



MEMBERS UPDATE

August 2019

How to Win a Gunfight

Top 5 Small Game Handguns

How to ID Venomous Snakes

SHTF Cookbook Part 1: Meat-lovers Edition

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How to Win a Gunfight

With 200+ years of warfighting under its belt, US Military knows a thing or two about how to win a gun battle. While this isn't what most of us would call "everyday knowledge," these tactical concepts are what the pros use to create and hold an advantage in worst-case, guns blazing confrontations.



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How to ID Venomous Snakes

With warm weather in full swing, chances are good that you'll eventually cross paths with a snake or two as you go about your normal hiking, hunting, or fishing routine. No need to go ballistic, simply keep calm and refer to what you learn in this article to ID the snake from a safe distance.



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SHTF Cookbook Part 1

If the proverbial "it" ever truly hits the fan, will you know how to get your protein fix? You might be surprised at how many animals running around your neighborhood are considered delicacies by foragers. In this "meat-lovers" edition, we'll tell you what's fair game, and just as importantly what animals to avoid.



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Top 5 Small Game Handguns

Ever notice how rattlesnakes, giant rats, and copperheads only seem to appear when you're unarmed? The only remedy for this predicament is to get yourself a "snake shooter" that's easy to carry and dispatches small game with ease. With these compact snake poppers, you'll be itching for some target practice.



HOW TO WIN A GUNFIGHT: 13 MILITARY GUNFIGHT TACTICS

No one plans to get into a gunfight, but if you were to stumble across one, would you be able to win against heavy fire?

If you read that last line and hesitated for a second to answer, it's safe to assume you need to take a page from the military handbook and brush up on some gunfight tactics that will potentially save your life and those around you.

Since it is extremely difficult to predict when a gunfight is going to occur, preparing yourself beforehand will give you a better chance of survival and winning. That is why we are going to go over thirteen tactics used by the military to ensure you, and whoever you are fighting alongside with, will come out victorious.

#1 WEAPON FIRE, WEAPON STOP



It's one of the important rules soldiers are taught in initial weapons training, and it is something you need to keep in the back of your head before finding yourself in a gunfight. A gunfight is nothing like Call of Duty where your gun of choice never jams or runs out of ammo. Stuff happens; from no ammo to your gun not automatically reloading because there's a piece of metal lodged in the ejection port. And this is exactly why soldiers are taught to carry a secondary weapon, like a pistol, in addition to a primary weapon.

You might be thinking you're a good enough shooter to be able to just pull out the magazine, cock the weapon, and easily shake out the jam, but remember you are in the middle of a gunfight and every second counts. When you have that extra pistol on you, you can sling your primary weapon and keep firing until you find decent cover to get your primary weapon working again.

#2 COVERING FIRE



Also known as 'fire and movement,' covering fire is a great gunfighting technique to use when you need to retreat and reposition or decide to attack your enemy.

If you're in a gunfight, you probably have some buddies helping you. Use your numbers to your advantage by abiding by this rule: if you're not running, you're shooting, and vice versa.

3 Everything is synchronized. If you are retreating, one person shoots while the other runs until you can find safe cover to counter attack. If you are attacking,

shoot in the enemy's direction while your buddy runs.

#3 RULE OF RUNNING



This rule of thumb is taught during initial combat training for military forces worldwide and you might have heard it yourself: "I'm up. He sees me. I'm down."

This saying is exactly what needs to go through your head as soon as you take your first step to run for cover. It gives you just enough time to move and not provide your enemy with a chance to take aim and fire. If you take longer than this, anyone with a good amount of training will be able to make a clean shot.

Now when I say "down," I'm not referring to dropping to the ground. You'll want to get down behind some sort of sufficient cover like a wall so you can then start shooting and allow your buddy to run.

#4 EYES PEELED

There are three important things to always be looking for while you're in the middle of a gunfight that are essential to your survival: your enemies, your buddy, and potential cover.

In addition to looking for your enemy, you need to recognize where they last were and where their bullets sound like they are coming from. This is

particularly important when implementing ‘fire and movement’ because you will be firing at your enemy while your buddy moves.



When it comes to your buddy, you’ll want to know where he is, or be able to listen out for his shooting in order to identify when you should run or when you should shoot. If he is shooting, you need to be running. But if his gun jams and you don’t hear his shooting, then that means you need to start shooting.

Looking out for cover is not just for retreating, it is also for attacking. You always need to be looking for the next place for you to move to and to put in front of you and your enemy. Remember, look for cover behind you when retreating and cover in front of you for attacking.

#5 RABBITS NOT WELCOMED

Imagine you’re on a hunting trip with a buddy and you see a rabbit eating in the grass. It bends down to eat, pops its head up, and then bends down again. You say to your buddy, “there’s a rabbit 3 meters right of that bush.” And wouldn’t you know it, the rabbit pops its head up in that exact same spot and... BAM! If you were the rabbit, you would be dead in seconds, which is what will happen if you do something similar in a



4 real gunfight.

Not acting like a rabbit is an essential part of “I’m up. He sees me. I’m down” and is the only way to be successful at it. If you are taking aim at your enemy, you will be aiming at the last place you saw him and waiting until he pops his head up again to take a clear shot. Keep that in mind when you run for cover and begin providing your buddy with covering fire because it is the same thing your enemy will be doing.

Once you have made it to your cover and are out of the line of fire, move or crawl a few meters laterally before popping up and firing.

#6 CREATIVE COVER



When some think of cover they think of a place to hide, but it’s also somewhere to shoot from and land some shots on your enemy so that your buddy can narrow the gap between you and the enemy. Since a gunfight will most likely take place in an urban setting with houses, fences, cars, windows, and what have you, you need to be able to be creative and use it to your advantage. Whatever is around you, use it and use it well.

Our special forces are trained to use flexibility and creativity in the midst of a gunfight, and it is something you need to do too. But it’s not just about finding any cover; you’ll want to find cover that provides you with a solid firing position where you can control your breathing and your weapon, so you make precise shots.

#7 CONFIDENCE, AGGRESSIVENESS, QUICKNESS



These are the three qualities you need to have when you enter a gunfight. If you try to take it nice and slow when bullets are flying, you will end up being shot.

Confidence is a necessity in a gunfight; if you start to doubt yourself or even your buddy, your chances of surviving are pretty low.

Being aggressive is a huge part of being on the offense and could determine whether or not you win a gunfight. If you uphold an offensive position with your buddy, your enemy will be faced with such precise force that they will end up not being able to handle the pressure. That's when they'll make crucial mistakes for you to take advantage of. Once your enemy starts to panic, you are now in control of the gunfight, and that control will ultimately allow you to win.

And, of course, the quicker you are to retreat or to attack, the more opportunities you will have to hold off your enemy or confuse them enough so you catch them off guard.

#8 PLANNING IS EVERYTHING

There are so many things that could happen in a gunfight, but you should be prepared for anything by having a

5

primary plan and a backup plan set in place beforehand.

It can be a simple plan, like sitting and firing a few shots to find out what type of weapons you're up against and where the shots are coming from, or going on the offense with your buddy until you can run a flank. Any type of plan will be extremely beneficial when bullets are flying overhead because you won't have a lot of time to sit and discuss while in the thick of it.



When it comes to a gunfight, however, it is hard to predict where it will happen, and that can make it difficult to develop a plan and a backup plan. Every terrain is different, but each comes with its own exposure points and weaknesses that you can take advantage of in the moment. To do that, you will need to implement your situational awareness and the OODA loop theory:

- Observe your enemy
- Orientate how they are acting and what you can do to counter and win that action
- Decide on the best course of action to take
- Action is taken
- The loop then continues back into the observation phase.

#9 FLANKING MANEUVER

When flanking an enemy, you are essentially attacking at an angle to the enemy's direction of engagement from one or more sides. It is a basic military tactic with many different variations you can use to your advantage when in a gunfight.

Ambush: a surprise attack from a concealed position with other members of the unit hidden to the sides



of the ambush to further surround the enemy.

Enemy defensive position: when flanking is used against an enemy's defensive position. You will receive the enemy's fire and then "fix" the enemy with suppressive fire, which will stop them from returning fire, retreating, or changing positions. Your flanking force will then move to the enemy flank and attack them at close range.

Double envelopment: Also known as the pincer movement, it is one of the most effective forms of flanking and revolves around simultaneous flank attacks in front, on both sides, and the rear of the enemy's formation. The main goal is to encircle your enemy and either force a surrender or completely destroy them.

#10 GUNFIGHT FROM A CAR

If you are in a car when the gunfight starts, you need to get out of that thing quickly because it is the ultimate bullet magnet. If you're riding around in a bulletproof car then you will be fine, but most of us are not the president.

However, you can't just pop out of the car without getting sprayed with bullets. Instead, this is what you need to do once your car has come to a complete

6 stop:



- Divert your enemy's attention and make them duck by firing some rounds in their direction
- Open the door and remember to hold it open with your foot
- Lead with your gun out the door and fire shots at your enemy while exiting the car
- Once out, position yourself so that the vehicle is in between yourself and the enemy

#11 KNIFE TO A GUNFIGHT

I'm sure you have heard it before, whether that be in real life or in a movie, "don't bring a knife to a gunfight." But I'm here to tell you that is the opposite of what our special forces are taught to do in battle. The best thing is to carry a knife on you in case it is your last option.

Imagine being in a gunfight; you've used all your energy and all your ammunition (including your backup pistol) to get to the enemy. Now it comes



down to the pure strength of you and the enemy. Do you really want to rely on your diminishing strength to determine the outcome of this long gunfight you've been put through? I would say no. Just like I told you to have a back-up pistol, it is a good idea to have a back-up knife so you still have the advantage over your enemy in close combat.

#12 GET IN PHYSICAL SHAPE



Getting down and doing push-ups right now is not going to work. You need to have a workout regimen put in place before SHTF so that you can be fully prepared for the endurance part of a gunfight.

There are many reasons why you should maintain a good fitness level, but the three most important reasons are as follows:

- Keeps your confidence up and provides you with a level-headed and tactical mindset
- Gets you from one point to another efficiently and quickly
- Provides you with steady aim even after sprinting

If you don't have a workout regimen in place, the best place to start is with high-impact interval training.

#13 INVEST IN A CHEST RIG



If you really want to increase your chances of winning a gunfight, then you'll want to grab a Chest Rig. With a Chest Rig you can carry more magazines, you'll have a smaller working area between the quick draw of your magazines to the loading port of your handgun and rifle, and you can also fasten your knife to it.

CONCLUSION

The best idea is to avoid getting into a gunfight if you can. But if you can't, you need to do everything in your power to win. This is a life or death situation, but by using all of the military tactics we've gone over, you should have a clear advantage over your enemy.



How to Identify Venomous Snakes in North America

When the weather gets warm, it's time for the hikers, campers, and outdoor enthusiasts to hit the trail... along with just about every other mammal, insect, and reptile on God's green earth. With that said, it sets the stage for a major uptick in human-snake encounters (including venomous ones).

First things first, we'll say that we don't live by the motto, "the only good snake is a dead snake." If we run across a snake on the road or on the trail, we'll let it slither on its way every time... heck, usually even if it's venomous.

But if it's just too close to the house or yard, that's when a decision has to be made. In order to make that decision, we first need to identify the species of snake and determine whether or not it's venomous.

Despite the fact that we only have 4 major species of poisonous snakes to deal with in North America, it can be surprisingly difficult to calmly ID these snakes in the heat of the moment. In fact, that's why we're writing this article, to make it easier for the non-snake experts among us to avoid a nasty and potentially fatal bite.

The 4 Big Ones

These are the 4 groups of poisonous snakes that you may run across in the US:

- Rattlesnakes
- Cottonmouths
- Copperheads
- Coral Snakes

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When we say that there are 4 major species of venomous snakes, that's a bit of an oversimplification,

but it makes the identification of these venomous snakes much easier.

You see, it doesn't matter much if you've spotted a Texas Coral Snake or an Arizona Coral Snake, both are deadly poisonous. So, stay away.

Rattlesnake

First things first, it's worth pointing out that three out of the four species of venomous snakes in the US have one defining trait in common: They are all members of the pit viper family of reptiles.



This means they each have similarly large, triangular-shaped heads that protrude on each side wider than the rest of their bodies. Aside from their colors and scales, these species have very similar head shapes.

While rattlesnakes have been associated with deadly defiance in American folklore -- i.e. the "Don't Tread on Me" flag -- there's something else to take away from that symbol: Rattlesnakes tend to warn those who come too close (by shaking their rattles).

The US is home to 16 species of rattlesnakes, all are venomous and all of them have the characteristic rattle. When it comes to geographic distribution, the rattlesnake's habitat is virtually coast-to-coast, with a few exceptions (most notably Hawaii and Alaska). So, no matter where you are going in the Lower 48, chances are you're in rattlesnake country.

Thankfully, these very widespread snakes are also the easiest to identify, thanks to the rattles. The only outliers are juvenile rattlesnakes, which are (as it is in most species) a bit harder to identify, on account of their small, developing rattles and less viperish heads.



Cottonmouth (AKA "water moccasins")



If you spend a lot of time on the water in the Southeastern US, you definitely want to study up on these sometimes aggressive boogers. True to their

name, the inside of their mouth is a pale pink, almost white.

And the reason we know this is because these snakes are known to stand their ground, coiling up and threatening intruders with their open mouths, fangs front and center. Thus, similar to the rattlesnake, their common name was inspired by their natural warning mechanism.

Cottonmouths generally live around the water, in swamps, rivers, and on the edges of lakes. They can often be found sunning themselves on exposed roots and low branches.

The general coloration of these snakes is dark olive/black scales on top, pale scales on the belly. Younger cottonmouths have a more recognizable pattern to their scales, and a black mark above each nostril. However, these marks fade over their lifetimes, giving way to a more solid, blackish color.

Copperhead



So, do you want the good news or bad news first? Okay, the good news about these snakes is they have the least potent venom of the North American

pit vipers, and their distribution is limited.

The bad news... these snakes are responsible for more bites than any other US species. You might say they have a tendency to bite when they feel threatened, as opposed to rattling their tails or showing their fangs.

They tend to live in wooded areas, rocky creek banks, and in woodpiles.

with a striking cross-banded color pattern that usually has copper tones to it. There are several subspecies with varying colorations, but all species have a similar pattern, almost like a camouflage.

The base tone tends to be pale tan to almost a pinkish tan, with the dark brown "hourglass" pattern repeating from nose to tail.

Coral Snake



The coral snake has by far the deadliest venom of all North American snakes, a neurotoxin very similar to a cobra's (they're in the same family). On the bright side, they are notoriously reclusive and rarely bite humans.

Due to the placement of their fangs, these snakes must hold on for a few seconds and make a chewing motion to inject their venom. Thus, many bites don't result in any venom injected at all.

In the old days, it's estimated that 10% of coral snake bites resulted in death. Since the availability of the anti-venom, there have been no recorded deaths from coral snake bites in the US.

Now, for the identification. These snakes stand out as entirely different from the others on this list, because they are not vipers. As we mentioned, they belong to the Elapidae family of snakes, which includes the cobra.

Unlike vipers, coral snakes don't have especially large heads in proportion to their bodies. They are also very brightly colored, with a pattern of red and black stripes with yellow (sometimes white) bands in between.

In fact, the same rhyme can be used to identify the vast majority of US coral snakes, "Red and black, friend of Jack. Red and yellow, kill a fellow."

Several harmless species, e.g. the scarlet king snake, look very similar to the coral snake to novice snake spotters.

The distinguishing factor is the fact that it has red and black bands that touch. Its red and yellow bands do not meet.



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Foods You can Eat During a SHTF Situation Without Resorting to Roadkill: Part 1

When the SHTF, you're going to find a host of chores that rank as serious top priorities; chief of which, is going to be finding something to eat. Keep in mind that a little bit of preparation can mean the difference between enjoying a sumptuous dinner or having to resort to some unsavory choices such as eating roadkill.

However, before you turn to harvesting animals for your next meal, be sure that you master how to properly gut, skin, scale, or do any preparation of their meat that is needed. Additionally, you will need to heat meat to a proper temperature before serving it or eating it yourself. Eating it raw or undercooked can quickly lead to a medical crisis that you are probably ill equipped for and will exacerbate an already dire emergency situation.

So, you'll want to bone up on those points in the
10 paragraph above, and there are plenty of YouTube

tutorials and prepper 101 classes available to prepare you for any survivalist's culinary exercises.

If You're Holed Up in a Shelter

If you are lucky enough to already have shelter or a well-stocked bunker when the SHTF, you just need to be able to replenish your meat supply as needed. Pigs, cows, chickens, and other similar animals are likely going to be too large and complex to raise in an average-sized enclosure. If you can think outside of the box, though, there are plenty of smaller animals that you can raise for food

1. Rabbits

Rabbits thrive in captivity and are prolific breeders. Their enclosures can consist of hutches, metal dog

pens, or cages. Just be sure they can't access any soft ground underneath their habitat because they are excellent burrowers. It would be unfortunate to have a healthy and rather large rabbit population that escaped through a small hole, wouldn't it?



Mother rabbits gestate for around 30 days and have litters that average from about 4 to 12 kits. Their diet is easy to maintain, and you can feed them endless amounts of timothy or alfalfa hay that's easily grown and dried. Be sure to supplement their diet with fruit such as apples and dark, green lettuce types like Romaine and Bibb.

As an added bonus, you can tan or pickle rabbit hides using simple kitchen staples such as alum and salt. Rabbit fur has also been used for centuries to make winter clothing such as coats and gloves.

2. Insects



Pictured: Escamole (ant larvae)

Eating insects simply bugs most people in the United States. But, if the SHTF and you had a choice between eating insects or chowing down on that dark oily spot on the side of the road with a few feathers or plugs of hair sticking out of it, the choice would probably

be easier. And, if you need any further convincing, many cultures eat a variety of insects, and they can be enjoyed in a variety of sumptuous recipes

For instance, if you miss bacon too much during an apocalypse, there's a solution: grasshoppers. The little jumpers are cooked in Oaxaca, Mexico, in a way that mimics the crunch and smoky taste of its pig-derived counterpart. That's a fact that's good to know since it's difficult to raise bacon-producing pigs as a source of food when you have limited space.

These creatures provide a sustainable food source presently, and there are companies out there that believe food made from insects and arachnids are an eco-friendly protein source that's the way of the future. Edible insects and arachnids that can be raised and eaten include scorpions, tarantulas, cicadas, crickets, grasshoppers, ants, ant larvae, mealworms, and species of caterpillar such as mopani worms, bamboo worms, waxworms, and silkworms. Some bugs can even be dried to make flour!

Just as with any other meat source, you'll want to ensure that you cook insects thoroughly before you ingest them. They host an array of pathogens that include bacteria, fungi, viruses, and nematodes.

3. Opossums

Opossums, or just 'possums' for short, are marsupials. We tend to think of the possum synonymously with roadkill since they are one of the most commonly encountered dead animals on the side of the road. Possums farmed for food are a whole different matter, though. And, before you dismiss this rat-looking varmint as a food source, know this: hand-raised opossum, much like rabbits, were a popular food staple during the Great Depression.

On the other hand, opossums are more delicate to raise than rabbits. Much like cats, they'll run out of your enclosure when they are let out of the cage. Possums will also use a litter pan. Keep in mind that you must nurture your captive possums because one of the main barriers to their survival in captivity is confinement and lack of a proper diet.

Possums are nocturnal, so their home should be quiet and away from draft and sunlight. A suitable enclosure

will have a nesting box, along with branches for them to exercise. An exercise wheel for nighttime would be ideal, too, since they can become frustrated easily in captivity. Feed them a diet of high-protein, dry, and low-fat foods. In particular, they'll eat veggies, fruits, insects, voles, and mice.



Meanwhile, possums you raise on your own don't take up much space, and the taste of a possum's meat is comparable to chicken. Opossum meat can be marinated overnight in a mixture of soy sauce and regular meat marinade. Recipes abound for cooking possum, and include dishes like possum potpie, possum and sweet potatoes, and stuffed possum.

Other Options

With enough space, patience, and the proper supplies, you can also raise squirrels, small birds, and possibly even a Nigerian dwarf goat. All of this can provide a good source of food, but remember to keep the goat for milk, not meat.

If You're Roughing it in the Woods

Now let's look at what types of readily available meat you can eat safely from the woods, along with some of examples of what you should avoid altogether if you are roughing it in the woods after the SHTF.

1. Birds



Wild fowl is some of the tastiest game out there, so this option will work for amateur and professional archers and hunters alike. There are shotguns that are made for hunting small game like the Franchi Affinity 3.5 and the Mossberg SA-20. This type of weaponry is very effective on birds such as doves, ducks and geese, pheasant, quail, and wild turkeys.

Bird calls available in stores will aid your bird-hunting by giving out a loud, yet true, tone that works with wild fowl such as pheasants and ducks. These artificial calls are great for finding and flushing out wild birds from reeds and grasses.

As far as scavenging wild birds go, ravens and crows are edible. Simply be sure that the animal was healthy and that you field dress the animal quickly. And, like all animals you harvest in the wild, make sure their meat is cooked well done.

2. Opossums

In a pinch, you can catch and eat wild opossums and prepare them in much the same way as you would ones you've raised on your own. Be sure to quickly gut, skin, and cook its meat until it's well done each time you bag one, though. You'll also want to note that the taste varies between individual possums. Some have even been described as tasting like pulled pork BBQ when you cook them over an open flame.

Unfortunately, the taste of wild possum is a little bit of a gamble, and some possum's meat can be unpleasant and overpowering. The taste of some can even almost punch you in the mouth, having been described by some as meat that's been cooked in a burning plastic trashcan. Possums are scavengers

in the wild, and they often raid trashcans and eat roadkill. Therefore, they taste like what they eat. If you want to weed out that 'trashy' taste, you may want to eventually move toward raising your own when things are more stable for you.

Opossums are one of the few animals in the wild that you can catch with your bare hands. More importantly, they have 50 sharp teeth and use them when threatened, too. Because of that, you'll want to arm yourself with a rock and good-sized stick when dealing with the business end of a ticked-off opossum. Possums can also yield fur for winter clothing. Their pointy and wispy hairs can be used to bulk up areas on rabbit and other animal hair-derived clothing.

3. Raccoon

Hunting raccoon with a gun and some 'coon hounds is a part of southern history, and hunting them by trap and shotgun is still practiced to this day in the southern part of the country. Enthusiasts of this practice attest to the fact that raccoon meat is delicious when cleaned and cooked right. The taste is said to be like dark meat turkey or chicken, but a little more tender and greasier than either.



If you are planning on hunting some on your own, you'll want to do it at night with a flashlight and a little .22 rifle. If you want to do it the traditional way - and have the luxury after the SHTF - drag a coonhound or two along with you. Coonhounds are fierce trackers and will tree raccoons and other prey. They'll keep their quarry up in the branches with their melodious bays until you catch up.

of the trees until you catch the glimmer of shiny raccoon eyes. You'll only have a second to shoot them because they are very skittish and don't like to look at you. A word of caution: Raccoons are more prone to carry rabies than any of the animals on this list, but infected coons most likely won't be out at night feeding.

4. Squirrel



Squirrels are often hunted in the Southeast, and it is typically the first real game that a hunter pursues. These bushy tailed rodents have tasty meat, and it's served up by roasting, baked, frying, stewing it in dumplings, and more.

If you want to venture out and hunt squirrel, be aware that it isn't a nocturnal animal like the raccoon. You can hunt them during the day using dogs and a .22 in the same fashion that you hunt raccoons. The dogs that run tree rats up in branches aren't known as coonhounds, though. They are 'squirrel' dogs. Squirrel dogs don't belong to the coonhound breeds. They are cur dogs instead, AKA the mountain cur. The mountain cur is also an established breed.

5. Rabbit

You can use a shotgun designed for hunting small game or a bow and arrow to hunt rabbits, but they're quick. Since they are such difficult prey to tag this way, it's best to use a trap or snare to catch them. The Internet abounds with tutorials on how to make one, ranging from complex designs to simple but effective ones that you can fashion from common materials found in the woods.



The best bait you can use for rabbits includes carrots, apples, brussels sprouts, and leafy greens. You can also spray the inside of the trap or around the snare with apple cider. This primitive technology can be used to trap wild boar, too. The trap will need to be sturdier to do this, and one popular design is fashioned from string and PVC pipe. As an aside, be sure you are advanced in your hunting skills before you try to trap or shoot a wild boar. Why? Just watch Old Yeller, if you haven't before, and get back to us on that.

6. Fish

Catching, cleaning, and eating fish, both fresh and saltwater types, is widely practiced today. That means the practice could translate and continue in times of trouble without much of a learning curve.

To be a post-civilization fisherman or angler, you'll just need gear and lures or bait. You'll additionally need a little know-how about how to cast your lures and how to hook fish when they bite. Snorkelers and divers can also use their bare hands, along with spears and harpoons, to catch fish in shallow parts of the ocean.

7. Reptiles

Many reptiles are poisonous, but if you are in a SHTF situation in the Deep South, there are an abundance of edible ones to eat. This is especially true in Florida, where there are plenty of exotic species to choose from.

7a. Iguana



One of the more exotic choices is the green iguana. Iguana meat is a food staple in the Caribbean, where they are known as "pollo de los árboles" or, in English, chicken of the trees. In Florida they are an invasive species, much like pythons and monkeys, and are proliferating in the state because irresponsible pet owners released them there.

Iguana meat contains more protein than chicken, and it is good roasted, stir-fried with herbs, or even served in burritos. What's more, if you want to be fancier than just roasting them on a stick across a pit, their meat can be used to make hot dogs, sausages, or burgers. Some cultures even believe iguana meat has medicinal properties, which will certainly be a plus when doctors and hospitals are in short supply.

The two main ways to catch these big lizards are by snaring or trapping them. You can fashion your own or, if you were proactive before the SHTF, you could have purchased them online. Bow and arrows and small game shotguns also work on bagging iguanas.

8. Turtles



Americans began eating this plentiful delicacy in the country's infancy. In fact, green snapping turtles were abundant during the time of the early settlers, and they often ate their fill of them in soups and stews. Turtle eggs, which were consumed as well, even made their appearance on Plymouth Colony dining tables.

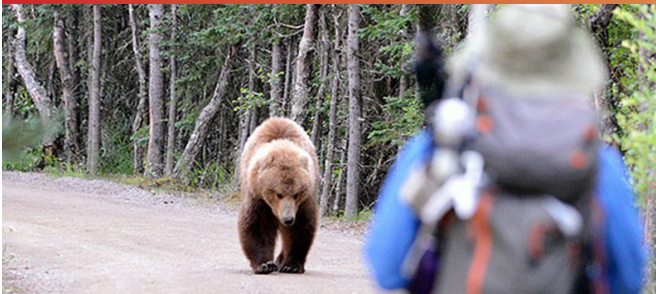
Snapping turtles are described as containing an array of distinct types of meat, depending on which part of the reptile's body it was harvested from. And, although the meat is kind of chewy, the taste is said to be reminiscent of shrimp, pork, chicken, beef, fish, and goat.

Turtle is notoriously hard to field dress and clean, but the consensus is to remove the head and flippers first. Preppers that want to get ahead of the game can practice preparing it from recipes that flourished in the 1800s. Don't consume it in large quantities, though, because turtle flesh contains high concentrations of environmental pollution.

Other Options

There are several other edible animals found throughout the U.S., including beavers, deer, and even rats (yes, rats; believe it or not, rats were a staple food for multiple ancient cultures). Be sure to see the warning below about the current deer population before you eat any venison, though.

Dangerous Game



National Park Service

We advise against trying to kill dangerous game in your quest for meat unless you are already an expert. The simple reason being that trial and error probably won't work out so well for you. In fact, just one simple misstep while hunting dangerous game can

mean your problems during an emergency situation will be over—just not in a good way. For instance, simple rules such as not shooting a bear when you're downhill from it could mean the difference between survival and getting mauled and eaten.

Other animals that are considered good eating, but amateurs should avoid because of the risk of severe injury or death, include rattlesnakes, sharks, large alligators and pythons, moose, and buffalo. Some large exotic birds such as male ostriches, cassowaries, and emus might be around, but they can give you a helluva pummeling. These large birds, especially the cassowary, might even severely injure or kill you.

Other Meat to Avoid

The following wildlife should be avoided because of the risk of contracting serious diseases during food preparation and handling.

1. Zombie Deer



If you are handy with a bow and arrow or a shotgun after everything heads south, you'll notice that deer are plentiful. However, hunting them is risky as many deer and elk in the Midwest have joined the ranks of the walking dead. Hunting them in this area is dangerous because some of these animals are infected with what's known as Zombie deer disease (AKA chronic wasting disease).

Zombie deer disease is a prion that creates holes in deer brains, much like Mad Cow disease does to cows and humans. The infection has spread to 24 states and four countries, and the worst part is that scientists are worried it could jump to humans. Signs that Bambi has Zombie deer disease include losing their fear of humans, aggression, lethargy, and salivating.

2. Armadillos



Known as ‘possum on the half-shell,’ the taste of armadillo meat has been compared to fine-grained and delicious pork. But you’ll want to avoid using armadillos as a food source like the plague if you are stuck in the woods when the SHTF. Or should we say avoid them like leprosy since armadillos have been known to carry it? To explain, the New England Journal of Medicine revealed recently that people living in the Deep South contracted leprosy (Hansen’s Disease). The source was virtually traced to their back yards.

Leprosy is one of the hardest diseases in the world to catch. However, according to evidence, the unfortunate southerners caught it from handling armadillos used for food. Armadillo meat is another food that was consumed during the Great Depression, and they are currently plentiful in the Deep South, especially in parts of Florida. If you are in a pinch, and the thought of losing your digits through leprosy doesn’t put you off, make sure you don’t undercook the meat on these armor-clad and tasty mammals. Parts of you might live to regret it if you do.

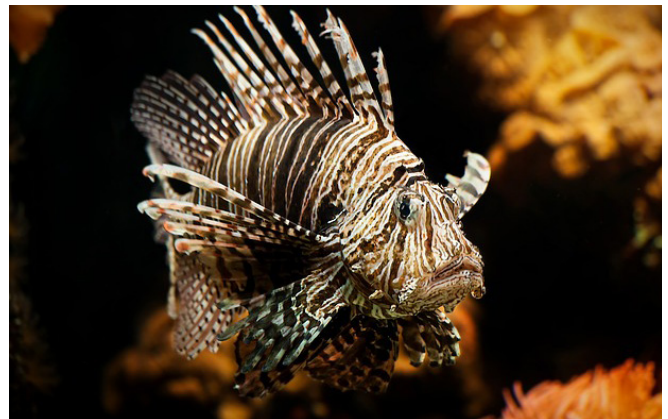
3. Monkey



Monkey meat is consumed all over the world, and people that have consumed it say it is a “sweet” type of meat. On the downside, these primates are genetically like humans, and that similarity results in the risk of passing on life-threatening diseases such as Ebola, HIV, and a herpes virus that will kill you ‘graveyard-dead.’

There is a growing population of monkeys in parts of Florida, and Rhesus macaques that were brought to Central Florida in the 1930s have become an invasive, but plentiful, species. However, they carry the life-threatening form of the herpes virus. Due to the risk of consuming this “sweet” meat, you may not want to monkey around with it.

4. Lionfish



Lionfish are another edible invasive species to Florida. This brightly colored fish has venom that packs a wallop in its fins, though. The venom isn’t deadly, but it is painful when they sting you. The affected area can lead to blistering and infection if not treated properly.

If you are desperate enough to take the chance, Lionfish have a pleasant taste and boast very white and flaky meat. If not, leave it to the experts and settle on something like grouper or flounder for a meal of ocean fish.

5. Buzzards

Survivalists have long held that most mammal and bird meat in the wild is safe to eat, even though this doesn’t assure palatability. The buzzard,



however, is one notable exception. A buzzard's diet of rotten meat leaves it rife with bacteria, and it's always a bad sign when other animals won't eat another. And nothing eats dead buzzards, including other scavenger birds.

6. Freshwater Mollusks



Oysters and clams obtained from saltwater are sources of some seriously good eating as long as they are cooked thoroughly enough. Other mollusks such as freshwater snails, slugs, and clams should not be depended on as a source of food.

The French made escargot popular, but it involves the use of a specific, edible land snail. There is a lengthy preparation of the snails involved before they are harvested. The preparation involves starving the snails for some time until they shed their parasites. Gross, cruel, and more importantly, you don't have time for that during your stint in the woods, do you?

Not going through that process opens you up to the possibility of consuming dangerous flukes. Also, not all land snails are edible. Slugs involve the same rolling of the dice when it comes to your health. As for freshwater clams and other bivalves, their flavor can be iffy. Not unlike a steaming bowl of marine mussels, they tend to take on the flavor of the bottom they dwell in. Even more, they can often be toxic.

7. Humans



If you've watched lots of fictional movies and TV shows about surviving the apocalypse, you've undoubtedly seen some desperate survivors turn to human meat. But there are many reasons not to do this aside from moralistic ones. For example, humans can be very difficult to hunt, and they often have the ability to shoot back. Perhaps even more important is the risk of contracting kuru. This fatal disease attacks the nervous system and is associated with preparing and eating humans, especially if you consume their brains.

What About Vegetarian Options?

Well, that does it for Foods You can Eat During a SHTF Situation Without Resorting to Roadkill: Part 1. The goal, when you get down to it, in this first article will serve you well if you're a meat lover. Be sure to check out Part 2, and we'll let you know what kind of vegetables you'll have access to if you ever have to live off the grid.





SMALL GAME HANDGUNS: TOP 5 SNAKE SHOOTERS

By Oli Fischer

Several years ago, I was walking to a deer blind in South Texas, enjoying the sights and sounds of the brush country, when I spotted something in my peripheral vision that made me freeze mid-step and literally jump back. I remember hearing myself making a gasping sound as I realized I'd almost stepped on a snake, and not just any snake.

To this day, it was the largest Western Diamondback Rattlesnake I've ever seen. Even now, I still believe it was as big around as my thigh. It was lying across the tire ruts I was following to the blind, probably sunning itself, until I walked up and nearly kicked it.

Luckily, it didn't strike, though God knows it had the opportunity. And all I had in my hands was a compound bow.

Of course, the snake responded to my commotion by coiling up and rattling at me from the side of the



road. It looked even bigger when it reared its massive head.

My first thought was to try to shoot it with a broadhead. Then I thought to smash it with a rock and take its skin as a trophy.

Finally, I realized that I would rather get to the deer blind and spend my precious time hunting what I came for, and not spending the next 12 hours receiving an anti-venom in an emergency room.

I gave the snake a wide berth and went about my way. That was the last time I went out in rattlesnake country without a "snake shooter."

WHAT MAKES A GREAT SNAKE SHOOTER

I learned two major lessons that day 1.) If that snake had bit me when it had the chance, no gun in the world would have helped me, and 2.) A giant snake story is just like a big fish story, if you don't have any evidence to back it up.

Now, I'm no big trophy hunter. I don't have a room in my house dedicated to my various kills. Nevertheless, over the years, I've thought about that snake many times and felt like I missed the opportunity of a lifetime...

If I'd only had a snake shooter at my side, I would have proof that he was really that big. Still, that's not the reason I love a good "snake shooter."

Ironically enough, in many ways, shooting snakes isn't the ultimate purpose of a "snake shooter." What makes a snake shooter truly great is that it's always at your side in case you need it because you enjoy carrying it so much.

First things first, let's consider the definition of a good snake shooter. A snake shooter needs to be extremely easy to carry, effective at close range, and very safe.

Chances are that you will be operating this firearm in a moment of intense excitement. Thus, safety is a primary concern.

COMPACTNESS - By necessity, a snake shooter needs to be compact, which pretty much rules out long guns. A snake shooter won't be of any use if you leave it back at camp.

Sure, a shotgun will tear a snake in two. A 357 will certainly do the trick. However, if it's too large to carry with you at all times, then it's not a good snake shooter.

EFFECTIVENESS - In the heat of the moment, a snake is a much smaller target than you might expect (even if it's the biggest rattler you've ever seen). That means that a spread pattern is ideal.

You don't want to empty a revolver just to kill a snake... and find out you missed with all 6 rounds.

SAFETY - Because a good snake shooter should be extremely packable and portable, it's also essential that it has safety features built-in.

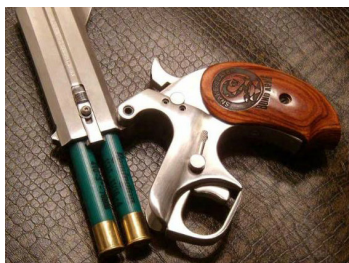
This is a gun that may be carried in a place that's fairly accessible (backpacks, pockets, or holster), not in a case. Thus, revolvers and single action firearms score bonus points.

BOND ARMS SNAKE SLAYER - True to its name, this is more or less the ultimate snake shooter straight out of the box, so to speak. So what truly sets it apart?

To begin with, it's a highly compact, derringer-style handgun, 6.5" from end to end. At 22 ounces, you might even call it "pocket-sized."

The second thing that makes this such a great snake gun is that it comes chambered for .45ACP/.410 from the factory. That means it has the ability to accept a true three-inch .410 shotgun shell, with buckshot even (if that's what you desire).

With buckshot, this gun can dispatch small game such as varmints just as easily as it can handle a cottonmouth. The hefty crossbolt safety also enables you to feel free and confident to carry this gun around wherever you go.

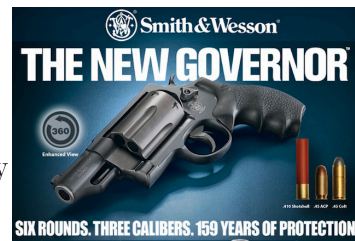


S&W GOVERNOR - Look, I'm not going to sugarcoat it, Smith & Wesson's "Governor" is pretty much a direct copy of Taurus' popular "Judge" (also on this list).

The only major difference is that one is made by one of the most trusted name in firearms history, the other is made by Taurus. Like the Snake Slayer,

the Governor can accept .410 shotgun shells (6 of them), albeit in a shorter 2.5" shell.

It can also accommodate a .45 Colt and .45 ACP, which is nice because the ACP is more readily available and comes in more varieties than the Long Colt.



It goes without saying that, thanks to the .410 cartridge, the Governor can shred small game. Weighing in at 1.85 pounds, it's pretty comfortable to carry. But at 8.5" in overall length, you're probably going to want to carry it in a holster.

TAURUS JUDGE - Like I said, you're not going to find too much difference between this revolver and the Governor, aside from the price. The Judge came first and heavily inspired the Governor.



The Judge is roughly the same weight (1.76 pounds) and accepts the same size .410 cartridges (5 of them) that the Governor does, as well as the .45 Colt, but not the .45 ACP. As of this writing, there were 14 different configurations of the Judge listed for sale on the Taurus website. In other words, there's plenty of variety to choose from if you want to go with this revolver.

Obviously, the S&W model has several advantages over the Judge -- an extra round in the cylinder and the ability to accept the .45 ACP -- at about twice the price.

Here's one more thing to consider about both the Judge and the Governor: Both are great "snake guns," but neither are great at anything else.

So, in case you were thinking that these hybrid revolvers were very multipurpose, they're not. They are great at close range, but don't compare well in accuracy and effectiveness with a shotgun or traditional sidearm.

RUGER LCP - This gun was made famous, in some circles, when Texas governor Rick Perry used one to dispatch a coyote while he was out for a jog. Perry was apparently jogging with his daughter's dog and the coyote was getting a little too close.



But if you're not a Perry fan, don't hold that against the LCP. The key point of that little anecdote was that Perry was carrying the small pistol in his running shorts (apparently).

Weighing in at just over half a pound, this little gun makes a very nice carry weapon -- one of the 3 pillars of a good snake gun.

When it comes to safety, the LCP doesn't have one. Instead, it has a very long-pull trigger. So keep a round chambered at your own risk.

Then, of course, there's the question of effectiveness. The LCP has a capacity of 6+1 rounds, a chambered .380 round that's more than capable of taming a rattlesnake. But as we've discussed, a snake is a small target and the LCP can't chamber a shotgun shell.

The solution to that problem is, of course, "snake shot" or "rat shot," except that no .380 shotshells are commercially available. Thus, you may want to go with the slightly larger, slightly heavier Ruger LC9 model.

This segues nicely into the next and final selection...

YOUR FAVORITE HANDGUN WITH SHOTSHELLS

If you already own a favorite carry gun in .22lr, 9mm, .40 S&W, .44 Mag, .45 Colt, or .45 Auto, the cheapest option is simply to buy a box of CCI Shotshells.



Unlike a true shotgun shell, these miniaturized shotshells are kind of the same concept, only designed to fit into a rifle or handgun round. They have a lot less shot (tiny pellets) in each round and an entirely different application. That is, you're not going dove hunting with these rounds.

These shells have a spread pattern that is only effective up to about 12 feet, which is ideal for snakes, rats, etc. The advantage is that you can use a handgun that you already own and are already familiar with.

Whenever you're going to carry your weapon in snake country, simply load a few shotshells and "old faithful" is transformed into your snake gun.

NON-FIREARM SNAKE GETTERS

Lastly, I feel I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that you're under no obligation to dispatch all venomous snakes you see with a firearm -- if you choose to dispatch them at all.

Even the most ruthless venomous snake does not view a human as a meal. If given the chance, the snake will retreat almost without exception.

However, if you find a venomous snake coiled up underneath your children's swing set, you probably won't feel comfortable letting it go. Nine out of ten times, a shovel or a hoe will be just as effective as a firearm, and a heck of a lot quieter.

CONCLUSION

Once again, I stand by the notion that a snake gun isn't entirely about shooting snakes, but filling the need to be armed when the unexpected happens. Any compact firearm that can take out a rattlesnake, rat, coyote, skunk, zombie, etc. will do the job, as long as you can get your hands on it in a hurry.

If you enjoy carrying a holstered sidearm, shotshells in most popular calibers are commercially available. That's what I typically do. However, if I was going to buy a purpose specific "snake gun," there's no doubt that I'd go with the Snake Slayer. It's just too cool to pass up, and there's something about the derringer that brings back childhood fantasies about the Wild West.

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