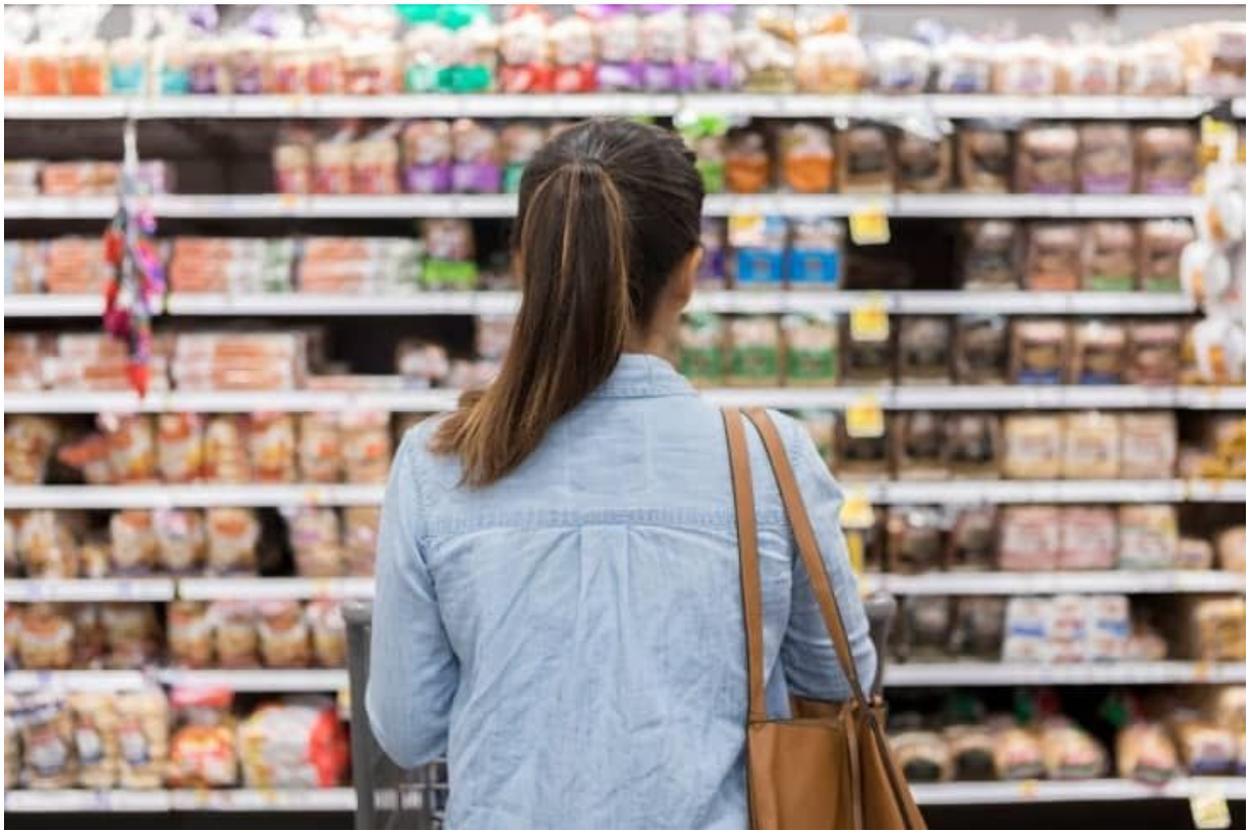




## 9 Store-Bought Dinner Shortcuts These Nutritionists Love

byREBECCA JASPAN | published FEB 23, 2021



Credit: SDI Productions/Getty Images

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Let's face it: We are all experiencing at least some level of pandemic cooking fatigue right now. Whatever the circumstances may be, feeding ourselves and our families can be downright exhausting. I'm a registered dietitian who plans meals for a living and I'm feeling it, too! That's where store-bought shortcuts from the grocery store come into play.

For some help in this department, I reached out to my colleagues to learn about some of their favorite dinner shortcuts from the grocery store. As nutritionists, our number-one goal is to make healthy eating both easy and convenient, so store-bought dinner shortcuts are an oft-recommended resource.

Here are a few suggestions if you're looking to shave time and effort off of your nightly cooking routine.



Credit: Sarah Crowley

## 1. Frozen Pizza Crust

A quick and nutritious dinner is just minutes away if there's a frozen pizza crust in the freezer. Engine 2 Sprouted Grain pizza crusts are a go-to for Laura Cipullo: "Just add mozzarella, tomato sauce, and fresh basil and it's ready in almost five minutes."

**More info:** Plant Strong Foods



## 2. Canned Beans

Canned beans are among Kim Rose's top-five essential pantry ingredients. "Not only are canned beans a great source of plant-based protein, but they're also an easy addition to most any dinner. Plus there are many kinds of beans to choose from to mix things up." She particularly loves to use them in chilis, bean burgers, and falafel patties.



Credit: Joe Lingeman

### **3. Jarred Sauces**

"I love to take shortcuts with pre-made sauces including tomato sauces, simmer sauces, and more. They add instant flavor to any meal for a fraction of the effort. Whenever possible, I recommend opting for brands with less added sugar and sodium," says Molly Cleary.



Credit: Photo: Tara Donne; Food Styling: Cyd McDowell

## **4. Spiralized Vegetables**

Many grocery stores carry “spiralized” zucchini, squash, carrots, beets, and other veggies. “These save both time and mess when you’re in a pinch. Quickly heat the veggie spirals and use them as a base for sauce or meatballs. You can even bulk them up with traditional noodles,” says Paige Mandel.



Credit: Joe Lingeman

## 5. Pre-Minced Garlic and Ginger

“Chopping and measuring is often one of the most tedious (and time-consuming) parts of cooking,” says Molly Cleary. “Opt for pre-minced garlic or ginger pastes” to speed up the prep process.

**Buy:** Dorot Crushed Garlic, Frozen, \$2.93 for 2.8 ounces



Credit: Courtesy of Annie's Homegrown

## 6. Boxed Mac and Cheese

Laura Cipullo swears by Annie's Shells & White Cheddar Macaroni & Cheese. "We add a can of tuna, peas, or broccoli to get in extra protein and veggies." It's a nostalgic favorite with a nutritious twist.

**Buy:** Annie's Shells & White Cheddar Macaroni & Cheese, \$1.59 for 6 ounces



Credit: Joe Lingeman; Food Styling: Cyd McDowell

## 7. Rotisserie Chicken

"A rotisserie chicken makes quick meals a breeze. Use some on top of salads; stuff inside quesadillas, enchiladas, or nachos; stir some along with your favorite sauce to make a quick chicken salad; or pair with your veggies and a starch for a balanced plate. When it's all gone, simmer the leftover carcass with veggies, spices, and water to make a delicious chicken stock," says Amanda Blechman.



Credit: Faith Durand

## **8. Frozen Grains**

“When cooked from scratch, some grains can take half an hour to cook (sometimes more). Most grocery stores sell pouches of pre-cooked options,” says Molly Cleary.



Credit: Joe Lingeman

## 9. Frozen Vegetables

“Frozen veggies save me on days when I have limited items in my fridge,” says Amanda Blechman. “They are harvested and frozen at their peak ripeness, so the nutrition quality matches that of fresh. I let them defrost a bit before seasoning and popping into the oven, but you can also just roast them frozen.”

