

CREATING A CUSTOM FOOD

STORAGE PLAN IN

8 STEPS



AN INTRODUCTION TO FOOD STORAGE: THE WHY

Preserving and prepping emergency food for long-term storage is not new. Some of the earliest humans preserved food by drying and curing. Historically, the purpose of drying and curing food was to survive harsh winters and to feed families when the wild game went missing or crops failed.

Modern motivations for preserving food remain very similar: to stay self-reliant despite disruptions in the supply of food. However, the disruptions that separate us from our food or stop the flow of new food into our grocery stores have changed dramatically—and their predictability has all but vanished.

Disruptions such as natural disasters, pandemics, supply-chain troubles, and war conflicts between countries all affect food security.

How these disasters and conflicts that disrupt our predictable access to food begin is primarily out of our control, and the solutions are beyond us. However, being prepared for empty grocery store shelves is 100% within our control.



IN OUR MODERN WORLD, OUR FOOD SECURITY WILL CONTINUALLY BE AT RISK. THAT IS WHY PREPARING EMERGENCY FOOD STORAGE IS SO VITAL.

There is good news. The methods by which we preserve our food have advanced significantly. For example, our refrigerators provide adequate short-term storage, and innovative companies have mastered more advanced food preservation techniques, like freeze-drying, to extend the shelf life of food upwards of 25 years.

These modern innovations have made food storage much more convenient for us. However, that does not mean you know where to begin your food storage journey.

That is where we come in.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Step One

Calculating your caloric needs 09

Step Two

Defining short-term food storage 10

Step Three

Improving water storage 11

Step Four

Investing in professional long-term food storage 14

Step Five

Assembling shelf-stable staples you'll cook with 16

Step Six

DIY long-term food storage 17

Step Seven

Storing your food safely and securely 18

Step Eight

Keeping track of quality and rotation 19

SUMMARY

THE HOW



STEP ONE

CALCULATE YOUR CALORIC NEEDS

To start, we will begin with one of the most critical tasks—calculating your caloric needs (and those of your family).

Deciding how much food to prep can be one of the mysteries of food storage. Nevertheless, by doing the math, you can figure out exactly how much food you and your family will require.



STEP TWO

DEFINING SHORT-TERM FOOD STORAGE

Chances are, you are already storing food to some degree; it's only natural. Short-term food storage helps cut down on grocery store visits and ensures there are always staple items in the pantry.

This section will discuss the importance of short-term food storage and how to match the simple short-term storage you've already been doing with your caloric needs.



STEP THREE

WATER STORAGE

You cannot have a food storage plan without considering water. As you know, water is essential for survival, but it is also a necessary item for cooking, bathing, and other household chores.

In step three, water is the focus. We'll provide you with tips for water storage and calculating how much water you should keep prepped.



STEP FOUR

PROFESSIONAL LONG-TERM FOOD STORAGE

This is where things will get exciting. This section will discuss the advantages of investing in professionally prepared and packaged food for long-term storage. We will also talk about some pitfalls and how to avoid them.

Think of this type of food as food insurance—it will put your mind at ease knowing you have a complete stockpile of nutritious food designed to last decades.

>> MAKE A STORAGE PLAN <<



STEP FIVE

ASSEMBLE SHELF STABLE STAPLES YOU'LL COOK WITH

In step five, we outline the importance of storing shelf-stable staples. These are items that you regularly enjoy cooking and eating.

We'll discuss some of the best food staples for long-term storage and share some guidance on keeping them fresh.



STEP SIX

DIY LONG-TERM FOOD STORAGE

In step four, we mentioned professionally made food for long-term storage. In step six, we will talk about DIY food for long-term storage. Specifically, we will discuss the process's pros and cons and how to do it at home.



STEP SEVEN

STORE YOUR FOOD SAFELY AND SECURELY

All your hard work thus far would be for nothing if you didn't have a plan for maintaining the food storage you've created. In step seven, we will guide you on properly storing your food for long-term storage to avoid premature spoiling and pests.



STEP EIGHT

KEEP TRACK OF QUALITY AND ROTATION

In step eight, we will continue discussing maintaining your food storage. It may sound complicated, but no worries—we will provide an easy-to-follow checklist to help you keep track of various maintenance tasks.

There you have it. Eight easy steps to create a custom food storage plan. By following these steps closely, you can develop a full-fledged prepper pantry. With your pantry, you will remain self-reliant and preserve food security during supply chain issues, natural disasters, and other emergencies.

So before we can dive into helping you devise a custom food storage plan with step one, we need to take a step back. First, we must decide how much effort you can invest into your new food storage project.

FOOD STORAGE INTERVENTION COMES ON A SPECTRUM

There are four levels of investment when it comes to food storage. We've designed each level to reflect the amount of time and effort you can invest in bulking up your food storage.

- Hands Off
- ● Light Touch
- ● ● Heavy Touch
- ● ● ● Do It Yourself

On one side of the spectrum, you have the “hands off” approach to food storage; on the other, you have the “do it yourself” or DIY approach. Each option has merit, including the ones in between hands-off and do-it-yourself. After all, any food storage is good food storage.

The goal for this section isn't to make you feel bad for wanting to be hands-off or to pressure you into doing everything yourself. Instead, the goal is to guide you in gauging what makes the most sense for your busy family and lifestyle—and ultimately, how we can help you accomplish your food storage goals.

Let's begin.

The Hands-Off Approach

There are situations where a hands-off approach involving a professional is ideal; for example, taking your car in for maintenance, or buying a cake for your daughter's wedding.

Some things are just better done by a professional. That can be the case for food storage as well.

With the hands-off approach...

10% of your food storage is short-term food storage that you prep yourself, like dried goods and canned items.

90% is professionally prepared and packaged food with a 25-year shelf life.

The hands-off level of intervention in food storage is great because it still allows you to partake in your food storage. You are in charge of customizing the short-term food storage you keep at home with the food you cook, bake, or buy for your family.

But when it comes to storing food for the long run, the hands-off approach gets the pros involved. This can be ideal for storing food for unexpected emergencies and disasters. Plus, this approach is easy to do and maintain.

>> MAKE A STORAGE PLAN <<

The Light Touch Approach

Some of us just cannot be told to sit still. We have to get involved with everything. Does that sound like you? If so, the light touch intervention to food storage is what you need.

With the light touch approach to food storage...

10%

of your food is short-term food storage, like dried goods and canned items.

30%

of your storage is shelf-stable staples that you regularly cook

60%

is professionally prepared and packaged food with a 25-year shelf life.

The light touch approach is ideal for those who understand the importance of professionally-made food items, but also enjoy cooking and prepping in their spare time. It can be accomplished with only minor modifications to your day-to-day lifestyle.

The Heavy Touch Approach

The heavy-touch approach to food storage is for the original preppers and homesteaders. It's for the people who have spent years fine-tuning their preps and building a stockpile of food that they've dried, canned, or cured themselves, and maybe even grown in their own garden.

With a heavy-touch approach to food storage...

10%

of your food is short-term storage, like canned items and dried goods.

60%

of your food storage is shelf-stable staple items that you cook.

30%

of your food is professionally prepared and packaged with a 25-year shelf life.

The heavy-touch approach is a full-time job. It is perfect for those who can dedicate themselves to food prepping. However, it does require routine rotations of your food stock to prevent food from aging too quickly and spoiling.

>> MAKE A STORAGE PLAN <<

The DIY Approach

The DIY approach to food storage is like the heavy-touch approach, only more involved—and with a twist. The DIY approach is perfect for preppers and homesteaders with years of experience who enjoy the hard work of growing, cooking, and preserving their own food.

However, instead of relying solely on an old root cellar or traditional food preservation tactics, they also prepare and package their food for long-term storage with modern DIY dehydration and freeze-drying methods.

With a DIY approach to food storage...

10%

of food is short-term storage, like canned items and dried goods.

70%

is a combination of shelf-stable staples and DIY packaged food for long-term storage.

20%

is professionally prepared and packaged food with a 25-year shelf life.

If you are a DIY type of person, more power to you. We do understand that this approach to food storage may only be possible for some; but that doesn't mean that individuals and families who cannot invest the time and effort in DIY food storage should miss out on storing food in case of emergency.

Everyone has the right to preserve their food security in tough times. Let us help you figure out how to do that.

STEP 1

CALCULATING YOUR CALORIC NEEDS

Calculating your caloric needs and those of your family members is not a secret science that only licensed dietary nutritionists can perform. Anyone can calculate approximate estimates for the number of calories they need to sustain themselves and their families.

The number of calories an individual requires is based on a few critical parameters.

First is the basal metabolic rate, or BMR. The BMR is the minimum amount of calories your body requires to keep its systems functioning, like the heart, lungs, and other unconscious or automatic processes.

Your unique BMR is based on age, weight, height, gender, and activity level. Typically, young children and teenagers require more calories to grow, whereas adults require fewer calories to sustain their status quo.

Similarly, your body type, specifically your height and weight, determine how quickly your body burns calories. On average, a male body is larger than a female body; therefore, men tend to require more calories than women.

Lastly, how active your lifestyle is affects how many calories your body will require. The more active a person is, the more calories they will need.

We've created a worksheet to help you determine how many calories you or a family member requires to stay nourished on a weekly and monthly basis. Calculating your caloric needs is most effective for getting an estimate. Typically, your unique BMR and calorie requirements are the bare minimum your body needs to sustain itself.

That's why we recommend making adjustments and consuming more if necessary, and if the scenario permits.



CALORIE CALCULATOR

Family Member Information		Calories Needed		
Name:	Sex:	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
Age:	Activity Level:			

Name:	Sex:	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
Age:	Activity Level:			

Name:	Sex:	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
Age:	Activity Level:			

Name:	Sex:	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
Age:	Activity Level:			

Name:	Sex:	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
Age:	Activity Level:			

Name:	Sex:	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
Age:	Activity Level:			

TO COMPUTE:

WEEKLY CALORIE = DAILY CALORIE x 7

MONTHLY CALORIE = WEEKLY CALORIE x 4.2

Total Calories Needed		
Daily	Weekly	Monthly

CALORIE CALCULATOR REFERENCE

FEMALE			
Activity Level (Recommended Daily Caloric Intake)			
Age	Sedentary Lifestyle (little or no exercise)	Slightly Active Lifestyle (exercise 1-3 days/week)	Active Lifestyle (exercise 6-7 days/week)
2-4 years	1,000	1,000-1,400	1,000-1,400
5-8 years	1,200	1,400-1,600	1,400-1,800
9-13 years	1,600	1,600-2,000	1,800-2,200
14-18 years	1,800	2,000	2,400
19-30 years	2,000	2,000-2,200	2,400
31-59 years	1,800	2,000	2,200
60+ years	1,600	1,800	2,000-2,200

MALE			
Activity Level (Recommended Daily Caloric Intake)			
Age	Sedentary Lifestyle (little or no exercise)	Slightly Active Lifestyle (exercise 1-3 days/week)	Active Lifestyle (exercise 6-7 days/week)
2-4 years	1,000	1,000-1,400	1,000-1,400
5-8 years	1,400	1,400-1,600	1,600-2,000
9-13 years	1,800	1,800-2,200	2,000-2,600
14-18 years	2,200	2,400-2,800	2,800-3,200
19-30 years	2,400	2,600-2,800	3,000
31-59 years	2,200	2,400-2,600	2,800-3,000
60+ years	2,000	2,200-2,400	2,400-2,800

STEP 2

SHORT-TERM FOOD STORAGE

We consider short-term foods to be items you eat with frequency and that have a relatively short shelf-life (at least three months). Typically they are stored in the pantry and do not require refrigeration.

Food items in the short-term category include:

- Canned tuna and other meats
- A variety of rice
- A selection of pasta
- Flour
- Ready-to-eat snacks, like granola bars

Your short-term food storage is your first line of defense against food insecurity. Specifically, the food in this category is ideal for infrequent and short-term lifestyle disruptions, such as localized weather emergencies.

It's important to regularly assess how much short-term storage you have in the home. The goal is to have enough short term stockpile to meet your caloric needs from step one for 3-4 weeks.

First, investigate your storage area and list the food items that fit the short-term food criteria. Write down their nutritional information, like serving size and caloric content.

Next, compare how those results stack up to the numbers you crunched in step one. In most cases, individuals do not consistently keep enough short-term food storage to meet the caloric requirements of their family.

If that's the case for you, that's okay. Simply carve out a section of your grocery budget to purchase the remaining items you will need to match your calorie estimates. You can update your short-term food storage in a single purchase, or slowly, over multiple trips to the store.

For example, each time you shop, buy a couple extra cans of beans and vegetables, pasta sauce, or whatever your stockpile could benefit from. Eventually, you'll hit your short-term food storage goals without breaking the bank.

To summarize, the goal of assessing your short-term food storage is to have enough food on hand that you and your family won't "miss a beat." You want to be able to continue eating like normal throughout short-term disruptions that would otherwise threaten your food security.

STEP 3

IMPROVING WATER STORAGE

We consider short-term foods to be items you eat with frequency and that have a relatively short shelf-life (at least three months). Typically they are stored in the pantry and do not require refrigeration.

Thus far, we have given a lot of attention to proper food storage. We've categorized your food storage into short, medium, and long-term foods and calculated an estimate for the number of calories you and your family would require in a survival situation.

Now it's time to do something similar with water. To note—we will not go too deep into water storage. After all, this ebook is primarily helping you create a custom food storage plan. However, we would be remiss not to address water storage in some capacity.

It's pretty simple to estimate how much water you might need. We recommend that you should be prepared to provide a minimum of one gallon of water per person daily. The one-gallon-per-person daily water ratio is meant to include the water they would need to stay hydrated, as well as carry out household chores and basic hygiene practices.

Like your short-term food storage, it's vital to always keep enough potable drinking water on hand so that you and your family can stay hydrated despite short-term disruptions or emergencies. We recommend having a minimum two-week water supply. To help you better define what that means, here's an example.

Suppose you are a family of four—a husband, wife, and two children—and you want to keep two weeks' worth of emergency water stocked at all times. In this case, your calculations will look like this:

$$1 \text{ gallon per person daily} \times 14 \text{ days} = 14 \text{ gallons.}$$

$$14 \text{ gallons of water per person daily} \times 4 \text{ people} = 56 \text{ gallons of water.}$$

To accomplish this, you can improve your water storage by stockpiling three different types of water:

- 1 Cases of individual water bottles
- 2 Refillable water jugs
- 3 Refillable water barrels

>> MAKE A STORAGE PLAN <<

Buying cases of water bottles is convenient in the short term. However, it can be costly and produce a lot of waste. Having a few cases of water bottles is a fine idea for a quick and easy water source, but crafting your long-term water storage plan around cases of individual water bottles is not recommended.

In addition to water bottles, we recommend building your water storage with reusable, stackable, and durable water jugs. These serve as a much more effective way to store water for prolonged periods. The most common size for water jugs we recommend is 5 gallons—any larger, and you may have trouble conveniently moving your jugs. For instance, a 5-gallon jug of water can weigh upwards of 45 pounds, depending on the weight of the jug.

For the best bulk and long-term water storage, we recommend using larger water barrels. There are many different types and sizes of water barrels and storage containers. It's vital to pick out the container that works best with your budget and space.

Typically, around 55 gallons is a good size. But remember, these will be nearly impossible to move when full, so position them strategically.

A Reliable Water Treatment Plan

Beginning to store emergency water is an excellent step toward self-reliance. However, adequate water storage is not only about stockpiling potable water; another important component of water storage is having a plan for filtering and disinfecting water.

If your municipal water source becomes unreliable at any point, or if you need to harvest water from some other natural source, such as a river or lake, it's critical to have a water treatment plan. Without an adequate water treatment plan, you and your family could fall to bacteria and viruses in contaminated water.

There are many ways to filter and treat water, but unscented chlorine bleach is one of the simplest and most reliable ways. Treating water with unscented chlorine bleach is a viable option for three reasons:

- 1 Bleach is a standard household product that you probably already have.
- 2 Bleach is affordable and available by the gallon.
- 3 Bleach is accessible almost anywhere.

>> MAKE A STORAGE PLAN <<

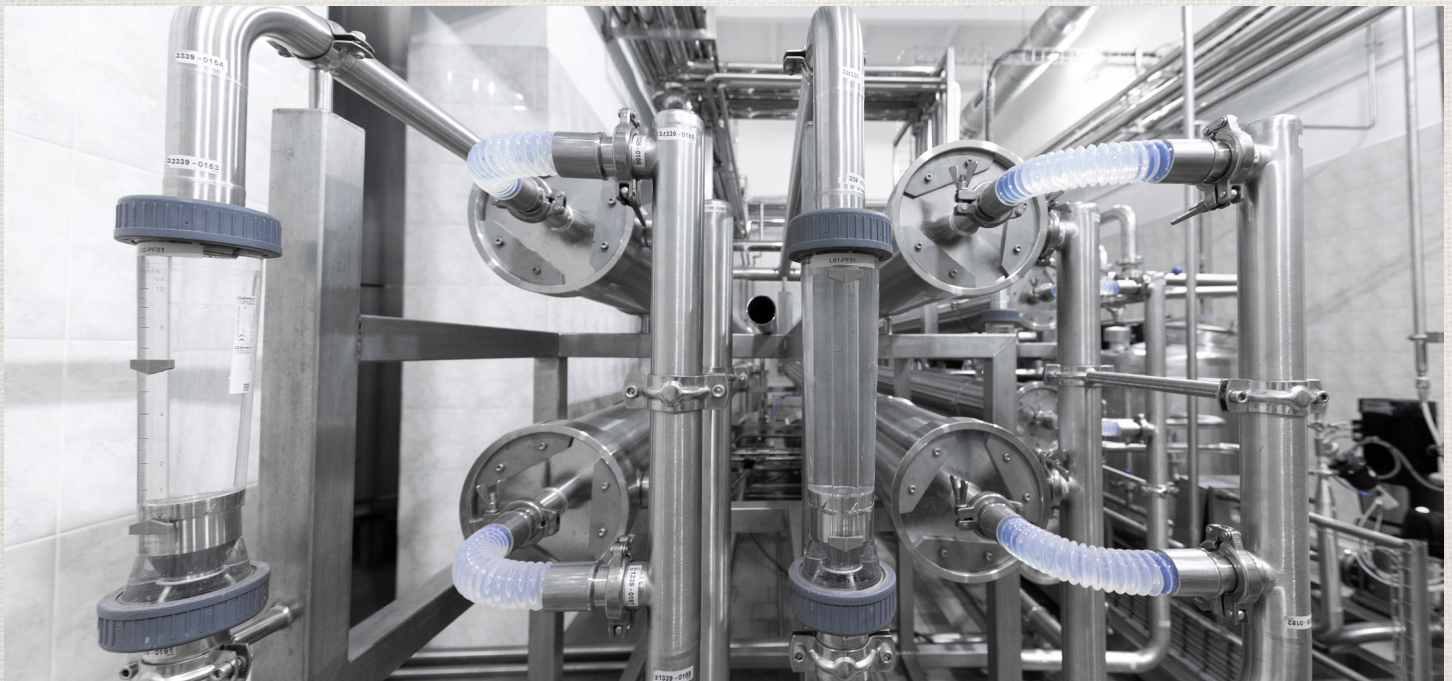
Here is a list of recommended ratios for treating water with unscented chlorine bleach.

If you are using 6% unscented chlorine bleach	If you are using 8.25% unscented chlorine bleach
2 drops of bleach per quart of water	2 drops of bleach per quart of water
8 drops of bleach per gallon of water	6 drops of bleach per gallon of water
16 drops of bleach per 2 gallons of water	12 drops of bleach per 2 gallons of water
teaspoon of bleach per 4 gallons of water	$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of bleach per 4 gallons of water
teaspoon of bleach for 8 gallons of water	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of bleach per 8 gallons of water

Besides having a plan and procedure in place for treating water with bleach, we also recommend having other methods of water filtration and treatment prepared ahead of time.

In many ways, creating a food storage plan is only one part of the process. As we just discussed, creating a water storage plan is another vital component of the process, along with stockpiling other supplies, family fire safety guidelines, and creating protocols for evacuation.

However, before we get ahead of ourselves, let's return to the task at hand and start a critical conversation about professionally prepared and packaged food designed for long-term storage.



STEP 4

INVESTING IN LONG-TERM FOOD STORAGE

While short term food items are items you typically always have in the pantry, that are ideal for throwing together easy meals and getting your family through unpredictable short-term threats to food security, such as hunkering down for a bad winter storm, they won't sustain you long term.

Next, we want to talk about that long-term food storage. You can source the food items in this category from professional companies that specialize in creating foods with extremely long and reliable shelf lives. These foods function like food insurance—you hope you never have to use them, but if you do, you'll be thankful you invested in insurance ahead of time.

Before we talk about what to look for regarding high-quality long-term food, we want to warn you of the pitfalls in this industry.

Unfortunately, there is a lot of low-quality long-term food on the market. They are full of questionable chemicals and additives and mostly serve as nonnutritious, empty-calorie fillers. Typically, the packaging used is designed for convenience over consistency and fails to keep the food fresh for the long term.

On the other hand, high-quality and professionally made food is intentionally designed for long-term storage. When we say long-term, we mean it—this food can stay fresh and retain its nutritional value for decades.

This is possible for two reasons:

- 1 High-quality food companies source nutrient-dense foods and use a freeze-drying or dehydrating process to evaporate moisture out and seal nutrition in. With 95% of the moisture removed, the food becomes primed for long-term storage.
- 2 High-quality food companies understand that the nutritious food on the inside is only as good as the packaging on the outside. In other words, the packaging is robust and durable enough to protect the food for decades—not to mention it's conveniently portable.

>> MAKE A STORAGE PLAN <<

Professionally prepared and packaged emergency food is vital for your long-term food storage. Even if a flood or vermin infestation destroys your pantry staples, the professionally made “food insurance” you invested in will remain not only edible, but nutritious and delicious.

Building a long-term food storage supply can feel like a big investment. That’s why we recommend investing in long-term food storage in small steps until you accomplish the goal of building up 3–12 months of backup emergency food.

For example, you can start by investing in a 72-hour emergency kit; then later, you can boost your stockpile to include two weeks of emergency food. Eventually, you’ll have enough long-term food storage to feed your family during even the most uncomfortable emergencies and disruptions in food security.

The Next Steps

At this point in creating your custom food storage plan, you’ve accomplished a lot!

- 1 You learned how to calculate caloric intake estimates;
- 2 you enhanced your short-term food storage to match those estimates to sustain your family for short-term emergencies;
- 3 you’ve begun stockpiling water;
- 4 and you’ve invested in professionally prepared and packed food insurance to meet the food storage goals you’ve set out for you and your family.

If you were to stop right now, you would be more prepared and self-reliant than the majority of the population. That’s something to be proud of.

However—now you are at a crossroads. If you go in one direction, you will repeat steps one through four. You will continue monitoring your short-term food supply, stockpiling water, and investing in long-term food storage.

If you go in the other direction, you will partake in a food preparation journey unlike ever before.

The following steps are optional. If you want a more hands-on approach, keep reading.

We will discuss assembling shelf-stable staple foods and DIY long-term food storage in steps five and six. Steps seven and eight will provide tips for storing your new food and maintaining your stockpile to help it stay fresh.

STEP 5

ASSEMBLING SHELF-STABLE STAPLES

The next step in your custom food storage plan is all about assembling shelf-stable staple food items. If you're wondering, "What exactly are shelf-stable staple foods?" don't worry—we'll explain.

A staple food item is a food that is frequently eaten, and is eaten in quantities that constitute a dominant portion of the standard diet for an individual or group of people. Ideally, staple foods are items that you willingly enjoy preparing and eating.

A shelf-stable food item is a type of food that can be safely stored at room temperature, ideally in a sealed container. This can include food that is normally refrigerated but that has been processed (i.e., dried, canned, dehydrated, or freeze-dried), so it can be safely stored at room temperature. Ideally, shelf-stable food items have a shelf life of 9–12 months or longer.

Therefore, a shelf-stable staple food item is something you willingly and frequently keep stockpiled, because you enjoy incorporating it into your diet and know that it will last a long time stored away in your pantry. For example, stocking a variety of beans so you can enjoy making chili and bean soups.

The food staples one person enjoys may be different from another. It all depends on personal preferences and dietary requirements. That being said, there are some classic staple food items that are commonly incorporated into short- and medium-term food

storage. You'll find a summary chart of these common staples in this book.

One cannot simply begin storing shelf-stable staple food items if you do not keep up with the process. Assembling food staples requires a commitment to new food storage habits, rhythms, and recipes. You have to plan carefully to cycle through your reserves. For example, if you regularly keep three months of shelf-stable staples, you must be prepared to use the entirety of the stockpile before it can spoil.

Typically, it looks like a lifestyle of prepping that involves regularly cooking and baking recipes from scratch and incorporating dried, canned, and other processed foods into your diet regularly. And, of course, this lifestyle involves keeping up with your reserves and routinely rotating your stockpile of staples so you can eat the freshest food possible.

For some, this lifestyle may seem impractical. In this case, they rely on professionally prepared and packaged foods to build their food reserves, and that's just fine.

For others, assembling shelf-stable food staples is second nature and something they enjoy. In this case, those individuals may even enjoy making DIY food for long-term storage—which, conveniently, is the topic of step six in your custom food storage plan.

COMMON STAPLES

SHELF LIFE & CALORIE CONTENT

Food Lists	Shelf Life	Storage Tips	Calories Content
Dried Fruits	1 year	Keep in their sealed packages or transfer to tightly sealed containers	400 Cal per 1.4 oz
Bouillon	2 years	Keep in an air-tight container in a cool, dry place	125 Cal per 3.25 oz Jar
Dark Chocolate	2 years	Keep in an air-tight container in a cool, dry place	665 Cal per 3.5 oz. Bar
Dried Pasta (pack)	3 years	Keep in an air-tight container in a cool, dry place	1600 Cal per 16 oz pack
Jerky	2 years	Keep in an air-tight container in a cool, dry place	800 Cal per 10 oz pack
Old Fashioned Oats (in a pack)	1-3 years	Keep in an air-tight container in a cool, dry place	3420 Cal per 32 oz pack
Cooking Oil (in a bottle)	2 years	Keep it out of direct sunlight and heat	3840 Cal per 16 fl oz bottle
Ramen Noodles (in a pack)	2 years	Keep in an air-tight container in a cool, dry place	800 Cal per 8.4 oz pack
Tomato Sauce (canned or jarred)	1-3 years	Keep in a cool, dry place	140 Cal per 15 oz can
Canned Tuna	3-5 years	Keep in a cool, dry place	160 Cal per 12 oz can
Pickled Vegetables	3-5 years	Keep in a cool, dry place	170 Cal per 64 fl. oz. Jar
Whole Spices and Herbs (in a jar)	4 years	Keep in an air-tight container in a cool, dry place out of direct sunlight	Negligible Calories

COMMON STAPLES

SHELF LIFE & CALORIE CONTENT CONT.

Food Lists	Shelf Life	Storage Tips	Calories Content
Canned Fruits	5-10 years	Keep in a cool, dry place	210 Cal per 15 oz can
Wheat	10 years	Keep in an air-tight container in a cool, dry place	1760 Cal per 24 oz pack
Instant Coffee	25 years	Keep in an air-tight container in a cool, dry place	Negligible Calories
Powdered Milk	20 years	Keep in an airtight container with a moisture-absorbing packet in a cool, dark place	7950 Cal per 56.4 oz can
Canned Milk	20 years	Keep in a cool, dry place	420 Cal per 12 Fl oz
White Rice (in a bag)	10 years	Keep it in an airtight container in a cool, dry place	1608 Cal per 1 Pound Bag
Corn starch (in a jar)	Indefinite if stored correctly	Keep in its original container, stored in a cool, dark place away from moisture	1680 Cal per 16 Oz Jar
Dried Pinto Beans	Indefinite if stored correctly	Keep in an air-tight container in a cool, dry place	3120 Cal per 32 oz pack
Maple Syrup (bottled)	1 year	Keep unopened in a cool, dry place	1320 Cal per 12.5 fl oz bottle
Raw Honey (bottled)	Indefinite if stored correctly	Keep tightly sealed in a jar to keep out humidity	1920 Cal per 24 oz bottle
Salt	Indefinite if stored correctly	Keep it in an airtight container in a cool, dry place	Negligible Calories
Soy Sauce (bottled)	Indefinite if stored correctly	Keep unopened in a cool, dry place	300 Cal per 15 fl oz bottle

COMMON STAPLES

SHELF LIFE & CALORIE CONTENT CONT.

Food Lists	Shelf Life	Storage Tips	Calories Content
Sugar (pack)	Indefinite if stored correctly	Keep it in an airtight container in a cool, dry place	17,010 Cal per 10 lbs pack
Vinegar (bottled)	Indefinite if stored correctly	Keep it in an airtight container in a cool, dry place	Negligible Calories
Brown Rice	6 months	Keep it in an airtight container in a cool, dry place	3200 Cal per 2 lb Bag
Cake Mix	4-5 months	Keep in a cool, dry place	1600 Cal per 15.25 oz
Chia Seeds	4 years	Keep it in an airtight container in a cool, dry place	1800 Cal per 2 lb pack
Cocoa	1 year	Keep it in an airtight container in a cool, dry place	1800 Cal per 16 oz pack
Flour	1 year	Keep it in an airtight container in a cool, dry place	8250 Cal per 5LB Bag
Dried Lentils	3 years	Keep it in an airtight container in a cool, dry place	1430 Cal per 1 lb pack
Nuts & Peanuts	9 months	Keep it in an airtight container in a cool, dry place	4590 Cal per 27 oz container
Spaghetti sauce, jarred	18 months	Keep in a cool, dry place	250 Cal per 24 oz. Jar
Canned Stew	5 years	Keep in a cool, dry place	945 Cal per 38 oz
Crackers	6-9 months	Keep in a cool, dry place	2480 Cal per 17.8 oz pack

COMMON STAPLES

SHELF LIFE & CALORIE CONTENT CONT.

Food Lists	Shelf Life	Storage Tips	Calories Content
Breakfast Cereal	6-12 months	Keep in a cool, dry place	2700 Cal per 24 oz
Granola Bars	6-8 months	Keep in a cool, dry place	1140 Cal per 8.94 oz pack
Protein Bars	1 year	Keep in a cool, dry place	1680 Cal per 2.4 oz pack
Canned Vegetables	3-5 years	Keep in a cool, dry place	70 Cal per 14.5 oz Can
Canned Meat	5 years	Keep in a cool, dry place	340 Cal per 7.5 oz Can
Powdered drink mix	1 year	Keep in an air-tight container in a cool, dry place	100 Cal per 10 packets
Pancake mix	1 year	Keep in an air-tight container in a cool, dry place	3200 Cal per 32 oz pack
Dried Mashed Potatoes	1 year	Keep in an air-tight container in a cool, dry place	440 Cal per 4 oz Pouch

STEP 6

DIY LONG-TERM FOOD STORAGE

If you have the free time and are looking for a more hands-on or heavy-touch approach to food storage, you can package your shelf-stable staple food items DIY-style. Attempting to package your own food at home is labor intensive, but it is possible and will extend the shelf-life of the food you choose to work with.

Common staples that can be packaged at home include sugar, rice, popcorn, beans, wheat, flour, and lentils, to name a few. If you plan to package food staples at home, it's important to remember that these foods are raw and uncooked. You will need a plan to process and cook the food items if you intend to eat them.

To package food staples yourself, you will need to invest in quite a few materials to do it adequately. You won't want to take any shortcuts in the preparation because a lot can go wrong, and tons of food can be wasted.

The most common way to package food at home is to package the items into mylar bags. Mylar bags are plastic, food-grade bags made from multiple layers of plastic and aluminum. Mylar bags are the chosen vessel for DIY food storage because they can provide a tight, oxygen- and moisture-free environment for your food if the proper steps are taken.

After the chosen staple food items have been loaded into the mylar bag, it's absolutely vital to supplement the package with oxygen absorber packets. Without oxygen absorber packets, the food inside the mylar bags will oxidize and spoil within a few months, if not weeks.

There are many different sizes of oxygen absorber packets. The size you choose and the quantity you add to the mylar bag will depend on the size of the bag, the type of food (e.g., dense food like rice vs. less dense food like pasta), and the quantity of food. Again, we want to stress the importance of oxygen absorbers—without them, the food you've packaged will not last.

After an adequate amount of food and absorber packets have been added to the mylar bags, it's time to seal the bag. Be careful not to overfill them—if you do, you will be unable to seal the bag adequately.

You must use heat to seal the bag properly. Mylar bags are designed to be sealed with a clamshell or impact heat sealer, and a proper seal is imperative. Only after the bag has been completely sealed and cut off to outside oxygen can the absorbers begin to work their magic and remove the oxygen trapped inside.

The last step of DIY food packing for long-term storage is to place the mylar bags filled with food into five-gallon buckets. We recommend placing the food in buckets because it will further insulate your packaged food from rodents, light, moisture, and warm temperatures.

It's important to mention that a lot of trial and error is involved in this DIY process. It requires a lot of finesse and attention to detail to ensure that your food is safely stored for the long term.

To be successful, you have to invest in the proper materials, follow a detailed plan, and take your time.

STEP 7

STORE YOUR FOOD SAFELY AND SECURELY

The food you stockpile for long-term storage is only as good as its packaging and how you store it away. It needs to be much more robust than your other types of food storage. For example, you are constantly interacting with short-term storage. Therefore, it's rare that things spoil before you consume and rotate the older items with something fresher.

You interact a little less with medium-storage food items. It's rare for things to spoil before you catch them, but still possible. Lastly, you only interact a minuscule amount with the food you have stockpiled specifically for long-term storage.

▶ USE THE BEST STORAGE SPOT

The area in which you choose to keep your food needs to be cool, dry, and relatively dark, or at the very least, shielded from natural sunlight. Regarding temperature, choosing a location that does not experience extreme temperature fluctuations is essential. The steadier and colder the temperature, the better.

▶ TAKE PRECAUTIONS

Your food storage area must be protected from insects, pests, rodents, and other vermin. One of the best ways to do this is to keep your food off the floor. If you must place food on the floor, ensure the container is robustly impenetrable. If your home or bug-out location has a history with insects, rodents, and other vermin, we recommend taking proactive steps to protect your food.

▶ STAY ORGANIZED

Organize items together. Your food storage can be much more effective if it's organized strategically. Organization often requires labeling your food. This will come in handy in an emergency because you won't have to second-guess where you cached the freeze-dried fruits four years earlier.

▶ ROTATE FOOD STRATEGICALLY

Always remember and utilize the motto, "first in, first out" (FIFO). As you restock and rotate your stockpiles based on the expiration dates of your food items, it's best to do so with purpose. The newly stocked items go towards the back so that the older items can be more readily accessible upfront. This ensures you eat the older stuff first and avoid having to deal with spoiled foods.

Setting your food storage up for success takes forethought and planning. But just because your food is safely stored away, waiting to come to the rescue during a food shortage or natural disaster, does not mean your job is done. There are still important steps you can take to monitor your food reserves.

For that reason, how safely and securely you store your food is vital. The organization is also important. The last thing you want during an emergency is to find a basement full of rotten food because the DIY packaging you used failed or your chosen location was unsuitable.

To help prevent this from happening to you, we want to share a few helpful guidelines we have learned from our years of safely prepping short, medium, and long-term emergency food.

STEP 8

KEEP TRACK OF QUALITY AND ROTATION

The last step in your custom food storage plan revolves around participating in your food storage. In other words, it's fantastic to have food stockpiled for emergencies, but you must also remain engaged to ensure its long-term lifespan.

This is especially true for medium-term and DIY-stored food, because these foods tend to spoil more often without routine maintenance, rotations, and quality checks.

On the other hand, professionally prepared and packed long-term food requires much less intervention after the point where you purchase the food and stash it away. This is because manufacturers of this type of food have perfected their systems, and use high-quality equipment and ingredients to create their products.

Therefore, this type of food only requires a “set it and forget it” mentality—which is one of its major advantages compared to DIY long-term food.

Nevertheless, part of your food storage plan needs to be a system for tracking food quality, rotating foods, and reassessing your stockpile. To help you with this process, we've created a checklist.

We recommend using the checklist to guide you as you learn more about your food storage needs. Remember, everyone's food storage is different, and the checklist is just a starting point, so don't be afraid to add to the list and customize the list to cater to your specific needs.

The checklist provides more detail and focuses on three critical maintenance and monitoring tasks.

- 1** Performing periodic checks of your pantry items to ensure they're being rotated and that none are outdated. To do so, use the FIFO strategy we mentioned in step seven.
- 2** Monitoring the condition of your water storage. For the most part, your water is okay to be left alone for 3–6 months at a time. However, we recommend periodically monitoring it for spoilage or contamination; for example, checking for color and smell and replacing the water every 6 months or as needed.
- 3** Periodically auditing the amount of food you have stored and comparing it to the amount you want or should be storing. After all, the caloric needs of you and your family will change over time. Children grow up and therefore need to eat more; they also eventually move out, meaning you'll require less. You may also add to the size of your family. All of these changes will require you to adjust and reconsider the food storage you have created.

ROTATIONAL FOOD STORAGE CHECKLIST



Every 3 Months

Tasks Done	Date Checked	Date Checked	Date Checked	Date Checked
Checked short term storage expiration dates				
Check stored items for signs of spoilage or pests				
Inspect shelves and containers for cleanliness and damage				
Discard any expired or spoiled food items.				
Ensure food is still ordered and organized				
Label unlabeled items with a "use by" date.				
Rotate food items so the oldest items are used first				
Monitor the amount of food in the pantry and adjust purchases as needed.				
Create a donation list for items that will not be used by their expiration date				
Create a list of items that need to be restocked				
Check water storage for smells and algae growth				

ROTATIONAL FOOD STORAGE CHECKLIST CONT.



Every 6 Months

Tasks Done	Date Checked	Date Checked	Date Checked	Date Checked
Check expiration dates on staples and long term food items				
Reevaluate storage containers, replace lids that don't fit correctly				
Check the temperature and humidity levels in the pantry to maintain the quality of food items				
Take inventory of items and update your spreadsheet				
Clean shelves and containers				
Clean out and replace water storage in jugs and barrels				

Every 1 Year

Tasks Done	Date Checked	Date Checked	Date Checked	Date Checked
Check expiration dates on professionally packaged and DIY long term food				
Redo calorie calculations for food storage for any family changes				
Evaluate balance for light-touch to heavy-touch food storage and evaluate if changes are needed				
Re-evaluate the current pantry storage system to determine if changes or upgrades are needed.				
Take inventory of items and update your spreadsheet				

WHERE YOU STARTED & WHERE YOU STAND

Before diving into this ebook about creating a custom food storage plan, you may have never thought about the importance of emergency food storage. You might have even been one of those who always thought, “That will never happen to me.”

In the end, hopefully, you not only appreciate the importance of preparing food and water for unexpected disasters and emergencies, but also have the resources and skills to efficiently and strategically stockpile food based on personal preferences and caloric requirements of your family.

A SUMMARY OF YOUR CUSTOM FOOD STORAGE PLAN

In the beginning, we talked about how much time and energy it takes to adequately put together a food storage plan. We outlined the specifics of a hands-off approach to food storage versus a completely DIY approach.

Next, we calculated valuable estimates for the number of calories you and your family may require to survive an unexpected disaster or emergency. With those caloric estimates, we helped you devise a game plan for stockpiling emergency food into three important categories—short, medium, and long-term.

Step three was all about water. We talked about the importance of a water storage plan to begin stockpiling drinking water and other water treatment tools to transform any water into potable water for drinking, bathing, and household chores.

Then we touched on long-term food storage specifically—how investing in an emergency food supply is essentially like food insurance, and how to differentiate high-quality, nourishing survival food from the cheap options stuffed with fillers and empty calories.

In the second half of the plan, we reviewed the importance of setting your emergency food up for success by storing it in the correct location. We also talked about how to monitor your food and maintain your reserves to preserve the freshness, quality, and nutritional value of your food for the long term.

By completing all the steps in your custom food storage plan, you’re investing in food insurance and in the future of your family. You’re prioritizing preparedness over other ways to spend your hard-earned money. You’re using your valuable time and energy to enhance food security for your family, no matter what unexpected disasters may come your way.

THE NEXT STEPS

Now that you have created a custom food storage plan, let us help. Valley Food Storage specializes in crafting high-quality and nutritious freeze-dried and dehydrated emergency food.

Please visit our website to consult any of the product experts waiting to help you. If you want to get more involved, join our disaster Dry Run group on Facebook. If you want to learn more about emergency preparedness, you can subscribe to our newsletter, and enjoy the helpful articles on our Practical Prepper Blog.

**Congratulations on creating your
custom food storage plan!**

To help you kickstart your storage plan, we're offering a special discount to all readers of this guide!

To receive the discount, all you have to do is use the code **STORAGE10** at checkout when you shop at Valley Food Storage to save **10% on your entire order!**

Get started now at:

www.valleyfoodstorage.com

