

Types of Foods You Should Keep in Your Survival Shelter

By

Martin Banks

Whether you're turning your home into a survival shelter, stocking an underground bunker, or building a bug-out cabin in the woods, there are a few things you'll always need. First, of course, you won't make it without the basics, including food, water, medicine, and weaponry.

There's a lot to consider when it comes to food. What edible items should you keep in your survival shelter? How should you store them to maximize shelf life?

What to Consider When Choosing Foods

There are a lot of different food options at the grocery store. Some are perishable, while others have a longer shelf life. Some offer the nutrients you need, while others are loaded with empty calories.

There are nearly as many criteria as there are types of food, but when it comes down to stocking your survival shelter, you only really need to consider four things: calories, cost, nutritional value, and shelf life.

- **Calories** – The average adult needs around 2,000 calories a day to stay healthy. That number varies from person to person and will fluctuate depending on how active you are, but it's a good baseline. Therefore, you'll want to stock up on foods for your survival shelter that is calorie-dense. There are two reasons behind this. First, it ensures you have enough calories to get through the day. Second, the more calorie-dense foods you choose, the less space you'll waste on stuff that won't help support your dietary needs.

- **Cost** – This can be problematic, especially if you're like many preppers stocking their shelter on a budget. Buying in bulk is usually the most cost-effective way to fill your survival shelter with food, but it's not always an option. Keep the costs in mind when researching food options.
- **Nutrition** – Calories aren't the only thing you need in your diet to stay healthy. You also require a variety of foods that provide all the vitamins and minerals you need to survive. For example, you can theoretically survive on beans and rice, but a few months of that will leave you bored to tears and nutritionally deficient.
- **Shelf Life** – Finally, and perhaps most important, is the shelf life of the food you're choosing. Stocking up on things that will spoil in two or three months doesn't do you any good if you end up having to survive on your supplies alone for extended periods. Learn the shelf life of everything you're planning to store — including how long it can last beyond its supposed expiration date.

What to Stock up On

Now that you know what to consider when stocking your survival pantry, here are some specific items that will keep you healthy for the long haul.

1. **Fruits** – Have you ever heard of scurvy? It's a disease caused by nutritional deficiencies, specifically a lack of vitamin C. It's a condition that affected sailors who spent months at sea with nothing to eat but hardtack and salted meat to carry them through their long journey. Fresh fruit is best, but if you don't have your orchard or citrus grove, canned and dried fruit is a suitable substitute. Canned fruit doesn't have the longest shelf life, but if you're continually rotating your stock, you should have plenty of canned fruit to keep you scurvy-free for a while. Dried, and especially freeze-dried, fruits will last much longer if you can keep them from being exposed to moisture. Sealed containers stocked with silica gel packets or other desiccants will keep your dried and freeze-dried fruit shelf stable for years to come.
2. **Vegetables** – Fruits and vegetables might get lumped together on the food pyramid, but they're both a vital part of a healthy diet. Canned veggies are your best option since most of the ones you'll want to include in your diet don't dry or freeze dry well. Although it's possible, you'll need water to reconstitute them unless you're planning to eat them dry as a snack. Like fruit, canned vegetables have a limited shelf life. You'll want to rotate your stock regularly, use what you have, and replace it with new canned goods you bring in. If possible, maintain a garden to

supplement your fruit and vegetable supplies. Fresh is always the best option if it's available, and many of the fruits and veggies we eat every day are easy to grow in pots and planters. You can even cultivate some items indoors if you have grow-lights available. Plus, if you end up with excess, you can always can it and enjoy it later.

3. **Meats and Other Proteins** – Beans may provide plenty of protein, but man (or woman) wasn't designed to live on beans alone. Meat is usually thought of as a perishable food supply, and while that is true when it's fresh, there are plenty of ways to make it last longer in a survival situation. Canned meat is your first option, and there are plenty of varieties available on the market today. Things like Spam or chipped beef might not seem appetizing on the shelf, but they still add protein to your diet. Canned fish should also be on your list when you're planning your survival shelter's menu. In addition to providing protein, fish like salmon and tuna — even canned — are packed full of micronutrients and things like omega-3 fatty acids that are essential parts of a healthy diet. Make sure you choose canned fish in oil rather than water. It might alter the taste a little bit, but it will stay fresher longer.
4. **Beans, Legumes, and Nuts** – Beans have long been the staple of survival food plans. They come canned or dried and provide a fair amount of protein, as well as other nutrients. They can be turned into just about anything you can imagine, including veggie burgers. You can find a variety of types and should stock up depending on your tastes. Dried beans have a longer shelf life than canned, but they require quite a bit more work before they're ready to eat. Dried or canned legumes, such as peas, can help add a bit of variety to your diet. Also, make sure you're adding nuts and nut butter to your stock. Both are chock full of protein and can serve as a snack, meal, or side, depending on how you prepare them.
5. **Rice and Grains** – Rice is usually the second thing you hear mentioned when stocking a survival shelter. Dried rice has a very long shelf life as long as you can keep pests out of it. There's a reason that it's been one of the primary dietary staples for countries worldwide for centuries. This isn't the only grain or grain-adjacent foodstuff you should include in your pantry. Stock up on wheat, corn, quinoa, spelt, and other similar grains. Each has its nutritional benefits and a variety of applications. For example, wheat and corn can be broken down into flour for making bread or pasta. Quinoa pairs well with nearly any other food — either sweet or savory — and provides a lot of nutritional value.
6. **Condiments** – Even if the world ends, you shouldn't have to eat bland food. Most of the condiments we use every day have a reasonably long shelf life. Most of them — even finicky things like mayonnaise — are

shelf-stable until they're opened. If you don't want to go overboard and fill up your storage space with bottles of ketchup and jars of mayonnaise, you might want to learn to make it yourself. Mayo is just emulsification of eggs and oil — and homemade always tastes better than store-bought. Take the time to know which condiments are shelf-stable and what's easy to make from scratch.

7. **Oils and Fats** – Cooking is challenging without something to conduct the heat. Water is your primary ingredient, but for things like frying, you're going to need some oil or fat. Most unopened cooking oils will last on your shelf for a year to 18 months before they start to go rancid. Buying large jars of cooking oil isn't a sustainable option for a survival shelter. Instead, focus on other sources of fat for your cooking. For example, lard is shelf-stable fat that you can use for cooking and baking. It isn't the healthiest option, but if the world ends, the last thing you're going to worry about is your cholesterol levels. If you hunt to supplement your supplies with fresh meat, you should also render the animal fat into tallow. It doesn't work as well for things like buttering toast, but it is an excellent alternative for cooking and deep frying in a pinch. If you render it correctly, removing as much water as possible, the tallow can become shelf-stable.
8. **Spices** – Just like the condiments, spices can help you add a bit more flavor to your survival menu. Without spices and salt, you end up with a bunch of bland food — enough to keep you alive and moving, but not enjoyable. Add the spices you use and anything you might miss if you can't find them after the world ends. Include salt, pepper, garlic, and onion powder, and any herbs or peppers you want to use to bolster taste. As a bonus, if you stock up on spices and don't end up using everything you stored, you've given yourself a collection of items that you can trade to other survivors for supplies you might be lacking. Salt was used as a currency in ancient Rome, and there's no reason why we couldn't revive that practice if the economy collapses.

Rotate Your Stock Frequently

Take the time to create the ideal food pantry for your survival shelter. One can at a time. Keep your selections varied enough that you won't get bored. Being prepared and having a variety of items will ensure you remain healthy and well-fed during isolation.

Retrieved from <https://www.survivopedia.com/8-types-of-foods-you-should-keep-in-your-survival->

shelter/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=2021-12-14-Food-Survival-Shelter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=linktext