



The Be Fit Minute

By Emily Gelsomin, RD, LDN



FROZEN VEGETABLES FOR FAST MEALS

Vegetables offer nutrients, fiber, and are fairly low calories. Their downside is they tend to require a trip to the grocery store. Below are three green varieties you can store in your freezer. So use the frozen type to add bulk to meals in a pinch.

FROZEN SPINACH

Fresh spinach is expensive and wilts quickly. Frozen spinach is cheaper, easy to store, and ensures you'll always have vegetables on hand.



Spinach Omelet

Make an omelet as you normally would and then top with thawed spinach before folding over. OR mix directly into a few cracked eggs; whisk to combine and then cook in omelet form or as scrambled eggs.



Spinach Tuna Burgers

Mix a can of tuna with some bread crumbs, an egg, a little mayo, minced onion, lemon juice, Dijon mustard, a fistful of thawed frozen spinach, plus salt and pepper. If the mixture seems dry, add a little more mayo or another egg. If the mixture seems too moist, add more bread crumbs. (It should hold together when formed into patties.) In a sauté pan with olive oil, cook the burgers on medium heat until the bottoms are golden. Flip and cook the remaining side until golden and heated through.

Need a recipe? Try this [spinach pesto for pasta](#).

FROZEN PEAS

Technically, peas are a starchy vegetable. But they are still a good source of fiber and an easy way to sneak a few more nutrients into dinner.



Pasta with Pea Carbonara

Cook pasta according to package directions. In a small bowl, whisk a few eggs and some parmesan cheese together. When the pasta is nearly done cooking, add in the frozen peas. Once the pasta is cooked and the peas are heated, drain them together and add back to the pan. Toss with the egg mixture and cook on low heat for about a minute, or until eggs thicken. Season with salt and pepper.



Pea Risotto

In a sauce pan, add 1 cup dry arborio rice and enough olive oil to coat the rice. Cook for a minute or two and then stir in ½ to 1 cup warmed chicken broth. Once the liquid is gone, add another ½ to 1 cup and repeat the process until the rice is fully cooked. Mix in parmesan cheese and thawed peas. Season with salt and pepper.

Need a recipe? Try this [pea sandwich spread](#).

FROZEN BROCCOLI

This vegetable workhorse tends to fall apart easier than the others. This can be used to its advantage with recipes that benefit from its softened state.



Broccoli Cheese Quesadilla

In a pan with a little olive oil, place a tortilla. Top with cheese, salsa, thawed broccoli, and whatever other leftovers you might need to use up. (Be careful not to overload or you'll have problems flipping it.) Top with another tortilla. Cook until the bottom layer is golden brown, flip, and cook until other side is golden brown.



Twice-Baked Broccoli Potato

Bake large baking potatoes until tender when pierced with a knife. Cut potatoes in half, scoop out the flesh and mix with thawed broccoli, cheese, diced jalapeño, and a little milk to moisten. Fill each half with the potato mixture, top with more cheese. Bake at 400 degrees until the cheese is melted. Top with a dollop of plain Greek yogurt.

Need a recipe? Try this [broccoli cheese soup](#).

THE STAPLES TO IMPROVISE

GRAINS/STARCHES

- Rice
- Pasta
- Baking potatoes (e.g. Idaho)
- Tortillas
- Bread crumbs

FRIDGE

- Cheese, e.g. cheddar, parmesan
- Salsa
- Low fat milk
- Greek yogurt
- Eggs
- Dijon Mustard
- Mayo

PANTRY

- Canned tuna
- Chicken broth
- Lemon
- Onion
- Jalapeños
- Olive oil
- Salt and pepper