



# Top 10 Items You Need to Have Stored Up... Before a Crisis Hits



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# **Introduction**

We've all read the blaring headlines, heard the disturbing reports and watched the heart-wrenching video footage. Disasters all around the world have caused hundreds of thousands of deaths and left millions upon millions of people homeless.

In 2004, an earthquake in the Indian Ocean resulted in tsunamis that killed well over 200,000 people and left countless others homeless, with Indonesia being the hardest hit. Six years later, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake in Haiti and more than 50 aftershocks affected 3 million people, with 300,000 dying and 1 million left homeless. In 2011, the 9.0 magnitude Tohoku earthquake and resultant tsunami left 4.4 million people in Japan without power and 1.5 million without water.

Many people in the United States contributed to the Red Cross and other international agencies that provided aid to the injured and the displaced following those disasters and others, while many other Americans said prayers on their behalf. Some of us also told ourselves that these kinds of catastrophies don't happen here. But they do.

In fact, natural disasters are on the rise in America. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina killed more than 1,800 people, caused \$81 billion in property damage and left 3 million people without electricity. Tornadoes in the U.S. in 2011 ended the lives of hundreds and destroyed many homes, and California wildfires forced the evacuation of 1 million people in 2007. Other hurricanes which have wreaked havoc in the U.S. in recent years include Ivan in 2004, Ike in 2008 and Irene in 2011.

At any time, one or more of these types of crises could occur here in the U.S., including earthquakes, hurricanes, fires, famines, floods and environmental disasters, not to mention epidemics, terrorist attacks and riots. We can't control if or when these emergency situations will emerge, but there is one thing we can control -- our readiness to deal with them.

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## **Nutrition**

We should all be focused on maintaining a healthy diet, even in the best of times. But if a disaster strikes, nutrition will become even more important as we and our families try to cope with a challenging situation. That's why it's crucial to make sure that a vast majority of the foods and beverages you include in your emergency supply are of high nutritional value. This will be a time when good health will be of utmost importance as you try to navigate your family through the crisis.

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When crises strike, a vast majority of people find themselves scrambling to fulfill their most basic needs, as well as those of their families. But with electrical power disrupted and grocery store supplies depleted, it is often impossible to properly care for your family if you haven't prepared in the first place.

The old cliché -- "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail" -- has never proven more accurate than when people are suddenly faced with an emergency situation that they are not prepared to deal with. It is very likely that stores will quickly run out of important food items following an emergency, and even if they don't, it's possible that prices for staples will skyrocket.

And it's not enough just to have food stockpiled. It has to be the type of food that does not require refrigeration. You could own more gallons of milk than anyone in your weather-ravaged city, but if you don't have electrical power or the space to keep it refrigerated, you might as well pour it down the drain.

Your food supply must also include much-needed nutrition to keep you and your family healthy over a

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### **Packaging**

Because they do not allow air in, cans will keep your food edible much longer than boxes will. And those canned foods will contain more needed calories than the ones in boxes due to the latter needing to be mixed with water. Depending on the size of your family, single-serving sizes may be better than large cans because it might be impossible to keep foods fresh inside those open cans until the next time you use them. Periodically check on expiration dates. Ease of preparation should be a big consideration when you select your items.

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potentially long period of time. If you have 300 boxes of Twinkies and only two cans of vegetables on your emergency shelf, your children will think you're a genius for the first day and then spend the rest of their lives thinking you're out of your mind.

Your food items must be packaged properly to ensure a long shelf life. Hopefully whatever crisis causes you to delve into your emergency supply will last only a week or less. But what if the crisis goes on for several weeks or several months or even a year or more? Having foods with the capability of lasting for years will serve you well and give you peace of mind if grocery stores stay closed for an extended period of time.

The methods you use to store your food are crucial to their longevity. Temperature, light and exposure to air and moisture are all important factors in ensuring that your emergency food supply will not spoil or be devoured by insects or rodents.

Once you've gone through the list of the 10 items that will disappear most quickly from store shelves, you may feel overwhelmed at the prospect of obtaining all of them right away. In fact, that pressure may result in you abandoning the idea altogether. But don't worry about that. Start slowly with a basic foundation and build from there.

Your first collection could include just enough food and water to get you and your family through a 24-hour emergency. Next you could focus on increasing those quantities to help you through a three-day situation. Then build up to a week, a month, a year and even several years if you want to. Like other things in your life, if you turn the building of an emergency food supply into a habit, you'll reach your goal.

There is a chance that people reading this report will go the rest of their lives without needing an emergency food supply to help them survive a crisis. But do you want to take that chance? We hope and pray that you will not face a disaster, but it is more likely that readers of this report will indeed face an emergency situation at some point in their lives.

If one of those people is you, would you rather have what you and your family need to stay fed and healthy safely tucked away in storage and ready to use, or would you rather be begging on the streets or sent off to a FEMA center by the government? Let's not waste time discussing that rhetorical question. Instead, let's take a look at the top 10 items that are most likely to disappear first from store shelves in an emergency, examine why they are important for your survival, and focus on how you can package and store them so that they are ready should you need them.

## **1** **Water**

Let's take the most obvious one first. People can go without food for an extended period of time if they absolutely have to, but surviving without water is impossible, even in otherwise ideal conditions. Of all the items on our list, this is one you do not want to skimp on.

Situations that exist immediately following a disaster don't lend themselves to sitting around casually. It's very likely that you will need to exert significant energy immediately after a crisis presents itself, which greatly increases the likelihood of dehydration if you are without water.

H2O at room temperature will never taste better than when you've been negatively affected by an emergency situation. Whether you are experiencing the "inconvenience" of losing your home's running

water for a day due to a weather problem or whether you're facing the prospect of weeks without running water due to a disaster that has affected your town's water supply, you and your family will be extremely grateful to have bottles of water handy.

How much water will you need? Well, it's estimated that you can get by on one gallon per person per day. You'll want to drink one-half of that amount each day and use the other half for washing and for adding to food in the cooking process.

In addition to plain old water, you might also want to include brands of bottled water that include vitamins, such as Sobe and Vitamin Water, as well as sports drinks that provide very important electrolytes and carbohydrates, including Gatorade and Powerade. Protein drinks can help you get by for a short period of time when food is scarce.

## 2

## Dried Fruits and Vegetables

There is nothing like the taste of fresh fruits and vegetables, but during an emergency, you probably will not have the luxury of being able to take a bite out of a crisp, freshly plucked apple or enjoy a savory stalk of broccoli smothered in melted butter. But a surprisingly close second choice -- and one that is far more realistic during a crisis -- is the consumption of dried fruits and vegetables.

The process of drying out fruits, vegetables and other items involves removing the original water content through sun-drying or the use of dehydrators. Not only do these items taste good, but they also maintain a high percentage of their nutritional value. Even more important to someone who is dependent on an emergency food supply, they are far superior to fresh fruits and vegetables in terms of shelf life.

Dried fruits provide essential vitamins and dietary fiber that you and your family will need during a crisis, including vitamins A and K, calcium, potassium, iron and copper. Those fruits include apricots, raisins, dates, prunes, figs, peaches, apples, pears, plums, cranberries, blueberries, strawberries, mangoes and many more.

Among the vegetables that contain high nutritional content, including key vitamins and minerals, are broccoli, potatoes, tomatoes, collards, spinach, okra, squash, avocados, peppers, mushrooms, peas, carrots, corn, onions and cabbage. Others include a wide variety of beans such as soybeans, navy beans, lima beans, kidney beans and green beans.

# 3

## Grains and Cereals

For someone looking to survive an emergency, grains are one of the most important foods, with whole grains considered the most healthy. The combination of the nutrition they provide and their incredible shelf life makes them a very valuable commodity. What makes a grain "whole" is the cereal germ, endosperm and bran that it contains.

Some of the most popular whole grains are wheat and brown rice. Providing energy and proteins, whole grains also include oats, barley, maize, rye, millet, sorghum and buckwheat.

Whole grains are also valued by emergency food gatherers for their variety of uses, including in baking. Among the products made from whole grains are whole wheat flour, whole wheat bread, whole wheat pasta, whole wheat macaroni and whole wheat spaghetti. Non-whole grain products include white rice, white flour, white bread and hominy.

Cereal is actually made from grasses that have been cultivated for the edible components of their grain. Worldwide, cereal grains provide more food energy than any other type of crop. Cereals are a good source of vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, protein, fats and oils.

Featuring a relatively long shelf life, breakfast cereals can be served quickly and easily, and are especially enjoyed by kids. Breakfast cereals that provide nutrition are to be selected over those that are heavy on sugar.

### Storage

How you store your emergency food supply will be a critical factor in how long the food stays good. It could make all the difference in the world if the crisis you face goes on for any duration. Shelves and cardboard flats might be of much greater use to you than refrigerators because power may not be available. Store your food items at temperatures between 40 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit, as higher temperatures will shorten their shelf life. Keep your food supply out of the light as much as possible, as vitamins, proteins and fats are susceptible to light. Also, keep your food items dry, as moisture can cause foods to spoil. Finally, consider keeping some of your food items in a secondary location, just in case a disaster precludes you from reaching your primary source.

# 4

## Canned Meats and Fish

Our guess is that you prefer the taste of fresh meat and fish over canned products. But in the aftermath of a disaster, it's very likely that fresh meat and fish will not be available. Unless you are a vegetarian, you are going to want some meat and fish products, and acquiring those items out of a can is going to be a much better option than not having them at all.

Meats and fish provide much-needed protein that you might not receive enough of in the other foods you've included in your emergency supplies. This is food that is pre-cooked and processed before being sealed in airtight containers. It also contains carbohydrates and fats, plus some vitamins and minerals.

You might be surprised at how many different meats and fish are available in canned form. Among the canned meats you may want to stock up on are ham, chicken, turkey, pork, roast beef, roast beef hash, beef stew, corned beef, ground beef, sausage, spam, chili with meat chunks, liver pate and soy patties. Even bacon can be canned!

There is also plenty of canned fish that you will appreciate having on hand, including different types of tuna and salmon. Other options for canned fish include smoked trout, gefilte, whitefish, herring, mackerel, catfish, sardines, oysters, clams, caviar and snails.

All of these canned meats and fish can be heated quickly on a small stove, as can a wide variety of soups that contain meat or fish, which could also be included in this category.

# 5

## Pasta and Sauces

An event that is often held the evening prior to a grueling physical exercise such as a marathon or triathlon is a big pasta dinner. Runners, bikers, swimmers and others whose physical limits are about to be tested understand that loading up on carbohydrates provided by pasta will give them the stamina their bodies need to compete at a high level.

If you and your family find yourselves in survival mode for any length of time due to a natural disaster or some other emergency situation, you may feel like you're running a marathon. In addition to all of the vitamins, minerals and protein you will be receiving in other foods that you have stocked up on, you will also need carbohydrates. Pasta is a great source of carbs.



There are many reasons why pasta should be included in your emergency food supply, including the fact that it is relatively inexpensive, easy to store and cook, has a long shelf life, is filling and nutritious, and will provide you with much-needed energy. An extremely versatile food, pasta comes in a wide variety of forms. It can be served as the main dish in a meal, or as a side dish or part of a salad.

Tasty whether hot or cold, pasta comes in many different forms, including spaghetti, mostaccioli, lasagna, fettuccine, ziti, linguine, manicotti, rigatoni, rotini, vermicelli, bucatini and angel hair. Delicious stuffed pastas include tortellini, ravioli and pierogi.

Some say that sauces are what make the pasta. Filled with nutrients themselves, these sauces vary in color, texture and taste, and they add copious amounts of flavoring to pasta. Available in long-lasting cans, these sauces include tomato-based sauce, alfredo, marinara, bolognese, pesto, puttanesca, formaggi, tuscan herbs sauce, and mushrooms and garlic sauce.

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### Variety

The single most important factor in building an emergency supply stock is to fill the basic needs of you and your family. You'd be better off being bored with consuming the same healthy foods over and over again than you would with a wide variety of unhealthy choices. But you can build a tremendous amount of variety into your supply and still keep it very nutritious. Variety will keep you and your family members in a better state of mind. There is also the chance that after an emergency strikes, you may need to barter with neighbors who have something you need and vice versa. The greater the variety of your supply, the more likely you'll be able to trade for what you want.

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## Nuts and Seeds

One of the best things about nuts and seeds in the diet of someone who is trying to survive an emergency is the fact that they require no preparation whatsoever. Just pop them in your mouth and enjoy the great taste and appreciate the nutritional value and energy that they are providing during a very challenging time.

Another advantage to nuts and seeds is the wide variety that's offered. Nuts that can be enjoyed quickly and efficiently include walnuts, peanuts, almonds, pecans, cashews, pistachio nuts, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts and acorns. Some require a little time to remove them from the shell, but the taste makes the effort well worthwhile.

A delicious food with nuts at its source -- usually enjoyed after being spread on bread or crackers -- is

peanut butter. With high levels of monounsaturated fats, this is another good source of energy. It provides protein, vitamins B3 and E, magnesium, dietary fiber and more.

The majority of human calories come from seeds, which also provide most cooking oils. Popular seeds include sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, flax and sesame seeds. Many seeds include a wide variety of nutrients, including iron, zinc, manganese, magnesium, phosphorous, copper, potassium, zinc and more.

## 7

## Juices and Powdered Milk

So far, we've focused mainly on food and water, but you're also going to need plenty of other beverages to wash down that food and quench your thirst. As with fruit, vegetables, meats and fish, juices and milk are always better when fresh. But fresh foods may not be available in an emergency. So, canned fruit and vegetable juices and powdered milk are the best choices for beverages that you can include in your emergency food supply and which will last a long time.

Juices consist of the liquid that is contained in fruit or vegetables. They are a natural and healthy source of nutrients and can be a refreshing substitute when fresh fruits are not available. Among the choices for your supply are orange juice, which is rich in vitamin C, folic acid and potassium; prune juice, which has digestive health benefits; and cranberry juice, which is good for the bladder. Others include grape juice, tomato juice, apple juice, pineapple juice and vegetable juice.

Powdered milk, which is an excellent source of calcium and Vitamin D, is preferable to condensed milk due to its longer shelf life. It can be used for cereal, and is also good for drinking, baking and cooking. It is normally produced by spray drying nonfat skim milk, whole milk, buttermilk or whey. Because it has a low moisture content, powdered milk does not need refrigeration. Powdered milk is hardly a new concept. A patent for a dried milk procedure was granted more than 160 years ago.

## 8

## Oils and Seasonings

Some people prefer bland foods over taste-enhanced foods. Then there is the other 99 percent of the population that wonders if life would be worth living without cooking oils, herbs, spices and a variety of other seasonings. These are the types of items that turn a cook into a chef, and if you are going to be relying on your emergency food supply for any length of time, you will definitely want to consider including oils and flavorings.

Let's start with cooking oils. They are easy to store, can last a long time and provide plenty of calories and nutrients. If you only pack one, it should probably be vegetable oil, canola oil, corn oil or olive oil. If you have the room and your tastes are more exotic than most, you might want to include soy oil, peanut oil or sesame oil.

There are also a wide variety of herbs and spices that you may wish to include, and again you will be glad you did if you and your family have to live off of your emergency supply for an extended period of time. You can live without them, but they do provide nutrition and definitely enhance the taste of many different dishes.

Among the herbs and spices you'll probably want to store are salt and pepper and a variety of powders, including chili, garlic, onion, parsley, onion, oregano and cinnamon. You can also include sugar as a sweetener and lemon juice as a seasoner. Vinegar can also be used in cooking, and it's useful for cleaning purposes and to keep insects away as well.

## **Comfort Foods**

Quite frankly, you and your family can survive without items such as Pop Tarts and Oreos. And if you are only dipping into your emergency food supply for two or three days, there is probably no reason to open those specific "comfort foods." But if you are settling in for close to a week or more of dependency on foods you've set aside for just this situation, these kinds of foods can provide a psychological relief for adults while simultaneously keeping kids happy and less worried.

A comfort food supply will look different for every family. It really comes down to what each person likes. Lots of kids and adults enjoy snack foods (sounds a lot better than junk food, right?) such as potato chips, cookies, candy bars and hard candy. Of course, healthier snacks that also taste good include granola bars, trail mixes and whole wheat crackers, each of which provides important carbohydrates.

Some people would consider coffee and tea as a comfort food. Others will tell you that they are absolute necessities and that they can't function without them. Either way, it would be wise to include instant coffee and tea among your emergency supplies.

You also might want to throw in a couple of bottles of wine or a bottle of your favorite liqueur. Once the kids are asleep and you and your spouse are attempting to relax after another day of dealing with an emergency situation, you'll be glad you included these stress relievers. Of course, overdoing it will not only make you dehydrated -- and you don't want to go there in a crisis -- it could also make everything seem worse in the morning once reality sets back in and your head is throbbing.

# 10

## Non-Food Items

If a disaster occurred, imagine how proud you would feel about showing your family stack after stack of canned goods and other items crucial to their survival, informing them that they would have enough food and water to last a year. Then envision the incredulous looks on their faces when you confessed that you had forgotten to pack a can opener.

If you were facing the prospect of not being able to make a visit to a stocked grocery store for a few days, a few months or longer, there are plenty of items that would be important to have access to in addition to the ones that you and your family could eat and drink. There are quite a few non-food items on this list -- and plenty more you could come up with if you put your mind to it -- but don't think you have to have them all. Go through the list and choose the ones you think you'll be most likely to need and then focus on acquiring them. Over time, you can add more to your emergency supplies.

- Can opener
- Flashlights and batteries; candles and lighters
- Copies of legal documents
- Human and pet medications
- Toiletries and cleaning supplies
- Clothing and footwear
- Sleeping bags and backpacks
- Dishes and utensils
- Tools, including a shovel, hammer, axe, pocket knife and rope
- First-aid supplies
- Small camping stove
- Blankets
- Pencils, pens and paper
- Garbage bags
- Insect repellent and rodent poison
- Radio
- Multiple vitamins
- Canned pet food
- Firearms and ammunition

### What Not To Include

The rule of thumb here is to limit the number of items that you may not really need or be able to use. Frozen foods are great if you have a working freezer because they will last indefinitely. But major emergencies frequently knock out power grids, and without a working freezer, your frozen foods will quickly spoil. Some people are high on MRE's (meals ready to eat) because they're easy to store, last a number of years in the right environment and have fast preparation times. But they can be expensive and some believe the taste is not really superior to foods stored in cans. Finally, the amount of comfort foods you stock should be only a small percentage of your overall supply. This will be especially important if the crisis goes on for an extended period of time.