



Store Cupboard Staples

Canned Goods

Tinned tuna, salmon and sardines are not only ready to use making them the ultimate fast food but makes for a low cost meal base. Tomatoes are essential for many dishes, so stock up on them while they're on offer. Most tinned foods will last anywhere from 12-24 months.

Dried Herbs and Spices

These will not only bring life to your food but are a healthier alternative to salt. Storing them in airtight containers helps to preserve their flavour. They'll need throwing out after about a year, as they'll no longer have much flavour.

Dried Pasta and Noodles

They are an excellent source of starchy carbohydrates to provide energy especially the whole meal varieties, and the basis of many substantial meals. Dried pasta keeps well for around two years.

Rice

Essential for curries, stir-fries, soups and salads. Like flour, white rice lasts longer than brown rice as the outer parts of the rice contain fat that can go rancid (these are removed from the white rice so it spoils less quickly). Brown rice will last six months, but white rice should be good for two years.

Flour Lasts from eight to 12 months, but whole meal flour won't last as long because it has more fat, so get rid of it if your not sure.

Nuts and Seeds

Generally contain around 50% fat, and they'll go rancid if exposed to oxygen. Don't buy huge quantities at a time and store them in the fridge once opened.

Sugar and Salt

Can be spoiled by moisture, so keep them dry and they'll last.

Oils

Cooking oil spray is a healthy choice, as you'll use less. Extra virgin olive oil though is a healthy monosaturated fat which tastes good in salads but costs more and is a carcinogen once heated as it has a low smoke point. Sesame and peanut oils add flavor to stir-fries and salads, but oils oxidise once opened and turn rancid, so get rid of any that smell off.

Table Sauces Best before dates vary, so follow the packaging guidance and store accordingly.

Use By and Best Before Dates

What's the Difference?

Use By Dates Appear on foods that go off quickly, so they tend to be more common on fresh products, such as meat, poultry, fish ready meals and prepared salads.

Best Before Dates Appear on foods with a longer shelf life and show how long the food will be at its best quality. Eating food after the best before date doesn't mean it will be unsafe. Eggs are the only exception they need to be eaten within a day or two after their best before date.