



Guide to Food Prep





# INTRODUCTION

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In 2006, during Atlanta's "Snowmageddon," we realized that businesses like our own were ill-prepared to support employees during such emergencies and exponentially bigger disasters such as Katrina and Harvey in Louisiana and Texas that were forthcoming.

Since then, the annual number of disasters and their costs to business have gone up, way up. To make matters worse, what one can buy with a dollar is decreasing, making it harder for the workforce to make ends meet and afford good food.

Thus, we offer the reader a quick overview on the history of meals, nutrition, food variety around the world, and what it took for our ancestors to survive and what it will take for workers and families to survive today. This book includes ideas for how to augment emergency food with common ingredients and items in the pantry and perhaps growing in the garden. Foraging for edibles in the field across the street or in the woods is another resourceful way to add nutrition and flavor, and extend the duration of emergency food kits.

This booklet is meant to support the delicious and nutritious variety of foods we make and sell to businesses, organizations, and communities every day to provide food insurance and peace of mind before disaster strikes.

**Here's to thriving in all times!**





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# Chapter 1 WATER

## To Thirst Not

**What are your options if tap water is undrinkable or runs out?**

Water, the stuff of life itself. Nothing on our beloved blue planet would be alive without it. We'd be Mars, a lifeless desert. Every cell in our body contains water. Every breath we take contains water. And most importantly, every cup of coffee is made with water!

Water is a vastly overlooked emergency supply. We take it for granted that it will always be there, sitting ready in our pipes at home or squirting out from our refrigerator door at the push of a button. Are we aware how critical it is to our survival? As Benjamin Franklin once wrote, "When the well is dry, we know the worth of water." How true.

People can live without food for a couple weeks, but we must have clean drinking water within three days to survive. Most emergency and disaster foods require clean water to rehydrate or boil to eat. Therefore, water storage is a critical investment that should not be overlooked.

As we've recently experienced, supermarkets can quickly sell out of water or become impossible to reach, making preparedness very difficult to accomplish in real time. If city water gets contaminated during floods, hurricanes, and other disasters, the ability to access clean water becomes a must-have for emergencies and survival. That's weather you boil it, make it with a filter, or have stored water prepared for emergencies.





## How much water will you need?

Preparedness experts recommend that we store a minimum of one gallon of water per person, per day which can mean two quarts to drink, one quart to cook, and one quart to maintain hygiene. For example, a family of four will need approximately 12 gallons of water to get through a 72-hour emergency.





# What are your options if tap water is undrinkable or runs out?

If tap water is flowing but contaminated by microorganisms, boiling the water would be the first choice to kill germs.<sup>1</sup> Another method of killing microorganisms would be to use 1/8 tsp of bleach to a gallon of water and make drinking water safe. Another option is using iodine tablets to kill bacteria. However, none of these processes will remove harmful substances like lead, nitrates, and pesticides. If contaminated by lead, mercury, and other toxic physical materials, the water needs to be heavily filtered down to 0.005-micron size to be safe.

According to the CDC: “Unopened commercially bottled water is the safest and most reliable source of water in an emergency.” Storing bottled water away from sunlight will extend its longevity. However plastic bottles can leach chemicals into water over time and its permeability can allow ambient gases to breach the bottle. One can also get a water bladder, fill it up with clean water and stick it in the closet for future use. Follow CDC guidelines to do it right.<sup>2</sup>

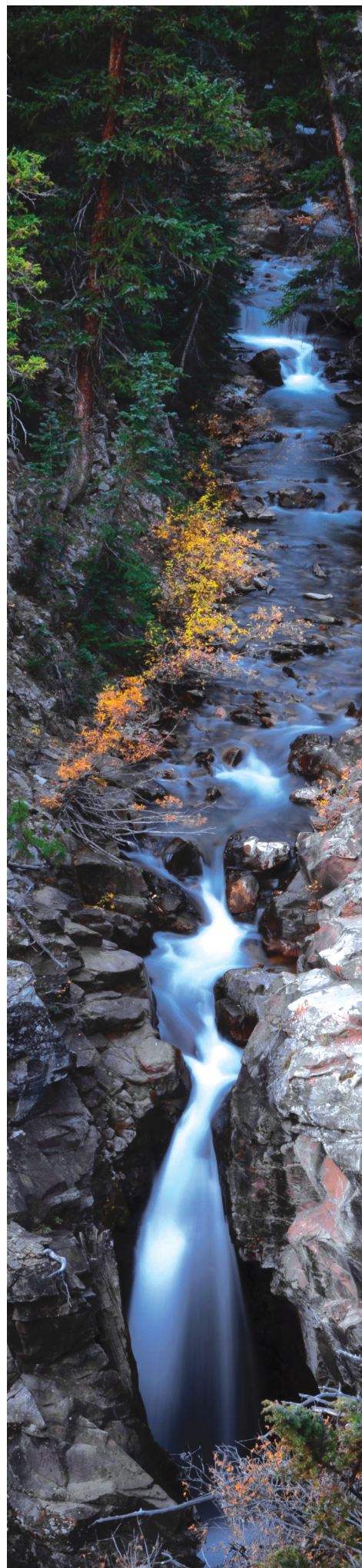
Despite what the CDC says, it is worth noting that a new and superior option to bottled water, is aluminum canned water which can offer 100% protection from contaminants. With a shelf-life in some cases of up to 30 years, storing purified canned water is one of the best options for use in emergencies.

There are also some unconventional ways to find drinkable water during emergencies. We may not think of the spigot at the bottom of our home water heater, for example. Those usually store between 20 and up to a hundred gallons of water. If you get an emergency alert, don’t shower, or take a bath! Save that water for drinking and cooking!

Outdoor spigots on apartment complexes and commercial/industrial buildings are great sources for stored water in an emergency. Put what is commonly called a “silcox key” in the glove compartment of your car and you will have access to water from nearly every building in the United States.

As water is the single most important element for our survival, why not prepare and store a few of these options today. The CDC suggests a minimum of three days and preferably a two-week supply for every man, woman, and child in the country. Canned and bottled water, bleach, iodine, silcox keys, filters, and water bladders are all readily available.

When is the best time to have a water solution? Now!





# Chapter 2 NUTRITION

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In the immortal words of Count Rugen (from the film “The Princess Bride”), “If you haven’t got your health, then you haven’t got anything.”

As we come to terms with natural disasters such as wildfires, floods, and hurricanes becoming the norm, it is moving to see and read about the strength of people, whether a part of disaster recovery groups or individuals, as they jump into action to help and save the lives of others or work tirelessly on recovery efforts.

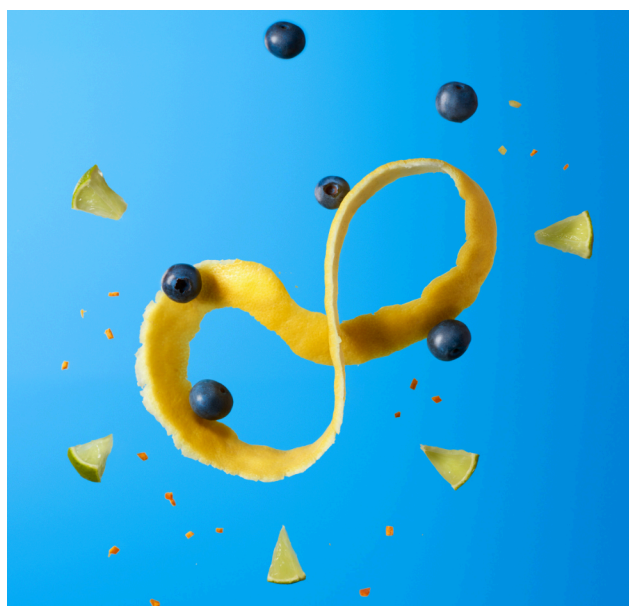
What we are capable of during disasters and emergencies inspires and reminds us that to stay strong and healthy through unpredictable events, we must take care of ourselves. Proper nutrition is one of the key elements of mental acuity, vitality and living a long, healthy life alongside fresh air, clean water, and enough exercise. The link between our health and food is undeniable.

# What key nutrients do we need as human beings to survive?



There are three essential nutrients in food that break down in the body to sustain us. They are protein, carbohydrates, and fat, and they each play important roles to keep us alive and well.

The first nutrient is protein, and your body would not be complete without it. This nutrient helps maintain and fix cells and even make new ones. Protein breaks down in the body and becomes amino acids. These acids help sustain muscle tissues, skin, and body processes, such as digestion. Sources of protein can be from meat and from plants like beans. During a crisis, eating a balanced amount of protein means you'll have the energy to carry on.



The second nutrient is carbohydrates which comes in the form of delicious fruits, vegetables, and grains. It is the body's preferred energy source and will be accessed as soon as you eat meals like spaghetti or mac and cheese. Carbs provide energy to your nervous system and brain. An active person during a crisis will rely heavily on carbs to keep them going as they make efforts to survive or work toward disaster recovery.

The third nutrient is fat and despite its bad reputation, not all fat is bad. They are high in calories, and we need those calories to help energize the body and let's be honest, fat tastes good! Healthy fats help the body absorb nutrients and minerals. Fat also keeps the body warm and satiates hunger by making us feel full. It makes sense that people used to bulk up for winter when food might be scarce. Fat is our body's backup energy when needed.

On a typical day, we need a balance of all three nutrients and enough calories to think clearly and function well. During major disasters or emergencies, this fact is unchanged. Having emergency food available is even more crucial when access to fresh food or the ability to prepare food is limited. The World Health Organization says during emergencies, we need at least 2100 calories per day with 46 grams of protein to survive. But to function well during disasters and emergencies, we would do better to be able to eat more than the bare minimum.

Consider that in the United States, a somewhat active adult man needs between 2,200-2,800 calories a day; and the somewhat active adult woman needs 1,800-2,200 calories a day depending on age and daily activity. So don't skimp on emergency food. Make sure you are planning for enough calories per person with most of those calories coming from carbohydrates for quick energy and the rest from a healthy balance of protein, fat, and fiber.



# Chapter 3 MEALS

## Timing is Everything

Eating “three-square meals” has evolved over the centuries to mean three sensible meals per day consisting of breakfast, lunch, and dinner. However, its origins are told from several stories of lore.

The first is cited to be from sailors who used to eat off square wooden boards. After a long day’s work, they would be given a large meal that filled the board and thus a square meal. A second story comes from Britain where a dinner plate used to be a square piece of wood with a bowl carved out to hold a portion of stew that was always cooking over a fire. Brits carried their square when traveling so they could get a square meal. Another one comes from the U.S. military when troops had to sit formally and upright with arms and legs at right angles. Their shape formed a square and so eating in the mess hall was a square meal.

Interesting tales aside, today’s meals have evolved from cultural norms, convenience around work and school stemming from the industrial revolution, and marketing such as cereal companies establishing that breakfast is the most important meal of the day in the 1940s.





But is there benefit to eating regular meals and does it impact your health and ability to function well? According to studies from King's College London the answer is "yes." The research correlates nutrition with when or how often we eat. Many of our bodies' food-related processes are controlled by circadian rhythms which is the natural cycle of physical, mental, and behavior changes the body experiences in 24 hours. It can affect appetite, digestion and the metabolism of fat, cholesterol, and glucose. You could say it is our body's built-in clock so inconsistent eating times can throw off our body's energetic rhythms. Disrupting the very system that controls our nutritional processes, according to one of the studies, can, surprisingly, lead to disease. If disrupting circadian rhythms can lead to disease, and eating at irregular times disrupts those rhythms, it stands to reason that consistent mealtime is related to better health. Breakfast offers a solid case-in-point as its benefits have been researched to show improved memory and concentration, lower "bad" LDL cholesterol levels, and decreased chances of getting diabetes, heart disease, and being overweight.

It may be challenging to keep a regular schedule during emergencies. However, having access to enough meals with the calories needed to stay alert, concentrate, and feel energized, can be an important aspect of survival and recovery not only for yourself but for those you are able to assist.

In the following chapters, we offer an overview of various daily meals and recipes including some of the food items we bring to market with ways to 'dress them up' a bit with staple ingredients you may have on hand or perhaps growing in the garden. While our meals, fruits, and vegetables will stand on their own for the durations we have designed, it can also be fun and tasty to augment them with foraged foods such as wild mushrooms, dandelions, or a bit of young sassafras tree leaves. You may even recreate a very old community tradition called "stone soup," by inviting a trusted neighbor or two to bring over some beef, chicken, fresh vegetables, or pasta to make an even better meal, together!

It is helpful to remember that during The Great Depression, and for that matter throughout the history of our survival as a species, people did what they had to do to get by when food was scarce. Since the rise of the industrial revolution and subsequent advances in food-tech, farm-tech, and transportation, we have more food and edible varieties to choose from than any human being alive just 200 years ago. We can get fresh avocados, bananas, and pineapples from Central and South America, 100 spices from around the world, ice-cream made of coconut, Japanese sushi, Nepalese goat, and just about anything you can think of eating from every corner of the world!

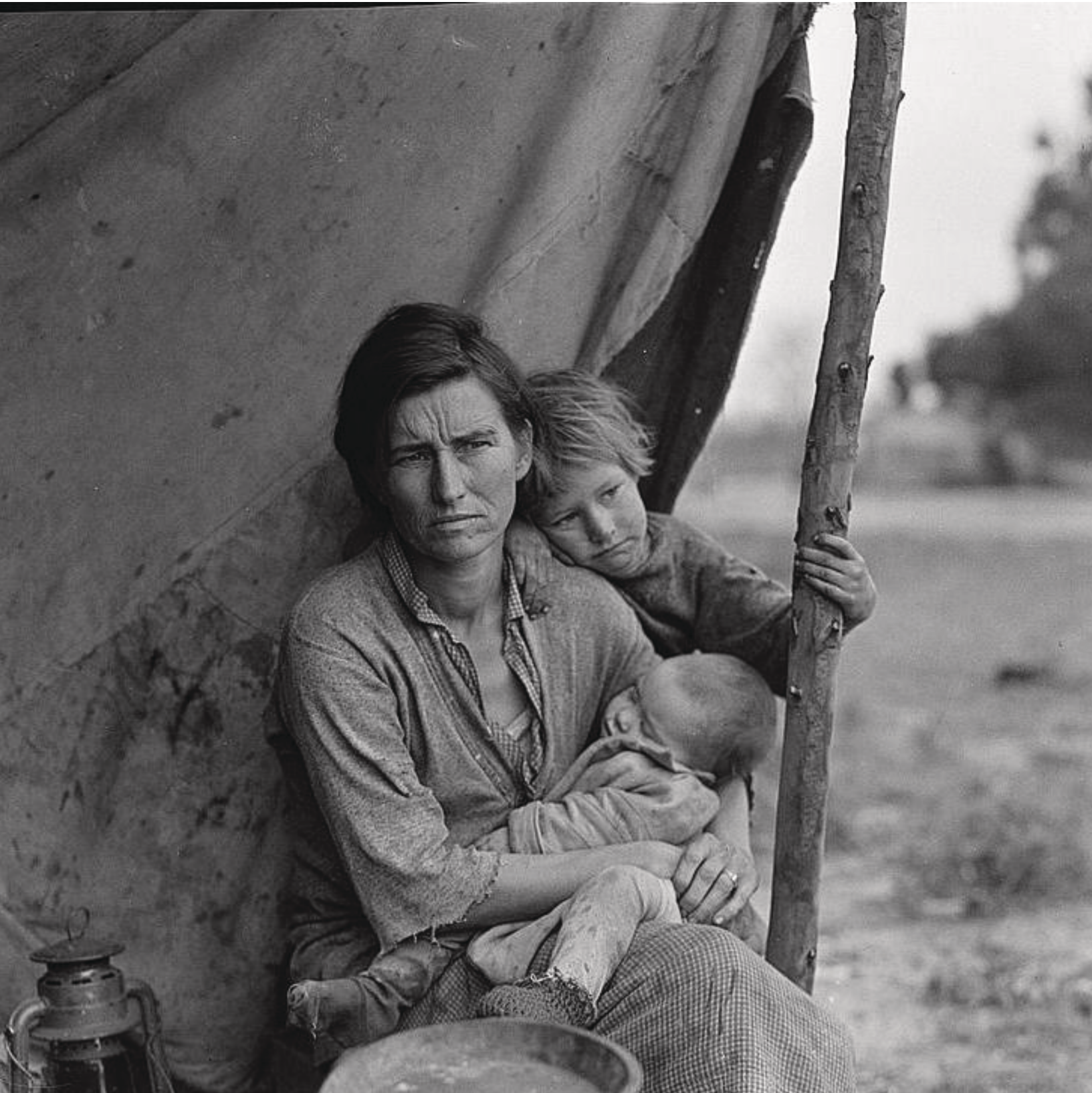
But before we go into what we typically enjoy for meals, let's see if we can loosen our ideas about what we consider edible or not. A great reference point is The Great Depression. What did Americans do to create meals when they often had little to nothing?



# Chapter 4

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## DEPRESSION ERA COOKING







During The Great Depression, a quarter of the population didn't have work and people survived the worst of the 1930s in a variety of ways — by helping each other, living with less, moving to find work, and by accepting charity. These are the very same ways people today are coping with the simultaneous challenges of the pandemic, climate change, devastating weather events, and economic downturn. With food shortages and rationing, little money, and dust bowls, people, back then, had to find new ways to stretch meals to fill bellies and use what was in their cupboards and forage for free edibles wherever they could. Meat was in short supply so many families relied on rice, beans, and cheese. According to one account, wool and cotton lint and sawdust were even added to stews to make it more filling. We don't suggest these items as food, but it goes to show how resourceful and flexible people needed to be to eat.

Meanwhile the USDA promoted "Farm Gardens" to encourage people to grow their own food and even supplied seeds, fertilizers, and gardening tools. But, food doesn't grow overnight. It takes time. We can't just throw seeds on the ground and be fed the next day. Some families were able to learn to grow fresh produce and others picked up foraging. Today, home gardening is experiencing a revival and people are learning to grow their own food to eat healthier and augment what they must buy. Foraging for wild food such as flowers, mushrooms, berries, and greens is a wonderful way to introduce variety and nutrition to meals especially when fresh food is scarce. What we consider to be weeds like Dandelion, Clover, and Wood Sorrel were added to meals during the Depression. All of these wild greens are edible from root to flower and nutritious to boot. They are often abundant and fun to experiment with in salads, sautees, and soups.

Tough times call for anti-fragile practices like backyard gardening and foraging, culinary creativity, and imagination. Starting a garden or foraging may sound daunting, however, in the long game we are playing, it is beneficial to start thinking ahead and putting into practice what we may need to rely on to live well, no matter what comes our way.

# Chapter 5 BREAKFAST

## Break Your Fast

Around the world, breakfast is an important and diverse meal. A common American breakfast is often a cold or hot cereal, or the classic eggs, bacon, and toast. Our morning meals are influenced by many cultures yet very different from others. France, Spain, and Italy keep it light with a pastry or toast and the must-have cup of coffee. Rice and beans with a side eggs, avocados, plantains, or cheese are what's served in Costa Rica. The full English breakfast is famous for filling you up with eggs, sausage, thick-cut bacon, beans, mushrooms, toast, a cooked tomato, and perhaps blood sausage! And don't forget a pot of tea to wash it all down. Meanwhile the full traditional Japanese breakfast is a beautiful balance of many little dishes such as miso soup, rice, pickled vegetables, fish or tofu, sticky fermented soybeans, and dried seaweed, all accompanied by green tea. Within each culture, all are delicious incentives to get up and have breakfast!

But is breakfast the most important meal of the day? According to research, skipping breakfast can throw off your body's rhythm of fasting while sleeping, and eating when you wake up. In the morning, blood sugar is usually low, you are dehydrated from having no water for many hours, and your muscles and mind do not work at their best. Breakfast helps replenish and fuel the body to increase energy. Eating breakfast helps burn calories throughout the day by kick-starting your metabolism so you can get things done and focus on work or school. And if you are facing an emergency, fuel yourself first to be alert and energized for what's ahead.

Here are a couple of easy breakfast recipes using our emergency food products.



Serves 5

# Simple Overnight Oats

- 2 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1 pouch dry (5 cups) Secure Foods Freeze Dried Sliced Strawberries
- 2 cups milk, any kind
- 5 teaspoons honey or maple syrup or other sweetener
- 1/4 cup nut butter, any kind

Add all ingredients to a container with a lid.

Stir ingredients together and place in refrigerator overnight, or for 2-4 hours if eating sooner.

When ready to serve, divide into five bowls and enjoy!

Serving Suggestion



Serves 6

# Garden Scramble

- 1 tablespoon butter or cooking oil
- 1/4 cup diced onion, fresh or rehydrated equivalent
- 1 pouch prepared (3 ¾ cups) Secure Foods Whole Egg
- 1 can (14.5 oz) diced tomatoes, drained
- salt and pepper to taste

In a large nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat.

Add onions and cook, stirring frequently, 2-3 minutes.

Add rehydrated eggs, salt, and pepper.

Cook to desired texture.

Add canned tomatoes and stir until mixture is heated through.

Serving Suggestion





# Chapter 6 LUNCH

## Midday Fuel

Office workers around the world eat different types of lunches to fuel up for the second half of their workday. Whether the culture is to take a long or short lunch, or eat at the office, out, or back home, taking a lunch break is consistent around the world. In India lunch is often packed in a stainless-steel container that includes rice, spicy meats, dried legumes, curry, vegetables, and a chapati flatbread. Italian workers with little time often go out for rectangular cut pizza so two slices can be conveniently sandwiched together. In China and Taiwan, workers grab a Chinese bento box for lunch. Kiosks all over cities sell metal or Styrofoam boxes that have four compartments to hold rice and meat or eggs, and the other three for dumplings, dried bean curd, pickled ginger, or steamed vegetables.

From Roman times to the Middle Ages, the midday meal used to be the main “dinner” of the day. Before artificial light, people got up much earlier in the day and went to bed earlier too, following natural circadian rhythms. After toiling in the field all morning, people were hungry and would eat a big meal in the middle of the day. The industrial revolution further influenced mealtimes as factory workers needed a noontime meal to have the energy to keep going through the afternoon. Though Americans sit mostly at a desk and take the typical 15-minute lunch break, the modern working day requires that we fuel up in the middle of the day to sustain energy for the rest of the afternoon.

Follow these recipes to make lunch from our emergency food options.

Serves 6

# Veggie Cheeseburger

- 1 pouch (3 cups) prepared Secure Foods Veggie Burger
- 1/2 cup sliced onion, fresh or re-hydrated
- 12 slices cheese, any kind
- 12 buns
- ketchup and/or mustard to taste
- lettuce and sliced tomato, optional

Assemble on each hamburger bun: one patty topped with a slice of cheese, sliced onion and ketchup/mustard to taste.

Add lettuce and sliced tomato if available.

Serving Suggestion





**Serves 4**

# Chicken Broth Ramen

- 1 pouch prepared (8 cups) Secure Foods Hearty Vegetable Chicken Flavored Soup
- 4 packs ramen noodles
- 2 cups broccoli, fresh, frozen, or rehydrated
- 4 hard boiled eggs, optional

Bring soup to a boil in a large saucepan.

Add broccoli and cook 3-4 minutes.

Add in ramen noodles and cook, stirring occasionally until tender, 4-5 minutes.

Divide among four bowls and top with hard boiled eggs, if using.

Serving Suggestion



# Chapter 7 DINNER

## Family Time

Though breakfast and lunch may not be a family affair, it appears the family dinner is common around the world. In Bangkok, Thailand, a multi-generational family ate an omelet with carrots, stir-fried minced pork and eggplant, and southern Thai sour curry with cauliflower. Family members cleaned up after themselves when the meal was over. In Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, a weeknight dinner was simple smashed beans, and a mixture of banana, bread, dates, cream and honey. A typical dinner in Port-au-Prince, Haiti consists of black bean sauce served with rice, and meat and crab marinated with citrus fruits grown in the yard. A family in Rehovot, Israel sits down to eat Yemeni soup, chicken schnitzel, and spicy Moroccan fish with bread and rice. A small family in Western Australia ate pan-fried local red snapper with broccolini and sweet potato fries. The kids had extra fruits and vegetables. A typical weeknight dinner in the U.S. could be spaghetti with meat sauce, green salad, and garlic bread.

With the invention of electricity and artificial light, people could stay up later and thus, dinner time became later and later. With the working lunch in full swing, family time at the end of the day became the norm. For the middle and lower classes, work hours often defined mealtimes. In the 1950s, the family dinner was firmly established with consumer spending at an all-time high and the introduction of the television into people's homes. The wholesome family having regular dinners together was immortalized through shows like "Leave it to Beaver."

Since then, the benefits of family dinners especially for children's development and socialization have been lauded by nutritionists. In addition, skipping dinner like skipping breakfast is ill-advised. Going to bed on an empty stomach has been shown to lead to less sleep, weight gain, loss of muscle mass, and less energy.

With enough stored food and water for everyone we care about, no matter what the situation may be, a satisfied belly and a good sleep will help us all face the next day rested and energized.

These are a couple of comforting recipes to make from our emergency food line.





**Serves 4**

# Creamy Beef & Vegetable Stir-Fry

- 1 pouch prepared (4 cups) Secure Foods Creamy Stroganoff
- 1 lb. ground beef, cooked
- 2 cups broccoli, frozen or re-hydrated
- 1/2 cup onions, any kind
- 1 cup carrots, frozen
- black pepper to taste

In a large pan over medium heat, combine all ingredients and stir well to combine.

Heat until completely warmed through.

Serving Suggestion





Serves 6

# Tuna Casserole

- 1 pouch prepared (5 cups) Secure Foods Elbow Macaroni
- 3 tablespoons butter, fresh or re-hydrated
- 1/2 cup onions, any kind
- 2 cups peas, frozen, canned, or re-hydrated
- 2 cans cream of mushroom soup
- 3 cups milk, any kind
- 2 cups cheese, any kind
- 3 cans of tuna
- 1 cup breadcrumbs

Preheat oven to 425° F.

In a large bowl, mix all ingredients except for breadcrumbs.

Spread into casserole dish and top with breadcrumbs.

Bake 18-20 minutes until bubbly.

Serving Suggestion





# Chapter 8

## FOOD PRESERVATION

### Make it Last!

Human beings are fortunate that nature provides so much food, but food (of all types) has one inconvenient quality: it spoils. As soon as vegetables and fruit are harvested, they begin to slowly rot. Meat goes bad quickly too, particularly in warmer climates. Thus, for millennia, humankind has devised various and ingenious ways to preserve food.

Let's go over the most common ways people have done it for centuries and see what has been borrowed from the past to make incredible strides in having foods last decades.

Drying is no doubt one of the very oldest methods of keeping food edible, possibly the very oldest. The ancient Romans dried their fruit, and evidence exists that indicates cultures in the Far and Middle East were drying foods in the sun (or by fire) as early as 12,000 B.C.



Today, dehydrated and freeze-dried foods are readily available for purchase and are possible DIY solutions. French inventors Masson and Shollet developed dehydrating machines in the mid-1800s. They dried vegetables using air heated to 105 degrees Fahrenheit then compressed the vegetables into cakes. World War I and II helped advance the technology significantly because of the increased demand of food for the troops on all sides. Freeze-drying was one of those advancements and originally developed for medical use during WWII. This preservation or processing technique is now applied to a wide variety of products including food.

Salting is another ancient method, used thousands of years ago and throughout the centuries, mainly to preserve meat. It is a form of drying, as salt drains meat of the moisture microorganisms need to survive.



Fermenting foods enabled those in the 1900s to store them without refrigeration. People commonly fermented and ate cheese, bread, beer, and vinegar. Occurring in an airless environment, fermenting is an anaerobic process. In an oxygen-free environment, desirable bacteria digest sugars, starches, and carbohydrates and release alcohols, carbon dioxide, and organic acids that preserve food. The undesirable bacteria that cause food to spoil, rot, and decay, can't survive in an anaerobic environment.

Freezing and boiling are venerable, well-known means of preserving food that go back many centuries. Some ancient cultures in cold climates built ice houses that could keep foods frozen for up to a year or more.

Canning is a semi-modern process invented in France by Nicholas Appert in the 1790s. Canned food is heated to destroy microorganisms and then vacuum sealed in a jar or can to prevent other microorganisms from entering. Canning's benefit is versatility and simplicity with no special equipment needed. Many types of foods cannot be dried, salted, fermented, boiled, or frozen, but can be effectively canned for preservation.

Each of these different ways of preserving food was invented by our ancestors so that we could survive hard times such as drought, fire, war, floods, and even the winters we now take for granted (as we hop into our modern heated or cooled chariots and head to the market where there is an abundance of ever-present fresh food from all over the world).

However, not all methods of food preservation are ideal for the modern life and the various current threats to people and businesses.



# Chapter 9 BE PREPARED

## What's Most Practical During an Emergency

When faced with an emergency or disaster, dehydrated and freeze-dried foods are possibly the best practical preserved food option. Dehydration and freeze-drying prevent microbial incursion and is particularly well-suited to preserve vegetables and pasta. These preservation processes create very densely packed calories in hyper-lightweight packages making them portable and shelf stable. With minimal to no cooking, they offer the option to be eaten dry, with clean water, or with boiled water to create a hot meal.

If your workforce must shelter-in-place or find it is wise to avoid crowded grocery stores, your location may offer ways to augment and mix and match various preserved foods that are available such as the many preserved food options described here. For the foreseeable future, freeze-dried or dehydrated foods will likely remain the most versatile, sturdy, and dependable means of food preservation available to us today and worth storing for future emergencies.

Being prepared for emergencies and disasters requires a comprehensive plan that secures the organization or business. Part of that plan is to take care of its most valuable resource, people. If you are an employee and your leadership is missing the food assurance that can help keep the workforce strong, perhaps it prudent to inquire about a plan that can help everyone from disaster to recovery.

Businesses wishing to assist in maintaining a reliable workforce unburdened by the fears and effects food insecurity brings, will be seeking solutions that anticipate such troubles ahead. They will implement solutions that keep their teams strong and their businesses able to fulfill their purpose without disruption.

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