

HOW OUR MEALS HAVE A 12 MONTH SHELF LIFE

Of all the advantages of Fuel For Sport meals, the one that surprises our customers the most is the 12 month shelf life, literally, on a shelf! This blog is going to explain exactly how our ambient meals can last a year, why they do not need to be refrigerated, and what ‘ambient’ actually means.

When food is ambient, it can be stored at room temperature (even when it would usually require refrigeration) for a longer period of time than non-ambient foods due to it being made ‘shelf-stable’. It needs to be kept in the sealed packaging for that time. Fuel For Sport meals are ambient, and have a 12 month shelf life.

TO MAKE THE MEALS AMBIENT, THEY GO THROUGH A SAFE PROCESS CALLED ‘RETORT’.

The retort process was designed by and used by NASA for their astronauts – it still is! While the astronauts are in space, it is crucial that their health remains in top condition, **and** that they get the core nutrition they require otherwise their performance levels, health, and mission could be jeopardized.

Ideally, the astronauts would be eating fresh food to get their core nutrition (vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, protein, fats). However this is obviously not possible due to **weight restriction** on board the shuttles; only the Skylab (NASA’s first space station launched in 1973) had a refrigerator which was specifically meant for food. Additionally, **fresh food quickly goes off**, so for missions to the space stations, and in the future to Mars and beyond, fresh food cannot be used. Therefore, they developed and used **the retort process to help the astronauts reach their nutritional targets** while reaching for the stars.

Fuel For Sport meals also use the **retort technology**. It is a process which involves putting the meals in a pressurised steam oven, and using a slow and gentle heat to kill the microorganism and bacteria which are normally in food. Then sealing it in the sterile packaging. This **extends the shelf life** and means it can be **stored at room temperature**.

OUR EXPERT SUPPLIERS CAREFULLY MONITOR THE ENTIRE PROCESS TO ENSURE THAT THE NUTRIENTS, TASTE, AND TEXTURE ARE NOT AFFECTED BY THE HEAT.

In fact, the nutritional values of our ambient meals are better than the majority of normal ready meals! **With claims such as Low Saturates Fat, Low Fat, and Low Sugar, PLUS High Protein, and Source of Fibre, our meals are providing you with the core nutrition you need at any time of the year.** They also contain the Vitamins and Minerals that you need, yet struggle to get at certain times of the year, for example the **Mexican Tuna Pasta contains 54% of your required Vitamin D intake**. All of these are vital to your health and happiness, and by using the retort technology, we are ensuring these nutrients are available to you whenever you need them.

We understand that **life is busy, and so we use retort technology** so that you can eat a healthy nutritional meal at any point in the year, whether you’re in the midst of crazy Christmas shopping trips, back to school madness, or jam-packed summer holidays. **We provide you with core nutrition in the same way that NASA provides their astronauts,** because ordinary life can be just as full and exciting as that.

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