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Grocery Store Survival Foods

By Jim Jones

Recent events have made many citizens think about stocking up for emergencies. There is nothing paranoid about preparedness. In fact being able to survive hard-times and disasters is just responsible citizenship. After storing plenty of water the next priority is food. The average American home has from two to four weeks of assorted canned, frozen and dried foodstuffs in stock. An emergency that lasts more than a few weeks or that requires the abandonment of the home requires the stocking of storable and portable foods. You can build up a six-month food stock by buying a few extra items each week. If you have room and you are sure you will be able to stay home throughout any emergency you can build up stocks of canned goods and dried foods (e.g. corn, wheat, beans, rice, etc.) and rotate in fresh supplies as you use the older stock annually. If you have limited space (living in an apartment) and/or may need to carry your stocks to a safer location your priorities change. You will want to have the most nourishment with the least weight and size. The more food value you can actually carry the longer you will be able to survive.

While the *theoretical* standard for daily meals is 2,000 calories and about 300 grams of carbohydrates. The fact is that lots of people get along fine and much less. This is survival, not gourmet dining! An initially healthy well-nourished person can get along for many months on 500 to 1000 calories per day. Of course food requirements can vary greatly depending on the individual metabolism, weather conditions and level of activity. If you are hunkering-down in a nice warm shelter you will need a lot less food than if you are on the march in winter conditions. You can add more items to the quantities listed in this article (e.g. oatmeal and Power Bars) if you feel you need to. Keep in mind that the more food you add to the pack the more weight you are carrying and the more energy you burn carrying it. There is also the potential of supplementing your stock by foraging, hunting and fishing. All of the items in the table below are found on typical grocery store shelves for any citizen to pack into their survival packs. Where items are sold in 12 packs, etc the price and other data is from the smallest packaged unit. Some packages contain more than one serving but it is assumed that the whole contents will be used as one meal under survival conditions.

Item & Price *	Weight & Size	Calories	Carbo-hydrates	Protein	Shelf Life **
Quaker Instant Oatmeal Individual packages 40 cents	1.5 oz 3 1/2 x 3 1/2 x 1/2	160	3g	4g	5 plus
Beef Jerky Small pkg. \$3.29	2 oz 4 x 5 x 1/2	80	5g	14g	2 to 5 years or more
Power Bars	2.3 oz	240	45g	7g	5 year plus

\$1.50	4x11/2x1/2				
Knorr Soup Mix (Tomato Beef) \$3.95	1.8 oz 4x4x1/2	120	27g	6g	5 years plus
Nature Valley Granola Bars (2 pack) 26 cents	1.5 oz 3 1/2x1 1/2x 3/4	180	29g	4g	5 years plus
Swiss Miss Hot Chocolate 25 cents	.55 oz 5x3x1/4	120	22g	2g	5 years plus
Lipton Rice Mix \$1.35	5.6 oz 6x5x1/2	590	141g	15g	5 years plus
Lipton Noodle Mix \$1.39	4.3 oz 6x5x1/2	600	84g	18g	5 years plus
Ramen Noodle Soup Mix, 50 cents	1.8 oz 4x4x1/2	190	26g	4g	5 years plus
Trail Mix, Dried fruit & nuts) \$1.99 pkg.	6 oz 5x5x1/2	130	16g	2g	About 5 years
Zatarain Jambalaya Mix (use with jerky) \$1.69	8 oz 4x6x1 1/2	780	147g	18g	5 years plus
King Oscar Anchovies \$3.00	2 oz 3 1/2x2x3/4	50	0g	6g	5 years plus

* Prices may vary. Families and groups can save substantially by buying in bulk at discount stores.

** Based on personal use of products stored in survival packs. While these foods were edible at 5 years most were not edible after ten years. Rotation every 2 to 3 years is recommended. Nutritional value and taste will deteriorate somewhat over years. A dry cool storage environment is required.

Depending on the weight of the pack one is willing to carry, five to ten days rations can be packed and carried along with other survival supplies (e.g. shelter, medicine, clothing, etc.) Up to 30 days rations could be packed into a 12 x 18 x 24 inch plastic tote bin that can quickly be loaded into an escape vehicle.

Oat Meal

Pound-for-pound, oatmeal is probably one of the best survival pack items; it is cheap, light, high in calories and vitamins. I have used packages of Quaker Instant Oatmeal that were stored over six years in the bottom of my survival pack. Oatmeal stored over ten years had become stale and inedible.

Here are four sample ration-packages I assembled from the items in the table. There are sufficient items in each package to provide three meals of varying food value. The tea candles and matches added to packages #1 and #2 make them more independent "survival kits". Tea candles cost about 5 cents each (bag of 50) weigh about .3 oz and

provide light (and some heat) for 4 hours each. Package #2 is designed for circumstances when cooking is not an option. All of the foods in that package can be eaten on the move. The addition of a 24 x 24 inch folded piece of heavy aluminum foil to and package can be folded into a makeshift cooking pot if nothing else is available. A few sealed handy-wipes can add comfort and sanitation without adding much weight. All items listed below are single packages.

Unit#1: Knorr soup mix, Granola bars, Oatmeal, Power Bar, Swiss Miss chocolate, Candle w/ matches. Weight 8 oz, Calories 800, Cost \$6.75

Unit #2: Beef jerky, Granola bar, Power Bar, Anchovies, Candle w/ matches. Weight 6.5 oz, Calories 550, Cost \$8.29

Unit #3: Oatmeal, Lipton noodle mix, Granola bars, Anchovies. Weight 7.7 oz, Calories 990, Cost \$5.39

Unit #4: Beef jerky, Power Bar, Oatmeal, Ramen noodle soup mix, Swiss Miss chocolate. Weight 9.3 oz, Calories 790, Cost \$5.99

It is recommended that each meal unit be placed in a sealed plastic bag. To assure that you are never completely without food, it is recommended that rations be carried as follows.

- Pockets: One Power Bar or Two Granola Bars or One package of Jerky
- Belt Pack: One complete ration as per unit #2
- Back Pack: five or more complete ration-packages

MREs and Freeze Dried

Military MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) are well-designed, nourishing and last well over ten years. They are expensive and heavy to carry. MREs are highly recommended for home and cache food storage. Freeze dried foods from the camp supply store are costly but are lightweight and keep well over ten years. If rotation is not practical, these may be a good choice for the survival pack

Having your food stocks and other survival items ready to go can bring security a peace-of-mind to the responsible citizen in dangerous times.

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