

Introduction to Food Storage

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This is to help those who wish to be prepared in their planning for food and water storage. We also will cover gardening, raising your own meat, foraging, preserving your own food, and using stored foods. Leaving out the “when” (we always answer “NOW”), we hope to cover “why”, “what”, “how” and “where”.

Why:

We all store food, even if it’s just another loaf of bread, to provide in case we lose access to our normal food supply. Today that might mean that our car is not running, or we don’t have time to stop by the store. Tomorrow that might mean there is no store! None of us wants to have to tell our family “there is no food tonight”, so we plan to provide “just in case”.

Personal – Loss of income due to lay-off or other loss of employment, injury or death

Natural – Forest fires, flood, drought, storms, earthquakes

Manmade – Civil unrest, world conflicts, government control

Most of us don’t want to be dependent upon the government for handouts (if they have them to give out). The price of being subject to governmental rules in order to receive food is one we do not want to pay. Having your own food supply means you can maintain your independence longer. A 72-hour easy to prepare and eat food supply gives you time to evaluate the situation and become mobile if necessary. Having a 30-day to one-year supply gives you time to get your own self-sufficient gardening/animal husbandry/hunting plans up to speed.

What:

There are many ideas on what to store, and many companies to provide whatever you determine to be needed in your long-term food storage plan. Most companies have a “year’s supply” of dehydrated foods as a package. You need to carefully evaluate the contents of these packages, as they may not fulfill the needs of your family.

I recommend three levels of food storage: (we will discuss these in detail in this chapter, this is just an overview)

1) A 72 hour “pick up and leave” kit that contains sufficient food/calories and water (or a way to purify water) for an emergency evacuation. Many choose MRE's or emergency ration food bars for these kits, as they require no preparation or heating in order to serve.

2) A two-week to one-month supply of ready-to-eat canned and dried foods. This two-week/one month period is critical for survival and you will want familiar, easy to prepare foods. Even better is food which you can eat without heating, as being non-observed may save your life. This food supply will be heavier, as the water is usually already in the food item (i.e. canned vegetables and fruits). Keep this food in movable crates or boxes, and remember to rotate! This will be the boxes of food you pick up if you have time and space to put them in your BOV if you are forced to evacuate your home. I also keep a 30 day supply of freeze dried meals as it is very light weight, but you must also provide water to rehydrate the meals.

3) One-year supplies start with the basic 4 concept, and go up to the higher priced, but very good, freeze dried food supplies. Most of us will settle in the middle, with #10 cans of dehydrated foods combined with “wet” canned foods (commercial or home canned) for the bulk of our storage foods. Wheat and other grains and beans can be bought cheaply in bulk and repacked for storage. Dehydrated foods are preferred over wet pack due to weight and storage space considerations. It is important to remember that dehydrated foods require water for reconstitution and cooking, so adequate water reserves or access to water is also required. A heat source for cooking these foods is also required, and some grains and beans require several hours of cooking time.

The Basic Four food storage concept is attributed to the Latter Day Saints members. This program listed below contains only 4 items: wheat, dried milk, honey and salt. Yes, theoretically you could survive but there are several problems with this program.

1) it has been proven that people will not eat, even to survive, food products that are unfamiliar to them.

2) this would provide a very monotonous diet, and boredom will affect an appetite, especially for a child.

3) Many people have food allergies or sensitivities that they may not be aware of until forced to eat large quantities of a particular food. As wheat and milk are two of the more common allergies, it is possible that one of your family could end up not being able to eat the bulk of your food storage. Also, whole wheat is hard to digest and asking the digestive system to digest a new food when it is already under stress might spell disaster!

The Modified 7 program is similar to the Basic 4, but with some additions and modifications to provide better nutrition and variety.

YOU MUST HAVE A GOOD GRAIN MILL TO EFFECTIVELY UTILIZE THE GRAINS IN ANY STORAGE PROGRAM THAT UTILIZES GRAINS AS A MAJOR PART OF THE DIET.

Be sure now that your mill will process corn, not all mills will and some stones will leave “grit” in the corn meal which can quickly grind down your teeth. Also be sure that your mill can be adapted to work without electricity (if you have an electric mill).

How:

We will go through how to determine your food and water requirements for different scenarios, and provide links to some "automated" programs that determine the basics for you. We'll also cover how to acquire your food in a timely fashion and provide you with references to some commercial sources for storage foods. Growing your own is certainly a big part of being prepared, and we will discuss gardening, animal raising, and preserving your own harvest. We'll also discuss how to forage for yourself if you find yourself in a "wilderness" survival situation.

Where:

In our discussion of storage foods and food preservation, we'll go over the best places to keep your supplies – a balance between accessibility, portability and best storage conditions. Some of us are even using boxes of food as furniture! You use what space you have in the most efficient manner. We will also discuss the importance of rotation and inventory so you don't end up with all tuna and peanut butter!