

I Wish I Liked Squash - or - Long-term Food Storage

I'm not an expert on food storage or nutrition, but it seems to me that there are three basic kinds of food we should store for long-term disasters: protein, starches, and fruits and vegetables. Well, four, if you included fats.

Everyone knows that meat is a good protein source. Fish is also good, and some people argue that it's healthier. But meat and fish can be expensive to store. Even if you do the work of preserving it yourself--which is a lot of work--you still have to buy or otherwise acquire it first. Some people are in a position to raise beef or chickens for food or eggs, but not everyone can do that.

Fortunately, beans and grains can help provide the protein we need, and they're a lot easier to store than meat. Don't get me wrong, I still want to store lots of meat. But by adding beans and grain to my diet, I can get by with less meat, and still have enough protein. Remember, though, that beans and grain are each not a complete protein so you have to eat both of them. I read recently that "they" are no longer saying that you have to eat beans and grains in the same meal. As long as you eat them the same day, that's OK. That said, there are so many beans-and-grains recipes or traditional meals, that it isn't hard to eat them in the same meal.

Starches are important because they have the bulk of the calories that will keep us from starving to death, and we have lots of options. The beans and grains you can eat for protein also provide starches. Beans are chock full of fiber--which most of us don't eat enough of. And whole grains have lots of complex carbs, and also vitamins and minerals. And of course, grains can be ground into flour and baked into all kinds of yummy things. Beans and grains are inexpensive to buy in bulk and they're easy to store long term. You can buy them already packaged in sealed, airtight buckets, or you can package them yourself. Delta69Alpha has several youtube videos about how to do that. You can check out his channel at <http://www.youtube.com/user/delta69alpha>. Of course, if you're storing whole grains for use during a disaster, you'll need a hand-operated grain mill. And you'll want to store whole grains because they store a lot longer than flour or rolled grains.

Potatoes are another great starch option. Potatoes have a lot of nutrition if you eat the skins along with the potatoes, and they store well. Potatoes are easy to grow, and they are attractive plants. You can buy dehydrated potatoes in several forms: shredded for hash browns, sliced, and potato pearls (whatever those are). And we all know you can get boxes of mashed potato flakes at the grocery store. I think it's good to have a supply of dehydrated potatoes, because although potatoes store well, they don't store for an entire year. So you can eat fresh potatoes when you have them, and stored potatoes when you're out of the fresh.

Now, here's the reason I wish I liked squash. Squash are very nutritious, and can provide a lot of complex carbs. They are easy to grow, and the plants and flowers are beautiful. Winter squash store very well, and some of them are gorgeous.

There is carnival, which is small enough for individual servings:
<http://www.territorialseed.com/product/9913/221> . There is delicata squash, which has a bush and a vining variety: <http://www.territorialseed.com/product/1121/221>. There is fairy squash: <http://www.territorialseed.com/product/1119/221> .

There's sweet dumpling:

<http://www.vermontbean.com/dp.asp?c=51&P={266797CE-5A61-428F-BEA2-69936D7F5C4B}> .

And there is turk's cap squash:

<http://www.vermontbean.com/dp.asp?c=51&P={DBD5A95C-2399-45CA-92B8-87D680F7AFF7}> , just to name a few.

(Sorry about all the links. I don't have pictures myself and I didn't want to violate copyrights). But I simply don't like the taste of squash. Pumpkin pie is about the only way I like to eat winter squashes. That said, I'm growing some this year anyway. I simply can't pass them up, and who knows--I may find a recipe I like.

And that brings us to the fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables do have carbs, but not enough to rely on them during a crisis. But with fruits' sugar content, they are often a great pick-me-up. And fruits and vegetables have lots of vitamins, minerals, and other phytonutrients. Of course we all know we should eat plenty of vegetables with lunch and dinner. And fruits are great for breakfast and desserts. Fresh veggies and fruits are always good when they're in season, and many of them are easy to grow. You can can them, or make jams and jellies from the fruit. You can also dehydrate them for use throughout the year. And you can purchase them already dehydrated or freeze-dried.

There are, of course, lots of other things to consider for long-term food storage, but this is a pretty good place to start. Now, off to find a good squash recipe.

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