

vegetables that take a long time to cook or require a lot of prep work, such as diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, water-packed roasted peppers and corn kernels, buy them bottled or canned.

### ***Stir-Fries***

Rely on low-fat bottled sauces and dried rubs to flavor meat and vegetables in seconds.

Skip frozen vegetables, which tend to go mushy. Instead, purchase precut vegetables found in the produce section of your supermarket; fresh stir-fry kits are popping up all over the place, too.

Save time with already-peeled shrimp (skip frozen, which tend to be watery) and chicken breast slices that are already pounded nice and thin for quick cooking.

Serve with quick-cooking or instant rice.

### ***Baking Mixes***

They're almost foolproof these days and are amazing time-savers. Use baking mixes as is or add a "homemade twist" by adding a fresh ingredient such as chopped walnuts or dried cranberries.

You can also do a complete flavor makeover with just one ingredient: Try adding some fresh orange or lemon zest, or a dash of almond or vanilla extract.

Forget separating eggs. When a recipe calls for just whites, buy some pour-able liquid egg whites instead.

### ***Smoothies***

Use frozen fruit instead of fresh: There's minimal prep work, less cleanup and no need for ice. Plus, frozen fruit is often more nutritious than fresh fruit since nutrients are locked in soon after picking when the fruit's frozen. "You'll have the equivalent of a very healthy fruit soft-serve."