'CAN' YOU TELL?

NEWS COPY

Millions of people admit to being unable to tell the difference between canned and fresh food, a study has found.

Despite canned food sometimes taking a back seat to fresh, one in four admit they have regularly eaten canned food, mistakenly believing they were eating fresh items.

And almost half say there are meals where they would struggle to tell the difference between fresh and canned ingredients.

Soup is the canned food most likely to be mistaken for fresh, followed by tinned tomatoes, vegetables such as sweetcorn and fish like tuna and salmon.

Custard, lentils and pulses and even whole meals such as Chilli con Carne from a can also leave people believing they are eating fresh ingredients.

A spokesman for the Metal Packaging Manufacturers Association (MPMA), which commissioned the research, said: "Many people have a narrow perception of canned food, but it can be a great addition to any kitchen.

"Just because the ingredients come from a can, they can still be just as tasty and nutritious as their fresh counterparts.

"They are often better value too.

"In fact, in a taste test, where people were given two meals, one made from fresh ingredients and one made from canned food, as well as some struggling to tell the difference, many said they actually preferred the canned food version."

The study, of 2,000 adults, found the average adult has 16 cans of food in their cupboard and relies on tinned food for at least three meals a week.

One in four will also use canned items once a week for BREAKFAST.

But while 56 per cent say they tend to use canned ingredients for sides such as beans or sweetcorn, one in twenty admit they rely heavily on cans and rarely have a meal with all fresh ingredients.

Baked beans was named as the most popular canned food to use in everyday cooking, followed by tinned tomatoes, soup, fish such as tuna and salmon and other vegetables such as sweetcorn.

Tinned fruit, hot dogs, ravioli and even new potatoes are also popular choices.

The research also found one in ten believe canned food is no different to fresh food, with 48 per cent seeing it as a store cupboard essential.

And six in ten happily serve it up when they are preparing food for others with almost three in ten using tinned food at a dinner party.

Almost a third have used canned ingredients as part of a roast dinner and one in four have even turned to tins during a barbecue.

Others have used it as part of a Christmas dinner (16%) and while making a meal for a date (10%).

But while a quarter of people believe canned food helps to reduce food waste, almost half were unaware that cans are 100 per cent recyclable.

One in twenty were also unaware canned fruit and vegetables can still count towards your five-a-day while one in ten mistakenly believe canned food loses all of its nutrition.

A spokesman for the Metal Packaging Manufacturers Association (MPMA) added: "Canned food has everything – great taste, as our taste test proved and, as the food is cooked in the can without use of preservatives, nutrition is locked-in.

Cans have a long shelf life adding to their convenience and are one of the most environmentally friendly forms of packaging you will find in any kitchen: they are 100 per cent recyclable, have among the highest recycling rates, and can be recycled over and over again.

Most common canned foods people mistake for fresh:
1. Soup
2. Tomatoes
3. Vegetables such as sweetcorn, green beans
4. Fish such as tuna or salmon
5. Beans
6. Custard
7. Fruit such as peaches, strawberries etc
8. Curry
9. Hot dogs
10. Lentils/pulses
11. Chilli con Carne
12. Potatoes/new potatoes
13. Meat such as corned beef or ham
14. Meatballs
15. Macaroni cheese
16. Spaghetti bolognaise
17. Ravioli
18. Chicken in a sauce, such as white wine sauce
19. Pie
20. Irish Stew

Most common canned foods to use when cooking a meal:
1. Baked beans
2. Tinned tomatoes
3. Soup
4. Canned fish such as tuna or salmon
5. Tinned vegetables such as sweetcorn, green beans etc
6. Beans other than baked beans such as kidney/butter etc
7. Tinned fruit such as peaches, strawberries etc
8. Custard
9. Meat such as corned beef or ham
10. Hot dogs
11. Lentils/pulses
12. Ravioli
13. Potatoes/new potatoes
14. Meatballs
15. Curry
16. Macaroni cheese
17. Pie
18. Spaghetti bolognaise
19. Chilli con Carne
20. Chicken in a sauce, such as white wine sauce

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