



10 Processed Foods APPROVED BY REGISTERED DIETITIANS

You've likely heard numerous times that you should avoid eating processed foods. In general, that is true particularly for foods that have sodium and sugar added during processing. The type of processed foods being referred to are highly (or overly) processed, such as sausages, potato chips, candy, and countless other convenient-type foods. By definition, a processed food is any food that has been altered in any way during preparation or processing, such as freezing, canning, drying or even cooking. Foods like pre-washed bagged lettuce, applesauce, olive oil and canned fruit all count as processed foods, but that doesn't mean they should be avoided.

Here is a list of healthy processed foods that are recommended by dietitians, which can be incorporated into your everyday meals and snacks.

Brown Rice: This whole-grain staple is higher in fiber than white rice and contains several nutrients like magnesium, which helps with blood coagulation and bone development. Add brown rice to stir fries and protein bowls.

Canned Beans: Beans are an excellent source of protein and fiber

and can easily be added to soups, stews and salads. Look for canned beans with lower or no-added sodium and rinse them to remove additional sodium before adding them to a recipe.

Frozen Fruit and Vegetables: Frozen produce is one of easiest ways to consume nutrient-dense food. Look for frozen fruit without added sugar to include in smoothies or enjoy as a simple snack. For the healthiest option, choose frozen vegetables without any added sauce or dressings.

Bagged Greens: Buying packaged spinach, romaine lettuce or other dark-green leafy vegetables is a simple way to increase your intake of daily greens! Look for pre-washed greens for an easy salad mix or include them in a smoothie.

Canned Tomatoes: This processed food is actually one that has an increased nutrient content from the canning process. The amount of lycopene, a powerful antioxidant, is enhanced during processing.

Canned Tuna and Salmon: Most Americans do not eat the recommended amount of seafood weekly to meet their body's omega-3 fatty acid needs. Look for

canned tuna and salmon in water and add them to the top of your salad.

Frozen Salmon: Salmon is high in healthy omega-3 fatty acids, low in saturated fat, and can even be cooked from frozen, making it even easier to add it to your weeknight meal roundup!

Greek Yogurt: Both regular and Greek yogurt are nutritious choices. However, Greek yogurt can have twice as much protein and generally lower sodium than regular yogurt. Just be sure to pay attention to the added sugar content in either type of yogurt or choose the lower-added sugar or plain options.

Broths and Stocks: These are useful bases for tons of dishes like homemade stews, soups or slow-cooker meals with chicken breasts. Choose no-sodium, lower-sodium or reduced-sodium options.

Nut Butters: Spreads like peanut butter, almond butter and soy butter are easy sources of protein and healthy fats. Spread them on celery or whole-wheat crackers for a healthy snack.

"19 processed foods nutritionists swear by," nbcnews.com, accessed April 5, 2021.

"Processed Foods: Problem or Panacea?," todaysdietitian.com, accessed April 5, 2021.

Meal-Prep Trick: Triangle Tortilla Wrap Hack

After going viral on social media earlier this year, the triangle tortilla wrap hack is an easier way to assemble the what-is-sometimes-super-messy roll-up – think lunch burrito stuffed to the rim, splits and bypasses plate to drip on pants! Rather than rolling your tortilla into the shape of a burrito, follow the instructions below to fold it into a compact, triangular, layered wrap.

Mastering It

Step 1: Slice your tortilla. Make a cut from the middle of your tortilla, straight to the edge closest to you.

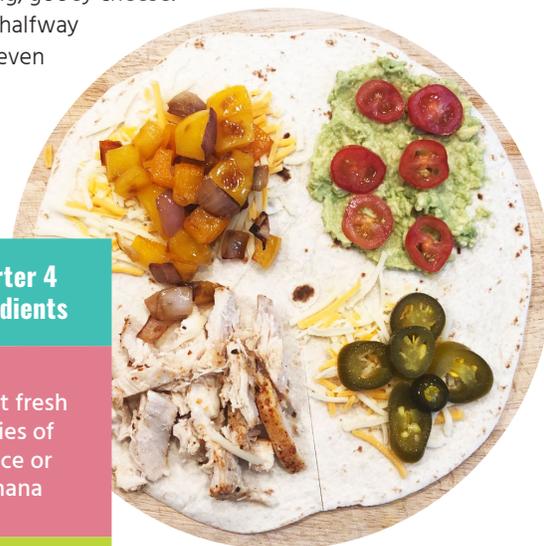
Step 2: Add your fillings to each quarter. Once your ingredients are fully prepped, you will organize your tortilla into four sections or quarters. The bottom-left quarter is Quarter 1. Working clockwise, add your ingredients for your combo of choice, according to the table below.

Step 3: Fold your tortilla clockwise. Grab the bottom-left corner of your tortilla and fold it upward, sandwiching Quarter 1 and Quarter 2. Then, flip the top-left corner of the tortilla over to the right side, sandwiching the stack with Quarter 3. Then fold

this portion down to sandwich them onto Quarter 4. When done, your tortilla should be a triangle with all of your fillings neatly stacked atop one another.

Step 4: Warm or enjoy immediately! Heat a skillet to medium heat and spread butter lightly on each side of your tortilla wrap. Toast your folded tortilla until it has browned and your fillings are warmed to your liking – think oozing, gooey cheese! Give it a flip halfway through for even cooking.

(Rotating clockwise from bottom left)



	Quarter 1 Ingredients	Quarter 2 Ingredients	Quarter 3 Ingredients	Quarter 4 Ingredients
The Classic PB&J (or Banana)*	peanut butter or nut butter of choice	fresh berries of choice or banana	repeat peanut butter or nut butter of choice	repeat fresh berries of choice or banana
Mexican-Infused Breakfast	scrambled eggs with dash of cayenne pepper	Mexican-blend cheese, minced green onions and sliced tomatoes	smashed avocado and sauteed bell peppers	smashed black beans and/or jalapenos
Homemade Pizza	pizza sauce or marinara of choice	sliced white mushrooms and/or cooked, ground turkey sausage	sliced bell peppers and onions	shredded mozzarella cheese and fresh or dried basil and oregano

***The Classic PB&J (or Banana) Notes:** Try microwaving a few fresh strawberries (or berries of choice) for 30 seconds; it breaks them down into a no-sugar-added, spreadable alternative to sugary jellies or preserves! This combo is great for little hands when you're on a springtime picnic lunch adventure!

Expert Assembly Tips: If you're using ingredients that are delicate in the face of heat, like lettuce or sauces, add them to the **bottom-left quarter** of your tortilla (**Quarter 1**). Once folded, this quarter is the most protected from heat when cooking, so you won't end up with a soggy section. Finally, avoid overstuffing your tortilla as it can make it difficult to fold your layers.

*You Need to Try This Tortilla Wrap Hack From TikTok," Caroline Stanko, tasteofhome.com, Feb. 8, 2021.