



# FINDINGS REPORT

summary of learnings



# Overview

Jodi and Julie came up with the Seven Day Challenge as a way to test their readers over at FoodStorageMadeEasy.NET (and themselves) in a simulated emergency situation. By actually living through these experiences people found a lot of things missing in their emergency preparedness plans. Think of the challenge as more of a hands-on lab than a lecture.

## Over 2000 Participants:

By doing the challenge on such a broad scale it invited a LOT of interaction and discussion by participants. People were encouraged by each other, learned from each other, and enjoyed the moral support even if their families weren't on board with the challenge.

## Motivating Factors:

While there were over 100 prizes donated from many different companies, people's main motivation in the challenge wasn't about winning prizes. Everyone wanted to LEARN. People were taking down copious notes during each day's events to make sure to work on those items once the challenge was over. Simulating living through an evacuation, or a quarantine, or lack of power or water makes you realize a LOT more what you would ACTUALLY want to have on hand for those situations.

## Summary of Learnings:

While each day has a summary with specific findings related to that "emergency", the overall learnings from this event have become very clear. While it is one thing to learn to use food storage on a daily basis and get familiar with the foods, it's completely different to transition to using them in an "actual" emergency. It's still a very good idea to start small and not to feel overwhelmed, but it's something that everyone can work on to become more self-reliant and confident in surviving with no power, water, etc. It's also a good idea to research what disasters are common in your area and to do more planning to be prepared for those specific events.

The next few pages give an overview of what emergency situation each day of the challenge brought along with key findings, statistics, and comments from participants. We gathered the data from Facebook comments, questionnaires, and blog comments. Remember, the challenge was designed to help people realize there are more reasons to do food storage than JUST to be prepared for traditional "emergencies".

# Day 1: NATURAL DISASTER "it's a flood!"

**There has been a flood and everyone in your city has been told to evacuate their homes for part of the day. You are not sure whether your home, or it's contents will survive the flood when you evacuate.**

## Daily Tasks and Limitations



- For this day, and ALL days of the challenge: no spending money, no going to stores
- You have no power for the whole day
- You have to "leave" your house within an hour for at least 5 hours (but you don't know if your house is going to be there when you get back)
- You can only grab what is in your disasters kit and ALREADY on your grab list when you leave
- You have to eat the food from your 72 hour kit while you are gone
- Your family gets soaking wet during evacuation, and one of your family members cuts their toe
- Your spouse is at work. You have to meet at your pre-determined meeting location when he or she is done work
- Once your whole family reunites you can return to your house
- When you get home, your fridge food is ruined, your basement food is flooded, and you need to make dinner with no power
- Keep your family entertained with no power (remember, lights, tv, appliances etc will not work!)



## Jodi & Julie's Summary



There are so many different scenarios in which you might need to evacuate that it has become clear that every family must plan for a variety of situations. If one spouse works out of the home, they should have a disaster kit at work. If you don't have a car at home, you may or may not have transportation in an evacuation situation so everything should be in backpacks and kept very light weight.

As far as 72 hour kit food is concerned, we found that most people did not have enough food for a full three days. Also, while it was nice to have some heated foods (and fun for the kids to cook it), we would highly recommend having enough foods in your kit to sustain you without needing to cook anything. The cookable foods could be treated as bonus or comfort foods.

Another little lesson learned (especially for family's with older kids) is to practice having time with no electronics. In today's world we are always "plugged in", so in an emergency it would be a huge shock to kids to not be able to do anything they are used to. Why not get used to doing this every now and then so they can have things in mind to do if the situation should ever arise.



## Stats: How did Readers Do?

- 65% of people were able to get out of the house within an hour
- Only 39% had a "Grab List" properly filled out beforehand
- 54% ate out of their 72 hour kits all day until dinnertime
- 86% of people had a first aid kit in their disaster kit
- Only 47% of people had spare clothing in their disaster kits
- 50% of people were able to meet in a pre-arranged meet up location
- 84% of challenge participants cooked a powerless dinner
- 94% were able to entertain themselves and kids all evening with no power

## Feedback from Participants

- Gather everything in a more central location
- Cooking utensils and pans need to be with food kits and easily grabbed
- Go over meeting places again with family. Practice disaster drills
- Freeze dried food, it's lighter
- I have not planned for what I would do with my pets in the event of an emergency
- More flashlights, more lamps, more drilling
- Backpacks by back door instead of throughout bedrooms
- Add diapers and diaper wipes to grab list
- I was ready if I would be stuck in the house but being evacuated, not so much
- Blowup pillows and warm throws in each 72 hour kit
- Check the gas gauge and keep it at the level my husband suggests I keep it
- I'm making the first aid kit a priority
- Need to make sure that ALL of our important papers are handy
- Put some food storage upstairs so it is in two locations
- I sat and thought about what to grab in an hour and it was really hard. Needs to be filled out!
- Make sure I replace what I use quickly
- More snacks and more kid friendly lunches in the 72 hr kit
- Our clothes were not quite the right size, I need to update them more frequently
- I really need to work on alternative ways to cook, a kerosene stove would be nice to have
- I won't take out food from kit until have new food to replace
- Have boxes/packaging for evacuating heirlooms listed on Grab List
- Regularly back up computers with Mozy
- I will have my disaster kit finished not half done in my closet
- Also, I had never considered WHERE we would go if we had to leave the house for 5 hours
- I will make my 72 hour kit with easier to carry...make it a back pack
- I also will think of things for the baby (she is 11 months old) and update her stuff every 3 month
- More entertainment for the kiddos
- Also, more easy makeable food without electricity in the house.... we didn't have many choices
- Get a better can opener
- I need to find a place to keep the stuff not packed away in some buried corner of the basement

# Day 2: IT'S A PANDEMIC "time for quarantine"

There has been an outbreak of the swine flu (or something like it) in your city, and you are ordered into quarantine in your home.

## Daily Tasks and Limitations



- For this day, and ALL days of the challenge: no spending money, no going to stores, and no restaurants. Today is more of a "THINKING" day than a "DOING" day
- You can't leave your house at all (if you have a prior commitment we understand, we both have something Thursday evening we committed to months ago!)
- Some of your family members have been infected and have fevers/ stomach flus and need proper medication
- You need to provide comfort foods to infected family members to make them feel better
- You have used up ALL the toilet paper and paper towels in your bathroom and kitchen, you can only use what you have stored extra (wherever that may be)
- The family members that have not been infected will stay healthy so long as they follow proper recommendations, meaning proper hand washing and sanitizing, and even wear face masks



## Jodi & Julie's Summary



Day 2 was a very interesting day to consider since Swine Flu is such a concern right now. If your family truly needed to be quarantined, some things to consider are as follows: Do you have enough money in savings to make up for lost time at work? Do you have medicines on hand at home to cover a wide variety of illnesses? Do you always have enough food on hand to last at least a week without shopping?



## Stats: How did Readers Do?

- 70% of people were able to stick with the quarantine and stay home all day
- A whopping 97% of challenge participants had fever medicines on hand
- 86% had medicine to help with stomach relief in the house
- 87% of people had some good comfort foods on hands for their family
- Surprisingly, 90% of participants had toilet paper in their storage, but only 78% had paper towels in their storage area
- Only 51% had appropriate face masks, we need to do better at that
- 89% had some hand sanitizer in the home, to help prevent spreading germs

## Feedback from Participants

- Need to upgrade medical supplies
- I knew I needed face masks but have been building other areas of food storage
- I need to have more medicine, in case we are here for a long time
- Think more of an individual disaster than trying to look at the whole elephant
- The medicine cabinet will be better prepared
- Keep soup supply up
- Make sure first aid kit is up to date and fully stocked
- Paper towels, more toilet paper, diapers and wet wipes
- I had what I needed although I don't know if my supplies would have lasted longer than a week
- Will ensure we have enough vitamin C, zinc lozenges, etc in addition to regular medications
- Make sure there is a stash of extra bed linens and comfy blankets to snuggle up when the drowsiness hits from illness
- More hand sanitizer, containers for people who get sick in bed
- Some ginger ale with real ginger and some Gatorade on hand
- Can up more of my chicken soup, maybe add some rice to my next batch
- More crackers because they help settle a upset stomach
- Paper products are quite critical, and one sick person can go through a roll a day
- I think I want more Emergen-C, probably 7-up and soda crackers
- I really need more 'stuff' on hand to keep the kids busy
- You think you have it all together and the kids got so bored
- Although I had Lysol and Clorox wipes, I didn't have any sanitizer for hands
- I will get a good thermometer and stock up juice and tissues
- More comfort foods and things to occupy our time
- I will try to replace the things we use regularly so there is more of a backup supply
- I think I will get some of them and maybe more jello but do not like the food coloring in them
- Antibacterial spray for use on phones and door knobs
- I think I will do a better job at keeping my home in a clean and organized state
- I think I am going to make each person a special bag that has everything they need for a quarantine these will be bags they can decorate and fill with things they enjoy and then stored under the bed- then they can truly have comfort

# Day 3: EVERYDAY EMERGENCY "dinner guests?!?!?"

Your spouse calls and announces their boss is coming over for dinner (or your boss invites themselves over for dinner TONIGHT!). You have no WAY to go to the store, and you have to come up with an impressive meal from what you already have in your home.

## Daily Tasks and Limitations



- For this day, and ALL days of the challenge: no spending money, no going to stores, and no restaurants
- You can use whatever food you have in your house (includes fridge, freezer)
- The meal has to have an appetizer
- The main course can't use meat because the boss is a vegetarian (your meal CAN use milk, and dairy)
- You have to have at least 2 side dishes for the dinner
- The meal has to have a dessert
- You have to get other family members to help you make the meal and or set the table "NICELY"
- Your house probably should be clean (even though that's not a "food storage" thing)
- Brainstorm what other types of "everyday" emergencies you may have, and how you could better prepare for them



## Jodi & Julie's Summary



Day 3 was a lighthearted day. While not an "emergency" in the traditional sense, it's definitely an emergency that could really happen to you. We had numerous people comment that something similar has happened to them in the past. This is an easy emergency to do something about. Just have in mind some good backup meals that can be made with ingredients you normally have on hand. One of Julie's favorite ideas is to ALWAYS have the ingredients to make a pudding pie because she is constantly asked to bring a "dessert" to events and hates going to the grocery store.



## Stats: How did Readers Do?

- While 80% of participants were able to create a nice appetizer from their food storage, 93% came up with a delicious dessert!
- 83% of people were able to come up with a vegetarian meal
- 82% of challenge participants managed to cook 2 nice side dishes

## Feedback from Participants

- Have some menus that uses my "staple pantry " ingredients so I don't have to think in a panic
- I can stock my pantry better
- Would like to get some dehydrated eggs and dehydrated cheese
- I usually have some homemade dishes in the freezer for these situations
- I need to learn how to do beans faster by becoming more familiar with my pressure cooker
- I need to have more side items on hand, I just did basic corn and mashed potatoes
- I want to plant a bigger garden
- I need more freezer space
- Will start to stock up on more veggies
- Need to think about what to have on hand for a dessert, I guess some fruit would work
- I have neglected desserts and comfort foods in my food storage
- I plan on buying some items that my family would enjoy
- I should have a variety of vegetarian choices, not just pasta
- Have more milk on hand for drinking - We have powdered milk that we will try next time
- Have a better stocked pantry and freezer, plus more canned fruits on hand
- Keep more variety of meal options on hand frozen or in the cupboard to meet any diet restrictions of guests
- Have more "NICE" recipes and ingredients on hand for nights like this
- Try to get some WOW recipes set aside to save time and always have the ingredients on hand
- I need to have more ideas for meals using my food storage
- I'll keep my freezer better stocked
- More choices for drinks would have been nice
- Make menus in advance
- I am going to store some dry parmesan cheese for topping dishes
- Expand the garden - It was an ok meal but nothing to write home about
- More organized recipe files



# Day 4: ECONOMIC CRISIS "money is tight!"

Times are tough. You have no income at the time. You have lost some critical utilities and are having to cut back on certain items. It's also the weekend, you've had a rough week and want to do something fun with your family or your friends.

## Daily Tasks and Limitations

- For this day, and ALL days of the challenge: no spending money, no going to stores, and no restaurants
- Your water got shut off because you couldn't pay your bill last month (remember toilets use 1 1/2-3 gallons of your stored water PER FLUSH)
- You no longer have cable, internet, or cell phones due to lack of money
- You ran out of bread, need some, and can't afford store bought -YES today is the day you have to actually try making bread
- You can't participate in activities that are paid for
- Do a fun activity with your family, or with your friends that costs no money outside of the home

## Jodi & Julie's Summary

Day 4 was the day that really hit home for a lot of our participants. Many of them said they have already been living this way do to their economic circumstances. This day really reinforced to us that even though most people START food storage thinking about natural disasters, it is most often actually USED in times of economic crisis.

Some economic benefits to food storage include saving money by stocking up when items are on sales, cooking more from scratch, and not constantly having to buy things you "run out of" at full price. And if things are really tight and bills aren't being paid, it is so relieving to know that at the very least you will be able to feed your family, and maybe use some of the normal grocery money to pay for other necessities.



## Stats: How did Readers Do?

- Just over half of the participants managed this day using only stored water
- 29% of people cheated and watched TV (BYU Football may have had an impact on this statistic)
- 32% couldn't go the day without using the Internet
- Only 26% couldn't manage without using their cell phone
- Our participants did well with 71% of people fulfilling the bread-making assignment
- 17% of participant's family members didn't LIKE their bread!
- 95% of individual's/families found a fun and FREE activity to do

## Feedback from Participants

- Probably should store more water
- Need to build stores of water, more batteries for radio, or buy a wind-up one
- Chemical toilet
- I have to find an alternative for the sun oven
- Keep the outdoor grill cleaner, better access to propane stove
- We have a savings account that will keep us going when/if we ever lose our job again
- We have large water containers in our garage - I need to figure out a better way to access them if I needed to
- Need to store more water for hygiene use, I had enough to drink but not enough for the bodies
- No longer question the need to have a very good food storage supply and will make that a priority
- Looking into getting a generator
- Buying diff types of food items like more yeast
- Buy a hand wheat grinder
- Maybe I should store gasoline for the cars
- I am glad I have been making bread and getting better at it
- I would like to have more fun things available
- Enough savings to pay bills for a year
- I would like to have more games for the family to play, just in case
- I need to increase my water storage so that I have at least a 2 week supply
- I need to have more baking soda and sawdust for the potty
- I will have to have another store of 'junk' water for the toilet - maybe an extra water barrel
- Plenty of wet wipes would be good when water is short
- I would like to get a solar oven and learn how to use it
- I need to practice making bread, so I'll know what I'm actually doing
- We didn't store much water because we didn't have a siphon hose - there was no way to get it out of the large containers
- It was really hard to not watch TV and use my cell phone
- More water for dogs too
- Having a convenient binder with food storage recipes

# Day 5: NATURAL DISASTER "earthquake!"

There has been an earthquake and you have lost some utilities.

## Daily Tasks and Limitations



- For this day, and ALL days of the challenge: no spending money, no going to stores, and no restaurants
- Your water pipe broke, and you have no water access
- The power has been cut off
- It's the 2nd day of the earthquake, your fridge food has gone bad, but the food in your freezer has managed to stay cold enough to use
- You're driving home from checking on a family member and the road is blocked with a bunch of large rocks from the earthquake, did you have a small car shovel (this is a very highly recommended item to store in your car)
- During the earthquake a beam fell on your computer(s) and crushed it. Did you have your data backed up in a remote location?
- Keep your family entertained all day with no power



## Jodi & Julie's Summary



One of the things that became the most apparent as we all suffered through a waterless, powerless emergency, is that our regular lifestyle will be severely altered. It is a huge pain to grind wheat with a manual grinder, and then to figure out a solution to actually cook something with it is another problem in itself. We ended up using a lot of canned goods and ready-to-eat meals just because they were so convenient.

If a long term situation arose, where we had to start baking with our food storage foods, we found that a lot of people (including ourselves) are grossly unprepared. This is something that is really hard for beginners to wrap their heads around, so it is something we want to tackle gradually in small steps. We used to feel we could avoid thinking about it for a while, but now that we have started actually using our food storage foods every day, we feel ready to tackle some of the harder issues.

One more takeaway for this day is almost everyone felt that they didn't have enough water stored when you start to consider hygiene, toilet flushing, dishwashing, clothes washing, etc. For a day or two you can avoid some of those things, but for a long term situation it requires a lot more thought and planning.



## Stats: How did Readers Do?

- People did better with the no water rule this day with 81% able to use only their stored water
- People must have been getting tired because only 61% cooked their meals without using any power or running water
- Just 25% of challenge participants had an emergency shovel in their car and this is one of the most recommend items to keep in a car kit
- Only 60% have an adequate computer backup plan in place - Scary
- 98% of people had enough candles/flashlights to get through a dark night

## Feedback from Participants

- I will continue to try very hard to get my Family's cooperation- I will NOT back down
- I need to get my cars prepped for emergencies, I have nothing but booster cables in them
- Get a family size tent to move the family into until home is declared safe
- Have shovel and bar of some sort for clearing the road
- Have more crafts and activities ready
- I need a good supply of fuel and extra water to cook with
- We need a few more flashlights, car emergency kits, some non gas lanterns would also be nice
- I used the last of the charcoal and so I will have to find something else to cook with tomorrow
- I'm going to try out our portable camp stove that we have, but never used, to make sure it works and find yummy recipes my kids like
- Will try to work on getting a generator
- Having an extra propane tank just in case, and the shovel
- Shovel for the car and some MRE's
- More tin foil, tarps, staple gun, duct tape, more germex, chain saw
- I need to do some serious work to prepare for an earthquake
- Need to figure that out-- like where outside food/water could be stored
- Shovel finding some games to play (simple ones) but we did have fun talking about old times
- Probably store some wood for camp fire style cooking
- We have a small shovel we just need to put it in our car
- Have 4 pages of a "to do list" and to buy list
- Buy more paper products, washing dishes by hand and heating the water is SO MUCH WORK
- If there is a real earthquake I will need to secure the tall shelves in my garage to the wall so they won't fall over
- Must have 3 month food supply in place sooner
- My family just would not play along with another day of no electricity
- I'd like my water easier to get to, it is in 30 gallon barrels, and the pump is not very reliable - I have to use very strong husbands and son's to get it

# Day 6: HEALTHY LIFESTYLE "this time is different"

It's time to change those unhealthy eating habits! You have been diagnosed with all sorts of health problems.

## Daily Tasks and Limitations

- For this day, and ALL days of the challenge: no spending money, no going to stores, and no restaurants
- You can't use any pre-packaged or convenience foods
- Your breakfast has to be low sugar
- Your lunch has to be low fat (if you're at work already, think about what you could have brought or made)
- Your dinner has to be from scratch using whole grains and/or legumes
- You have to have 3-5 servings of fruits and vegetables today

## Jodi & Julie's Summary

Day 6 covered a benefit of food storage that a lot of people don't think about. For our "emergency" we concocted some allergies and dietary restrictions. For some people this becomes a way of living for them when they have a child with certain health problems. But we have done some research on the benefits of cooking from scratch and using whole grains and it can be very beneficial to ANYBODY to include more of those foods in their diet.

Using food storage and creating healthier meals can take a little planning and getting used to, but it doesn't have to be difficult. We found that most participants wished that they ate more healthy on a regular basis, so this was a good reminder to start working towards that. It's also interesting to note that most food storage calculators lean heavily on wheat and don't include fruits or vegetables. So you definitely need to adjust for your own personal situations.



## Stats: How did Readers Do?

- 94% of challengers easily made a low-sugar breakfast and a low-fat lunch
- 88% of people made a dinner out of whole grains or legumes
- A healthy 78% made sure to include 3-5 servings of vegetables in today's diet

## Feedback from Participants

- Have more meals ready to make from scratch and make sure there are more fruits and veggies
- Dry some fruits to eat as snacks
- Write a bigger list for the week
- I would need to drink more water - I don't come close to the recommended 8 glasses per day
- Eat this way even when no one is telling me I need to
- Need a menu planned and stock put aside for it
- Let's just say we need to rethink our food storage.
- I need to be more familiar with protein alternatives (like beans, etc.) that aren't pre-packaged
- Store more agave
- Always make sure I have my food storage of dried beans and lentils, its much cheaper and really good for you.
- I rely too heavily on prepackaged foods at times - I also use too much salt
- I need some better low fat and low salt recipes
- Legumes is not something I am familiar with just yet - I wish I could just take that plunge
- We have already planted a fall garden, but I will for sure grow more vegetables next year
- I will also buy more frozen food (especially vegetables)
- More different types of homemade juices
- I'll learn how to prepare more meals with whole grains and legumes
- I will continue to take all the good hints and put them in to practice
- Get a wheat grinder and keep more wheat berries on hand to grind for oatmeal
- I was surprised how much processed food I have... granola bars, chips, etc
- I need to go through the cupboard again and clean out
- I have lots of beans and grains on hand, quinoa is one of my favorites - It makes a great substitute for couscous and much better for you
- I like the smoothie idea so more stuff for that
- I will make these kinds of meals more often
- I usually don't get enough fruits and veggies
- Look into freeze dried veggies more and learn more about the dehydrator I already have
- This one was pretty easy for me and extra motivation to eat healthy like I had planned on doing
- The hardest part was not giving the 3 year old, fruit rollups, gold fish crackers and ramen noodles
- This has been awesome to think creatively and be able to plan during these situations and it has given me a good to do list on what I still need

# Day 7: EVERYDAY EMERGENCY "you need what?"

One of your family members calls you in a panic and says they need a treat for a party they are going to (they didn't know about it, so don't freak out at them!). You are stranded at home with no car, and can't get to a store.

## Daily Tasks and Limitations

- For this day, and ALL days of the challenge: no spending money, no going to stores, and no restaurants (until your treat is made)
- You have run out of fresh butter (you can use shelf stable alternatives)
- You have run out of eggs milk (you can use powdered)
- You have run out of fresh milk (you can use powdered)
- Make a delicious dessert
- Once the dessert is ready, YOU ARE DONE!

## Jodi & Julie's Summary

We loved day 7, and so did everyone else. We wanted to highlight another way that food storage can make your life a little easier by pretending to need a dessert made for an event that day. Jodi is at home during the days with no car, so she definitely learned on this day that is nice to be prepared for ANY type of emergency. Lots of participants decided that they would start to keep more unconventional food storage items on hand in order to be prepared for these random types of occurrences. When you can buy things like cake mixes, puddings, pie crusts, etc. on sales and with coupons it's totally worth stocking up on!



## Stats: How did Readers Do?

- 92% of challenge participants were prepared with powdered milk on hand
- Only 65% had an alternative to butter in their food storage
- Surprisingly, just 59% have powdered eggs in case of an emergency
- 66% of people were able to think of a recipe that didn't need to use any alternatives to normal baking ingredients

## Feedback from Participants

- I will definitely look into alternatives to have on hand, but I didn't need them for this challenge
- I guess I should freeze some bananas to have for later
- I need to get my egg, butter, and milk powders, that is on my list, but have been concentrating on preserving summer produce lately instead
- This week showed me how quickly you can go through items in the house - especially when you are stuck at home
- More homemade mixes on hand
- I would like to store more fruit filling so I can make a pie at a moments notice
- I think I should have some starts for making homemade yogurt. - that way I wouldn't have to have any in the fridge
- We love dessert, I had lots of stuff on hand to make
- More nuts
- I've never thought of powdered eggs or butter alternatives
- Store shortening
- More supplies to last me longer
- I will most likely try and store more fresh stuff as often as I can
- Make a pantry list and stock up a bit more
- I need to store more of the ingredients for these \*fun\* foods - It would help the \*mental health\* of all the family
- Know where the flourless peanut butter cookie recipe is
- Look up some desert recipes that use the alternatives
- I need to inventory my baking products
- For this challenge, I was good and prepared, and I didn't even use a boxed mix - We even had dry milk for washing down our yummy treat
- The best thing we can do is learn to simplify our needs, and re-purpose many items
- I plan to have more food storage for my neighbors, so I can help others in these type of situations
- I'm still trying to figure out how to store strength and stamina
- Can't have too many chocolate chips
- I also have cookie dough in my freezer ready to go for such occasions
- I used applesauce in place of the butter, which I always do, but without eggs, I had to use mayo, which worked pretty well