

Can Cats Eat Tuna?



Article checked by a vet

Is tuna bad for cats and can you feed cats tuna regularly?

Can cats eat canned or tinned tuna?

Yes, cats can eat tuna in small amounts, but preparation matters. Tinned or canned fish must only be given to a cat if it is prepared in a way which will help prevent upsetting the cat's stomach, so be wary of the labels when buying tuna. Canned and tinned tuna is often packaged in brine, oil or spring water. There can be high sodium levels in the brine or oil, which can cause stomach upset. Ultimately, cats have very different nutritional

requirements to humans, so it is not a good idea to give your cat lots of human food. We suggest sticking to formulated dry or wet cat food, which provides a complete and well-balanced diet which has been formulated to keep your cat healthy and strong.

Highlights

- Cats can eat canned tuna, though only in small amounts and only when it is prepared safely.
- Tuna in brine or oil is unsafe, and only tuna packaged in spring water is edible for cats.
- Too much tuna can cause a build-up of mercury in cats, which can become toxic in large quantities. Treats like tuna should make up no more than 10% of a cat’s daily calories and only ever be fed as an occasional treat.
- Salmon, white fish, cod, trout, and mackerel all contain healthy nutrients and contain less mercury.

Do cats like tuna?

Tuna has a strong aroma and flavour which attracts cats. Cats can be adept at getting their own way when they want something. The strong smell of canned tuna can be deliciously alluring, so make sure your tuna is secure from prying paws.

Looking for a way to diversify your cat's diet? Introducing canned tuna into their diet as an occasional treat is a great way to do this, however, it is best to start with small amounts of tuna to test if it agrees with your cat's stomach.

Make sure to double-check what type of canned tuna you are treating your cat to by always reading the label, if available, low salt options should be considered and in general, processed seed oils and brine are not good for your cat. Tuna canned with spring water with no added seasonings or additives is the safest option and all others should be avoided.

Feeding canned tuna in brine to my cat

Can cats eat tuna in brine? No, tuna in brine contains high levels of sodium which can be toxic for cats and could cause electrolyte imbalance in your cat's body and dehydration. It is best to avoid feeding your cat tuna in brine.

Feeding canned tuna in sunflower oil to my cat

Can cats eat tuna in sunflower oil? No, it is best to avoid feeding your cat tuna which has been canned in sunflower oil. Sunflower oil can cause gastrointestinal issues such as stomach upset, vomiting and diarrhoea in your pet.

Feeding canned tuna in olive oil to my cat

Can cats eat tuna in olive oil? Although olive oil is not toxic to cats, the fat content could cause stomach upset (diarrhoea and vomiting). We advise avoiding tuna in olive oil too.

Feeding canned tuna in spring water to my cat

Can cats eat tuna in spring water? Yes! This is the safest canned tuna to feed your feline and the only one we recommend using. Remember to check there are also no added seasonings or additives.

Feeding canned tuna mayonnaise to my cat

Can cats eat tuna mayonnaise? No, you should avoid feeding your cat canned tuna mayonnaise. Other ingredients and additives such as salt, pepper or onion powder could be included and can be very harmful to cats. Mayonnaise itself is not toxic to cats however they are lactose intolerant, so it can cause, abdominal discomfort, diarrhoea and vomiting.

Feeding canned tuna with vegetables to my cat

Can cats eat tuna with vegetables? No, we do not recommend feeding your cat canned tuna with vegetables as it may contain ingredients and additives such as salt, pepper or onion powder and these can be very harmful to cats.

Salmon

Canned tuna often comes brined with additional ingredients, oils or seasonings which can be harmful to cats, fresh or canned tuna in springwater are the best options for you if you want to treat your cat!

It is important to note that tuna also contains very high levels of mercury which can be toxic if it is ingested in large quantities, leading to sickness in cats. Albacore tuna has, on average, 3 times as much mercury as other species of tuna and this type of fish should be avoided at all costs, so always check the labels on canned and fresh tuna before feeding it to your cat. Remember that any tuna must only be given in small amounts as an occasional treat.

Salmon is packed with omega-3 fatty acids which promote heart health and brain function. Omega-3 fatty acids also work to protect the immune system and can help improve coat

and skin health. Salmon also contains lots of potassium which helps regulate body functions.

Cod

Cod contains less fat than other types of fish making it a healthy source of protein. It also contains high levels of omega-3 fatty acids and vitamins such as vitamin B12 which supports the immune system.

Trout

Trout is also a good source of omega-3 fatty acids for cats, fatty acids help promote a healthy immune system and can improve coat and skin health.

White fish

Whitefish generally contains less fat than other types of fish making it an excellent source of lean protein for cats but they may not contain as much omega-3 as other types of fish such as salmon.

Mackerel

As well as being packed full of omega-3, mackerel is also a great source of selenium which can help improve skin and coat health, joint health and your cat's immune system.

Sardines

Sardines have the lowest levels of mercury found in any fish. They also contain the same high levels of fatty acids and protein, as well as taurine which supports overall bodily function.

Is canned tuna good for cats?

Tuna is high in protein, which is great for supporting muscle development and overall growth. It boasts a strong omega-3 content, which supports skin and coat health. It’s also low in carbs and provides extra moisture that can aid a cat’s kidney function. On top of that, its strong aroma can make it a beneficial choice for helping cats who have lost their appetite.

However, tuna is designed for human consumption, not for feline nutrition, so it should not replace a complete and balanced cat food.

How much tuna can cats eat?

Tuna should be given only occasionally to your cat as a treat, and should not be a regular part of their diet.

In general, treats should make up no more than 10% of a cat’s daily calories, and a small teaspoon-sized amount once a week is a sensible upper limit for an adult cat. Kittens under a year old should not be given tuna at all.

Cats can also eat prawns and shrimp as an occasional treat, though they must be plain and cooked.

Can you feed cats tuna

Ultimately, cooked fresh tuna is a great addition to your cat's regular diet of wet or dry food as an infrequent treat in small amounts! However, tinned tuna can be trickier, and you should only feed your cat tuna that has been tinned with spring water. Feeding your cat tuna in anything other than spring water should be avoided to make sure you do not cause any stomach upset or health issues.

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1. **Is canned tuna okay for cats?**

   Yes, occasionally, as long as it is packed in spring water with no added salt, oil or seasoning. Even then it should only be offered as a treat, not as a mainstay in a cat’s daily diet.

2. **Is tuna bad for cats?**

   It is important to remember that tuna is not nutritionally complete and should not be a staple in your cat's diet. It also contains high levels of mercury, which is toxic to cats

when consumed in large quantities. Additionally, it can cause diarrhoea, vomit, and digestive upset in some cats.

3. **What can I feed my cat if I don't have cat food?**

   If you’re in a temporary situation and need alternative foods for your cat, you can offer plain cooked chicken, turkey, or fish such as tuna or salmon. Ensure there is no added seasoning or oil and that the meat has no bones. This can tide a cat over for a meal or two but should not continue beyond this.

4. **How much tuna can I give my cat?**

   A small, teaspoon-sized amount of plain or springwater canned tuna once a week is a safe upper limit for most adult cats.

5. **What canned fish can cats eat?**

   Cats can eat canned tuna, salmon, or sardines, as long as they’re packed in spring water rather than in oil or brine, with no added salt. This should not replace a well-balanced and complete diet, though.

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