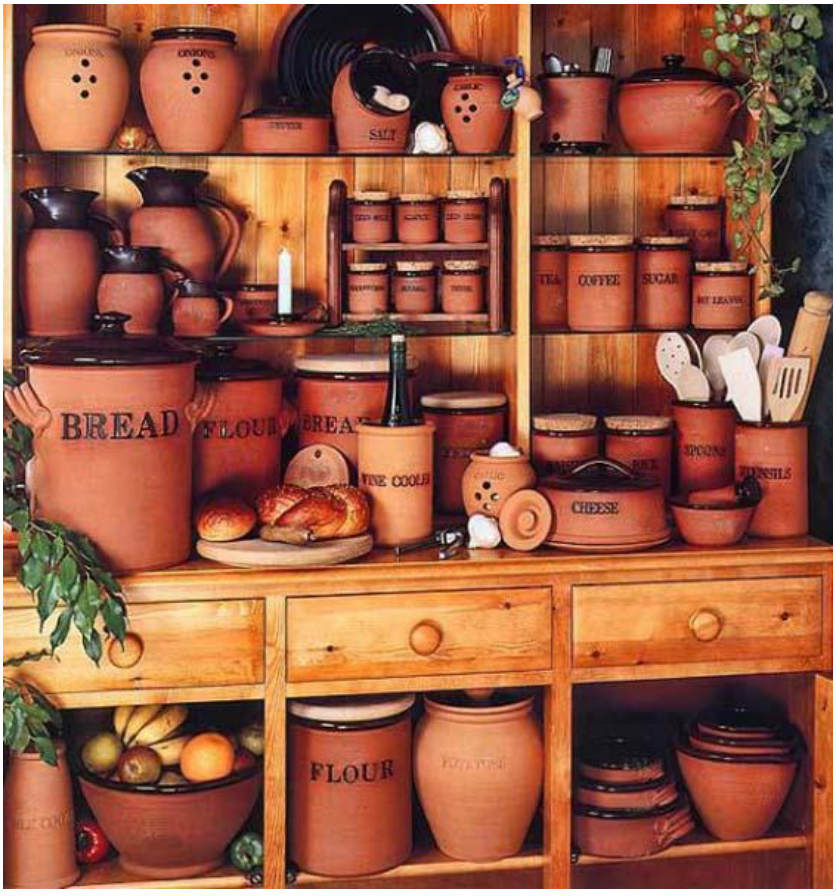
SURVIVAL FOOD GUIDE



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First priorities

We get up, take the kids to school, go to work, come home, eat, watch a little TV, go to bed and do it again the next day (with a few vacations thrown in for good measure). In our own comfortable routines, we are lulled into a sense of cocooned safety which leads to complacency.

But then something happens – a flood that wipes you out overnight. Perhaps a tornado rips through, or a hurricane (like the now infamous Katrina), and you realize more fully how quickly an emergency can arise. Are you really prepared for it? I mean really?

Your first priorities when it comes to preparedness are water and food. And this book will help you the insides of smart food storage, even when it's really difficult to do this, like in hot climates.

SMART Food Storage - Getting Started

Identify a location in your home where you can store non-perishables. In or near the kitchen is ideal, but not necessary. Basements, hall closets, or extra closets in other areas of your home all are possibilities.

Garages are not the best choice, since the temperature swings throughout the year can degrade the quality of the food.

Group foods by categories such as baking supplies, grains, condiments, canned fruits and vegetables, pasta, beverages, paper products, personal care items, and so on. If space is limited, relegate bathroom and cleaning products to linen closets or other areas of your home.

Safety tip: when using open shelves, put heavy and breakable items on lower shelves and lighter items (e.g., cereal boxes, pasta) on higher shelves.

How Much To Buy?

For beginners, the best rule of thumb to go by is a six-week supply of any particular item. The tendency for beginners is to overbuy, not underbuy, so when in doubt, buy a little bit less. As you become more familiar with your family's needs and sale cycles, you can tinker with the buying timetable.

If you don't have a clue as to how much to buy, make your best, educated guess. It's all part of the learning curve, and it may in fact take a few months to get the hang of it. Don't give up. Once your

pantry is organized, you will be able to tell at a glance how much of a particular item you have, and can restock as needed.

Rotating Your Stock

Mark the month and year on each item with a permanent marker kept in the pantry. (Tie a string on it and affix it permanently to the shelves if wandering pens are a problem in your household.) Mark each item on an easy-to-spot location on the package so you don't have to pick it up to see the date. Since many items have only lot numbers and not expiration dates, this will make it clear to you how old an item really is.

Put newer duplicate items behind older ones as you restock. When you grab your supplies, you'll be using up the oldest first. Take just five minutes a month to tidy up your shelves and check your dates, moving items around if necessary. If you find items that really should be used soon, incorporate them into your upcoming meal plans. This will prevent wasted food and wasted dollars.

Your Freezer: The Coldest Part Of Your Storage

Is an extra freezer worth the investment? If you follow the strategies in this report, the answer is a resounding yes. Here's why. A typical

16.5 cubic foot chest freezer manufactured between 1993 and 2000 costs approximately $4.67 per month in electricity to operate. A chest freezer manufactured 2001 or later costs about $3.75 a month in electricity.

And if you go out and buy one? You'll still come out ahead. A new, energy-efficient chest freezer costs somewhere in the neighborhood of $200 to $600. While this may sound like an expensive purchase, the truth is that when used appropriately, your freezer will pay for itself quickly.

Whether you have a dedicated extra freezer, or just the one attached to your refrigerator, you'll want to use that space most efficiently. Here are a few tips.

Choose your containers carefully. Round containers waste space. Square and rectangular containers are much more space efficient and they also stack better. Consider using freezer containers that are all from the same brand so that they will fit together and stack nicely. Make sure you can see through your containers if possible; it's easier to quickly glance at what you've got in stock if you've been careless about labeling.

Rotate your supply. The contents of your freezer should change about four times a year. This means that you are regularly using the food you buy. A common pitfall is to pack the freezer full, but neglect to use what's inside. Always use the oldest food first, and don't forget to mark your container items with a "use by" date.

Remove excess packaging. Boxes and bags waste precious space because they have extra volume from air in the packaging process. Bags slip and don't stack as well, and they don't offer long-term protection from freezer burn. Whenever possible, store items in right-sized freezer containers.

Be choosy about what you freeze. Think of your freezer primarily as your meat storehouse. Don't use it to store bulky items like loaves of bread, or to store things you'll regularly find on sale. Instead, use it primarily to stock your sale meats. If you use your freezer space to store mainly your meats purchased at maximum savings, you'll get more bang for your buck in the long run.

Precook what you can. This works well for ground beef and certain items, like chicken for fajitas or soups. Why? Meat typically shrinks when it's cooked. Precooking not only saves you space, it also saves you prep time later on.

A full freezer runs more economically than an empty one. Keep your freezer stocked with your “best buys” and rotate often.

Freezer Storage Guidelines

Beef

ground 4 months

stew meat 4 months

steaks 12 months

roasts 12 months

frozen dinners 3 months

cooked casseroles 3 months

cooked beef 3 months

gravy/broth 3 months

Poultry

Whole chicken 12 months

Whole turnkey 12 months

Whole duck/goose 6 months

Parts (breast, etc.) 9 months

Giblets/livers 3 months

Cooked casseroles 3 months

Frozen dinners 3 months

Gravy/broth 3 months

Pork, Lamb, Veal

Ground 4 months

Chops/ribs 4 months

Roast 6 months

Stew meat 4 months

Sausage 2 months

Cooked ham 2 months

Bacon 1 month

Hot dogs 1 month

Fish

White varieties 4 months

Salmon, perch,

trout, bass 3 months

Dairy

Butter 6 months

Margarine 18 months

Milk 1 month

Cheddar cheese 6 months

Ice cream

Vegetables 12 months

Juice concentrate 12 months

Ground coffee 6 months

Breads, Desserts, Snacks

Sliced bread 1 month

Unsliced bread 3 months

Unfrosted cake 4 months

Cookies 9 months

Cookie dough 6 months

Brownies 6 months

Fruit pies 6 months

Pie shells 6 months

Waffles/pancakes 4 months

Flour 12 months

Nuts, candy 12 months

Shredded coconut 12 months

Marshmallows 12 months

These recommendations are to ensure optimum quality.

Most frozen foods can almost always be safely eaten beyond the times listed, although quality may suffer.

Never eat anything that smells bad, even if it has been in the freezer following the guidelines listed here.

What Should A Well-Stocked Pantry Include?

This list of pantry items is not a definitive checklist, but rather a springboard for you to develop your own. If your pantry is in a humid environment, such as a damp basement, some items (such as flour) should be stored in their packaging in larger sealed plastic tubs to keep the moisture out.

BAKING SUPPLIES: baking powder, baking soda, salt, cocoa, yeast, flours, cornstarch, vinegar, food coloring, colored sprinkles.
CONVENIENCE FOODS: cold cereal, crackers, boxed macaroni & cheese, canned soups, baking mixes, canned icing
CONDIMENTS: ketchup, mayonnaise, mustard, relish, pickles, jams/jelly.
FATS: olive oil, coconut oil, canola oil, vegetable oil, shortening, non-stick spray
FRUITS: canned fruits, dried fruits, raisins
GRAINS: flour, oatmeal, cornmeal, rice, popcorn
LEGUMES: peanut butter, dried beans
MEATS: canned tuna, canned ham, canned chicken, canned salmon

BEVERAGES: tea, coffee, bottled juice, dry milk, ultra-high pasteurized shelf-stable milk

PASTA: spaghetti, macaroni, other pastas

SEASONINGS: spices and herbs, bouillon, soy sauce, worcestershire sauce, vanilla extract

SWEETENERS: white sugar, brown sugar, molasses, corn syrup, honey, confectioners sugar, pancake or maple syrup

VEGETABLES: canned goods

OTHER: nuts

NON-FOOD GROCERY ITEMS: paper towels, toilet paper, tissues, personal care items, cleaning supplies

An interesting letter

I get many emails from responsible people who are taking food storage seriously and are determined to properly prepare for the next emergency situation that might occur. And because a certain problem seems to repeat for many of you decent folks, I've decided to include this info in this book.

Here's the most recent one:

"I was just going through the contents of my Bug Out Bag this morning, as I tend to do every couple of months, and I noticed the

food I have stored there has not preserved too well. The PowerBars have sort of bloated up like balloons and the foil packs of tuna are questionable at best. I immediately tossed the old stuff and put in some fresh supplies but I'm wondering to myself how long this new stash will last.

Like a lot of people I keep my BOB in my car. I do this because my primary concern / projected use for a bug out bag is to help me get back to my house rather than away from it. This is for a number of reasons including my basic philosophy that I'm planning on "bugging in" in most scenarios as well as the fact that I'm on the road commuting back and forth to work quite a bit.

Since my supplies spend a lot of time in the car they also end up spending more time at higher temperatures than is generally recommended for most foods. Even foods intended for long-term storage don't do as well when stored at high temperatures. I would guess that on some days when my car is parked out in the sun the temps inside probably get well above 100 degrees. Far too high for storing food reliably.

So, what to do? I really don't have any way of controlling the temperature inside my car on hot days."

How To Store Food In Hot & Humid Climates

Food storage, food storage, food storage. It can begin to sound like a broken record. But it is one of the single best things you can do to protect your family no matter what comes down the proverbial pipe. But if you live in a hot and humid climate, such as the Gulf Coast regions and southeastern United States or even if you keep food in your car and in the sun, like my friend, you have special challenges to deal with.

The Good News

In some respects, the challenges you will face are nothing compared to the benefits. Unlike the northern United States, you will be able to grow fresh food most of the year without much trouble. Once you find that perfect schedule of what to plant and when, you could get a steady stream of goodies with several harvest times.

If you really want to be creative, you can even implement winter gardening to ensure that you have harvest times throughout the whole year.

To maximize this benefit, keep your food as fresh as possible for as long as possible. You can do this, even in the heat, by creating a **"cooler"** made from two basic terra cotta pots, one larger than the other. Put the smaller pot in the larger one, fill the gap with sand, and saturate the sand with water. Then cover it with a cloth. To add additional insulation from the heat, bury the pot up to its rim. The evaporation of moisture from the wet sand will cool the air around the food and help keep it fresh.

Only use this type of cooler for fresh fruits and veggies though, as grain, beans, and long-term food storage is damaged by moisture, as we will discuss next.

The Bad News

Now for the downside of your chosen domicile. There are four enemies of food storage: light, heat, oxygen, and moisture. The southeastern parts of the United States have lots of all four. So your job, as a food storage aficionado, is to reduce these things as much as possible, wherever possible.

The easiest one to deal with is light. Since you will also have to contend with heat and moisture, do yourself a favor and eliminate the light issue all together. Make sure your food stores are not out in the open, but instead neatly packed away in your root cellar, basement, or pantry cupboards. If none of these options are available, at a minimum, avoid putting your food near a lamp or window, and throw a blanket over it.

Seal It

You can eliminate two threats in one by dehydrating your food, and then vacuum sealing it. The dehydration obviously takes care of most of the moisture, and the vacuum sucks all the air out of it. Invest in a good food grade system to process your food this way.

Saving a little to buy a cheap vacuum sealer will hurt you in the long run if the quality is poor, since your food will be more likely to spoil and you would have lost your investment in the food.

This works best for fruits and vegetables. You can vacuum seal beans, rice, and just about any other food too, though there may be better solutions for those types of foods. The downside of this method is that food does lose some of its nutritional value from dehydration, so you will not want to use this method exclusively.

Store your food no matter what type of climate you live in — this widely popular DVD series will show you how!

Can It

Traditional canning in mason jars is probably one of the best known food preservation techniques, and one that has been used successfully for a very long time. Pressure canners allow you to can a wider variety of food than traditional water bath canning, since it seals the food at a higher temperature. Of course, this has the same problem as dehydration, since some of the vitamins are destroyed through the process.

There is another option for canning goods that does not have this problem, though it takes a little more forethought and planning. This method works especially well for grains and beans which you don't want to cook ahead of time, and can preserve food for up to 30 years.

You may want to use glass jars that you have saved from foods you eat every day. You can also visit your local restaurant to see if they have leftover food-grade plastic buckets, or purchase large food-grade barrels. Once you have your containers, you will also need O2 absorbers, and ideally, Mylar bags.

Put the food in the jar, bucket, or barrel, add O2 absorbers, and seal airtight. This is one reason Mylar bags are helpful as you can use them to line the container, and then seal completely shut with a clam shell heat sealer. In a pinch, an iron (without steam) or flat iron like you use on your hair will work too for sealing the Mylar.

Mylar bags, O2 absorbers, and a good food grade bucket or glass jar, you will eliminate the light, moisture, and oxygen all in one. Then you only have to contend with heat.

Freeze It

The most obvious way to get rid of heat is to freeze your food stores. You will not need to remove the air, though it may still be helpful to vacuum seal food in order to prevent freezer burn. Light and moisture are non-issues as well.

Despite all its benefits, freezing foods has several major drawbacks. First and foremost, freezers are not the cheapest form of square feet. Freezers are expensive to buy, and could break and need to be replaced. You also run the risk of the freezer accidentally being unplugged or turned off and the food spoiling.

Finally, freezers require electricity, so a back-up power source would be needed, and you would not want to rely solely on anything

electric for your food stores, even if you do have an off-grid power source. There are just too many things that could go wrong.

Of all the elements that damage food, heat tends to be the least of the evils. So as long as you are able to minimize oxygen, moisture, and light affecting your food storage, even in higher heat, you should be able to successfully store food for 3-5 years at least.
That being said, there are lots of things that you can do to keep your food cool even in a hot climate.

• Find the coolest room in your house – a shaded northeast corner is probably the first place you should look if you do not have a basement or root cellar.
• Ensure good air circulation and put in fans to cool the air of the space.
• Keep any lights off in the area unless they are absolutely needed.
• Use air conditioning in your home
• Install a geothermal system to optimize both your heating and your cooling

No matter where you live, it is important to store food, and to store it in a way that you won't lose your investment through mold, rot, botulism, or oxidation. Even if you start small with one glass jar and

a few oxygen absorbers, or by purchasing a few extra canned goods, start somewhere so you will be that much closer to being ready no matter what the future holds!

Survival Cooking

A person can survive indefinitely opening cold cans of beans for meals, but it wouldn't be a very satisfying existence. In times of crisis, a hot meal goes a long way toward soothing the day's troubles. The simplest way to heat a meal is the Boy Scout method: a couple of bricks or rocks set around a small outdoor fire, with the bean can propped over the flames. It's low cost, and it works.

However, the cook doesn't have much control over the outcome. Outdoor cooking of all kinds, including grilling and barbecuing, all work during emergency situations, provided you have the charcoal or wood (and matches!) needed to get the heat going.

These are familiar methods, too, so family members don't have to make a huge leap to accept these foods. It's difficult to cook much more than meats and a few firm vegetables over open heat like this, though. Also, never use these devices in a confined space, as they emit carbon monoxide.

“Campfire” cooking can lend itself to some baking, if you also have a cast iron Dutch Oven—a large, heavy, cast iron covered pot. Place a well-kneaded pound of bread dough into a heavily greased or oiled Dutch Oven and put the cover in position. Make a hole or pot-sized well in the ash near the fire, and line this with glowing coals.

Put about an inch of ash over the coals, and place the Dutch Oven into this. Now, pile about an inch of hot ash around the oven and cover with glowing coals, then another layer of ash to keep the heat in. Uncover and check your bread in about 35 minutes, it should be done.

Propane and butane camp stoves are so much like ordinary home stoves that there is no difference in the cooking results. Portable RV 2-burner propane stoves are often available used— mine cost $5 at a garage sale—and can even do pressure canning because the heat is consistent and reliable.

A typical 18-gallon propane cylinder, the kind used for barbeques, costs around $30 new, and a propane fillup is about $7. This will last for nearly a month of daily use. You’ll also need a feeder hose and pressure regulator for the stove, which can be prepared by your propane dealer for $20 or so.

Butane stoves are also portable and run off of a cylinder of the same kind of butane that is used in cigarette lighters. These stoves are $80-90 new, and cylinders are $5 and last for 8 hours of cooking.

General camp stoves (around $65 at department stores) operate on “stove fuel” (basically, propane in a small 1-pound cylinder - $3). A cylinder lasts for around 8 hours of cooking. You can also find camp stoves that will cook off of unleaded gasoline, and there are some that are “multifuel,” using either kerosene or gasoline—handy in case of a shortage of one fuel or the other. Use outdoors or on a covered porch to prevent carbon monoxide buildup in your home.

Solar cooking is another option, if you have plenty of unobstructed sunlight and someone who is willing to adjust the cooker to face the sun every half hour or so. A solar oven need be no more fancy than a set of nested cardboard boxes painted flat black on the inside with tempura colors, a sheet of window glass, and some aluminum foil glued to cardboard panels. Total cost for this, if you can scrounge leftover glass and cardboard, is about $1.

Place your food in a covered lightweight pan inside the box, prop it so the entire interior is exposed to the sunlight (about a

45-degree angle), cover with the sheet of glass (and tape the glass so it won't slide), then prop the aluminum foil panels so that they reflect more sunlight down into the box. Move the box every 30 minutes so it maintains an even temperature. It will get hot fast, easily up to 325 degrees, and hold the heat as long as it faces the sun.

Remember to use potholders when removing your foods! Our first solar oven had a black plastic trash bag as a heat absorbing inner surface; it worked superbly until the plastic actually melted.

Keeping foods cool if the power goes out can be as simple as looking for shade, even under a tree. Some Ozarkers have partially buried old broken freezers in the shade of backyard trees, storing grains and winter vegetables inside.

During the winter, your parked car will stay at the same temperature as the outside air—below freezing on those cold nights—so you can store frozen goods there safely. During the daylight hours, the car interior will heat up, though, if it's in the sun. Park it in the shade of the house, or cover the windows and roof with a blanket to keep the interior cool.

Kerosene refrigerator/freezers are alternative appliances that will continue to function with the power off because they are “powered” by kerosene. Their cooling and freezing capacity is exactly the same as a regular refrigerator, and they come in the same colors. Typically, they are a little smaller than conventional ‘fridges and cost up to $1500, but they’ll last for decades with care.

Portable battery-powered refrigerators that keep your foods 40-degrees cooler than outside temperatures are available at most department store sporting-goods sections ($90). These run off of both DC and AC power, so they can be plugged into your car battery through the cigarette lighter outlet or into a solar power system.

What about that freezer full of expensive meat if the power goes off? First step is to cover the freezer with blankets to help retain the cold. Then, find dry ice (if everyone else in your town hasn’t already bought out the supply). Blanket coverings will keep a full freezer frozen for two days, and the addition of dry ice will prolong that to three or four days.

A solar oven design made with cardboard boxes, aluminum foil, and a piece of window glass. Interior of the box is flat black paint.

If power stays off, it's time to eat and time to can the meat remaining.

Canning low-acid foods like meat calls for a pressure canner ($90), canning jars ($6 for 12), a source of consistent heat (like a propane RV stove), and some skill. In considering your time requirements, it took me two days of steady canning to put a 230-pound pig into jars. Each quart jar holds 3 pounds of meat.

The Seven Major Mistakes in Food Storage

20 bags of wheat, 60 pound cans of honey and a couple of cases of powdered milk.

It may sound like a storage plan, but is it a good one? Obviously not. Let's find out why and which are some of the serious problems that may occur trying to live on these basics:

1. Variety - Most people don't have enough variety in their storage. 95% of the people I've worked with have only stored the 4 basic items we mentioned earlier: wheat, milk, honey, and salt. Statistics show most of us won't survive on such a diet for several reasons.

a) Many people are allergic to wheat and may not be aware of it until they are eating it meal after meal.

b) Wheat is too harsh for young children. They can tolerate it in small amounts but not as their main staple.

c) We get tired of eating the same foods over and over and many times prefer to not eat, then to sample that particular food again.

This is called appetite fatigue. Young children and older people are particularly susceptible to it. Store less wheat than is generally suggested and put the difference into a variety of other grains, particular ones your family likes to eat. Also store a variety of beans. This will add variety of color texture and flavor. Variety is the key to a successful storage program. It is essential that you store flavorings such as tomato, bouillon, cheese, and onion.

Also, include a good supply of the spices you like to cook with. These flavorings and spices allow you to do many creative things with your grains and beans. Without them you are severely limited. One of the best suggestions I can give you is buy a good food storage cookbook, go through it, and see what your family would really eat. Notice the

ingredients as you do it. This will help you more than anything else to know what items to store.

2. Extended Staples - Few people get beyond storing the four basic items but it's extremely important that you do so. Never put all your eggs in one basket. Store dehydrated and/or freeze dried foods as well as home canned and store bought canned goods. Make sure you add cooking oil, shortening, baking powder, soda, yeast and powdered eggs. You can't cook even the most basic recipes without these items. Because of limited space I won't list all the items that should be included in a well-balanced storage program.

3. Vitamins - Vitamins are important, especially if you have children, since children do not store body reserves of nutrients as adults do. A good quality multi-vitamin and vitamin C are the most vital. Others might be added as your budget permits.

4. Quick and Easy and Psychological Foods - Quick and easy foods help you through times when you are psychologically or physically unable to prepare your basic storage items. No cook foods such as freeze-dried are wonderful since they require little preparation, MRE's (Meal Ready to Eat), such as many preparedness outlets carry, canned goods, etc. are also very good. Psychological Foods are

the goodies - Jell-O, pudding, candy, etc. - you should add to your storage.

These may sound frivolous, but through the years I've talked with many people who have lived entirely on their storage for extended periods of time. Nearly all of them say these were the most helpful items in their storage to normalize their situations and make it more bearable. These are especially important if you have children.

5. Balance - Time and time again I've seen families buy all of their wheat, then buy all of another item and so on. Don't do that. It's important to keep well-balanced as you build your storage. Buy several items, rather than a large quantity of one item. If something happens and you have to live on your present storage you'll fare much better having a one month supply of a variety of items than a year's supply of two to three items.

6. Containers - Always store your bulk foods in food storage containers. I have seen literally tons and tons of food thrown away because they were left in sacks, where they became highly susceptible to moisture, insects, and rodents. If you are using plastic buckets make sure they are lined with a food grade plastic liner available from companies that carry packaging supplies.

Never use trash can liners as these are treated with pesticides. Don't stack them too high. In an earthquake they may topple, the lids pop open, or they may crack. A better container is the #10 tin can which most preparedness companies use when they package their foods.

7. Use Your Storage - In all the years I've worked with preparedness one of the biggest problems I've seen is people storing food and not knowing what to do with it. It's vital that you and your family become familiar with the things you are storing. You need to know how to prepare these foods. This is not something you want to have to learn under stress. Your family needs to be used to eating these foods.

A stressful period is not a good time to totally change your diet. Get a good food storage cookbook and learn to use these foods!

It's easy to solve these food storage problems once you know what they are. The lady I talked about at the first of the article left realizing what she had stored was a good beginning but not enough. As she said, it's better to find out the mistakes I've made now while there's still time to make corrections. This makes a lot more sense.

If you're one who needs to make some adjustments, that's OK. Look at these suggestions and add the things you're missing. It’s easy to take a basic storage and add the essentials to make it livable, but it needs to be done. As I did the research for my cookbook, I wanted to include recipes that gave help to families no matter what they had stored.

As I put the material together it was fascinating to discover what the pioneers ate is the type of things we store. But if you have stored only the 4 basics, there's very, very little you can do with it. By adding even just a few things it greatly increases your options, and the prospect of your family surviving on it.

As I studied how the pioneers lived and ate, my whole feeling for food storage changed. I realized our storage is what most of the world has always lived on. If it’s put together the right way will be returning to good basic living with a few goodies thrown in.