

PANTRY

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Canned tuna

Canned tuna isn't as popular as it was in the 1950s, when it was America's most popular fish. But it's still a relatively inexpensive source of protein that can transform a pot of cooked noodles into a quick and easy casserole. Tuna also can pitch-hit for crab meat in a patty and add substance to a bed of greens.

Cereal

There's nothing like an all-day-breakfast fare, especially when it comes to cereal. Whether it is alt-grain, loaded with dried fruits and nuts, riff on a cookie, frosted with sugar, flavored with chocolate or cinnamon or "burst" with yogurt, it is unfussy and satisfying. Cereal can go well beyond a bowl with milk, and be used as a base for cookies, crunchy pie crusts and cheese crisps. Just think outside the box.

Chips

Crunchy munchies of any kind is the definition of comfort for some of us. There is something about the fried snack that eases the mind. In fact, there is even scientific research to prove it. The Journal of Neuroscience published a study 10 years ago that found that "elevated levels of salt in the body lowered stress hormones." In addition to simply munching on chips, reduce your calorie guilt by building a salad with them. Nacho salad, anyone?

Canned fruits

Fresh fruit lasts only so long on your kitchen counter, and is often limited to a certain season. Canned pineapple, for instance, brings a taste of the tropics any time of year, and can be used in both sweet and savory dishes. Look for one that has no added sugar or is canned



Darrell Sapp/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette-TNS

Spicy corn muffins

in fruit juice instead of sugar syrup.

QUICK TOMATO CURRY

This curry is on the sweet side, so you may want to halve the amount of honey. If you have boneless, skinless chicken breast in the refrigerator or freezer, add thin slices to the sauce and cook for 8 to 10 minutes. Or, for a vegetarian dish, add your favorite vegetable.

- 3 tablespoons ghee, coconut oil or extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large red onion, cut into ½-inch wedges
- 1 (2-inch) piece ginger, peeled, finely grated
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- Kosher salt, divided
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon garam masala
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 (28-ounce) can whole peeled tomatoes

- 1 (15-ounce) can coconut milk
- 12 ounces chicken, cut into strips
- ½ cup whole-milk Greek yogurt
- ½ cup coarsely chopped cilantro

Heat ghee or oil in a large wide saucepan over medium-high. Add onion and cook, turning occasionally, until undersides are golden brown, about 2 minutes.

Add ginger and garlic and cook, stirring, until softened, about 2 minutes. Season with salt.

Add garam masala, bay leaf and red pepper, and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in honey and cook until slightly caramelized, about 1 minute.

Add tomatoes along with juices and bring to a boil, smashing down on tomatoes with a wooden spoon until pieces are no bigger than 1 inch. Reduce heat to medium and cook, stirring often and scraping up browned bits from bottom of pot, until sauce thickens, 8 to 10 minutes.

Add coconut milk and cook, stirring occasionally until sauce thickens, 20 to 25 minutes. Taste and season with salt, if needed.

Add chicken strips and reduce heat to low. Cook, partially covered, until chicken is cooked through, 8 to 10 minutes. Season with salt.

In a small bowl, combine yogurt, a big pinch of salt and 2 tablespoons of water.

Drizzle yogurt sauce over stew. Top with cilantro before serving.

Serves 6.
— Bonappetit.com

JALAPENO CANNED CORN MUFFINS

If you don't have cornmeal, use polenta or semolina in

its place or just plain old all-purpose flour for these dinner muffins. And if you have a can of cream-style corn instead of canned corn kernels, that is OK, too.

- 1 cup cornmeal
- 1 (8.5-ounce) can whole kernel corn
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped finely
- 3 eggs, slightly beaten
- 1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese, divided
- ½ cup milk
- 1/3 cup oil
- 12 pickled jalapeno rings, optional

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Grease a 12-cup muffin pan.

In a large bowl, combine cornmeal, corn kernels, baking powder, salt and jalapeno pepper with a spatula.

Add eggs, ¾ cup cheddar cheese, milk and oil. Combine all the ingredients together well.

Divide corn mixture among the muffin cups. Top each muffin with the remaining ¼ cup cheese. Place a pickled jalapeno on top of each muffin, if using.

Bake for about 20 to 25 minutes, until a tester inserted into the center of the muffins comes out clean.

Makes 12 muffins.
— Arthi Subramaniam

LEMONY LENTIL SOUP

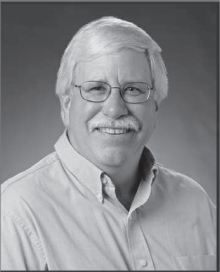
This soup can be made with small dry orange or yellow lentils — they both cook quickly. Cloves are optional but they add a wonderful flavor. Remove them before serving. If you don't have stock or enough of it, use plain water.

- 2 cups orange lentils
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 large onion, diced
- 2 large garlic cloves, chopped
- 3 black cloves, optional
- 1 large carrot, diced
- 1 teaspoon red chili flakes
- Salt, to taste
- 8 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- Juice of 2 lemons
- Fried onions, optional

Wash the lentils and drain them well in a colander.

In a large pot, add oil and butter over medium heat.

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Baker City Herald

THE OBSERVER