

Food Preparation For Natural Disasters (Fire, Flood, Power-Outage)

Composed by: Christina Lao, Dietetic Student of California State University of Fresno

Edited by: Leslee Blanch, RDN, LD, Family Consumer Science Associate Extension Educator

The foods that we store in our pantries tend to be foods we enjoy; this may include healthy foods, and maybe some not so healthy foods. There are several factors to consider when storing foods for emergency situations:

- Ages of family members
- Special needs of family members (Example: Infants, pregnant women, elderly will need more water than the average person)
- Number of family members
- Food preferences
- Special health and diet needs
- Ability and equipment to prepare food
- Space for storage

But are we getting the nutrition our body needs?

When it comes to stocking food, we should avoid foods that increase thirst, such as alcohol and highly salted packaged foods:

- More than 300 milligrams of sodium per serving
- Highly processed meats

Other ingredients to consider limiting include fat, sugar, and additives:

- Over 3 grams of saturated fat per serving
- Anything with added sugar
- Long lists of strange ingredients
- For example, we can differentiate nutrition facts of saturated fat and sodium on the two labels below.

Some nutrient-rich foods that can be stored for natural disasters include:

Nutrition Facts	Amount/serving	%DV*	Amount/serving	%DV*
	Total Fat 16g	25%	Total Carb. 1g	0%
Serv. Size 2 oz. (56g)	Sat. Fat 6g	30%	Fiber 0g	0%
Servings per Container 6	Cholest. 40mg	13%	Sugars 0g	
Calories 180	Sodium 790mg	33%	Protein 7g	
Fat Cal. 140				
*Percent Daily Values (DV) are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Vitamin A 0% • Vitamin C 0% • Calcium 0% • Iron 2%				

- Black olives (heart healthy fats)
- Reduced sodium black beans, refried beans, pinto, kidney, and garbanzo beans (have fiber and protein, lower the risks of chronic diseases, and low-fat snack)
- Whole-wheat crackers (has fiber to make you fill fuller)
- Thai Kitchen's Coconut milk (last longer than most other dairy alternatives)

Nutrition Facts/Datos de Nutrición	
Serving Size/Tamaño por Ración 2 oz (56 g - 1/4 cup/taza)	
Servings Per Container/Raciones por Envase about/como 5	
Amount Per Serving/Cantidad por Ración	
Calories/Calorías 80	Calories from Fat/Calorías de Grasa 50
% Daily Value*/% Valor Diario*	
Total Fat/Grasa Total 5g	8%
Saturated Fat/Grasa Saturada 2g	10%
Trans Fat/Grasa Trans 0g	
Polyunsaturated Fat/Grasa Poliinsaturada 2g	
Monounsaturated Fat/Grasa Monoinsaturada 1.5g	
Cholesterol/Colesterol 35mg	12%
Sodium/Sodio 220mg	9%
Potassium/Potasio 130mg	4%
Total Carbohydrate/Carbohidrato Total < 1g	0%
Sugars/Azúcares 0g	
Protein/Proteínas 8g	14%
Vitamin A/Vitamina A 0%	Vitamin C/Vitamina C 0%
Calcium/Calcio 10%	Iron/Hierro 4%
Vitamin D/Vitamina D 25%	Niacin/Niacina 20%
Vitamin B6/Vitamina B6 6%	Vitamin B12/Vitamina B12 70%
Selenium/Selenio 45%	

1. Emergency Food and Water Supplies. [texashelp.tamu.edu](https://texashelp.tamu.edu/browse/disaster-preparedness-information/emergency-food-and-water-supplies/). Accessed September 28, 2020.
2. London J, Picard C. 30 Health Canned Foods You Should Add to Your Pantry. [goodhousekeeping.com](https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/diet-nutrition/g5147/healthy-canned-foods/). Published March 27, 2020. Accessed September 29, 2020.

- Canned mackerel, tuna, or sardines in water (full of omega-3's and vitamin B12 [essential nutrient for nerve function and cognitive health]) Could include vitamin, mineral, and protein supplements
- Peanut butter
- Nuts
- Dried fruit
- Fruits canned without added sugar

SHelf-LIFE OF FOODS FOR STORAGE

The following provides some general guidelines for replacement of common emergency foods.

Use within six months:

- ◆ Powdered milk - *boxed*
- ◆ Dried fruit
- ◆ Dry, crisp crackers
- ◆ Potatoes

Use within one year, or before the date indicated on the label:

- ◆ Canned condensed meat and vegetable soups
- ◆ Canned fruits, fruit juices, and vegetables
- ◆ Ready-to-eat cereals and uncooked instant cereals
- ◆ Peanut butter
- ◆ Jelly
- ◆ Hard candy and canned nuts
- ◆ Vitamins

May be stored indefinitely (in proper containers and conditions):

- ◆ Wheat
- ◆ Vegetable oils
- ◆ Dried corn
- ◆ Baking powder
- ◆ Soybeans
- ◆ Instant coffee, tea, and cocoa
- ◆ Salt
- ◆ Noncarbonated soft drinks
- ◆ White rice
- ◆ Bouillon products
- ◆ Dry pasta
- ◆ Powdered milk – *in nitrogen-packed cans*

- Canned spinach and sliced beets (contain vitamin C; can lower risks of heart diseases, and reduce inflammation)
- A variety of “No Added Salt” canned vegetables
- Vegetable soup (contains vitamin A to help protect vision and keep eyes healthy)
- One gallon of water per person or pet for drinking and sanitation, at least 3-day supply
- Optional: Powdered protein supplements; vitamin/mineral supplements

Food Storage Tips-

- Keep food in a dry, cool spot (dark area, if possible)
- Open food boxes and other re-sealable containers carefully so that you can close them tightly after each use
- Wrap perishable foods, such as cookies and crackers, in plastic bags and keep them in sealed containers
- Empty open packages of sugar, dried fruits, and nuts into screw-top jars or airtight canisters for protection from pests
- Inspect all food for signs of spoilage before use
- Throw out canned goods that become swollen, dented or corroded
- Use foods before they go bad, and replace them with fresh supplies, dated with ink or marker

1. London J, Picard C. 30 Health Canned Foods You Should Add to Your Pantry. [goodhousekeeping.com. https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/diet-nutrition/g5147/healthy-canned-foods/](https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/diet-nutrition/g5147/healthy-canned-foods/). Published March 27, 2020. Accessed September 29, 2020.
2. Emergency Food and Water Supplies. [texashelp.tamu.edu.https://texashelp.tamu.edu/browse/disaster-preparedness-information/emergency-food-and-water-supplies/](https://texashelp.tamu.edu/browse/disaster-preparedness-information/emergency-food-and-water-supplies/). Accessed September 28, 2020.
3. Food and Water in an Emergency. <https://www.fema.gov/pdf/library/f&web.pdf>. Accessed September 28, 2020.

Cleaning and Sanitizing Equipment After Any Disaster-

- Pots and pans, glasses, dishes, and utensils should be washed in detergent and rinsed in clean, sanitized water, if available, then soaked for 15 minutes in a solution of 2 teaspoons (tsp) of chlorine bleach per quart of water at room temperature
- Use 2 tsp of chlorine bleach in 1 quart of water to clean food preparation surfaces and equipment and the inside of refrigerators and freezers



1. London J, Picard C. 30 Health Canned Foods You Should Add to Your Pantry. goodhousekeeping.com. <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/diet-nutrition/g5147/healthy-canned-foods/>. Published March 27, 2020. Accessed September 29, 2020.
2. Emergency Food and Water Supplies. texashelp.tamu.edu.<https://texashelp.tamu.edu/browse/disaster-preparedness-information/emergency-food-and-water-supplies/>. Accessed September 28, 2020.
3. Food and Water in an Emergency. <https://www.fema.gov/pdf/library/f&web.pdf>. Accessed September 28, 2020.