

# Quick Guide to Emergency Food Planning & Cooking

By Carol M. Frankel



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This booklet was submitted to Cedar Hills Ready!  
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***Note from the Author:** I wrote this document a couple of years ago I think about emergency food supply; I have updated it with my pandemic experience. I think we all have learned more about pantry cooking! Much of my experience comes from living Vashon Island for 20 years where the power goes out all the time and trees fall across the roads, so everyone becomes quite self sufficient. I like to think about this in a broader context than just The Big One, in that we may find ourselves in smaller emergencies regularly that give us a chance to think about what we need and what we will do. This document is just guidelines and suggestions for how to adapt what each family likes, not really recipes.*

Some agencies say you should have emergency food for 3 days. I don't think this is enough. A 10-day supply is better. Oregon Earthquake Preparedness is now suggesting at least a **two-week supply, three weeks is even better.**

- Establish a heat source in case your kitchen is not working– a camp stove, a barbecue, etc.
- Establish your water supply with some for cooking as well as drinking, recommendation is one gallon per person per day for two weeks.
- Think of your equipment – manual can opener, pots that fit your heat source.
- Think about clean up with limited water. A non-stick pan is better. And foods that just add hot water make simpler clean up. A pot cozy will save a lot of fuel – directions on the web for making one.

The pandemic shut down has given us a chance to think about our food plans. We should be shopping less often, using pantry supplies more. It has made me rethink my plan to simplify and think of what is essential. There are lots of emergencies – storms, wildfire with possible evacuations, etc., so I have been thinking about various levels of emergencies. I have developed a little notebook with:

- Lists of staples to keep up on,
- Items to make sure I always have, if I have only a couple of days' notice
- Items to grab in sudden evacuation.

Many people buy meal prep packages that keep for years. You can do that. But you can put together your own supply that will be more interesting, more satisfying and probably cheaper. Moreover you can use things out of it regularly and replace them.

In reading about emergencies, we read about the peanut butter we can eat out of the jar, breakfast bars and the raisins to just sustain ourselves, but also think about how you are going to make a space where your family can be safe and happy for a few days or even a couple of weeks. If you can make some things that feel like real meals, the psychological benefits as well as nutritional benefits will be great.

In times of emergency, meals together can make everyone feel more secure, no matter how simple. Cook some of these meals, and see how they work for your family. I found I needed to think of meals with a couple of dishes, to make them feel like a meal. Think of a main dish, and a salad substitute side (maybe just some olives, or bottled giardiniera) or dessert that seems like it makes a contribution to the meal, even if it is only dried fruit or trail mix.

### General Guidelines

1. You will have limited water and fuel. Canned food to heat up will be better than dried, which will need water to rehydrate. Learn to cook one-pot pasta; look for recipes on-line. No need to heat and throw out all that pasta water.
2. Develop some family favorite recipes using these ingredients as a base: couscous and tabbouleh (using bulgur wheat). Just add hot water and sit for a while.
3. Set up a small collection of spices and aromatics, like chopped, dried onions and garlic, dried parsley, Italian seasoning, chili powder, curry powder, and dried ginger. Even if you normally don't use them in this form, they are easy to store and use, and can add a lot of zip to food. Don't forget salt and pepper.
4. Think of your camping favorites, such as canned stew or soups, baked beans, etc.
5. Think of protein sources that will keep, including: nuts, canned beans, canned meats and fish, and vacuum-packed smoked salmon.
6. Browse your supermarket aisles, and look for packaged foods that don't take lots of water. For example, boxed potato side dishes usually have a stove-top option. Think of new ways to use old favorites. For example, canned pumpkin and coconut milk with some good spices can make an Indian soup.
7. Get cans or bottles for adding flavor, including ingredients like canned green chilis, olives, capers, salsa, olives, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce, anchovies, pesto, and so on.
8. Get foods your family will like (or tolerate) so you can rotate your supplies, or donate and replace them periodically before the "use by" dates are up, if you don't want to rotate your supply.
9. Think of shelf stable fat sources, oils and ghee.
10. Think of cooking liquids, stock, wine, beer, coconut milk, tomato juice, and so on.
11. Think of bread substitutes. For example: canned brown bread, crackers, substantial chips like pita and tortilla. Consider using these in meals; don't just consume as snacks.
12. Look for long "use-by" dates on simple cookies: shortbread, gingersnaps, and so on, which make a great simple dessert with bottled applesauce or other fruit not loaded with sugar.

## Twelve Recipe Ideas

Use these as examples, and modify to make your own favorites:

1. **One pot spaghetti using spaghetti:** Canned diced tomatoes, dried onion and garlic, Italian seasoning, and Parmesan on top.
2. **Salmon fettuccini:** Canned salmon, noodles, pesto, sun-dried tomatoes, canned artichoke hearts, olives, capers and optional anchovies.
3. **Spanish rice:** Rice, canned tomatoes, black beans, chili powder, dried onion.
4. **Asian rice or noodles:** Rice or noodles, dried mushrooms, dried chives, wakame seaweed. Shredded nori seaweed on top.
5. **Niçoise salad (cold or hot):** canned tuna or salmon on canned potatoes with green beans, sun-dried tomatoes, olives, capers and dill.
6. **Tabbouleh:** Add hot water to bulgur wheat and let sit. Add dried onions, garlic, and parsley. When proper texture is developed, add olive oil, salt, pepper, capers, sun-dried tomatoes, and lemon juice. You can also add garbanzo beans. Real tabbouleh has tons of fresh parsley and mint; you just have to do without this or start growing them in your garden.
7. **Couscous:** Soak in hot water until soft, but not mushy. Add olive oil, salt and pepper and other items, as in tabbouleh, if you choose. Or go with a Moroccan theme of cinnamon, ginger, raisins, or other dried fruit, sliced almond or pine nuts. Canned Japanese adzuki beans go with this sweet theme, or add your favorite beans.
8. **Cookies:** Look up recipes for no-bake cookies and recipes for no-bake fruit crisp using canned fruit.
9. **Hummus:** Mash canned garbanzo beans with lemon juice, olive oil, garlic, salt and cumin.
10. **Bean soup:** Come up with your own bean soup recipes with a can of beans and a can of tomato. Try various seasonings, but include onion and garlic, for sure. Maybe cinnamon, paprika, or peppers. Think of adding a can of drained artichoke hearts and olives, and call it a tagine. Make it thick and serve over rice or couscous.
11. **Pumpkin soup:** Combine a can of pumpkin and a can of coconut milk. Add curry powder, onion, and red pepper. Serve over rice, and top with almonds.

Try these things and get the hang of it for your family and your tastes and then start your pantry!