

April 28, 2019

Three-Month Supply

The 10 Menu Method

While I don't use this myself, it is a good way to stay organized and make sure you have exactly what you need with as little waste as possible. To do this, you plan 10 days' worth of menus for all three meals. Then you buy all the ingredients you need to make those meals each 9 times. That becomes a complete supply for 90 days. You don't have to eat that way all the time, just two or three times a week to use all the supplies within a year. Some people love this because they say they eat the same meals often anyhow and this makes it easy to keep a supply rotated.

The people who use this method keep their food in 4 divided sections or places. The first section is the one they are using while the next two sections can be rotated into spot #1 when #1 is all gone. The fourth can be the place supplies are restocked as they are on sale at the store. * I like having 12 meals planned just to add variety and the extra supplies.

Why I Don't Recommend Meals in Mylar Pouches

While it may be a good idea to have some of these on hand or in a 72-hour kit, I do not recommend storing meals in Mylar, like the ones you would use to backpack, for a 3-month supply. Here's why:

1. These are expensive and you will have a tendency to keep them on the shelf in case of an emergency and not eat them because you don't want to replace them. The longer they sit

the less you will want to use them. Then when they are no longer good you will view food storage very negatively, as a waste, and believe it is not worth doing.

2. Hardly anyone uses these as their regular diet, and they shouldn't. While they are tasty the first few days, they are not made to eat for weeks on end. After a few days they will all taste a lot the same, and over time you will need nutrients you won't be getting. If you are struggling with a health or financial problem the people at work are going to wonder about you when you bring an instant Mylar meal every day for lunch. Frankly, you need to maintain as much normalcy as possible to get through difficulties. These are not normal.
3. These meals are not the best for stomach upset or illness. Some people who are sensitive to soy, milk, gluten, or other foods will have difficulty digesting them even in the best of circumstances. Especially under stress, you need some things you are used to eating that are easy on your system and help it function normally.
4. You can't share a supply of these very easily. In the pamphlet "All is Safely Gathered In" we are asked to have enough to help the bishop assist others. When your ward starts a soup line you can't very practically bring a pouch of lasagna to the table to add to the soup.
5. This approach does not encourage you to develop provident skills. Being able to serve your family and those you love by preparing healthy food for them is a very good skill to have. I sometimes worry as much about people who don't cook as I do about those who don't have food storage. Having skills gives you options in many situations. It is pretty hard to be very creative with food in pouches if you end up needing to stretch your supply for more people or more time.

A Note about Expiration Dates

Expiration dates have been added to items at the grocery store for consumer safety to keep food at its peak and current in many cases, but sometimes they are simply to keep up on inventory. There is not a standard way that all products are marked, and

sometimes this makes things complicated. There are different markings that mean different things. Just a date can mean the date when it is canned or boxed for shipping. If the code or date is the date it was canned, it will have at least a year to three years before it would expire. Best by: dates are just that. The food is still at its best or peak nutritionally and in other ways at that date. That doesn't mean it is instantly bad if that date has passed. Use by: is different. Use-by dates are most often put on things that have a short shelf-life and are often refrigerated at the store. You need to watch things carefully around that date. I have had food be moldy, sour, or curdled even before those dates. At the same time, I have felt fine about eating some canned goods that are past the stamped date. A lot of food that is perfectly good gets tossed in the US just because people don't understand the markings.

Did you know that the food bank will usually take and distribute food up to three years past the date on the cans unless it is tomato-based or baby food and formula? They are pretty sure of the safety at that point. If a can is badly dented or bulged or shows leakage then those are all signs you should dispose of that can no questions asked. While I have eaten some things past best by or sell by dates, I also have the motto, "When in doubt, throw it out." If your food is kept in a cool, dry, dark place it will last quite a bit longer than food that is warm or in humidity. It is always wise to use your senses of smell and sight when checking food that has been in storage.

*One exception to using your nose is flour from the Home Storage Center. The oxygen absorber in a can of flour creates a chemical reaction making a gas in the flour that will smell bad when you open a stored can. All you need to do is wait 8-10 hours with the lid open and the smell will dissipate.

Gardening

It is always nice to have a spot of ground for a garden, and the know-how to make it productive. While we have some fabulous gardeners in Alpine, it is worthwhile to note that it is also a challenge here because of the deer, squirrels, voles, and insect

pests that have increased steadily in the last thirty years. We also have late springs that often go from wintery weather almost directly into summer heat. Alpine also freezes earlier in the fall than most of Utah County. If you want to count on a garden or orchard as an emergency supply of food, I highly recommend that you start preparing now. Face the learning curve in good times and not when you are destitute. You will need to have your garden fenced, your soil in condition, and several years of good weeding under your belt as well as pest prevention to be able to get a good enough crop to use it as your food supply. While I love growing things and would encourage anyone to garden, I have had enough experience to know that it isn't realistic to believe that someone who has never done it will have sure success when times get tough if they only have seeds.

Short-Term Items at Home Storage Centers Now

- Granola
- Peanut Butter
- Pancake Mix
- Fortified Fruit Drink Mix
- Cocoa Mix
- Instant Refried Beans
- Potato Pearls (different than flakes)

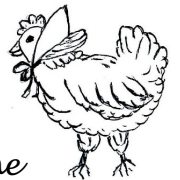
*These items are good if you will use them for your family often. They will not store long term.

Notes from Red Hen

Dear Red,

When our egg production dropped off (moved out of our sick coop conditions) the farmer's wife came out to see what was wrong. Her son was scolded and his mother is with him every day checking to see that he does the job right. We are much better off. I have learned two important things from this experience. First, it is a good idea to have our own back-up supplies. Second, as a mother it is best to teach and train by working with our offspring rather than assume they will just be responsible and get it right.

— Love, Speckle



Fresh Sprouts Year Round

If you are used to having fresh fruits and vegetables it will be hard to stay satisfied with packaged and canned foods. While canned fruits and vegetables are better than none at all they are cooked rather than raw. I tend to like dried fruits and vegetables for this reason. However, it is hard to enjoy a salad, lettuce in your sandwich, wrap, or taco with dried veggies. When you need or want green things and you can't garden or buy them, sprouting is a good alternative. Sprouting will add nutrients, increase digestibility, and decrease some of the problems that come from eating nuts, seeds, and grains on a regular basis. *It will decrease gluten, but not eliminate it for those who are sensitive.

Many seeds are good for sprouting while some are not. Small legumes, grains, and some vegetable seeds like radish, pea, pumpkin, and broccoli are the best for sprouting. Red kidney beans should not be sprouted for consumption because they contain phytohaemagglutinin which is very toxic when sprouted. Almonds can be sprouted if you can find them truly raw, but most other nuts should not be sprouted, though soaking is fine.

Sprouting is usually simple. It requires very clean containers and water, but even kids can do it. My favorite thing to sprout is lentils. They are cheap and easy to buy, produce tasty results in just a few days, and add freshness. I like to start with these. If you find you love sprouting then add more things as you go like radish seeds, mung beans, alfalfa, and broccoli seeds. You may have to buy some of these online, but I have found them in stores that sell things like this in bulk.

All you have to do to sprout lentils is measure two tablespoons, rinse them well in tepid water, put them in a quart jar, and then cover them with about ½ cup water and let them soak overnight or about 8 hours on a counter top. I like to keep the mouth of the jar covered with a cloth or mesh and a rubber band. After soaking, drain the water off. Cover with water and drain (rinse) them twice a day. You will see sprouts within two days after

soaking. They are yummy after 3 days, but I like mine at day 5–6 if I want them for a salad or on sandwiches.

There is some really good information online about sprouting if you want to learn more. I love the site sproutpeople.com.

* There is some concern regarding sprouting and bacteria or mold growth in the media today. There is a much smaller chance of these problems if the seeds are not heat or radiation treated and are truly raw. Your jar or container needs to be clean and sterile and your seeds well rinsed when you start, and you should take care to keep the process clean. You need to make sure your sprouts are rinsed in clean water two or more times a day, and covered at least with a porous, clean cloth or mesh in between to avoid fruit flies and other insects, but allowing air flow. The sprouts should be eaten when they are done and not stored on the counter or more than 3–5 days in the refrigerator.

**While things that have been stored with an oxygen absorber will be free of bugs and bacteria, over time their ability to sprout and grow will also decline and die. Wheat from a #10 can may not sprout for this reason. If I want to be able to count on sprouting something later on I will store it in a container with food-grade diatomaceous earth. This will kill things from the insect world while keeping the grain “alive.”