

Can Manufacturers Institute Omnibus Study Overview and Findings

The Can Manufacturers Institute (CMI) recently conducted a short omnibus study in order to better understand how people are consuming canned foods and what proportion of fruits and vegetables are sourced from cans. Following is a summary of the key findings and methodology. Numbers highlighted in yellow indicate a statistically significant difference from total sample.

Key Findings

Canned foods play a very important role as a staple of the American diet, with a significant percentage of Americans dependent upon canned fruits and vegetables as a proportion of their produce intake. Those on food assistance consume canned fruits and vegetables at a higher rate than the average American, and canned fruits and vegetables play a more important role in delivering servings of fruits and vegetables to food assistance households. Canned fruits and vegetables could potentially play an even bigger role in driving fruit and vegetable consumption if more consumers understood that canned fruit and vegetables can be as nutritious as fresh.

Ninety-seven percent of Americans have consumed at least one type of canned food in the past month and 90% of Americans have consumed a canned fruit or canned vegetable within this time frame. A larger proportion of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infant and Children Programs (WIC) households rely on canned fruits for their monthly fruit intake with just under two-thirds of these households having consumed canned fruit in the past month.

	US Adults	Limited Access to Fresh	SNAP / WIC Food Assistance
Any canned food	97%	97%	98%
Any Fruit and Veg	90	91	91
Tomatoes	60	59	58
Vegetables	75	77	80
Fruit	55	59	65

In an average week, Americans consume nearly 6 cans of fruits and vegetables. Additionally, those who receive food assistance through SNAP or WIC programs report consuming an additional one and a half cans of fruit and vegetables in an average week.

	US Adults	Limited Access to Fresh	SNAP / WIC Food Assistance
Any Fruit and Veg	5.5	5.7	7.1
Tomatoes	2.0	2.2	2.4
Vegetables	3.2	3.1	3.9
Fruit	2.5	2.5	3.0

Canned fruits and vegetables are judged to be extremely or very important in helping Americans prepare convenient, nutritious and affordable meals. This is especially true for those Americans on

food assistance, who have a limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables, or who are challenged by the cost, storage and preparation of fresh fruits and vegetables.

	US Adults	Limited Access to Fresh	SNAP / WIC Food Assistance
Extremely/very important in helping me prepare convenient, nutritious and affordable meals	56%	67%	67%

One quarter of the fruit consumed in the average American household is sourced from cans; this proportion rises when looking at those on SNAP and WIC, and those who struggle to access and store fresh fruits and vegetables - for these consumers, about one-third of their fruit consumption is sourced from cans.

	US Adults	Limited Access to Fresh	SNAP / WIC Food Assistance
Share of fruit			
Canned	25%	30%	32%
Fresh	64	57	56
Frozen	8	9	9
Other	3	4	4

Just under one-third of the vegetables consumed in the average American household is sourced from cans; this proportion rises when looking at those on SNAP and WIC, and those who struggle to access and store fresh vegetables - for these consumers, nearly 39% of their vegetables are sourced from cans.

	US Adults	Limited Access to Fresh	SNAP / WIC Food Assistance
Share of vegetables			
Canned	31%	35%	39%
Fresh	44	39	36
Frozen	22	21	21
Other	3	4	4

Canned foods play an important role in delivering nutrient dense foods within the American diet - in addition to fruits and vegetables, cans account for a significant share of the beans and fish consumed by Americans.

	US Adults	Limited Access to Fresh	SNAP / WIC Food Assistance
Canned share of			
Fruit	25%	30%	32%
Vegetables	31	35	39
Beans	66	65	64
Fish	28	32	32

Americans estimate that they waste just under one fifth of the produce they purchase due to spoilage, poor quality or bad taste. This proportion of “wasted fresh produce” is greater among SNAP and WIC consumers, and those who struggle to access and store fresh vegetables - for these consumers, about one-fourth of their “fresh” produce is thrown out because of spoilage, bad taste or poor quality.

	US Adults	Limited Access to Fresh	SNAP / WIC Food Assistance
% of fresh fruit thrown out because of spoilage, bad taste or poor quality	17%	25%	22%
% of fresh vegetables thrown out because of spoilage, bad taste or poor quality	15%	23%	20%

A significant proportion of Americans do not have the time, resources or access to fresh fruits and vegetables - for this group of people, canned fruits and vegetables help them get the servings of fruits and vegetables they need for a healthy diet.

Given the reliance on cans as a source for fruit and vegetables, and the large proportion of Americans (41%) who feel they have, “limited access to stores or farmers markets that affordable, quality fresh fruits and vegetables” - there is an important opportunity to reinforce the fact that canned fruits and vegetables can be just as nutritious as fresh fruits and vegetables. Unfortunately, only 57% of Americans, and just under two thirds of SNAP / WIC households currently agree with the idea that canned fruits and vegetables can be as nutritious as fresh. Clarifying this misperception may further increase total fruit and vegetable intake among all Americans.

	US Adults	Limited Access to Fresh	SNAP / WIC Food Assistance
Canned produce, like peaches and tomatoes, are great because they are available year round so I can eat them or use them in recipes at any time.	91%	94%	90%
Given my limited food budget, canned fruits and vegetables help me prepare affordable healthy meals	70	82	81
Canned fruits and vegetables are a better value than fresh fruits and vegetables as they don't spoil and are easy to store until needed.	72	83	76
Given my hectic schedule, the convenience of canned fruits and vegetables helps me prepare balanced healthy meals	68	78	69
Canned fruits and vegetables can be just as nutritious as fresh fruits and vegetables	57	68	64
If canned fruits and vegetables were not available, I would not be able to get enough of the fruits and vegetables I need for a healthy diet.	50	73	58
I have limited access to stores or farmers markets that affordable, quality fresh fruits and vegetables	41	100	53
It is difficult for me to afford fresh fruits and vegetables	46	72	61
Too much of the fresh fruits and vegetables I purchase go bad or go to waste	52	72	60
Canned fruits and vegetables can be more nutritious than fresh fruits & vegetables	31	48	35

% indicating they strongly agree, agree or slightly agree with statement

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Methodology and Sample Groups Analyzed

The research summarized in this document was conducted using Toluna's On-line Omnibus; interviews were completed on July 25 through July 27, 2012. The total sample of 1017 respondents is representative of US adults and is balanced on three key demographics: age, sex, and region of the US. Additionally, respondents with the following characteristics were identified for comparative analysis of consumption behaviors and attitudes towards canned and fresh foods:

SNAP / WIC Food Assistance - US adults who indicate that within the past year, they or someone in their immediate family participated in any of the SNAP or WIC food assistance programs.

Limited Access to Fresh - US adults who agree with the statement: "I have limited access to stores or farmers markets that sell affordable quality fresh fruits and vegetables."

Sample sizes and margins of error for these sample groups are as follows:

Sample group	Size	Margin of Error
Total US Adults	1017	+/- 3%
SNAP / WIC Assistance	211	+/- 7%
Limited Access to Fresh	414	+/- 5%