

LIMITED INCOME FOOD PANTRY

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This list is not all-inclusive, but serves as a guideline for healthier menu choices, items to have on hand, and low-cost foods. Some foods may take some learning, but usually have instructions on them, and recipes on the web. Comfort foods are good to have on hand when times are tight.

Tip: Many fruits and veggies come in economical large cans (called #10 cans) for families or food service.

FRUITS

Canned Fruit (*preferable in their own juice*)
Applesauce (*unsweetened*)
Canned Juice (*pineapple, apple, grape, etc.*)
Dried Fruit (*prunes, raisins, craisins, etc.*)

Tip: Each week buy 1 extra meal, and store it. Each grocery trip, buy an extra canned item or two.

INGREDIENTS

Flour (*preferably unbleached*)
Cornmeal
Dried Potatoes
Dried Milk (*whole milk in ethnic aisles or stores*)
Oats / Grits
Dried Pasta
Long grain rice
Cornstarch (*gravies, stir-fry*)
Peanut Butter (*versatile ingredient for a variety of dishes and snacks*)
Peanut Oil (*or other, preferably not corn oil*)
Spices (*pepper, rosemary, oregano, cayenne, etc.*)
Baking Soda
Baking Powder
Sugar / Honey / Molasses
Dried Beans (*pinto, lentils, split pea, etc.*)
Canned Meat (*chicken, beef, tuna*)
Canned Fish (*salmon, sardines, etc.*)

Tip: Use meats (canned or otherwise) as a flavoring, not the main dish. Adding a bit of beef to a main dish of potatoes helps the meat go toward several meals. Cooking with bacon grease can add meat flavor to meals as well. Using the stock water from the canned meats can add flavor to soups, gravies, etc. Learn how to make gravies and sauces from scratch - they add a lot to any meal, and cost very little!

VEGGIES

Canned Veggies (*potatoes, peas, carrots, spinach, greens, corn, etc.*)
Canned Pumpkin (*another versatile ingredient for veggie or desserts*)

MISCELLANEOUS

Kelp Tablets (*and other vitamin / mineral supplements*)
Charcoal Tablets (*for food poisoning*)
Sea Salt (*with iodine! The best (healthiest) sea salt is unprocessed and should be a greyish color from the minerals still in it*)

COMFORT FOODS

Popcorn (*bagged unpopped, not microwave*)
Dried Fruit
Mixed Nuts (*good source of oils*)
Hard Candies (*m&ms, lifesavers, mints, etc. - avoid ones that melt easily*)
Mini chocolates
Coffee / Tea / hot cocoa mix
No-frills corn (tortilla) chips

Tip: "Bent and Dent" stores are stores that sell items that have been dinged or bent in larger stores, or are over the suggested expiration date. Usually they are much cheaper. Be cautious - do not buy heavily bent or dented canned items, as it may have opened the seal, especially if on the side seams. Many times, however, you will be able to find canned items that have nary a dent on them, and still within the suggested expiration date.

AVOID - CHEAP, BUT VERY UNHEALTHY

Macaroni & cheese
Canned chili meat
Products with high fructose corn syrup or MSG
(*also disguised as 'natural flavoring'*)
Kool-aid-type drink mixes

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