



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Black Eyed Pea Tuna Salad

You don't need a stove or oven to make nutritious food. There are plenty of options using just pantry staples. Many meals can be made using a combination of items typically kept in the back of one's pantry. The day before you go grocery shopping and think you don't have anything good to make, just check your cupboard and you'll find a plethora of options.

Canned beans and tuna are items that may feel like rainy day items, but they're easy to mix into dishes to increase your consumption of protein, fiber, and some Omega-3's. Bonus: they have a long shelf life so they're great for camping, dorm rooms, or even on the go for TDY. They can also help you add variety into your regular meals by switching up the type of beans or protein.

Challenge yourself this week to make a nutritious meal without using the microwave, oven, or stove. If you're using canned or boxed items, watch out for sodium. This meal is a great base or starter recipe that can be made using items already in your pantry or refrigerator. It can be used as a topper for your salad (no salad dressing needed) or make it into a wrap. It has a good variety of fresh vegetables so it's nutritionally dense. The versatility of this meal makes it easy for meal preparation for the week. Make a large batch and serve it in a variety of ways.

**Ingredients: 4 servings**

- 2 cans (14 or 15 oz.) low-sodium black eyed peas, drained and rinsed
- 2 cans (5oz.) of tuna, drained
- 1 medium green pepper, cored and diced
- 1 medium red bell pepper, peeled, seeded and diced
- 1 medium English cucumber, diced
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- ¼ cup red onion, chopped
- ⅓ cup celery, thinly sliced
- ½ cup shredded, sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 avocado, peeled, seeded and diced
- 1-2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp. plus 1 tsp. chopped fresh cilantro
- ¾ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- 2 tsp. sugar (optional)
- 2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 20-24 oz. leafy field green mix

Directions:

1. In a large bowl combine all vegetables (except the avocado), cheese, and minced garlic. Mix gently. Once well mixed, fold in the avocado, cilantro and tuna.
2. In a small mixing bowl, add the oil and vinegar along with the spices and sugar (if using) and whisk well. Drizzle the dressing over the black eyed pea mixture and toss gently to saturate the dressing throughout.
3. Place ¼ leafy green mixture on a plate and top with one cup of the black eyed pea salad. If desired, sprinkle apple cider vinegar on the greens. Repeat for the three remaining servings.

Tips:

- Mix any remaining blacked eyed peas in a salad or salsa. Cover and refrigerate and consider serving as a snack with a few tortilla chips.
- Although the salad can be served immediately, it's best to cover and refrigerate for at least two hours or overnight as this enhances the flavor.
- If holding overnight, do not add the avocado or tuna. Instead, cut and dice the avocado and add with the drained tuna just before serving.
- Omit the tuna according to your own taste preferences.

DISCLAIMER:

THIS RECIPE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT BY DOD OF ANY INDIVIDUAL VENDOR. ANY PRODUCT OF SIMILAR SPECIFICATION MAY BE USED TO MAKE THIS HEALTHY CHOICE MEAL.