

May 7, 2022

Long-term Food Storage

Short-term vs. Long-term

Last month we covered a three-month supply of food made up mostly of short-term supplies. Now we are talking about a year's supply of long-term food items. What is the difference between a three-month supply and long-term year's supply?

While you can use and rotate your long-term supply along with your three-month supply, there is quite a bit of difference. Short-term items are usually ones that last under 3–5 years. These may include canned goods, dry-packaged goods, baking supplies, oils, seeds for a garden or sprouting—really anything (that doesn't need to be frozen or refrigerated) that would keep life fairly normal if you had a crisis that resulted in not being able to buy food readily. Many of these things need to be used and rotated to keep them safe to eat. There are a lot of fun options for short-term storage. When stored in a cool, dry, dark place in a vermin-proof container you can even store chocolate for 1–3 years. Crackers and other foods containing oils will have the shortest shelf life and should be rotated within 6 months. You kind of have to “tend” your short-term storage to make sure that you keep it current.

Long-term storage consists of things that last 10–30 or more years. These will most often be dry goods. The objective of long-term storage is not to keep you full and happy, but to have enough to eat that it would sustain life. The amounts recommended in the 2019 Preparedness Guide at

<https://providentpapers.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Long-Term-or-Year-Supply-1-2019-05-12.pdf> would give you each day about a serving of grain, a small serving of legumes, with enough milk, oil, and sweeteners to help you cook these things. It would be nice to have meat and vegetables to add to these basics, but you could stay alive even if you didn't. It is more than the famous hand cart pioneers got. While I highly recommend using and rotating long-term storage the best you can, for many people this is a case of tucking it away and forgetting it. You might think of it as buying food insurance. It is an expense you may never need, but if you do need it you will be glad you have it.

Ideas of Foods to Store Long Term

Wheat stores extremely well, giving many people the impression that food storage is all about wheat. However, there are other things you can store to make up a good storage plan. Here is a basic list of things that can be counted as long-term storage if they are stored properly. *The Church's Home Storage Center specializes in the best storage methods for long-term storage. Everything except milk can be purchased in #10 cans that have been packed with oxygen absorbers and sealed. For storage items packed this way, their prices are among the very best.

Whole grains

- Wheat (30 yrs)
- Other grains (20+ yrs in whole form)
- Rolled Oats and oatmeal (30 yrs)
- Pasta (30 yrs - egg free)
- Rice (30 yrs. - white)
- Potato flakes (30 yrs)
- White flour (10 yrs)
- Popcorn (2+ yrs)

Legumes

- Beans of all kinds (30 yrs)
- Lentils (20 –30 yrs)
- Split peas

Sweeteners

- Sugar (30 years)
- Honey (yrs)
- Molasses (2-5 yrs)
- Gelatin (sweetened)
- Jellies and jams (2–5 yrs)

Milk

- Nonfat powdered milk (20 yrs)
- Whey powder, pudding powder, buttermilk powder, cheese powder... (20 yrs)

Dehydrated fruits and vegetables: 10 –30 years if dried hard (apples and onions last better than carrots). Some people prefer freeze-dried fruits and vegetables, but they will take up slightly more room.

Tips

*Storing spices and baking supplies can make a difference when using very basic ingredients.

*When storing something that has mixed ingredients such as a pasta dinner dish, the rule is that the shelf-life is only as long and the ingredient with the shortest shelf-life.

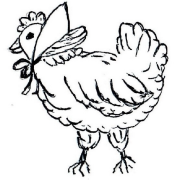
Proper Storage Methods

1. When storing foods long term, large cans with oxygen absorbers are the "gold standard."
2. Sealed glass jars with oxygen absorbers may work well to store foods as long as cans in a dark place. However, you must consider that they can break while being moved or in an earthquake. The seal can also fail more easily than a can.
3. Plastic Buckets, Pete 1 bottles (excluding water bottles), and Mylar bags are all plastic. Because of this they are gas-permeable, and the shelf life will be decreased. Buckets are decreased by half or more compared to cans. Mylar and plastic bags can be penetrated by both insects and rodents. If you choose to use these they should be put in a bucket or tight bin to help protect them. Pete 1 bottles with oxygen absorbers are clear, but if they have airtight lids and are kept in the dark, food in them will last longer than most other plastics. These are better than Mylar and plastic bags for resisting insects and rodents. Sometimes in cool storage Pete 1 bottles will slowly lose air pressure. That is a good sign they are airtight. When you open the bottle it will usually expand again. *A PETE1

bottle is the kind that soda pop, sports drinks, and most juices come in. You can find all sizes this way. They are safe to use if they are washed with soapy water, rinsed, and completely dried. *I like to watch for the bottles that have a wider opening.

Boxes, bags and packages are not safe for long-term storage. It is recommended that all food-storage items you purchase in these things be transferred to something else to store them, and they will last longer with the oxygen removed, whether you do that with a vacuum sealer, an oxygen absorber, or both. *No oxygen absorber should be used with sugar and salt. Salt doesn't need one and sugar will become a rock-hard mass.

————— **Notes from Red Hen** —————



Dear Cousin Speckle,

I know I told you about the deal we made with Pig for a root cellar. Well, I have been concerned about how I would store our wheat without proper containers, and the Lord has provided. Joey, my oldest chick from last year's brood, was scratching along and he found the farmer's son and his buddy sitting behind the old wood shed that isn't used any more. They were drinking sodas. When they were done they just tossed their plastic bottles in the weeds. As soon as they left, Joey and Frank went to get them. They came home with one under each wing. They went back a few days later and got 4 more. That is 8 bottles we washed to store wheat in. We are all hoping that they will continue to enjoy this treat and leave the bottles. I wonder if the farmer and his wife drink pop.

Love, Red