

## Your Emergency Foods Will Outlive You

By Joseph Parish



You can discuss survival gear, guns and self-defense but regardless of all your preps without your basic long-term survival foods you will not last very long after the SHTF. There is no doubt that properly prepared and stored emergency food will outlive you and your family. Dehydrated foods will last for up to 30 years if all the air is kept out of the container and the temperature is properly maintained. Best used by dates are essentially none existent when you switch to dehydrated types of food supplies. It really does not matter much that you are storing up for emergency times or for everyday use as these types of stored foods constitute consumables which will likely never spoil. Some of the non-perishable foods listed in this article will surely outlive you.

To achieve this timeless storage of foods you will need to store them properly. The best environment for these stored foods would be one which is dark, cool and above all dry. An environment which is free of humidity, moisture or direct sunlight offers the most rewarding storage to be found. Always avoid the extreme temperature conditions and try to keep the temperature even throughout the year. All consumables should be contained in air-tight containers or vacuum packed with oxygen absorbers inserted to increase their long shelf life.

Even if a few of your non-perishable foods change in flavor or texture a bit they will still remain edible and safe for human consumption over an indefinite time span. Of course, you should use logic and good common sense to judge if your food has survived the ravages of time. If you open one of your survival food containers and discover that it has an off smell to it, if it is too soft or you notice mold developing on it then it is no longer good to eat and should be discarded.

You will need to be especially careful at keeping your staples completely dry and moisture free while in their airtight container. These would include rice, crackers and some fruits such as dried cranberries. As mentioned, some of the survival type foods may change in texture but are still very much edible. This list would include items like dried lentils, beans and split peas, honey, Jell-o, maple syrup and molasses. In the case of honey, you will find that after a long period of time it will start to crystallize. If that happens

merely place your jar of honey in a very hot water bath to revive it once again. From experience you are always better using your dried beans and split peas within a reasonable period of time. The problem with these products is that the time necessary to cook them tends to increase with their age. This could be critical as in a survival situation you cannot afford to waste your fuel by cooking beans for over 12 hours. As an interesting side note, if you recall the old nursery song which includes the phrase "peas porridge hot" you will discover that in the olden days they had a very similar problem. The solution is to course ground the beans or peas and then cook them. In the end you will find that they cook quicker thus using less fuel.

Non-perishable foods such as dried pasta and noodles, dried fruit and instant coffee will also survive the ordeal of time when packaged air free with oxygen absorbers. Powdered milk will last a good 10 to 20 years under ideal conditions so it appears to have a reasonably long shelf life just not as long as some of the other foods.

Basic cooking products like baking soda, corn starch, syrup and flour are viewed as the perfect survival foods if also kept in an air-tight container and free of moisture and humidity. We store our flour in air-free Mason jars. I would also like to mention a quick warning about corn starch. Corn Starch may not go bad but it does have a tendency to lose its efficacy when used as a thickening agent. Incidentally, do not use oxygen absorbers with sugar or salt or you will risk ending up with a brick. Other items such as the beans, flour and rice may last longer without the oxygen absorbers however you tend to risk bug infestations.

Seasonings are other non-perishable survival foods which will last forever. The only disadvantage of seasonings is that over a long period of time they will get weaker in flavor thus you will need to use more of the product than you normally would. Once again keep them in an air-tight container and store then in a moisture free environment. Dried herbs, pepper, salt, spices, sugar and flavor extracts are excellent choices for long term storage.

You will also discover that there are numerous condiments which fall under the category of non-perishable foods. Although they may change slightly in taste and texture, they will be safe to eat and cook with. Among those foods falling under the above definition we find vinegar and Worcestershire sauce.

Drinks which are non-perishable include those with over 10 percent alcohol content which has no milk or eggs in its composition. This would leave out drinks such as Bailey's, etc. I like to keep a healthy supply of vodka stored up since it readily adapts to medical and disinfectant tasks. In addition, we store wine and an assortment of liquors.