

# 5 Easy to Prepare Foods in Each Food Group

If you are new to cooking, you might be wondering where to start. This resource lays out specific, easy-to-prepare foods. It also includes cooking and preparation methods for each of the 5 food groups. When beginning to make more meals at home, it is a good idea to start with simple recipes and easily prepared foods. Then, before you know it, you'll be ready for more advanced ones.

## Dairy



Easy to prepare foods in the [dairy](#) food group:

- Milk
- Yogurt
- Cheeses
- Cottage cheese
- Ricotta cheese

**Cooking/Preparation Methods:** For the most part, dairy foods are going to be served as is. They generally do not require a lot of preparation once brought home from the store. They also pair well with many other food groups like fruit and grains.

Easy to prepare foods in the [protein](#) food group:

- Boiled egg
- Chicken
- Beans
- Tuna
- Ground beef

**Cooking/Preparation Methods:** While many proteins require cooking, some canned proteins can be served with little to no preparation. Examples of no-cook proteins include canned beans, tuna, salmon, and chicken. Canned beans should be (unless otherwise stated in a recipe) drained and rinsed.

## Protein



## Grains



Easy to prepare foods in the **grain** food group:

- Whole wheat pasta
- Couscous
- Whole wheat bread
- Brown rice
- Oatmeal

**Cooking/Preparation Methods:** Most grains can be simply prepared by boiling them. The type of grain will determine the time it will take to cook. The instructions provided on a grain's box or package can help any level cook end up with a perfectly cooked grain.

Easy to prepare foods in the **vegetable** food group:

- Broccoli
- Leafy greens
- Green beans
- Peas
- Carrots

**Cooking/Preparation Methods:** First, all fresh veggies need to be rinsed before they are prepared or eaten. Vegetables make a great side or base to no-cook dishes. They are also a great way to include vitamins and minerals in your family's meals. Veggies are equally delicious when cooked! Vegetables can be boiled, steamed, sautéed, grilled, slow cooked, roasted, or microwaved.

## Vegetables



## Fruits



Easy to prepare foods in the **fruit** food group:

- Apples
- Bananas
- Berries
- Oranges
- Melon

**Cooking/Preparation Methods:** All fresh fruits need to be rinsed before eating! Similar to dairy, fruit often comes ready to eat. You may get fruit as fresh, canned, or frozen. Enjoy fruit in smoothies, over pancakes, on a salad, or as is. Fruit is a great way to include lots of vitamins and antioxidants in your family's diet. Many fruits can be pureed or mashed for homemade jams or spreads. Homemade Applesauce is another great way to make use of fresh apples!