

# Thinking Outside the Box!



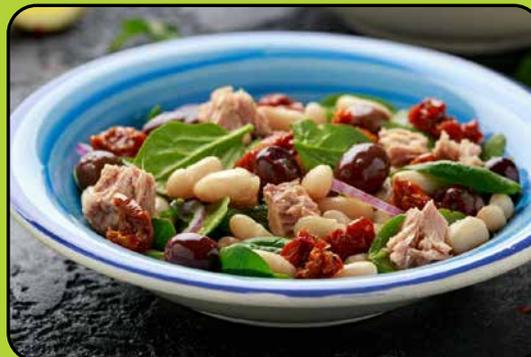
## Cannellini Bean and Tuna Mixed Green Salad

How many times have you heard that “it’s expensive to eat healthy?” Likely it’s more times than you can remember. It’s a saying most believe without looking deeper. Keeping a nutritionally balanced diet doesn’t need to break the bank. Being mindful to meal plan at least once a week can save both time and money. Part of meal planning is taking into the cost of the ingredients.

During next week’s meal planning session, pick one day and try using less expensive cuts of lean proteins, bring in canned and frozen vegetables, and even consider plant-based proteins such as beans. 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.

Starting your meal planning by focusing on ingredients can lead to some creative results. Oftentimes frozen and canned produce is processed at the height of their nutrient density. Using a mix of fresh, frozen, and canned gives a wide variety of the types of dishes you can make without sacrificing flavor or nutrients.

Soups and salads are easy to experiment with as you can taste the immediate results after each ingredient is added. This meal uses canned tuna and canned beans as the main source of protein. These ingredients can be kept in your pantry for easy access and are inexpensive proteins. A combination of fresh and frozen produce gives a nice combination of textures while keeping the price point down.



**Calories per serving: 494**

**Nutrients per Serving:**

**Protein: 34.01 g**

**Fat: 22.19 g**

**Carbs: 45.54 g**

**Fiber: 13.49 g**

### Ingredients: 4 Servings

- 13-14 oz. canned low-sodium cannellini beans
- 12 oz. canned tuna, in water
- 1 cup fresh shredded carrots
- 12 oz. frozen broccoli florets, thawed
- ¼ red or yellow onion, diced
- ½ cup fresh basil leaves
- 10 oz. fresh arugula
- 1 Granny Smith apple, cored, peeled and diced
- 7 oz. canned black olives, sliced (optional)
- ¼ cup sun flower seed kernels (preferably no added salt)
- 1 tbsp. fresh squeezed lemon juice
- Zest of half a lemon (optional)
- 1 tbsp. dried Italian seasoning
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 dashes black pepper
- 2 dashes table salt (optional)

### Directions:

1. Drain the canned beans and place the beans in a large mixing bowl.
2. Add the produce and toss to mix ingredients evenly. Drain the tuna and olives (if using), and add to the produce and bean mix. Add the sunflower seeds.
3. In a container that has a lid, add the oil, lemon juice and zest (if using), vinegar, Italian seasoning, minced garlic and salt (if using) and pepper. Cover and shake vigorously to mix the ingredients. Pour the dressing over the salad and gently toss to cover all ingredients.
4. Serve by placing ¼ of the ingredients in a bowl.

### Notes

- The flavors of this salad will blend nicely and the arugula will wilt a bit, which is desired by some, if allowed to rest in the refrigerator for a few hours, covered. This recipe can be made in advance, just reserve adding the apples until serving time and then toss them in.
- Perfect to plan for office lunches for a couple of days. Just add the apples, in the morning, mix and cover.
- The optional ingredients will increase the sodium content of this dish. Adding the olives will increase the calories.

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.

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