

FROZEN VEGETABLES & OTHER HEALTHY PACKAGED FOODS



Have you ever wondered whether frozen vegetables are worth eating and have nutritional value? Have you ever wondered whether there are any good quality and healthy packaged foods?

The answer to both questions is yes, if you know what to look for. This article will be in 2 parts; the first discussing frozen vegetables, the second

discussing how to find healthy packaged foods

Frozen vegetables are usually blanched, then snap frozen. This prevents the loss of most nutrients, with up to 95% of the vitamins and minerals retained. At risk are the water-soluble B-group vitamins – folate, thiamine and riboflavin – and vitamin C.

When vegetables are snap frozen, their nutritional content is high. But there is the risk of thawing when they are transported, and every time that happens there is a further loss of vitamins. If you pick up a bag of frozen vegetables and the contents aren't moving around freely, that's a sign they've thawed out a little and then refrozen. It's a good idea to take an insulated shopping bag to the supermarket to stop them thawing on the way home.

Nothing beats good-quality fresh produce, but if you think the vegetables in your freezer have remained constantly frozen and haven't gone through that thawing process, then they could have an equally good or even slightly better nutritional value than fresh veggies that have been sitting in your fridge for a while.

Frozen veggies are convenient for people who are busy, aren't inspired to cook, live by themselves or have trouble chopping up food. If you can make the cooking process easier by not having to peel and chop vegetables, you're more likely to eat well.

As long as you're eating some fresh fruit and salad veggies that are rich in B vitamins and vitamin C, you won't miss out on many vital nutrients by eating frozen vegetables.

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There is a pretty simple rule of thumb when looking for **healthy packaged foods** and that is to get good at reading the ingredients list. What I recommend you look for is;

1. That the ingredients are as close to possible in their natural state
2. That there is nothing synthetic or artificial added – ie; sugars and numbers
3. That the ingredients list is very short

Here are some examples;

- Orange juice should have one ingredient. Avoid those with added sugar or other numbers
- Almonds or other RAW nuts, should just include the nuts and no preservatives, salt etc.
- Rolled oats should have one ingredient.

Products with a long ingredient lists are bound to be full of preservatives, sugars and artificial colours, sweeteners and flavours. Stay away from these. Ideally eat food that is fresh, but be very diligent when choosing packaged food. There are good ones out there but you need to look for them.

