

Can you go grid-less for 30 days? Part 2

Food off the grid

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When you ask the typical American what they will do in a food shortage crisis (like Japan's recent 8.9 earthquake followed by a tsunami), a common response is "I will get a gun and kill my own game." Even in parts of the nation where game is plentiful, the most seasoned hunters don't get game every year. Hunting should be considered a very bad option, especially in the more urban areas, like New York City.

So what are some of the options for food in a "Grid-Less" crisis? These include: saved food, produced food, stolen or poached food, and wild crafted food. Clearly, storing some food for a crisis is your best option. The question then becomes what to store.

Before you buy bags of soybeans consider some of the American diet facts.

Americans eat a whopping 3000 to 4000 calories a day on average. 25-30 percent of those calories are sugar. If you drink sodas, sweet coffees, power drinks, and eat sweet "low fat foods" you may be getting 25 percent of your calories in sugar alone. A 2-liter Pepsi has 224 grams of sugar, just shy of 1/2 lb. (53 teaspoons).

Recently, the U.S.D.A. researched the top eight sources of calories in the average American diet (see list below). In a time of crisis you will not feel well or be able to focus and function if you attempt to change from this "American diet" to "soy beans and rice."

Whole Milk
Cola
White Bread
Rolls
Sugar
Ground Beef
Processed American Cheese.

To "get by," most people need 1500 calories and 75 grams of protein each day. At 1500 calories per day, one loses weight and will feel hungry, but it is also enough food to live on. If water and fuel are scarce, canned foods may be one's best option. Pre-cooked canned foods contain water, and can be eaten cold.

Try this one day test diet and see how you get by. Purchase one 15 oz. can of chili with beans (580 calories), one 5-oz. can of tuna (100 calories), one can green beans (50

calories), one 29 oz. can of sliced peaches (600 calories), and one pack of Top Ramen - 3oz. (380 calories). Total calories = 1,710, grams of protein = 76, and sugar = 131 grams. The cost = \$5.00, for one day.

Using this model you will have to buy and store 120 cans of food and 30 packs of noodles for each person in your household for 30 days. If you have a large coffee addiction (or other) be sure to buy extra of those items. The advantage of canned food is low cost, you can buy what you eat already and the storage time is reasonable (two years).

If water is plentiful you may want freeze-dried foods for your stash. The Survival Acres internet site (<http://survivalacres.com/>) has many freeze-dried food products and package deals available. You can purchase a 7-day, 2-person pack for \$110.69 (\$7.80 per person per day). Freeze-dried foods have a very long life, take up very little space and afford a very good variety.

If money is an issue, the following items will store well and only cost you \$2.50 a day to feed one person.

15 lbs of pinto beans
4 lbs of lard*
25 lbs of rice
5 lbs of sugar
package of salt

**Unlike oil, which can go rancid, lard has a long shelf life and can last for years.*

The wild-crafting option is also possible if you live in or near a green belt. When wild-crafting for food remember: the more landscaped the setting, the more likely it is to be toxic. Almost all organic gardens and landscapes are wild and tangled. Most manicured landscapes are maintained with fungicides and herbicides, and very toxic to eat.

If you imagine yourself wild-crafting, buy books on wild edibles and study them ahead of time. Don't taste plants to see if they are edible, there are just too many poisonous plants for this to be a safe option. A simple test that is almost always correct is to scratch your skin on the inner arm, and then rub the plant into the skin. If it puckers or becomes irritated, most likely it is toxic (or allergenic).



The production of food is a good option in a crisis, with some planning. Fresh sprouts are tasty and very easy to do. You can produce sprouts by spreading seeds on a towel, spread out on a cookie sheet. If you keep it damp, the sprouts will be ready to eat in six or more days.

Seeds such as sunflower, broccoli, radish, alfalfa, and clover sprout well. You can buy seed singles or sprouting mixes from Johnny's Select Seeds or Richters of Canada. Both carry 1 oz. bags of sprout seeds at good prices (\$3.50 each).

Another way to store food is by smoking it. If you have one or more freezers of meat, and the power goes out, all that food will begin to thaw and go bad. With a smoker you can make good use of your meat that would otherwise spoil. A smoking project will keep you occupied in the first days when you need to stay busy.

The bottom line is you need to plan ahead. It is most certain that we are going to experience food shortages in the next several years. If you are prepared and have a plan, you and your family can come through the experience with a sense of adventure and success, rather than fear and panic.

Here are some further food resources to review:

- <http://www.wilderness-survival.net/plants-1.php>
- <http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=wild+edible+plants&qpv=wild+edible+plants&FORM=VDRE>
- <http://www.survival-center.com/guide/food.htm>

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