

3 MREs Recipes You Can Make at Home

By Christine C.



Having a survival food stockpile is essential for preppers and other like-minded folks who want to be ready in the event of a large-scale emergency. In fact, it's usually one of the first steps people take towards living a more prepared life.

Most people agree that having “all your eggs in one basket” isn't practical. For this reason, relying on one backup food source alone doesn't provide a person with the best chance of survival.

Keeping plenty of canned, jarred, or otherwise preserved food in the home food bank is a smart setup.

But, having “bug-out bags” or “get home bags” with emergency MREs in several locations—such as in the vehicle and home—is your best bet in having enough sustenance to survive almost any situation.

What are MREs?

MRE stands for “Meals, Ready to Eat”. These are portable, shelf-stable, and calorie-dense food portions that will provide a person with enough protein and nutritional content to keep them healthy and energized throughout a high activity day.

Sometimes MRE's are jokingly referred to as “Meals Rejected by Ethiopians”, “Mr. E's”, or “Meals Rarely Edible”, by servicemen who still have not-so-fond memories of clunky tin cans or brown paper packages filled with mystery meat and questionable sides.

While these rations might not have been the best-tasting food in the world, they got the job done. Plus, most people would probably agree that in a survival situation—or after an all-day hike while

camping for that matter—even the most finicky eaters become a lot less picky and a little more concerned with getting something in their stomachs.

The good news is that MREs you make yourself are cheap and easy to prepare and will likely taste a bit better than more expensive pre-packaged options. Plus, they're light and take up very little space in a bug-out bag compared to cans and other bulkier food items.

DIY MRE Supplies

Although most military-grade MREs come in thermally protected mylar pouches — using vacuum-sealed bags or a strong Ziplock freezer bag will work just fine.

They may not have the same shelf life or stay as fresh for as long as military MREs, but they should still last at least 2 to 5 years when properly stored.

It's also worth mentioning that not all of the items on this supply list are absolutely critical. Feel free to add or omit anything you feel is necessary for your MREs.

Vacuum sealer and vacuum bags (Ziplock freezer bags will work in a pinch, as long as you can push most of the air out to ensure your MRE's stay fresh)

Gallon sized Ziplock freezer bag to further protect your MREs

Plastic fork, spoon, thermos, and napkins (if desired)

Alcohol wipes for cleaning hands (if desired)

Water: Although a lot of military-grade MREs are ready to eat right out of the pouch, making DIY MREs make it a little harder to conform to that standard.

So, make sure you have plenty of water in your bug-out bag.

What Food Items Should You Include in Your MREs?

Even though I believe in the old adage “you get what you pay for”, I still like to get as many shelf-stable food supplies as I can from the dollar store. After all, processed food is processed food whether it's purchased from a big grocery chain or a thrift shop.

I live relatively close to a Mexican dollar store so I was able to find a lot of unique, shelf-stable, high-calorie items to include in my MREs for very cheap.

When purchasing food items for your MREs, there are a few things to keep in mind:

Each MRE should be around 1000 calories or more.

Make sure you pick items with enough protein, fat, carbs, vitamins, and minerals.

Supplement meals with energy bars or similar items to increase calorie content without adding too much extra weight.

Avoid cans or heavier items, as they pose the risk of slowing you down.

Prepping Your MREs

These steps will be completed in the same way with each MRE recipe.

1. Measure ingredients and pour them into individual vacuum seal bags (or double-seal sandwich-sized Ziplock bags)
2. Seal or push air out of bags after filling.
3. Label contents of bags and instructions with a permanent marker or label maker.
4. Organize and place smaller bags of food into a gallon-sized Ziplock bag, eliminate air, and seal.
5. When you're ready to dig into your MRE, simply remove the smaller food pouches from the larger 1-gallon Ziplock. (You can reuse the larger Ziplock as a storage or trash container if you'd like.)

MREs Recipes

Breakfast MRE (Oatmeal, Fruit Mix, and Barley Drink)

1 cup instant oats, any flavor

½ cup trail mix/ hikers mix

2 packets of sugar or honey (if desired)

Cinnamon stick or honey (if desired)

1 tbsp. "Cebada" barley powder combined with 1 tbsp powdered milk and 1 tsp sugar, stored inside of a sandwich bag or vacuum-sealed bag.

Around 2 cups of water

Calories: 1,100



Instructions

Open 2-3 paper packages of instant oats. Pour the contents out of the packaging and into the Ziplock sandwich bag you stored them in.

Add 1 cup of water.

Wait a few minutes and allow oats to hydrate to the desired texture, add extras like cinnamon, dried fruit, or sugar if desired. Then, eat your oats straight from the bag.

Hydrate the high-calorie “Cebada” powder and powdered milk mixture inside of the bag by adding 1 cup of water. Drink straight from the bag or pour into a cup or thermos.

Supplement the meal with ½ cup of trail mix or an energy bar.

Cebada



Fact: Sweetened barley water is a vitamin-rich, high-protein drink that has around 300-1000 calories per serving depending on the size and flavor add-ins like sugar, cinnamon, and milk.

It's a cheap and powerful food item to have in your food bank.

MRE Lunch ("Tuna salad" and Crackers)

1 cup tuna in tuna packs (avoid cans to save space and weight)

Dehydrated vegetables

1 sleeve of (5) saltine crackers

Mayonnaise and mustard packets

Salt and pepper packets

Dried fruit and nut mix

Energy bar



Calories: 900

Instructions

Open pouches of tuna and combine them into one pack.

Add dehydrated vegetables, mayonnaise, mustard, salt, and pepper to create a “tuna salad”

Dip crackers into tuna salad and enjoy.

Supplement the meal with an energy bar and a handful of trail mix or mixed fruit and nuts.

MRE Dinner (“Cottage pie” in a Bag)

1 cup dehydrated carrots and peas

1 cup of small-cut beef jerky pieces (to rehydrate)

one cup instant mashed potatoes

2-3 ketchup packets

Salt and pepper packets

1 teaspoon tomato or beef bouillon powder or cube

1 pack of (5) crackers

½ cup trail mix

⅓ cup powdered milk to ½ cup water for a glass of milk with dinner, otherwise, save your water.



Calories: 1,200

Instructions

Open pouches of dehydrated vegetables and beef jerky, combine ingredients, and add enough water to barely cover the food.

Wait 10-15 minutes to hydrate—body heat will speed hydration time.

Add bouillon, salt, pepper, and ketchup packets to the meat and vegetable mixture and shake to combine.

Add water to instant mashed potatoes and shake until the powder looks similar to mashed potatoes.

Cut a hole in the corner of the potato bag and squeeze potatoes on top of the meat mixture to create a cottage pie in a bag.

Add crushed crackers if desired.

Supplement the meal with an energy bar and a handful of trail mix or mixed fruit and nuts.

These three recipes will provide you with everything you need for a high-activity day in the field or in an emergency.

If the need for emergency food rations occurs or you need to leave your home in a hurry because of a disaster or emergency event, you'll be glad you took the time to prepare your MRE's.

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