

April 2, 2022

A Three-Month Supply of Things You Use on a Regular Basis.

We have truly been spoiled in the last 40 years. We jump in our cars any time we want to and drive to the grocery store for anything we feel we need or want. There is always fresh meat, milk, cheese, eggs, breads, and produce. If the things are not in season now it doesn't seem to matter. It is brought in by truck from other locations and all the developments in refrigeration make it possible to store and transport for longer periods of time.

Maybe like you, I am certainly a "fresh girl" when it comes to eating. The produce department is my favorite part of a grocery store. However, when I finally got really serious about following the council of our church leaders I decided that I had to work things out so that I could be obedient and still not give up my love of fresh. I had to commit to cooking and being mindful of rotating storage to make this work. I did have to change some habits, and I think it has already been worth the effort. After all, there are many things that could clear my options from the grocery store shelves, and cooking with shelf-stable ingredients surely beats going hungry! Here is a list of things I started to do.

1. I chose to learn how to prepare my soil, and grow a garden. In the summer months I have a lot of my own organic fresh things, and there are even side benefits! I am out enough in the mornings to get my vitamin D from the sun in the spring and summer. I believe that being outside every day accomplishing something improves my outlook on life, and I often have some extra produce to preserve.

2. I have worked on constantly learning new ways to preserve fresh fruits and vegetables. Canning, dehydrating (or freeze-drying), fermenting, and pickling are good ways to preserve what you have for several months. Yes, it is work to do that. If you don't have the time or inclination to take this up you can buy cans and jars of these things that someone else preserved.
3. I have started to collect recipes for things that can be made with shelf-stable foods. When I find a dish or idea we like (maybe not love) I put it into my recipe file.
4. I make it a point to actually cook, and I use things in cans, jars, and packages for some of my meals every week. I don't always make the whole meal that way, but at least part of it. It helps if you are cooking family meals when you do this.
5. I watch for sales on the things I need to make the shelf-stable recipes my family approves of. I find that they are actually happy I cook for them. I set a goal to pick up a few extras each time I am at the store. It's surprising how fast things add up when you do this. I like this approach because I am not depleting the whole supply so it is gone for others.

*[Challenge for this article](#)—make a plan for yourself so that you can make preparedness a sustainable part of your life.

At Least Have the Basics

While you need to store what you will use, here is a guideline of basics everyone should have for both long- and short-term storage:

- a. Flour (wheat or gluten free—the kind you need for your family); also grains like corn, rice, oats, buckwheat, etc. if you have an efficient way to grind.
- b. Sweetener—sugar, honey, monk fruit, stevia, those derived from grain alcohol like erythritol (if you tolerate them in larger amounts—many people don't.), jams, flavored gelatin....
- c. Leavening—yeast, sourdough start, baking powder, baking soda....
- d. Oil—shortening (also good for emergency candle or soap making), butter, coconut oil, vegetable oil, olive oil....
- e. Salt—your choice of salt (I like to have some that is iodine free to use for pickling or fermenting if needed)

- f. Protein sources—canned meats, nut butters (must rotate often), dried meats (must rotate often or boil fully for more than 10 minutes), seeds (rotate within 6 months), legumes, live chickens....
- g. Fruits and vegetables—dried, canned/bottled, in a garden or root cellar, frozen (if you are prepared to lose them in a power outage)

*Best tip I heard from a talk show this month. When you go to buy shelf-stable ingredients to make a dish buy two of everything you need. Use one and put one away. Then buy again before you use the one you put away and buy two again to do the same thing. "A little bit at a time adds up in the end."

*Challenge from this article—Keep your "feelers out" for new ideas and collect recipes to make with shelf-stable foods. Try at least two new recipes a month!

Do You Have This Simple Tool?

One must-have tool for short-term storage is a good sturdy can opener that is not electric. I like to have a backup besides the one I use every day. You might have to pay a little more for a good one, but this is not a place to scrimp. Below are some tips for working with cans.

Bonus Tip #1—When cans are difficult to open (especially true for big #10 cans) open the bottom because the factory seal is not as tough as the one at the top where the lid was added and sealed after the food was inside.

Bonus Tip #2—If you have the kind of opener that cuts the sealed lid along the side you can actually use some of the empty cans to store small things in. This way you still have a lid. I just add a knob to the top and decorate them. Simple decorative paper does the trick or you can get fancy and paint or embellish in hundreds of ways.

Bonus Tip #3—While saving all your cans is not recommended you may want to be aware that these can be useful tools in a real pinch or crisis. I have read books where people were in negative circumstances and they used cans to help dig, to store things, to put plants in, and for emergencies where people were sick. They can also be adapted as candle lanterns and filled with dirt to create barriers. #10 storage cans make great buckets for picking fruit and herbs if you have to forage. Just add a wire hanger or rope handle. You can also cook (with a hanger handle) and carry water in them.

*Challenge for this article—Get a good spare can opener this week if you don't have one!

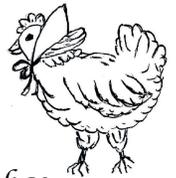
Eat, Drink and Be Ready!

In the first part of November our stake is planning to have our second "Eat, Drink, and Be Ready" event. This is a fun activity where you and your family can come taste different ideas of things that can be made with shelf-stable foods that are good for storage and collect the recipes.

We had this event for the first time last year, and we are bringing it back by popular demand.

*Challenge—Mark your calendar and plan to attend.

Notes from Red Hen



Dear Cousin Speckle,

I am so excited about my good fortune that I must write to tell you. One of last year's piglets has turned out to be an ambitious and fair-minded creature. He wanted some bread very badly and came to talk to me about it. He said he was too young to help with the wheat I planted but he would be willing to help me for some bread now.

Well, you can imagine how surprised I was. He said he was an exceptional digger, so I asked if he could dig me a hole big enough for a root cellar. He did! My chicks and I took some wood from the scrap pile and put up pillars and beams to make it all stable. Then Jack and Joseph, my two chicks adept at carpentry, made shelves for us. I gave the pig a loaf of bread for excavating and another one for covering our structure. I now have a good root cellar for storing the things we are preserving for the winter. I just wish I had some of those jars the farmer's wife has to keep them in. I am thinking of a way to get them.

Love, Red