

Survival - The Seven Major Mistakes in Food Storage

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A month or two ago I met a cute little gal who was talking to me about her newly begun food storage. You know, she began, I've dreaded doing my storage for years, it seems so blah, but the way national events are going my husband and I decided we couldn't put it off anymore. And, do you know, it really hasn't been so hard. We just bought 20 bags of wheat, my husband found a place to get 60 pound cans of honey, and now all we have to do is get a couple of cases of powdered milk.

Could you tell me where to get the milk? After I suggested several distributors, I asked, Do you know how to cook with your Wheat? Oh, she laughed, if we ever need it Ill learn how. My kids only like white bread and I don't have a wheat grinder. She had just made every major mistake in storing food (other than not storing anything at all). But she's not alone, through 14 years of helping people prepare, I found most peoples storage starts out looking just like hers.

So whets wrong with this storage plan?

There are seven serious problems that may occur trying to live on these basics:

1. Variety - Most people don't have enough variety in their storage. 95% of the people I've worked with have only stored the 4 basic items we mentioned earlier: wheat, milk, honey, and salt. Statistics show most of us wont survive on such a diet for several reasons.

- a) Many people are allergic to wheat and may not be aware of it until they are eating it meal after meal.
- b) Wheat is too harsh for young children. They can tolerate it in small amounts but not as their main staple.
- c) We get tired of eating the same foods over and over and many times prefer to not eat, then to sample that particular food again.

This is called appetite fatigue. Young children and older people are particularly susceptible to it. Store less wheat than is generally suggested and put the difference into a variety of other grains, particular ones your family likes to eat. Also store a variety of beans. This will add variety of color texture and flavor. Variety is the key to a successful storage program. It is essential that you store flavorings such as tomato, bouillon, cheese, and onion.

Also, include a good supply of the spices you like to cook with. These flavorings and spices allow you to do many creative things with your grains and beans. Without them you are severely limited. One of the best suggestions I can give you is buy a good food storage cookbook, go through it, and see what your family would really eat. Notice the ingredients as you do it. This will help you more than anything else to know what items to store.

2. Extended Staples - Few people get beyond storing the four basic items but its extremely important that you do so. Never put all your eggs in one basket. Store dehydrated and/or freeze dried foods as well

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as home canned and store bought canned goods. Make sure you add cooking oil, shortening, baking powder, soda, yeast and powdered eggs. You cant cook even the most basic recipes without these items. Because of limited space I wont list all the items that should be included in a well-balanced storage program. They are included in the The New Cooking With Home Storage cookbook, as well as information on how much to store, and where to purchase it.

3. Vitamins - Vitamins are important, especially if you have children, since children do not store body reserves of nutrients as adults do. A good quality multi-vitamin and vitamin C are the most vital. Others might be added as your budget permits.

4. Quick and Easy and Psychological Foods - Quick and easy foods help you through times when you are psychologically or physically unable to prepare your basic storage items. No cook foods such as freeze-dried are wonderful since they require little preparation, MRE's (Meal Ready to Eat), such as many preparedness outlets carry, canned goods, etc. are also very good. Psychological Foods are the goodies - Jell-O, pudding, candy, etc. - you should add to your storage.

These may sound frivolous, but through the years I've talked with many people who have lived entirely on their storage for extended periods of time. Nearly all of them say these were the most helpful items in their storage to normalize their situations and make it more bearable. These are especially important if you have children.

5. Balance - Time and time again I've seen families buy all of their wheat, then buy all of another item and so on. Don't do that. Its important to keep well-balanced as you build your storage. Buy several items, rather than a large quantity of one item. If something happens and you have to live on your present storage you'll fare much better having a one month supply of a variety of items than a years supply of two to three items.

6. Containers - Always store your bulk foods in food storage containers. I have seen literally tons and tons of food thrown away because they were left in sacks, where they became highly susceptible to moisture, insects, and rodents. If you are using plastic buckets make sure they are lined with a food grade plastic liner available from companies that carry packaging supplies. Never use trash can liners as these are treated with pesticides. Don't stack them too high. In an earthquake they may topple, the lids pop open, or they may crack. A better container is the #10 tin can which most preparedness companies use when they package their foods.

7. Use Your Storage - In all the years I've worked with preparedness one of the biggest problems I've seen is people storing food and not knowing what to do with it. Its vital that you and your family become familiar with the things you are storing. You need to know how to prepare these foods. This is not something you want to have to learn under stress. Your family needs to be used to eating these foods.

A stressful period is not a good time to totally change your diet. Get a good food storage cookbook and learn to use these foods!

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Its easy to solve these food storage problems once you know what they are. The lady I talked about at the first of the article left realizing what she had stored was a good beginning but not enough. As she said, Its better to find out the mistakes I've made now while there's still time to make corrections. This makes a lot more sense.

If you're one who needs to make some adjustments, that's OK. Look at these suggestions and add the things you're missing. Its easy to take a basic storage and add the essentials to make it livable, but it needs to be done. As I did the research for my cookbook, I wanted to include recipes that gave help to families no matter what they had stored.

As I put the material together it was fascinating to discover what the pioneers ate is the type of things we store. But if you have stored only the 4 basics, there's very, very little you can do with it. By adding even just a few things it greatly increases your options, and the prospect of your family surviving on it. As I studied how the pioneers lived and ate, my whole feeling for food storage changed. I realized our storage is what most of the world has always lived on. If its put together the right way well be returning to good basic living with a few goodies thrown in.