

Fast Track To Survival



5 Skills and 7 Things You MUST Have To Survive Any Crisis Situation and Keep Your Family Safe, Healthy, and Happy No Matter What Is Happening Out There

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Go Figure...

Until Sandy, most Americans could not imagine that millions could go for weeks in the country's biggest city without food, water, electricity, heat or even the ability to flush their toilet. Sure, Katrina taught us that normalcy can be very slow in returning, but who could foresee major urban areas without life's essentials for weeks?

If it can happen in New York City, it can happen anywhere. More and more Americans are making the decision to prepare. Just in case...

Maybe you are like many Americans that have thought about stockpiling some supplies in the event of a crisis. But the task seems overwhelming, and you don't know where to start. Or, perhaps you have put off making disaster preparations because you are struggling to pay the bills already, and you think you cannot afford to buy lots of survival gear.



This guide is intended to give you a quick start. It will show you that you do not have to throw lots of money at the situation. Anyone on any budget can create a hoard or stockpile of food. Hoarding is part of nature's survival instinct. But the idea has a bad reputation because of the reality shows. No one thinks squirrels are paranoid or alarmist when they bury nuts for the winter. Preparing for a crisis is taking responsibility for your family's survival.

In this guide, you will find information on several food items that should be on everyone's food stockpile list and essential non-food items. It also gives you actions you can take today in preparation to survive a natural disaster or other crisis in your hometown.

Essential Items To Hoard

We always hope that any crisis will be short-lived. Optimistically thinking that things will get back to normal within a few days can leave your family's chances of survival in doubt.

Beyond all else, water is the most important commodity in a disaster or crisis. Water is one of the first items that will sell out after a crisis, so you want to build up a stockpile of water. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) suggests having enough food and water on hand to last for two weeks. You can survive for days without food; water, however, is another matter entirely. You should plan for one gallon per person per day at a minimum. This is for drinking purposes only. You will see from the items in the list following that water is necessary for cooking and rehydrating them so you can eat them.

Dried Staples

Pasta: Pasta is filling, nutritious and has a long shelf life. It is easy to store and, if needed, can be taken with you should you need to leave your home. Another plus is that pasta is fairly inexpensive, so it is an item that is easy to add to your storage even if you are on a tight budget.

Rice: This grain, a staple of any good emergency food storage, has a variety of cooking uses, and steaming rice can be done on virtually any type of stove. Uncooked rice has a very long shelf-life when properly stored.

Beans: Beans are known to be one of the best all-round survival foods. They're high in protein, and if sealed in food-grade buckets, they'll keep for up to ten years. Make sure to store them in a cool, dry, dark location. All dry beans are good to store; black beans, red beans, pinto beans, lentils, etc. You can sprout them (the exception is kidney beans which are toxic) for added nutrition.

Canned Goods

Canned Soups: Canned soups taste good, can be prepared on any type of stove and have a long shelf life. It is easy to store a variety of flavors and many of the soups are filling and provide a good amount of nutrition.

Canned Meats: While canned meat might not be your first choice, it is a great option when you want to store meat for the long term. Canned roast beef, ham, chicken, and fish can be heated on any type of stove and then used in a variety of filling and nutritious dishes. You can also preserve your own meats by manually canning them.

Canned Vegetables: You can purchase canned veggies or can your own. Either way, these are a staple in any good food storage stockpile. You need the nutrition that vegetables provide, yet getting fresh vegetables can be very difficult during a time of crisis. Remember, if you do not have a garden, now is a good time to start one. This will provide you with items that you will be able to use in canning and will also provide a renewable source of food.

Spices

Salt: Salt has an extremely long shelf life, is very easy to store and is an important part of baking and cooking most meals. Salt helps with water retention. An important factor during a crisis when you will be exerting yourself more than usual. Water is a precious commodity, and you want to keep hydrated. Salt has other uses besides being a delicious addition to many foods. It can also increase the shelf life of vegetables and can be used to clean up spills without the need to use potentially harmful chemicals.

Spices: Spices can help turn your emergency meals from bland to delicious. Spices typically store well and have a long shelf life. In addition to adding some flavor to your meals, some spices can help to keep your family healthy. For example, including some garlic in your diet each day can boost your immune system. Staying healthy during a crisis is more important than ever, because getting medicine or seeing a doctor may be more difficult.

Cooking Essentials

Cooking oil: Without power, margarine or butter will spoil. Cooking oil is necessary in cooking, and you'll need it if you are cooking over an open flame to avoid scorching your food.

Vegetable Shortening or Lard: These serve the same purpose as the above and can be used in baking as well.

Century Old Survival Classic

Beef Jerky: Beef jerky has been a survival food for centuries. Native Americans consumed it on the go as they wandered from hunting ground to hunting ground. Beef jerky has an extremely long shelf life, is easy to store and carry, and tastes delicious. You can buy beef jerky or you can learn to make your own. This is one of the most survival-friendly foods around. For a healthier version, you can substitute turkey for beef.

Powdered Liquids

Milk (condensed or powdered): Milk is a staple in cooking and baking, and you'll need it if you have cereal in your storage. Of course, you will not be able to keep a supply of fresh milk on hand, but condensed and powdered milk both store easily, have a long shelf life (powdered milk has a longer shelf life than condensed milk) and can be used for cooking, baking and drinking. The popular soy or rice milk in the small cartons can be stored without refrigeration, but once opened, it will spoil without cooling of some type.

Sports drinks: Sports drinks are a great source of energy. If you are working outside, especially in the heat, your body loses electrolytes which can be replaced with sport's drinks. They also can be a lifesaver if one of your small children falls ill.

Juice powders: Some juice powders contain vitamin C. Mix with water, and you'll have a healthy and delicious drink.

Protein drinks: If you can't get a full meal, a protein drink can provide you with the nutrition that you need to get by. These drink mixes usually have a very long shelf life and come in a variety of flavors.

All of these items will disappear from grocery store shelves almost immediately. Even large supermarkets only keep about a 3 day supply of items in inventory. To be truly prepared, you will need to the above types of items that have a long shelf life. During a crisis situation, it is extremely important that you get the proper nutrition. There is a good chance that you will be more active than normal. Additionally, you may have limited access to medical care, so maintaining good health is very important. You want to hoard items that do not need refrigeration or cooling. All of these can be stored on shelves or even in the back of a car. Even if you are unfamiliar with them, most of the items on the list are very easy to prepare. During a crisis situation, you may not have access to your regular stove and oven, so it is important that the items are able to be prepared either with no cooking or on a simple stove or even over an open fire.

Remember these are just the fast start items. There are many others we believe are essential to add to your survival hoard. We also have tips for things that you need to include depending on your personal familial circumstances. For a full list and much more detailed information check out our more depth publications.

Survival Means Lifestyle Adjustments

Our lifestyle has become dependent on technology for convenience. We cram as many things into the day as possible. We have become accustomed to immediate gratification. So, many families do not cook at home. Those that do often rely on preassembled convenience foods.

Preparing for a crisis will cause a shift in your thinking. Your customary methods of meal preparation may be unavailable. Probably, you will have no electricity. That fact alone brings up a host of items that you will need.

If you have a BBQ (charcoal or propane) or a hibachi, you have this covered already. The important thing is to have spare bags of charcoal or cylinders of propane. Propane cylinders can be used to power a light source like a camping lantern as well. They are also portable and fairly lightweight. If you choose, they can also be added to your bug out bag.

One of the staples of hoarding food for survival is canned goods. They may come from the store or they may be foods you canned yourself. Either way, you will need a hand can opener or an old fashioned bottle opener with the point and lip (church key). Another thing about foods packed in commercial cans is you can warm it right in the can without too much hassle. Home canned items can be heated in the jar as well, but this requires much more care and attention.

If you live in a part of the country that has blizzards, you probably already have candles or lanterns for light. Even if you revert back to a way of life that starts at sunrise and ends at sundown, you will still need sources of light. It is best to include a variety of light sources, such as candles, oil lamps and flashlights. Be sure to include a light source that is either solar powered or hand-cranked. Some of the newer ones also allow you to charge your cell phone. Do keep some battery operated flashlights as well as a good supply of extra batteries.

You will need a first aid kit. You can put your own kit together by purchasing items separately. This is covered more extensively later in the bug out bag section.

Don't forget to include personal hygiene items. Toilet paper heads the list. Soap, shampoo, and toothpaste are essential for maintaining good health. Feminine hygiene products are essential if you have women in your family. Even if your family unit does not include a woman, these are useful for first aid and the treatment of injuries.

Weapons and ammunition are useful for hunting and self-defense. Desperation brings out the worst in some people. During a time of serious crisis, the police protection may be limited. They will have their hands full. You will have to take on the responsibility of keeping your family safe from harm.

The Government Will Take Care Of Us

Over the past several years, the government has played a bigger role in our lives. We have become accustomed to the government stepping in when something unusual happens. Food stamps, unemployment benefits, disability payments have all contributed to this mindset.

Yes eventually, FEMA and other government agencies will arrive on the scene. But depending on the situation, it could be days or even weeks. You saw evidence of this during Sandy. What will you and your family do in the meantime?

In fact, FEMA cautions all of us to have enough food and water for at least two weeks. Certainly, you saw the long lines of people waiting for water and food supplies. If you have your own little hoard of supplies, you won't have to wait several hours every day for necessities.



It is a mistake to think that the government or rescue organizations are going to arrive in a hurry during a time of trouble and take care of you and your family. There have been many instances when such aid was simply unavailable or took weeks to reach those who desperately needed it. We saw this during Katrina and more recently during the aftermath from Sandy.

Even weeks after the storm, many Sandy survivors publically begged their elected officials (and anyone else who would listen) for help. Unfortunately, they were unprepared.

Instead of taking a chance at being in that position during a future disaster or crisis, consider the possibilities and do what you can to prepare. Remember, YOU are responsible for yourself and your family's survival. If you wait until disaster strikes to try and gather the items that you need, it might be too late. You'll be forced to fight the crowd for what little supplies are available on the shelves at the grocery store. The most essential items will sell out quickly, leaving your family without the basics that they need. You may also be putting yourself in harm's way, because crises create desperation and the mob mentality often begins to take over.

Prepare today. It's not about fear. It's about being ready to face disasters and have the best chance for survival.

Learn How to Use Items In Storage

A few of the items that you have in your emergency hoard may be ones you don't use on a regular basis. Of course, you will also have plenty of items that you are used to using, but it is important to know how to use all of the items that you have in your food storage.

When you choose items for your emergency food storage, you should also have a plan about how to use them. You don't need to come up with an exact meal plan, but you should have a basic idea of how the items can create meals.

Some are surprised when they buy long-term storage food items for the first time and realize that there are often no instructions on the can. Instead, you have to find other sources of information as to how to use each product.

Obviously, the time to do this is BEFORE a crisis occurs. You don't want the added stress of having to learn how to cook with strange ingredients while you are in the middle of dealing with a crisis situation.

Instead, become familiar with how to use each item in your food storage now. Then, should a disaster or crisis occur, you will have all the knowledge that you need to be able to continue to feed your family.

Practice Eliminates Stress And Costly Mistakes

You might be reluctant to make practice meals with your stockpile. Some of the food items tend to cost more than what you would normally pay at the grocery store. Still, it is best to practice with each item at least once for several reasons.

Will your family eat it? If your family turns up its nose at a certain meal then it has no place in your stockpile. When food is scarce, they may be less picky about what they eat, but it is just as easy to stock foods that they will enjoy as it is to stock foods that no one is enthusiastic about.

You can make mistakes without serious consequences. If you are nervous about cooking with long-term storage foods for the first time, it makes more sense to get some practice in during a time when you can afford to make some mistakes. Not only that, you may be inexperienced in cooking with alternative heat sources. During a crisis situation, you do not want to take a chance of wasting some of your precious survival supplies by burning or otherwise ruining them during cooking. If you practice now, a mistake won't hurt nearly as much, and you'll have time to perfect your skills before a real crisis occurs.

Practice can actually be fun. For some families, practicing for a crisis is a serious matter. Again, having all of the supplies in the world won't mean a lot if you don't know how to use them. Some families have drills during which they cook with nothing but items from their storage for an entire week.

To be sure they are truly ready for a crisis, some shun the use of their oven and stove and rely solely on their alternative means of cooking. This might sound extreme, but by doing such drills, your family will not be the least bit intimidated by having to rely on alternative cooking methods during a crisis.



Along the same lines, have you ever used a hand can opener? Once at a dinner party, one of the guests offered to help the hostess. It was her first experience using a hand cranked can opener.

Have you ever pitched a tent or created a shelter with a tarp and a rope? Putting up some tents is similar to assembling children's toys at the holidays. Many times, you can't make heads or tails of the instructions.

Practice will make the situation much less stressful and allow you to easily accomplish the needed kitchen or other survival chores when a crisis occurs.

What Can I Do Today To Get Started?

A disaster is not the only reason that grocery stores will sell out of certain items. Something as simple as truck driver's strike can cripple the food supply chain and leave shelves empty in locations all over the country.

Several news stories during the drought mentioned that a lack of acreage with crops has already caused food prices to rise, but could soon cause a worldwide food shortage.

One of the quickest ways to anticipate a food shortage is to watch the supply lines. When you watch the evening news, listen for any talk of supply lines being interrupted. If such activity is making the news then there is a good chance a food shortage is coming, and it's time to stock up.

Sandy may be motivating you right now. But if you don't act day to day life will lull you back into complacency. So, don't procrastinate. It is impossible to know when a disaster or other event will cause grocery stores to sell out of the items that you need. If you start today, then you have the best possible chance of being prepared.

Put Together A Bug Out Bag

Most folks make their survival preparations with the idea that they will hole up in their home and ride the disaster or crisis out there. So, they may have prepared and stockpiled for years and feel quite proud of themselves.

But we saw from Sandy, you might have to flee with very little warning. What would you do? That's where a bug out bag comes in. A bug out bag is a mini hoard of survival supplies. You pick up and bug out.

The three things to remember about a bug out bag are:

- It should be complete.
- It should be compact.
- It should be close (easily accessible).

All you need is a good quality backpack. You should waterproof the material or purchase a water proof cover. Remember, this is a quick start guide designed for you to feel you have seized the moment and started to prepare for your family's survival; more elaborate backpacks are available and discussed in our other publications. As you prepare, you will see the need for multiple bug out bags.

Most people can make a start from items they have on hand. You can buy fully stocked bug out bags, but we do not recommend that for several reasons. Primarily, the cost is always higher than if you bought the items and assembled them yourself. Secondly,

your family is unique; only you can decide what items are the most important for your family's survival. Finally, when you assemble the bag, you know the quality of the items you are adding to it.



Food and Water are musts for the bag. Space is a consideration; so the typical food stuffs are too bulky. Most survival experts recommend enough food for 3 weeks. The most cost effective and space saving way is high calorie food bars. These are available at survival websites and emergency supply retailers.

Water is a thornier problem. You can carry some water but 21 gallons (enough for one person for 3 weeks) is very heavy and prohibitively bulky. Even the minimum we recommend, water for three days, is going to feel like a boulder after a day of walking.

You will be forced to find other sources of water. You should take this fact into consideration when you leave your home and plan on heading for an area with known water sources. There is no guarantee the water will be safe to drink though. You will need a portable water purifier and filter.

You will need a first aid kit. It is best to put this together yourself because you can conserve space and weight. If you take medication, include an extra supply. If you wear contacts, stock extra pairs and fluids. It is also recommended you put a pair of glasses in your bug out bag.

You need one change of clothes, 3-4 extra pairs of socks, and a backup pair of shoes. Your climate dictates what type of clothing to pack.

Shelter is your next worry. A tent is ideal, but if you cannot carry one, then include tarps, rope, an axe (or all-purpose tool) and duct tape. As you learn more about disaster/crisis preparedness you will discover that duct tape is a survivalist's best friend. These items allow you to create a shelter when you get to where you are going.

Heat is necessary even in the desert. You will need waterproof matches and a firestarter. Obviously, the axe we mentioned above can help you break up firewood. If you do not normally carry a knife in your pocket, a Swiss Army type knife with multiple tools is a space saving and effective addition to your bug out bag. A survival blanket is lightweight necessity.

The tins that mints (Altoids) come in are useful ways to store a few small items. They are small enough you can have several of them anywhere you spend time. If you plan the contents carefully, they become mini survival kits.

On Your Next Shopping Trip, Buy An Extra Food Item From The List

Especially, if you have dealing with the effects of the recession on your own personal budget, you may be wondering how you can afford to build stockpile of survival food to sustain your family through the next disaster or crisis.

Start small; nearly everyone can afford to buy one extra item from the list every time they make a trip to the store. This can actually save you money in the long run depending on events in the world. Although it is illegal, some food and other retailers will raise prices when there is an impending disaster or they expect shortages. They may even ration certain items limiting you to the purchase of only one. Thus, if you buy now, you are actually saving money in the future. Even without any specific crisis, food prices steadily creep upwards over time.

So what are some other ways you can lessen the bite of collecting a survival food hoard?

If you have not investigated generic food items this is the time to try some. In the past, they may not have been comparable to the name brand items. But, your grocery store learned fast that consumers will buy them if the quality is the same. Today, the generic store brands are frequently packaged by the exact same facilities as the name brands. The same food for a lower price is a win-win for the survival conscious consumer like you.

Coupons are a proven method of saving money. Even a few cents here and there add up and can finance the purchase of those extra items you pick up on each trip to the store. Yes, it means a bit more work, but coupons are readily available online and from the Sunday and weekly food section in most larger newspapers.

We mentioned gardening under canned vegetables. Home canned vegetables have a higher nutritional value than commercially canned ones. Almost anyone can grow a few vegetables in pots on the patio, balcony, or even indoors.

If you are eligible, food banks or churches with food programs can help you accumulate many of the crucial items on the list above. The Church of The Latter Day Saints (Mormons) sometimes has food pantries that sell home-canned foods to the public. Mormons are encouraged to keep at least a year's supply of food on hand by their religious leaders.

Is There A Doctor In the House?

We've got very far away from natural methods of healing and the folk remedies our great grandparents all learned from their older relatives. Natural healing remedies and the basic principles of first aid are invaluable in a crisis.

Why?

Because you won't have access to your doctor. You may have seen during Sandy, even the hospitals were evacuating patients because they did not have emergency power-their backup generators were not functioning.

We made the point several times already that during a disaster or crisis day-to-day life will be very different. More strenuous, more dangerous activities will be the order of the day. You may be cleaning up debris; you may be wading through toxic water; you may be stranded in a high rise and someone may have a medical issue.

We recommend you download a first aid book from the internet and print it out. This is one of the best ones that has been around for years:

http://hesperian.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/en_wtnd_2011/en_wtnd_2011_full.pdf

One thing that you can do to prepare for a survival medical situation is to take instructional classes from the American Red Cross. General First Aid, CPR, and Infant resuscitation are just a few of the classes available. There are classes for all age groups and skill levels. Once you have received some first aid training, you can begin to assemble your family's survival medicine kit.

You can personalize your first aid kit to accommodate the types of events that happen in your area. Earthquakes, floods, tornados, and firestorms all present different types of injuries, which can necessitate the inclusion of different items for treatment. Survival medicine does not need to be fancy, just functional.

If your family unit includes seniors, babies, or members with special needs (diabetes, asthma, etc.), extra supplies specific to them should also be a part of your survival first aid kit.

Papers You Can't Live Without

Some of the tips we share with you spill over into benefits for your everyday life. This is one of them. Most people's important papers are chaos. You might be meticulously organized elsewhere but when it comes to your personal documents they can be in boxes, file cabinets, or drawers anywhere in the house.

Locate your important papers preserve them in protective materials and location. Some examples are:

- Birth certificates
- Insurance policies
- Passports
- Social security cards
- Medical records/copies of prescriptions
- Bank account information
- Deeds and titles to homes and cars
- Computer backup: This should be in the form of two memory sticks. One can be kept with you and the other should be kept in a secondary location.

Many use a fire/weather proof safe, but remember that you need to be able to grab these items and go. For that reason, an ammunition case is a better choice. It is portable, yet still offers the needed protection for the documents. If you can find one that fits inside your safe...so much the better

The days of the address book are gone—replaced by storing your life in your phone. Can you even remember your home phone number? Or anyone else's phone number for that matter? Of course not...that is what speed dial is for. If your phone is dead, you cannot access those numbers.

Suppose you lost your phone? You would lose all your contacts. You would be forced to wait until your colleagues, friends, and family called you...

Include a list of the important phone numbers of friends and family or email addresses. Why email addresses? Because it is a method of communicating that doesn't require both (or all) parties to have the same services at the same time. Suppose you have cell service, but your parents, who live in a different part of town, do not. You can email them. Later, they may have the ability to access a computer or get their cell service back.

We have made the point several times in this guide. Power is very fickle during a crisis or a disaster. Cell phone batteries need power. By the time your family members can get your email, you may have a dead phone. Technology is a boon most of the time, but during a crisis our dependence on it can be a source of frustration.

Have A Family Discussion About Survival

In most cases, you are not looking to provide for simply your own survival. You probably have a spouse or significant other; you may have children; you may have extended family members. Now is the time to talk about your concerns with them.

The news of the day will provide many opportunities to discuss why you need to prepare as a family unit. The events surrounding Sandy are a perfect starting point because they were widely publicized, and most people spent at least some time following the news of the storm and its aftermath in one way or another.

The more cooperation you gain from your family the lighter the load you will carry for survival preparation. Piquing your spouse's interest allows you to spread out the learning curve as well as the workload.

Of course, the trend in America is to shield our children from unpleasantness. This is misguided because it doesn't really work. Technology gives your children access to information about disasters, crises, and tragedies. Remain calm. Children take their cues from you. If you're agitated, they won't even hear the information, they'll hear your emotion.

You want to be listening to what they are concerned about. Be honest, but don't overdo the details. Take the opportunity to put a survival spin on these events with them. It is better that they hear it from you. It turns a fearful situation to one of hope. Mental preparation goes a long way towards turning whiners into winners.

Over several days, children may return with further questions as they process the event.

Guidelines for parents:

- Inform: Explain and stay calm
- Listen: Let them ask questions.
- Normalize: Go back to your routine
- Encourage ways to help
- Memorialize if family members were touched by the events

Closing Thoughts...

Don't ever think that a disaster cannot visit you. It doesn't matter if it's never happened before. It doesn't matter if you live a charmed life and nothing bad ever happens to you. It CAN happen. Secondly, don't let the mocking of others stop you from doing what you feel is best. Remember, no one makes fun of squirrels.

Many people think that accumulating a stockpile and having any type of emergency plan means that you are an alarmist or paranoid, but quite the opposite is true. When you are prepared, you have no reason to fear.

You are not being an alarmist; you are simply being wise and preparing for the possibilities of tomorrow. For every day you are prepared to survive on your own, for every disaster you care for yourself and your family in, government organizations with disaster response missions can worry about others in terms of supplies. Law enforcement has one less potential criminal running about because you won't be among those stealing to feed their kids.

Disasters Happen Everyday

If you live in an area that is prone to hurricanes, tornadoes or other natural disasters, then you already understand that disasters happen every single day. Some come without warning while others may give you a few hours or days to prepare.

Today, tomorrow and every day after that, a disaster will take place somewhere in the world. It may be a "small" disaster, such as a hurricane that only impacts a small area and barely makes the national news.

It may be a huge disaster, such as the Asian tsunami, superstorm Sandy, or Katrina that becomes the top story for weeks and changes the face of emergency preparedness.

Everybody has different reasons for wanting to prepare. Your circumstances are unique to you. We hope this answers some of your questions and at the very least has you thinking about beginning to prepare for the next crisis or disaster.

If your circumstances seem to create obstacles in certain areas, our more extensive publications have tips, strategies and alternative suggestions that can help you work around those seeming obstacles.