

Anyone can store up on their favorite foods

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The going joke around our family is the thought of “going shopping” in our food storage room. We have a 10-foot square room dedicated to food storage and nothing else. Right now, the room is overflowing with quart and pint jars, purchased food in cans, and quart/pint mason jars of home canned products. Some of the food is in the form of dehydrated products both commercially bought in number 10 cans along with those that my wife and I have dehydrated ourselves. We never toss food into the trash basket. What we do is dehydrate it and store it in quart mason jars. The jars are labeled with the product name and the date it was made. If you plan to do likewise be sure not to cook your foods with any sort of oil or butter otherwise it will go rancid.

Many of the products that we store are consumables which have a 20 to 30-year shelf life. These types of food never seem to go bad or spoil and provide the basis of our emergency food supply. It is likely that these items of food will outlive you and me before they go bad. Naturally, you should store these items properly. In our case the heat register is closed off in order to keep the room cool in the winter and opened in the summer to permit cold air from the AC to fill the room. Most of our dehydrated foods which we have

made ourselves contain an oxygen absorber in it to remove all traces of air. Air is the primary cause of foods going bad. The room is maintained at a low light when needed and it goes without saying that the spot used for your food storage should be dry and without any sort of direct sunlight. In our room we have black-out curtains installed on the window to shield it from sunlight.

Although it is totally possible that in some situations the flavor of your survival foods may change along with their texture but they will still be edible and safe for human consumption. Use good judgment when checking your food to eat. If it does not smell proper, if it is exceptionally soft or you can see mold developing on it – don't eat it.

We keep a good supply of white rice in our food pantry as it is fairly inexpensive and in the case of a "no food available" scenario it will go a long way towards feeding members of our family. It must be kept completely dry and maintained in a moisture free environment. It should be stored in air tight containers. Originally years ago, we stored our rice in clean two-liter plastic soda bottles, but found that storing in that way was not a good idea. The rice we stored in that manner had a tendency to go bad. We now store the white rice in quart mason jars with oxygen absorbers added.

Most people are not aware of it, but crackers, and other similar types of foods can be stored for many years if placed into the mason jars with oxygen absorbers. The key to storing these types of products, and basically any kind of food is the proper removal of air.

Another popular storage food found in many emergency supplies is dried fruit. Just about any fruit can be dehydrated, and stored even such items as watermelon. If dehydrated watermelon lasts long enough to be reconstituted it tastes just like the original product. Children love the taste of the dehydrated watermelon so it is usually a difficult item to keep a supply of.

Honey is one food that could be stored for thousands of years without going bad. They have discovered jars of honey stored in Egyptian tombs and it is still in edible condition. Other storable products would include molasses, Maple syrup, beans of all kinds and dry Jell-O mix (we have Jell-O in the number 10 cans). We store various types of pasta, and noodles in quart mason jars, and have some from as far back as prior to Y2K. These are still in good shape, and useable.

Cooking products such as baking soda, corn starch, salt, pepper, and other spices, and herbs will last indefinitely if kept in air tight containers, and free of any moisture. Some of the herbs may lose a bit of potency over time, but are still very much useable. Most condiments are non-perishable, and help change the taste of plain stored emergency foods. They will be safe to eat after years of storage, and the flavor will likely remain the same years after they were first purchased.

We keep drinks in our storage room as well. Coffee beans store very well with the oxygen absorbers, and even the store-bought cans of coffee will last for a number of

years if unopened. Although we do not drink much alcoholic beverages, we store products such as vodka for making herbal medicines, and such. Any alcohol which is over 10% should last forever in your food storage location. In addition, we always maintain a good supply of wine. Other drinks include powdered juices, and commercial products such as Tang, and Kool-Aid. Tea is always a stocked-up item for us. These last forever if keep dry, and air free.

Remember, just about any food can be stored if you know the best way to do it. All dry types of foods are candidates for long term storage if you add an oxygen absorber to the jar. These would include items such as cookies, chips and related products. Experiment on some of the things you like to eat, and see how they taste in about 6 months, or a year. You will be surprised at what treasures you find as you stock up on them.