

# new posts and handouts

*Please Note: These handouts can be added to your Food Storage Made Easy Binder or you may simply use them as a resource on your computer. They are additional information and not necessary as part of the checklists or babysteps.*

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A disaster has occurred near the water supply source for your town. All of the water supply has been contaminated and is no longer drinkable or useable for cooking/washing/etc. It is estimated that it will be several days before things are restored to normal. For today's tasks, assume it is the end of the third day of having no water.

## Daily Limitations and Tasks:

### Today's Tasks:

- Go and shut off the main water supply to your house immediately ([view tutorial](#))
- You must find a way for you (and your family if applicable) to bathe or shower today
- Cook all of your meals with only the water you have in storage
- Locate the nearest source of fresh water to your home
- Print out some resources on [alternate water sources](#) and [water purification](#) in case the contamination is prolonged.

### Today's Limitations:

- For this day, and ALL days of the challenge: no spending money, no going to stores, and no restaurants.
- You can't use a water purifier for your tap water, the contamination is too bad.
- Remember that this is the third day without water and account for that when you consider how much you have stored.
- Also remember ... toilets require water to "flush".

### Advanced Tasks:

- Go to the nearest source of fresh water and fill up several water containers.
- Purify that water with either a water purifier or an alternate purification method.



You just discovered that you have some kind of allergy to an unknown preservative. Since you aren't able to isolate what it is exactly, you now need to avoid ALL preservatives and start cooking all of your food from scratch. This includes making a loaf of bread. Remember, no going to the store. \*\*A little rule of thumb: you have to know where the ingredient comes from, and be able to pronounce the ingredients on any canned item you use (meaning a can of tomatoes is ok, but not a can of spaghetti sauce)\*\*

## Daily Limitations and Tasks:

### Today's Tasks:

- Cook breakfast from scratch
- Cook lunch from scratch
- Cook dinner from scratch
- Bake a loaf of homemade bread
- Print out some of your favorite recipes to use in case the internet is down during an emergency

### Today's Limitations:

- For this day, and ALL days of the challenge: no spending money, no going to stores, and no restaurants.
- Do not use ANY pre-packaged or convenience-type foods. No mixes, boxed cereals, canned soups or sauces etc. If you can't pronounce all the ingredients and say where it came from, it's probably a NO go.
- Do not buy or borrow ingredients. Use only what you have stored.

### Advanced Tasks:

- Make a delicious dessert from scratch.
- Plan an entire week worth of meals you could make out of your current food supplies.
- Do some research on the health benefits of eating less preservatives.



# Day 3: TERRORIST ATTACK



## EMP: electromagnetic pulse

Your country has just suffered a severe terrorist attack. A series of nuclear bombs were fired off simultaneously, causing an [Electromagnetic Pulse \(EMP\)](#). This has rendered all electricity and electrical devices in your entire country to be useless. This includes lights, cell phones, computers, vehicles with electrical ignitions, generators, and most municipal water pumps. Today is going to be rough ... **READ THE TASKS AND LIMITATIONS CAREFULLY but adapt where work and family situations require if needed..**

## Daily Limitations and Tasks:

### Today's Tasks:

- Cook and clean up all of your meals without power or water ([powerless cooking ideas](#))
- Walk or ride a bike anywhere you need to go today
- Entertain yourself (and your kids if applicable) without electricity the entire day
- Keep your family warm (or cool) as furnace blowers and A/C will not work without electricity
- At some point today (make it a surprise for your family) you see a pack of looters making their way through your neighborhood. You have fifteen minutes to collect your grab list items (things you wouldn't want damaged or stolen) and one meal worth of food to eat (72 hour kits would be great for this). Evacuate on foot to a nearby park and stay away from your home for at least 2 hours until the looters have moved on. (Even if you think you can defend yourself, this is a *practice exercise* to use your kits and *evacuation plan*)
- Jot down some ideas on how you would live and function in a sustained post-EMP environment

### Today's Limitations:

- For this day, and ALL days of the challenge: no spending money, no going to stores, and no restaurants.
- Your fridge food has gone bad already, but the freezer food is still ok.
- No electronics. This means iPods, cell phones, laptops, ANYTHING. They are all fried, even generators are destroyed. You may only get online to discuss the challenge 😊
- You can only drive if your car has a non-electric ignition (i.e. 1960's or older) ... unless you are going to work and it's too far to walk
- You aren't able to communicate with your family, did you have a [family plan](#) in place?
- Remember ... toilets require water to "flush".

### Advanced Tasks:

- Grind wheat by hand and use it in a recipe today.
- SUPER ADVANCED (for those who think this is too easy): Your neighborhood is in ruins, stay away from home the entire day without your car, with all of your grab list items, and eating only out of your disaster kit. (If you do this one you get 5 bonus points)



## Day 4: ECONOMIC CRISIS

helping a friend in need

Due to job loss and the slow economy, a family that you are close friends with was just evicted from their home. You offer to let them stay with you overnight. You must feed and provide shelter to a family of 6 on short notice. When they arrive, you also discover that they are vegetarians. Assume that they arrive shortly after breakfast.

## Daily Limitations and Tasks:

### Today's Tasks:

- Cook lunch for your family plus two adults and four kids
- For a fun friday night twist (and to take their minds off their situation) play restaurant for dinner. Be creative how you want to do this (make some family members waiters, make menus, set the table nicely, have appetizers, whatever you want)
- Provide sleeping arrangements for two adults and four children in your home
- The family did not bring any hygiene items, provide them with toothbrushes, shampoo, soap, etc.
- Evaluate your tp, paper towel, laundry detergent, and dish detergent stores ... do you have enough to last with this many extra people for a few days?
- Go over your own budget and/or financial situation (with your spouse if applicable) and think about how you can avoid having a situation like this occur in your own family (budget, financial reserve, minimize debt, etc.)

### Today's Limitations:

- For this day, and ALL days of the challenge: no spending money, no going to stores, and no restaurants.
- None of the meals can include any meat.
- You ran out of milk and eggs due to the extra guests. No using them for cooking!

### Advanced Tasks:

- One of the children is a baby, make a batch of homemade baby food.
- The family needs \$100 in gas money to travel to a relatives' house where they will stay long term, do you have that much cash in your home that you can give them?

(Please note: Either freeze the extra food for later, give it to a family in need, or actually invite a family over for the day.)

A colorful graphic for 'Day 5: NATURAL DISASTER extreme weather conditions'. The text 'Day 5:' is in pink, 'NATURAL DISASTER' is in large green letters, and 'extreme weather conditions' is in pink on a green background. The graphic includes illustrations of a laptop, a smartphone, a power outlet, a lightning bolt, a tornado, and a yellow emergency vehicle.

## Day 5: NATURAL DISASTER extreme weather conditions

Your area just got struck with severe weather conditions. Depending on where you live this could be a blizzard, tornado, hurricane, etc. The power lines are out and there is a problem with the natural gas supply. Luckily, you still have running water though. Keep you and your family warm, fed, and entertained at home today because you are NOT going out in these conditions. Your fridge food has been ruined due to the power outage, but your freezer foods are still ok.

## Daily Limitations and Tasks:

### Today's Tasks:

- Prepare all of your meals INDOORS without using electricity (read your owner's manuals on your appliances, you'd be surprised that a lot of them are not suitable for indoor usage)
- Determine how to keep your family warm or cool depending on the season
- Entertain yourself (and kids if applicable) without using any electronics
- Due to some marital strife we caused last year, you may watch one football game of your choice without penalty today (tell your family that because you let them watch the game, they have to play along for the rest of the day)
- Write down a list of common weather conditions or "disasters" that are likely to occur in your area. Brainstorm with your family (if applicable) ideas for how to be better prepared for each type.

### Today's Limitations:

- For this day, and ALL days of the challenge: no spending money, no going to stores, and no restaurants.
- Do not leave your house.
- Do not use electricity (you may use the computer ONLY to report on the challenge, if your cell phone and/or laptop are charged you can still use them until they run out of battery).
- Do not use food from your fridge (freezer is ok).
- Do not use anything requiring natural gas (water heater, gas stove, furnace).

### Advanced Tasks:

- One of your family members is sick with the flu. Provide medicine and comfort.
- Your meals must be hot. And no MREs (freeze-dried meals ready to eat).
- Skip the football game 😊



You have decided to take a pleasant Sunday afternoon drive to enjoy the scenery of the changing leaves. However, a little while into your drive disaster strikes. One of your tires has a blow-out and you are in an area with no cell phone service. To make matters worse your battery died too and it is a full hour before someone arrives to help give you a jump.

## Daily Limitations and Tasks:

### Today's Tasks:

- Take a drive with your family or a friend or two
- Change your car's tire out on the side of the road ([view tutorial](#))
- Wait for one hour in your vehicle with the engine turned off (it's dead remember).
- You and your other car passengers must be entertained, kept warm/cool, and given a snack and a drink.
- You must have jumper cables in your car to charge your battery.
- If you have children of driving age, give them a lesson on how to change a tire and make them practice it at least once

### Today's Limitations:

- For this day, and ALL days of the challenge: no spending money, no going to stores, and no restaurants.
- For women, you must change the tire yourself. No cheating and getting your husband to do it.
- You can't call roadside service because you are in a dead cell phone area.

### Advanced Tasks:

- Wait in your car for 3 hours instead of 1, and make it during a meal time.
- While changing the tire you accidentally locked your keys in the car. Can you pick the lock?



Your family and friends are starting to figure out that you have a great food storage. Your mother-in-law (or friend, or grandma, or fill-in-the-blank) just called you this morning and asked if she could come by later today and check out your preps. She is interested to learn how much you have, and how you rotate it all. She even hints that she might want to purchase some food for you for a gift.

## Daily Limitations and Tasks:

### Today's Tasks:

- Organize your kitchen pantry and any food storage areas in your home
- Evaluate where your appliances are in your home to make cooking with food storage easier
- Move some of your long term food storage up to your kitchen area to encourage you to use it more
- Check your water supplies, refill any empty containers
- Inventory your long term food storage items (you may use our [calculator](#))
- Inventory your three month supply items (you may use our [worksheet](#))
- Look at your Disaster Kits, do you need to swap clothes out? Rotate food? Do what you can now and make a list of anything you may need to buy

### Today's Limitations:

- For this day, and ALL days of the challenge: no spending money, no going to stores, and no restaurants ... UNTIL YOU ARE FINISHED!

### Advanced Tasks:

- Make cute labels for your buckets, shelves, etc. ([label tutorial](#) | [bucket labels](#))
- Make a complete list of what you still need to buy (long term AND three month supply) so that your guest can purchase some of it for you for a gift.
- Review all of your week's report cards and compile them into one list of future things to do/buy



# Water Saving Tips

When you lose your water supply, you quickly assess what water needs are most important. First off, it's important to have drinking water. After that, cooking probably takes a close second. Laundry and personal hygiene can take the back burner for a few days, but after that – you need to start figuring out how to make the most out of your stored water.

When we did the 7 Day Emergency Preparedness Challenge this year, we learned a lot from our readers about how they saved, or stretched their water supply. Here are some of the great suggestions we received.

- First off, FILL YOUR WATER CONTAINERS. We heard from SO many people they had containers they just hadn't gotten around to filling yet. The challenge has been over for a couple weeks, quit procrastinating and get to it TODAY!
- Bathe in a large bucket, and use bottles that have the types of tops that squirt (refillable condiment containers) when pressure is applied. This will help with faster rinsing. Use the remaining bath water in the bucket for flushing toilets.
- Use coralite bath wipes, for quick bathing.
- Store some no rinse shampoo and conditioner for hair.
- Have paper plates, plastic cups, and disposable tableware to use to allow you to cut back on dish water.
- Use recipes that mix most ingredients in one dish, or pan that you serve straight from to cut back on dishes.
- Store wet wipes, and hand sanitizer to help clean up messes, and wash hands.
- Tap into your water heater for water if you run out of stored water.
- Wear your hair in ponytails, or wear hats when you can't wash your hair as frequently during prolonged times with no water.
- If you have a swamp cooler that runs on water, make sure you have back up cooling methods such as fans, or wet rags to cool your body off during hotter weather.
- Fill liquid soap/detergent bottles with water. You have water for washing small load of dishes. Soapy water for hands, and the bottles squirt out better then soda or juice containers.
- Save water from cooking noodles, or boiling water. Use water from canned vegetables.
- Don't wait until you are out of clean clothes to do laundry!

- If you have to do laundry get a bucket, put a little baking soda, a tad of water, plunge by hand or with plunger. No need to rinse with baking soda. Baking soda will eradicate smell too.
- If you're water has a funny taste, store drink flavoring to improve the taste. You can also aerate the water by pouring it back and forth between two containers. It adds oxygen to the water and gets rid of the stale taste.
- Flush conservatively. Use water you previously used for bathing to flush the toilets.

# 3 Month Supply Questions

When it comes to getting a [3 month supply of food](#) together, we have found that a lot of people get so much anxiety over the whole thing that they don't do it at all. We have compiled a list of questions to ask yourself that will help you formulate a plan of attack for your 3 month supply. Ask yourself these questions, and as you do so you'll see a plan start to form – with some resources on our site to help.

## 1. Why am I building a 3 month supply of food?

Are you storing a 3 month supply of food for a potential job loss? For a potential natural disaster? For meal planning purposes? Whatever it is that you are doing this for will influence how you go about planning, so first – decide – Why Am I Doing This? Check out our complete series on [“Why Food Storage?”](#) (included in past updates) if you haven't figured this out yet.

## 2. What kinds of foods do I want to include?

Are you the type that thinks your 3 month plan can only have shelf stable items? Do you think fridge and freezer foods count in your 3 month plan? Do you want to make a plan based on the assumption that you can still buy produce to fill in holes in your recipes? Once you have decided which types of foods you want in your 3 month plan, you'll be able to filter your recipes to fit that criteria. \*\*\*disclaimer\*\*\* While it's always good to have some shelf stable recipes, we think planning strictly shelf stable meals is a hard place to start for beginners.

## 3. How will I plan what to buy for my supply?

- Some people find that buying foods they use often in bulk fit their goals for a 3 month plan.
- Some people like to plan their meals on our printable pdf forms with good old fashioned pens and pencils. [\(found on our BabyStep 3 page\)](#)
- If you're really wanting to get detailed, you can use our 3 month supply excel spreadsheet and go to town including all ingredients for all your recipes and then watch it automatically calculate how many of each item you need. [\(found on our BabyStep 3 page\)](#)

#### 4. How much money can I afford to budget?

While the end goal is to use foods daily from your pantry, and replace them with your regular grocery shopping, to get your supply kick started you may need to budget a certain amount of money to get your supply going. Figure out what you can spare until you have a supply built up and think of it as an investment.

#### 5. How will I shop for my 3 month supply?

When you have determined WHAT you need to buy, develop a plan to purchase. For some great info on this – visit our sister site [The Food Storage Shopper](#). You may decide buying one extra each time works for you, or you might get into coupon and sale shopping and buy things only when on sale. Whatever fits your style, having a game plan in place will surely help. If you live in the Western United States we highly recommend the service [Deals to Meals](#) to help get your supply at the lowest possible prices.

Good luck, and remember there aren't RIGHT answers to these questions. If we have learned anything in doing this for the last 2 years its that EVERYONE has a different style, and you need to figure out what works for you!

# All About Powdered Milk

## Why should I store powdered milk?

Food storage calculators generally recommend storing either 16 pounds or powdered milk per person or 75 pounds per person. The 16 pound recommendation accounts for one glass of milk per day. However, if you were to be living off of food storage and wanted to cook a variety of foods, you would definitely want to have more milk for baking, etc. Also if you have small children or a nursing mother it is important to have even more powdered milk. Because of the high nutrient levels in powdered milk, if you were unable to find ways to cook your food, you can actually sustain life by ONLY drinking powdered milk for quite some time. So storing more is never a bad thing!

## What is the difference between instant and non-instant powdered milk?

Instant powdered milk is similar to instant rice in that it is faster and easier to reconstitute than non-instant formulas. Typically instant powdered milk takes about twice as much powder per gallon as non-instant, but it depends on which brand you are purchasing.

## What is a milk alternative?

A milk alternative is NOT 100% milk. It contains a lot of ingredients to make it taste better including whey, partially hydrogenated vegetable oil, and high fructose corn syrup. As a result, it taste yummiier, but has way less protein and includes some ingredients which are NOT great for you. If you want to use your stored milk in recipes or to make cheese, etc., they would turn out differently than if you used 100% milk. If you just want to drink the milk alternative as a milk flavored yummy drink, it's ok. However you will be missing out on important nutrients which are even more critical in a time of emergency.

## Which brand of powdered milk tastes the best?

The Utah Preppers blog posted an in depth [taste test](#) on the most common brands of powdered milk out there. We are so glad they did this because we've only personally tried a few brands ourselves. According to their study, the best-tasting milks were:

- Milk alternative: Morning Moos
- Instant powdered milk: Provident Pantry
- Non-instant powdered milk: Rainy Day

### Are there any options besides “nonfat” powdered milk?

Yes! Dry whole milk is available although it's much more difficult to find, especially in bulk. If you just cannot stomach nonfat milk (like Jodi's dear sweet husband) there is still hope. One brand that we have heard about a lot but haven't tried yet is Nido. You can often find it in the Hispanic foods section at your local grocery store. Or I found it available [online](#) at Amazon.com (don't you just love Amazon?) It's pricier than nonfat milk and the storage life will be much shorter due to the fat content of the milk so make sure to watch out for that.

### How can I improve the taste of powdered milk?

One trick we learned from Crystal at [Everyday Food Storage](#) is to mix a little bit of sugar and vanilla in to your powdered milk and then make sure to serve it cold. This will significantly improve the taste of your milk!

### Where can I purchase powdered milk for the best price?

The LDS cannery is the least expensive place to get powdered milk. To find a cannery (home storage center) in your area visit <http://www.providentliving.org/location/map/0,12566,2026-1-4,00.html>. (Please note that a lot of canneries do not require you to be a member of the LDS church to purchase from them, so contact your local cannery and find out their policies). However, since milk from the cannery is not the best tasting powdered milk, here are some other options. Provident Pantry instant milk is available at Emergency Essentials stores or at <http://beprepared.com>. Rainy Day non-instant milk (made by Walton Wheat) is available from Alison's Pantry at <http://www.alisonspantry.com> or via a local rep.

### What is the shelf life of powdered milk?

While different sources claim the shelf life on powdered milk can be up to 20-25 years, we have also read that the nutrient level significantly drops within that time. So we would definitely recommend incorporating a habit of rotating your powdered milk to keep your supplies as fresh as possible.

### What's the best way to rotate my powdered milk?

Since most people don't particularly enjoy drinking powdered milk as a replacement to regular milk, we highly recommend using it in RECIPES where it won't be as noticeable. You can view our [food storage recipes](#) (see Binder Appendix) to see where we have substituted powdered milk successfully. Or you can also check out our sister site [Everyday Food Storage](#) for more great ideas on cooking with your food storage!

# All About Honey

## How much honey should I store

According to most [food storage calculators](#) it is recommended to store 60 pounds total of sugars/sweeteners per year per adult. Our calculator uses the common recommendation of just 3 pounds of honey per person. However, we both use honey in our basic bread recipes so we have chosen to store a little bit more than that. Some people feel that for health reasons they would rather store more honey than refined white sugar so obviously they would also up their honey storage amount. As you start using your food storage more and baking a lot from scratch you may find that you prefer to cook with honey and thus want to up your own storage amount as well.

## What are the different types of honey\*

Raw – Unheated honey that has been removed from the comb. It may contain bits of wax, insect parts and other small debris. Raw honey contains small amounts of vitamins and minerals that are not in white sugar.

Filtered – Raw honey that has been warmed slightly to make it easier to filter out small particles and impurities. Filtered honey is almost the same as raw, just a little cleaner. Most of the small amounts of nutrients remain.

Liquid – Honey that has been heated to higher temperatures to allow for easier filtering and to kill any microorganisms. Usually lighter in color, this form is milder in flavor, resists crystallization and is generally clearer than raw honey. Much of the trace amounts of vitamins are lost in this processing.

Crystallized or Spun – This honey has had some of its moisture content removed to make a creamy, spread. It is the most processed form of honey.

\*Info found at <http://www.survival-center.com/foodfaq/ff9-swee.htm#Honey>

### How do I replace honey for sugar in a recipe?\*

#### *To bake with Honey:*

Use pure raw honey for up to half of the sugar in the recipe

For each cup of honey used: reduce the liquid by 1/2 cup

Add 1/2 teaspoon baking soda

Reduce oven temperature by 25 degrees

#### *To cook with honey:*

For sauces, marinades, and salad dressings substitute pure honey for up to half the sugar in the recipe.

1 cup of sugar = 1/3 to 1/2 cup honey. (If it is a stronger honey you would use 1/3 cup. If it is milder use 1/2 cup)

\*Info found at [Cox Honeyland](http://CoxHoneyland.com) website

### What are some good food storage recipes using honey?

- [Ezekiel Bread](http://foodstoragemadeeasy.net/2010/04/21/ezekiel-bread-julies-long-overdue-promise/) - <http://foodstoragemadeeasy.net/2010/04/21/ezekiel-bread-julies-long-overdue-promise/>
- [Honey Whole Wheat Bread](http://foodstoragemadeeasy.net/2009/04/18/food-storage-recipe-bread/) - <http://foodstoragemadeeasy.net/2009/04/18/food-storage-recipe-bread/>
- [Blender Wheat Pancakes](http://foodstoragemadeeasy.net/2009/02/05/food-storage-blender-wheat-pancakes/) - <http://foodstoragemadeeasy.net/2009/02/05/food-storage-blender-wheat-pancakes/>
- [Granola Bars](http://foodstoragemadeeasy.net/2009/01/03/food-storage-recipe-granola-bar/) - <http://foodstoragemadeeasy.net/2009/01/03/food-storage-recipe-granola-bar/>
- [Honey Granola](http://foodstoragemadeeasy.net/2010/06/14/food-storage-recipes-honey-granola/) - <http://foodstoragemadeeasy.net/2010/06/14/food-storage-recipes-honey-granola/>

### Where can I get honey in bulk?

- Emergency Essentials sells honey in a [#10 can size](#) for \$32.95 which is about 9 pounds of honey.
- Honeyville Grain sells a [5-gallon bucket](#) for \$133.99 which is 60 pounds.
- Walton Feed has grade A honey in [45 lb buckets](#) for \$92.80.
- Cox Honeyland sell pure raw honey in lots of different sizes. A [12 lb bucket](#) is \$35.20 and a [48 lb bucket](#) is \$131.80 for example.



# Homemade Baby Food

One of the reasons why many people choose to have Food Storage is for times of Economic Crisis. This could be in your own family or a more widespread situation. It's wise to store food, know how to use it, and save money at the same time.

A few months ago when Julie's baby started on baby food, she had a "WELL DUH!" moment in the grocery check out line as the cashier was ringing up jar after jar of expensive baby food. She realized it was ridiculous to pay so much for squash and bananas filled with tons of water. Here are some tips she has learned on how to make homemade baby food.

## Choosing the Foods

If the baby is old enough to eat the food, you can use that food. Some of our favorites are yams, squash, carrots, peas, green beans, apples, pears, and peaches. Some foods aren't recommended for younger infants, so make sure you consult with your doctor. We use [Deals to Meals](#) to find the best price for produce and cook batches of what's on sale.

## Cooking the Foods

Cook the vegetable or fruit either by [pressure cooking](#), steaming, baking, or boiling. Pressure cooking or steaming maintains the most nutrients. You can prepare large batches at once.

## Pureeing the Foods

Remove the water and save it. Take the cooked vegetables or fruits and put them into a [blender](#), food processor, or bowl in which you can use a hand held processor to puree the foods. Add back the liquid you saved to get to the right consistency. You may also thin the food with formula, breast milk, or plain water if you don't have enough saved.

## Freezing the Foods

Once you have a nice liquid baby food puree you will then transfer the puree into containers. You can use freezer jam tupperwares, or any other container that can go in the freezer. This allows you to make weeks of food at a time at a fraction of the cost of store-bought food. Another way is to use ice cube trays for freezing/storage. Fill each tray with the puree then cover the tray with plastic wrap and put it in the freezer. Once the cubes are frozen, you can place them in ziploc bags for single servings (1 cube is about 1 oz).

### Eating the Foods

When it is time to feed your baby, thaw and/or reheat the ice cubes, or foods from the containers. You can store food in the fridge for a couple of days, so each time you take some food out of the fridge, replace it from one from the freezer. This will ensure you always have some ready to go.

### Online Video Tutorial

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xXd43hnxLw>

# Gardening FAQs

## 1. What soil mix is best for raised bed gardens?

I suggest a combination of ingredients called Mel's Mix. It is equal parts compost, vermiculite, and peat moss. For specific instructions, go to my website and click on the Build It tab, then read the post there.

Each spring I add more compost to my boxes—I usually need to add one quarter to one third of the volume of my garden bed. Also, after harvesting you can replant in that square. Before you do, add a scoop of compost and mix it in.

## 2. What are cold frames and how do you use them?

A cold frame is like putting a glass roof on your garden. Imagine a mini-greenhouse, built around your garden beds. It helps you plant and grow sooner, and it extends the season later by protecting the plants. I would not suggest using cold frames if you are a beginner unless your weather conditions require it.

## 3. SEEDS

### 3a. Do higher quality seeds really make a difference?

YES! I've personally experienced this. You know those super cheap seeds by American Seed Company? There's a reason they are so inexpensive. They have a very low germination rate, about 10%, which means you are paying for a bunch of seeds that won't sprout.

### 3b. Where do you buy your seeds?

I have always purchased whatever brand I find at Wal-Mart, Home Depot, or IFA (Intermountain Farmers Association, the local farm coop store). I have found all of these seeds to be similarly priced and comparable in quality.

The advantage of buying seeds at a local store (like IFA) is that they often carry brands that have been developed specifically for the climate in which you live. The advantage of purchasing from a catalog is that you can choose from endless varieties and types of vegetables. I just hate waiting for something to come in the mail!

### 3c. What are Heirloom seeds?

Heirloom seeds, or vegetables, are varieties that were grown in the “old days.” Many have been used for over 50 or 100 years, and there are many more varieties. However, they are not as disease resistant as the seeds you will find at the store. Since the industrialization of agriculture, seeds have been bred for consistency and disease resistance. This has resulted in fewer varieties (sort of a “one size fits all”) and hybrids, which are more expensive.

### 3d. How do I store seeds?

If you use the square foot gardening method, chances are you’ll have tons of seeds leftover. I put mine in snack size ziplock baggies, so if the seeds spill out it’s no big deal. Then I keep them in a cool, dry place. In the summer I put them in my fridge or basement. In the winter I keep them in the garage.

### 4. What are good plants for colder climates?

Root veggies (beets, carrots, onions, leeks, turnips, radishes, potatoes)

Cabbage family (cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, kale, mustard)

Peas and beans

If you have a short growing season, buy varieties that harvest in a shorter time frame.

### 5. Can you share any composting tips for beginners?

Don’t do it. Okay, that’s not totally true. If you have the space and want to compost for environmental reasons, by all means go ahead. But unless you have a lot of mass (think 100 gallons) and are willing to do a lot of work (turn it every week), you won’t be generating compost for this year.

The only composting I know of that is compact, very little work, but does use food scraps (fruits and veggies only), is vermacomposting—that’s right, with worms. I have a friend who does this. The compost she gets is like gold, but is measured in cups, not cubic feet.

## **6. CANNING**

### 6a. What are some tips for planning your garden if canning is your end goal?

First, do you have a pressure canner? Because if you don’t you are limited to canning mostly fruits (remember, tomatoes are a fruit!) and pickles. Salsa also works, since there is enough acid to can it safely with the boiling water method. If you are interested in canning, I suggest dedicate most of your garden to canning veggies. To maximize your yield, grow as much vertically as you can. By trellising cucumbers you can plant 8 per square, compared to 4+ squares if you let them sprawl out.

### 6b. Which type of tomato plant is better for canning?

In general, paste tomatoes (like Roma) are good for canning. The flesh is more firm, so it holds up to all the heat, and it is less watery, so you have more pulp per tomato. But Roma's are a little smaller, so it's more peeling compared to other varieties. I grow Roma, Early Girl, Better Boy, and Celebrity. For salsa I use an even mix of tomatoes, but I can whole Roma tomatoes for sauce.

When purchasing tomatoes, ask around. What do your friends and neighbors grow, and why? I don't usually ask at the nursery or home and garden store, because I'm almost always advised to purchase what they have on the shelf! You can call your local extension office for a list of suggested varieties for your location. At many places the plants have tags on them, indicating if they are good for slicing, salads, canning, etc. Also look for disease resistant varieties.

### 6c. How many to tomatoes, peppers, etc. should I plant if I want to can?

If this is your first year growing a garden, I suggest you start small and increase with time. Otherwise, you're likely to take on too much, burn out, and never can a single jar. It's just impossible to know until you try it, and see how much your garden produces.

### 7. What are some tips on how you should rotate your garden plan each year?

If you SFG and use compost or Mel's mix, you will need to replenish it with compost every year. As long as you didn't have any diseases, there is no need to rotate your crops. Unless you get bored, like me, or become obsessed with finding the perfect gardening layout (also like me).

### 8. What plants grow best in desert climates?

Everything! You may have a hard time with cool-weather plants like broccoli, spinach, and peas. But if you give them an early start and shade from the hot sun, even these will grow well. Things like tomatoes and peppers do particularly well, since they can tolerate some heat and love the sunshine. I suggest everyone do a little research on their local extension website ([www.extension.org](http://www.extension.org)) and/or check out a local farming supply store for varieties developed specifically for your climate.

### 9. Do I need to fertilize?

I believe in fertilizing. This can be organic or chemical, but I don't feel Mel's mix provides sufficient nutrients for my gardens. Now, you have to be careful because if you fertilize with too much nitrogen you will have big, leafy plants and little fruit. I sometimes use an all-purpose fertilizer (20-20-20 or 10-10-10), but I really love one called Blooming and Rooting (9-59-8). I use it when starting seeds (about 4 weeks after germination) and on all my veggies that flower (squash, peas, beans, tomatoes, peppers) every 6 weeks.

# Garden Box Tutorial

## Materials Needed:

- 4"x4" vinyl post jackets (found in either 72" or 100" lengths)
  - You can also use 5"x5" vinyl posts but they have holes pre-drilled in incorrect places)
- Vinyl fence slats (found in 16' lengths)
  - You can make your boxes one slat high, but I prefer to do them double
- Fence Post Caps (optional)
  - You don't NEED these but they make the boxes look so pretty!
- Liquid Nails (optional)
  - Can be used to glue the two layers of slats together if you are worried about stability

## Tools Needed:

- Tape Measure
- Pencil
- Straight Edge/Ruler
- Table Saw or Sawzall or Circular Saw or Hacksaw (to cut vinyl into segments)
- Jigsaw or Sawzall or Hacksaw Blade (to cut the post holes, jigsaw works best)

## Posts

Measure post lengths to give you 1-2 inches of space at the top, and 4-6 inches of space at the bottom. Then give yourself either 5 1/2 or 11 inches for the slats (depending on whether you are doing one layer or two). Cut 4 equal segments. If you are doing a longer box, you will need to add 2 additional posts to give it more stability in the middle.

## Side Slats

Determine the size of box you want to make. For a 4 foot square box you would ideally give yourself a few extra inches on each side since they will be stuck into the posts. However, since the slats come in 16 foot lengths we opted to just make our box a little smaller. Cut into 4 equal segments. Again if you are doing a longer box, make additional slats as necessary. Don't make the slats longer than 4 or 5 feet in length.

## Post Holes

Draw yourself a template for the holes. Start down 1-2 inches from the top of the post (depending on what you measured for). Make sure to mark the center of the post. Measure

your fence slat (should be about 1 1/2 inches) and mark that width down the post starting from the center. So you will have 3/4" on each side of the middle line. You can either measure 11" and draw the lines, or simply trace around your fence slat to get a pretty good outline. Use a large drill bit to start a hole in the outline. Then using a jigsaw, cut out the hole. You will need two holes per post and they should be on sides right next to each other.

### Assembly

If you glued your two layers of slats together, wait for them to dry. Then stick the fence slats into the holes you made in the posts and form your square foot garden box. Once you determine where your box will go, dig holes in the ground for the four post holes and stick your box in! We like to fill our posts with dirt after to make them more stable. Then stick on the post caps for a beautiful finishing touch.

### Cost of a 4'x4' Box (all parts from Home Depot)

72" vinyl post jacket – \$15.97

16' vinyl slats x 2 – \$29.94

Fence post caps x 4 – \$6.68

TOTAL COST – \$52.59

### Time Required

A simple 4x4 box like the one we built can be done in an hour or so. Depending on how much of a perfectionist you are with the measuring and cuts it could take a little longer. If you have a table saw and a jigsaw it could take a little shorter. To do a bigger box with more cuts and more complex measurements it will longer as well. Also if you choose to glue the slats together it's best to let them dry overnight.

### Online Video Instructions

View a video tutorial online at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rbe3IRp\\_M68](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rbe3IRp_M68)

# Powerless Cooking

We recognize that there are many scenarios where you may be without power and needing to use your food storage. We wanted to do a brief overview of some powerless cooking options for you. This is not all-inclusive. There are many options available, and each one has its specific advantages. We plan on going into more detail about different powerless cooking options in the future, but for now wanted to throw out a few ideas for you to think about.



**SUN OVENS:** [Sun Ovens](#) use the sun as an energy source and can be used to cook anything you cook in your regular oven. They can be used in parks that ban open flame cooking. There is never any danger of fire or of burning food or forests. (We can get you great DISCOUNTS if you buy it from our product page)



**VOLCANO:** The [Volcano Collapsible Propane Grill](#) is a very versatile and efficient Stove/Grill. The stove works with propane, wood and charcoal. Collapses down to 5" for easy storage, and you can use multiple cooking methods such as grills, pans, dutch ovens with the Volcano.



**CAMP STOVES:** The number of [camp stoves](#) on the market are endless. You can get small single burner stoves, to fancy Camp Stoves that compete with stoves found in homes. When purchasing a camp stove, make sure you take storage space into consideration.



**BBQ GRILLS:** You may not have thought of using your [BBQ](#) in case of emergencies, however it is a legitimate way to cook without power. You may consider thinking of recipes, and dishes you can use in your BBQ you already own.





**DUTCH OVEN:** A [Dutch oven](#) is a thick-walled (usually cast iron) cooking pot with a tight-fitting lid. Dutch ovens have been used as cooking vessels for hundreds of years. Dutch Ovens are great for cooking a variety of meals.



**GENERATORS:** [Generators](#) are available in a wide range of power ratings. Depending on the type, generators may run a variety of fuel. While generators are not a cooking apparatus, they can provide power for stoves, electric pressure cookers, or crock pots. Generators must be run outside, so make sure you have plenty of extension cords.



**CAMPFIRE:** When all else fails, if you have wood and matches, in THEORY, you should be able to build and cook over a [fire pit](#) or in a fireplace. If this is your plan, make sure you at least have pots, pans, and utensils to cook over a fire.

Since using any of these methods requires fuel, and extreme heat, consult the user manuals for further details and safety instructions. Most of these can not be used indoors, and have limits on how much fuel you are legally allowed to store for them. Again, we'll cover these things in more detail later.

# Dutch Oven Cooking

I had the opportunity to attend a Dutch Oven Cooking demonstration at my community recreation center. They had several different foods to sample and I got to see how they cooked with charcoal on the Dutch Ovens. I stood beside the “cooks” the whole evening and picked their brains about everything. I’ve never done Dutch Oven Cooking before so I wanted to learn all about it.

I grabbed a handout with some great tips and recipes on it. Here is a compilation of some of what was included:

## Baking Temperature Chart

Oven Size	Baking Temperature Chart						
		Oven Temperature					
		325 F	350 F	375 F	400 F	425 F	450 F
8"	Total Briquettes	15	16	17	18	19	20
	Top / Bottom	10 / 5	11 / 5	11 / 6	12 / 6	13 / 6	14 / 6
10"	Total Briquettes	19	21	23	25	27	29
	Top / Bottom	13 / 6	14 / 7	16 / 7	17 / 8	18 / 9	19 / 10
12"	Total Briquettes	23	25	27	29	31	33
	Top / Bottom	16 / 7	17 / 8	18 / 9	19 / 10	21 / 10	22 / 11
14"	Total Briquettes	30	32	34	36	38	40
	Top / Bottom	20 / 10	21 / 11	22 / 12	24 / 12	25 / 13	26 / 14
16"	Total Briquettes	37	39	41	43	45	47
	Top / Bottom	25 / 12	26 / 13	27 / 14	28 / 15	29 / 16	30 / 17

## Cooking Tips

- Protect your dutch oven from wind and rain, or add extra coals to compensate.
- Remember, it’s not an exact science, add or take away coals as needed (usually add).
- Cooking meat? Move coals to the bottom.
- Baking bread or desserts? Move coals to the top
- Meals that require more than 30-45 minutes to cook may need new coals added during cooking. If so, light new coals soon enough to allow them to get going before you need the.
- Keep the lid closed! Avoid peeking more than needed.

### Cleaning Instructions

**NEVER USE SOAP!** Different people have different methods for cleaning their dutch oven. The goal is not to get down to bare metal. Use a spatula or scraper to remove all leftover food and sauces. Use a clean rag to wipe out as much residue as you can. Then add about a cup of salt, and use another couple of clean rags to scrub the bottom and sides smooth. Then remove the salt, wipe down with oil, and place it back on the remaining coals for 5-10 minutes. Then give it a final wipe down and it's ready for the next time. Most quality dutch ovens come with cleaning and seasoning instructions.

### Easy Cobbler Recipe

#### **Ingredients:**

1 large can of sliced peaches  
1 box yellow cake mix  
1 can soda (lemon lime or ginger ale)  
About 1/4 cup butter  
Cinnamon to taste

#### **Directions:**

Heat enough coals to cook at 350 degrees F. Dump peaches with juice into dutch oven. Spread cake mix over the peaches evenly. Pour 1 can of soda evenly over the cake mix. Place a few thin slices of butter on top. Add a sprinkle of cinnamon. Cook until firm. Serve hot with cold ice cream!

One of the best things about Dutch Oven Cooking is that all you need for cooking is charcoal. Charcoal will store indefinitely so it is a fantastic fuel to keep on hand for emergency cooking.

# Healthy Food Storage

Julie attended a workshop on healthy food storage options and has put together this report to help you get started on the pathway to a healthier storage program.

I learned so much! It brought back memories of when I first started food storage. I was a little overwhelmed, but this time I know through BabySteps I can slowly implement the things that I choose. So here's a little disclaimer, this is not necessarily for everyone right now! I'm on a personal journey of trying to change some of the foods I eat. By doing this- I have to think about food storage a little differently. Since some of you asked to hear about what I learned I'm sharing this...

## Julie's Notes: Healthy Food Storage Workshop

The speaker was Yvonne Salcido, who was from the School of Natural Healing. When she started speaking I felt excited as she seemed vibrant, and looked healthy. She started by giving some of her basic guidelines for eating. It's amazing the more you learn about nutrition, the more some of this stuff keeps repeating itself. Anyways, here they were:

### Basic Guidelines

- Eat Foods in Wholesome State
- Study Nutrition and Herbs
- Avoid toxic habit forming habits
- Fresh is Best
- Staff of Life (wheat, soaked and sprouted)
- Eat in the Season thereof

After she talked about that, she gave us a little TREASURE! This is something I've been searching for and developing in my mind lately. When this slide came up, I did a little shout for joy! THE WORK HAS BEEN DONE. She gave a little calculator of what to store for "optimally healthy" food storage. I asked her if I could share it, and she said yes, so here it is....

### Healthy Options Calculator

300 lbs Organic Wheat  
155 lbs Other Grains  
50 lbs Nuts  
50 lbs Seeds  
75 lbs Organic Beans  
60 lbs Raw Honey  
20 lbs Oil (coconut oil, olive oil, wheat germ oil)  
10 lbs Salt (real salt)  
60 lbs Sprout Mix  
5 lbs Seed Sprout mix  
Garden Seeds (non hybrid)  
Spices

Then she talked more about sprouts. The University of Utah did a study to find out the highest vitamin per storage space kinds of food you can store. The answer was.... SPROUTS. They came up with a mixture (that I couldn't write down fast enough) but I'll do a little digging and try to find it. I have a mix called Pro-Vita mix I got at a store called Kitchen Kneads, and I think it might be the same thing.

### Herbs for Medicine

Next up was a topic we have never covered and I think we need to talk a little bit more about. Yvonne suggested we store herbs for medicinal purposes and then went through a bunch of different kinds of herbs you can store that help with different ailments etc. The first one she talked about was cayenne, which is good for circulation, and can stop bleeding etc. She then talked about a lot more that I wrote down, and couldn't take notes fast enough on. I was really interested, but must admit I felt like I could have used about 10 hours of info on that stuff instead of 20 mins. I'm going to learn more about it, but in the mean time, know that its out there and start learning about it, if you feel ready and think its a good fit **(Like I mentioned before these are just my notes- I don't know much about this yet, you need to do your due diligence, research, and speak with your doctors about medications, and potential interactions with herbs).**