

14 Food Storage Myths Debunked

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14 FOOD STORAGE



MYTHS DEBUNKED





When it comes to preparing for natural disasters and other emergencies, food storage is near the top of every list. Knowing you can feed your family if the grid is down or the roads are unpassable can help relieve some of the stress and worry.

However, many myths make the rounds when it comes to emergency food storage. Not being able to separate fact from fiction when it comes to what you store, how you store it, and how long you store it can mean the difference between being prepared and going hungry.

Article continues below.

Here are 14 food storage myths debunked.

Myth 1: You Can Store Food Anywhere

You may have seen photos of emergency food stacked under the bed, on a window ledge, or even in the bathroom. However, some locations offer far less than ideal conditions for keeping food safe and ready to eat.

The primary enemies of food are heat, light, and moisture. That means your best bets are locations that are cool, dark, and dry. Here are a few tips:

- Aim to keep food off the floor where it is more likely to attract pests and absorb moisture.
- Avoid moist or humid locations like over the stove or under the sink.
- Light can degrade food and its packaging. Keep food away from windows.

Myth 2: Canned Food is All You Need

Canned food usually has a long shelf life. However, even cans corrode when not stored properly. Also, most canned foods will not supply all the nutritional value you need.

When it comes to canned food, make sure you rotate on a first in, first out basis. And consider stocking up on basic ingredients (beans, corn, meats) that you can use to make different meals rather than canned meals (ravioli or beef stew) that your family can tire of eating.

Myth 3: When People Are Hungry Enough, They'll Eat Anything

A crisis is not the time your family will want to experiment with new foods or foods they already don't like. Chances are excellent that they will not eat it.

Instead, stock up on versatile ingredients that you can combine in different ways to make meals your family likes.

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Myth 4: Once You Have X Amount of Food, You'll Be Good To Go

Many emergency preparedness sites recommend having a three-day supply of food and water for each person in your family. That's a good starting point, but what happens after those three days?

Work on storing as much food as possible in the appropriate space and consider ways to supplement your supply with gardening, raising livestock, fishing, hunting, and gathering.

Myth 5: Beans Last Forever

Beans have a justly-deserved reputation as a backbone item of an emergency food pantry. However, even beans have their limits.

The good news is that you can revive dried beans in a pressure cooker. Or, place the beans in three cups of water. Add a teaspoon of baking soda and simmer on the stove for about three hours.

Myth 6: You Only Need Freeze-Dried Foods

Freeze-dried foods are a great option for your emergency pantry, but you don't want them as your only option. For one thing, they require water to prepare. What if water is scarce? You won't want to sacrifice precious drinking water to prepare your food

Also, some freeze-dried foods are highly processed and contain a hefty list of preservatives.

Myth 7: Wheat Should Be a Mainstay of Your Food Supply

Wheat is the main ingredient in many types of bread. But think about it, will you have the other ingredients and the ability to bake bread during a disaster? Maybe not.

Myth 8: Nuts Have an Extended Shelf Life

Did you know that the oils in most nuts can go rancid when exposed to heat? Try placing them in the refrigerator or freezer for long-term storage. Here are some tips for storing nuts safely.

Myth 9: Plastic Water Bottles Will Fulfill Your Water Needs

Water itself doesn't go bad, but the containers water is stored in can be a problem. When plastic bottles begin to degrade, their chemicals can leach into the water. These chemicals can damage your respiratory and digestive systems and harm your gut.

Here are [some tips](#) for establishing and maintaining an emergency water supply.

Myth 10: If You Run Out of Food, You Can Go Hunting

Whether or not you can supplement your family's food supply with hunting varies widely depending on where you live and how widespread the crisis is. Remember that others will be just as needy as you are – maybe even more so.

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[This article](#) goes into some advice and tips for hunting, fishing, and foraging when you are hungry,

Myth 11: You Can't Eat Foods That Are Past Their Expiration Date

Those confusing “sell by,” “best by,” and “use by” dates on food packaging are contributing to tons of food waste every year.

The fact is that many foods remain edible for a year or more past their expiration date. The dates indicate peak freshness but not when a food is unsafe to eat. You can learn more about expiration dates, including reasonable times to store foods, [right here](#).

Myth 12: Emergency Food Storage is All About Storing Things in Bulk

Stockpiling certain foods in bulk quantities can save you money and headaches, but going big may not work for everything.

Your goal should be a layered approach of storing a variety of shelf-stable nutritional foods that your family likes to eat. Varying the sizes of your sealed containers and packages can help you keep your food fresher longer.

13. If You Have a Big Freezer and a Generator, You Only Need Frozen Food

First of all, the power could be out. And even if you have a [gas-power generator](#), you may run out of fuel or need it for other things. Your best bet is to have a supply of both frozen and [shelf-stable foods](#).

14. Your Emergency Pantry is Only for Life-and-Death Emergencies

Not true! Storing food is not a one-and-done deal. You need to keep track of what's in there and [rotate out items](#) to maintain freshness.

Also, there is no shame in using some of your stored items when your cash flow is down, someone in your family is ill, or you can't get to the store. Just keep track of your supply and replenish items when you can.

We've shared ours; now you share yours. What food storage myths can you add to this list?

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