



## **Processing is not a modern invention; it's a set of tools humans have used for centuries to keep food safe, nutritious, and available.**

We sometimes hear: “Food processing was created by big companies to make money, not to keep people healthy.” While modern processing is used in large-scale production, humans have been processing food for millennia. We have dried meat and fruit to last through the winter, fermented milk into yoghurt, turned cabbage into sauerkraut, cooked grains to make them easier to digest, and smoked fish so it would keep during long journeys. These methods existed well before factories and global markets.

Modern industry certainly seeks efficiency and profit, but this doesn't make processing inherently bad. Large-scale processing can feed millions safely, reduce food waste, and make nutrient-rich foods more accessible and affordable. The key is to choose products where processing improves safety, nutrition, or both. With thousands of processed foods available, ranging from highly beneficial to less healthy, supporting those that balance convenience, health, and sustainability is one way to make processing work in our favour.

In addition to traditional methods, modern processing often involves the use of food additives, substances added to enhance safety, quality, and shelf life. These include preservatives to prevent spoilage, antioxidants to protect nutrients, and stabilizers to maintain texture. Like any tool, their impact depends on how they are used and in what quantities. Additives can play a helpful role in reducing food waste, maintaining nutritional quality, and ensuring food remains safe from contamination but they are also subject to strict regulation by most public health agencies and their proper dosage based on careful investigations and recommendation by the Codex Alimentarius a globally accepted industry-independent institution within FAO . In the European Union, for instance, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) regularly reviews the safety of all approved food additives. These evaluations consider the latest scientific evidence, and if new data raises concerns, measures are taken to protect consumers.

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