsumas, peppers, raisins, aubergine, apples, dried fruit
Dairy and dairy alternatives	Choose lower fat and lower sugar varieties	Include 2-3 servings a day	Canned evaporated milk, custard*, canned rice pudding*	Milk, cheese, yoghurt
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other protein	Eat more beans and pulses, two portions of sustainably sourced fish (one of which should be oily). Eat less red and processed meat	Include 2-3 servings a day	Canned baked beans, canned kidney beans, canned lentils, canned tuna, canned sardines, canned salmon, canned mackerel, canned chickpeas, canned corned beef	Fresh fish, poultry, red meat (e.g. beef mince), eggs, nuts and seeds
Oils and spreads	Choose unsaturated oils in small amounts	Use in small amounts		Butter, margarine, oils

*Composite foods which contain more than one food group.



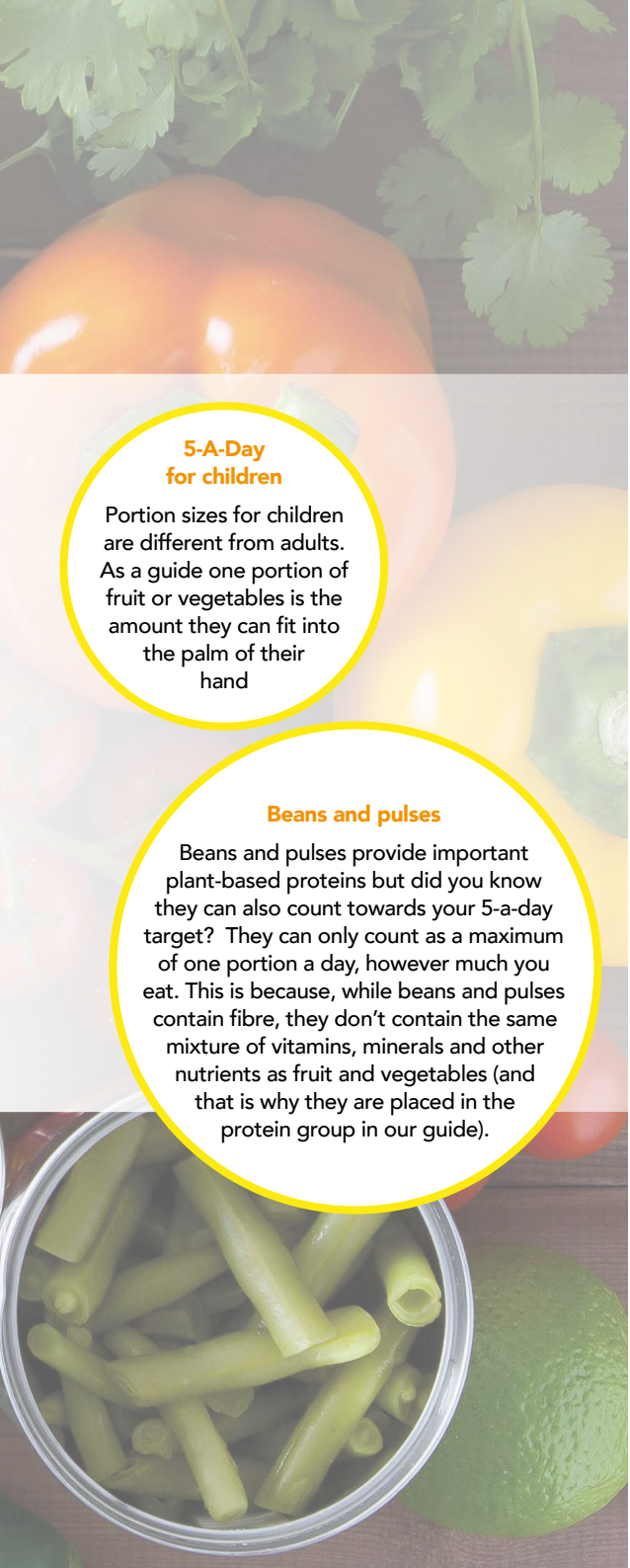
Portion Control

Eating the right quantity of foods is also important to be healthy and eating larger portions than you need may contribute to unwanted weight gain. Canned foods will often give guidance on how much is a portion, either on the traffic light guide or the nutrition table at the back of the label. Some example portion sizes of canned food favourites are given below:

CANNED FOOD FAVOURITES	PORTION SIZE WEIGHT	WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?
Canned corned beef	90g	A deck of cards
Canned ham	90g	A deck of cards
Canned tuna	140g	Fills the palm of your hand 
Canned oily fish (salmon, mackerel, sardines)	140g	
Canned custard	130g	⅓ of a 400g can
Canned rice pudding	200g	½ of a 400g can
Plant based proteins		
Canned baked beans	150g	Four tablespoons
Canned beans (e.g. kidney beans, butterbeans, black eyed beans	150g	Four tablespoons (drained)
Canned pulses (lentils, chickpeas	150g	Four tablespoons (drained)

Sources: 1. BDA Portion Sizes Food Fact Sheet. Available from: Portion sizes | British Dietetic Association (BDA) (accessed Dec 2022). 2. Food Standards Agency. Food Portion Sizes. 3rd Edition 2012. London, TSO.





5-A-Day for children

Portion sizes for children are different from adults. As a guide one portion of fruit or vegetables is the amount they can fit into the palm of their hand

Beans and pulses

Beans and pulses provide important plant-based proteins but did you know they can also count towards your 5-a-day target? They can only count as a maximum of one portion a day, however much you eat. This is because, while beans and pulses contain fibre, they don't contain the same mixture of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients as fruit and vegetables (and that is why they are placed in the protein group in our guide).

Canned fruits and vegetables also count towards your 5-A-day target. The following guide gives the amount of canned fruits and vegetables that would count as a portion. Don't forget that as most fruits and vegetables are canned in a liquid such as water or juice, the portion guide refers to drained quantities.

CANNED FOOD	PORTION GUIDE (DRAINED)
Canned vegetables	
Canned ackee	3 heaped tablespoons
Canned asparagus	7 spears
Canned carrots	3 heaped tablespoons
Canned peas	3 heaped tablespoons
Canned sweetcorn	3 heaped tablespoons
Canned tomatoes (plum)	2 whole tomatoes

CANNED FOOD	PORTION GUIDE (DRAINED)
Canned fruit	
Canned apricots	6 half pieces
Canned pears	2 half pieces
Canned grapefruit	8 segments
Canned cherries	11 cherries
Canned fruit salad	3 heaped tablespoons
Canned mandarin oranges	3 heaped tablespoons
Canned pineapple	2 rings or 12 chunks
Canned prunes	6 prunes
Canned strawberries	9 strawberries
Canned lychees	6 lychees
Canned raspberries	20 raspberries
Canned rhubarb chunks	5 chunks
Canned peaches	2 half pieces

Source: NHS. Rough guide - Fruit & vegetable portion sizes [Internet]. NHS.uk. 2021. Available from: https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/5ADAY/Documents/Downloads/5ADAY_portion_guide.pdf (accessed Dec 2022)

Canned foods are also good sources of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients needed in smaller amounts. The guide below focuses on some of the key nutrients in our diet and which canned foods provide them in a significant amount.

Sources of vitamins and minerals in canned foods

NUTRIENT	HOW MUCH DO I NEED? [1]	WHAT DOES IT DO?	WHICH CANNED FOODS BEST PROVIDE THEM?
Iron	14mg	For healthy red blood cells and normal cognitive function	Canned corned beef, canned lentils in tomato sauce, canned green lentils, canned tongue, canned seafood, canned anchovies, canned sardines and pilchards, canned steak with gravy
Omega- 3	Eat at least one portion of oily fish per week [2]	For the normal function of the heart and for normal brain and eye development	Canned sardines, canned mackerel, canned herrings, canned pilchards and canned kippers
Zinc	10mg	For the normal functioning of the immune system, maintenance of bones and vision	Canned meatballs in gravy, canned ham, canned tongue, canned crab, canned clams, canned anchovies, canned shrimps, canned sardines, canned herring in tomato sauce, canned corned beef, canned luncheon meat, canned mince in gravy, canned ham and pork, canned steak in gravy
Iodine	150mcg	For normal functioning of the nervous system and cognitive function	Canned shrimps, canned sardines, canned mussels, canned mackerel, canned pilchards, canned rice pudding, canned custard, canned salmon, canned condensed milk, canned evaporated milk
Folic acid	200mcg	For normal blood formation, nervous system function and healthy tissue growth during pregnancy	Canned asparagus, canned baked beans, canned broad beans, canned lentils, canned sweetcorn, canned black eye beans*, canned spinach* canned chickpeas*
Vitamin C	80mg	For the formation of collagen in bones, cartilage, skin, blood vessels, gums and teeth. Vitamin C also helps the body absorb iron	Canned ackee, canned spinach, canned pineapple, canned grapefruit, canned strawberries, canned longans, canned asparagus, canned guava, canned papaya, canned apricots, canned blackcurrants, canned mango juice, canned fruit cocktail, canned baby sweetcorn, canned mandarin oranges, canned sweetcorn
Calcium	800mg	For the maintenance of bones and teeth	Canned sardines, canned crab, canned anchovies, canned pilchards, canned salmon, canned evaporated milk, canned condensed milk
Vitamin D	5mcg	Contributes to the maintenance of normal bones, muscle and teeth	Canned mackerel, canned tuna, canned sardines, canned pilchards, canned corned beef, canned salmon

[1] Reference intakes. Regulation (EU) no 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers.
[2] Based on classification of oily fish, SACN 2004.
*based on US data in the absence of UK data. Examples in blue font could be changed to canned seafood.
DHA: docosahexaenoic acid; EPA: eicosapentaenoic acid;



Reading nutrition labels

The front of pack nutrition label on some canned foods provides an easy way to make healthier choices, choose a balanced diet and compare products. See our easy guide below.

The traffic light guide is based on the portion size stated above it

Use the calorie information to compare different products

Reference intake has replaced the term Guideline Daily Amount or GDA for short

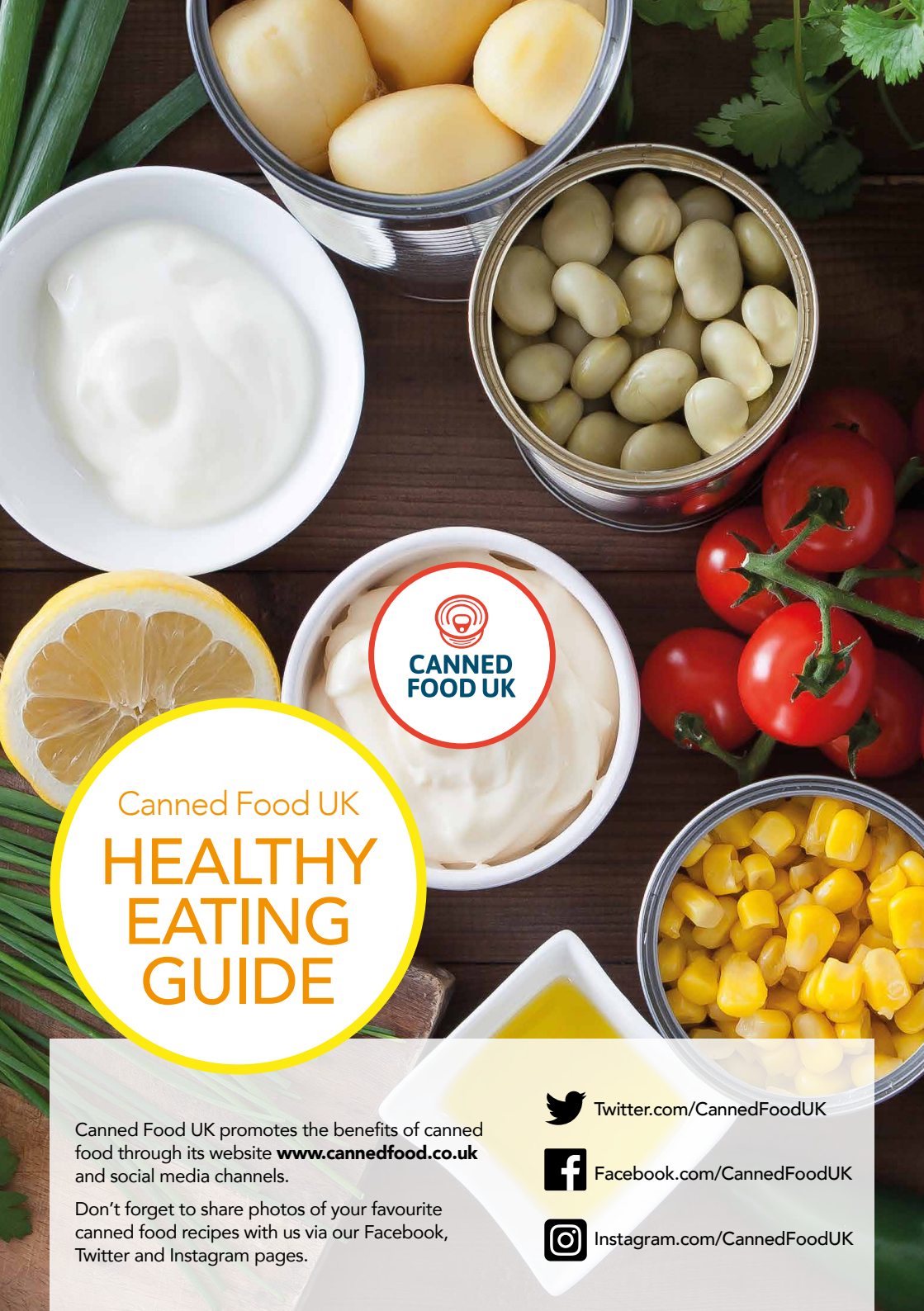
One - quarter of a can contains

Energy	Fat	Saturates	Salt
608kJ 144kcal	5.0g	0.9g	0.9g
7%	7%	5%	15%

of the reference intake*

Typical values per 100g: Energy 579kJ / 138kcal

Colour coding tells you whether the food is low (green), medium (amber) or high (red) in the nutrient



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HEALTHY EATING GUIDE

Canned Food UK promotes the benefits of canned food through its website **www.cannedfood.co.uk** and social media channels.

Don't forget to share photos of your favourite canned food recipes with us via our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages.

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