

Storage Containers

A good method for storing food is in military surplus ammunition cans, military foot lockers, lidded plastic storage containers and large portable ice chests. The military makes many sizes of ammo cans and they are normally available from army surplus stores. These are metal water-tight cans and can be stored anywhere. They prevent moisture, insects and rodents from access to the stored food. Military foot lockers, lidded plastic storage containers and large portable ice chests have the same basic properties as the military ammunition cans. Military foot lockers, lidded plastic storage containers and large portable ice are normally lighter in weight but are not water tight. One thing to always remember when storing food, or any other items, in a large container is the weight of the container when loaded. In a major disaster, you may be forced to relocate. You need to make sure your food storage is light enough to be portable.

Maintaining Freshness

Rotate your food items annually. Pick a month each year when you will do this and mark the date on the storage containers. Since most canned items have a two year shelf life, you can replace one half of the stored items with new items and use the older items for daily consumption. Always check the expiration date on food before consuming it. Don't forget to add an extra pound of table salt and can of pepper to your stored food. A little spice can go a long way to make the meal taste better.

Food Preparation:

The best laid plans can be ruined for the lack of the appropriate means to prepare your food. By keeping the meals simple, the food preparation items needed can be kept to a minimum. Here is a list of the basic food preparation items:

1. Pot to cook simple meals (Teflon for ease of cleaning)
2. A large spoon for cooking (Compatible with Teflon pot so you don't damage the Teflon)
3. One metal or non-breakable bowl per person (can be used for soups and broths, a plate can't)
4. One metal spoon per person (can be used for liquids, a fork can't)
5. One metal or non-breakable cup per person
6. A can opener
7. A large knife (for slicing canned bread and other items)
8. A coffee pot or tea pot for heating water (Use for water only - needed for sanitation)
9. Coleman type propane stove (two burner is best for cooking and heating water at the same time)

NOTE: Don't forget to buy a spark igniter.

Emergency Cooking

The Coleman type propane stove is included because natural gas or propane deliveries could be disrupted. A single small propane camping cylinder should last a week, if used sparingly (two hot meals and heating water daily). Avoid using too many propane burning items in an enclosed space. Always have an open window or door near the item when in use to avoid a build-up of fumes.

Alternate Hot Water Method

Another means for heating water, during periods when the sun shines, is a solar shower. A five gallon solar shower should be able to provide hot water for hygiene purposes for two people daily. Do NOT use the hot water from a solar shower for cooking unless the solar shower is dedicated for drinking water use only. This will also save on propane use and extend the life of your propane cylinders.

Food Hygiene:

You will need the following to maintain your food preparation equipment:

1. Large plastic bucket with lid for washing (It can also be used to store the food preparation equipment)
2. Nylon/sponge scrubber (use only for cleaning food preparation items.)
3. Liquid soap (hand soft soap can be used for personal hygiene and cleaning kitchen items)
4. Towels for drying items and cleaning the tops of cans before opening.

Use drinking quality water (sparingly) to clean food preparation equipment.