

Eat Your Fruits and Veggies  
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The current recommendation of 13 servings per day of vegetables and fruits for adults might be daunting to the average person, who now eats about half of the desired amount. However, home preserved food makes it easy to incorporate fruits and vegetables into every meal. The Canned Food Alliance, at [Mealtime.org](http://Mealtime.org), promotes the addition of vegetables and fruits by encouraging everyone to “Just Add One” canned food to your favorite recipes, while a University of California Davis study finds that fresh, frozen, dried and canned vegetables and fruits each have particular nutritional values to add to the family meals.

Dr. Christine Bruhn from UCD relates the findings of a recent study on the nutritional values of fresh fruits and vegetables as compared to preserved. Amazingly, fresh produce does not always guarantee the most nutrition. Fresh vegetables and fruits must be eaten as soon as possible after harvest to insure the maximum benefit and nutritional content. Dr. Bruhn found that some foods actually have higher levels of antioxidants after being canned than before. She gives as an example cherries, which contain enzymes that begin to destroy the naturally occurring phenolic compounds after harvest. The phenolic compounds create the antioxidants. Heating the cherries for processing and preserving destroys the enzymes and saves the phenolic compounds. Eating canned cherries, with the juice, actually provides greater antioxidant benefits than eating fresh cherries that have been shipped to the markets.

Different preserving methods create different nutritional profiles. Frozen fruits and vegetables retain more nutrients initially, although these lose some value after being frozen for long periods of time. Be sure to rotate frozen foods, using first those which have been in the freezer the longest. Canned foods must be heated to be processed, and thus lose some nutritional value up front, but these can be stored much longer without subsequent loss of nutrients. The important thing to remember is to eat more fruits and vegetables, no matter how the food has been preserved. The following recipe, from the Harvard University Dining Services, combines fresh green beans with dried cherries to create a delicious, healthy treat.

Green Beans with Dried Cherries  
Serves 4

- ½ cup dried sweetened cherries
- ½ tablespoon canola oil
- ½ small red onion, diced (scant ¼ cup)
- 2 tablespoons firmly packed brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- ¼ cup water
- 1 pound green beans, trimmed
- Salt to taste (optional)

Begin by making the cherry glaze: Heat the oil in a small saucepan over medium heat. Add the red onion and cook for 3 to 4 minutes, or until tender. Add the brown sugar to the onions. Stir to dissolve. Add the dry cherries, vinegar, and water. Simmer mixture for 4 to 5 minutes, or until the cherries are soft and the liquid had reduced. Do not let the mixture cook until dry; if it begins to dry out, add more water in small amounts to keep it moist. Set the sauce aside. Place the beans in a small steamer basket, and place the basket in a pot with a tightly fitting lid, above an inch of boiling water. Cover and cook over medium-high heat for about 3 minutes, keeping the beans slightly crisp. Toss the steamed green beans with the cherry glaze, season with salt to taste (if desired), and serve.

Questions about safe home food preservation? Call the Master Food Preservers and leave a message at (530) 621-5506. A Master Food Preserver will return the call. The Master Food Preservers are also available free of charge to speak to organizations and clubs about food safety or food preservation topics. Just call the number above to arrange for a speaker for small or large groups. For more information about the public education classes and activities, including the free public classes on food safety and pressure canning, be sure to go to the Master Food Preserver website at [http://ceeldorado.ucdavis.edu/Master\\_Food\\_Preservers/](http://ceeldorado.ucdavis.edu/Master_Food_Preservers/).