



MEMBERS UPDATE

December 2019

TOP 10 Best Last-Second Christmas Gifts

- **Why Fermentation Should Be Part Of Your Self-Reliance Plan**
- **How An Ordinary Citizen Became The Ultimate "Good Guy With A Gun"**

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Good Guy with a Gun

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to confront a shooter in a mass casualty terror attack? So many of us wish we could intervene to stop these senseless tragedies, but how that might play out is hard to comprehend. Our “good guy with a gun” had the courage, firepower, and presence of mind to keep calm and return fire.



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10 Last-Second Gifts

If you’ve got that nagging feeling that you overlooked someone while you were making your list, or you really want up your stocking-stuffer game this Christmas, we’ve got you covered. These last second gifts cost \$20 or less and they’re all virtually guaranteed to please.



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SHTF Booze Guide

What in the world is “SHTF Booze,” you ask? If you’ve ever considered creating an emergency alcohol stockpile, or trying your hand a home brewing, this guide is for you. The value of distilling, winemaking, and brewing will only become more pronounced in a long-term emergency scenario.

How An Ordinary Citizen Became The Ultimate Good Guy With A Gun



Photo: TrendingTopics2019, CC 2.0

Stephen Willeford is not what you'd expect when you think of a hero. Standing at an average height of 5 feet and 7 inches, with a handful of belly, some balding, and a white beard, he almost looks like jolly-ole Saint Nick. His voice, gentle and soft. His temperament, cool and collected, even when his meal is interrupted at the local diner a few miles down from his house by a curious stranger who wants to know his profession.

"I'm a plumber," Stephen replied.

Heroes have been displayed in literature, movies, and the media as people with extraordinary strength and abilities; something one might not equate with a professional plumber. Stephen doesn't have any superhuman abilities, and he is adamant that he is not special.

Two years earlier, Stephen was just another number in the population of Sutherland, Texas. He was known to make friends wherever he went and had no problem striking up a conversation with just about everyone. But ever since his small town became the latest victim of a mass shooting, his life has never been the same. One day he was pretty much anonymous, the next, he was being branded as a national hero.

A year after the mass shooting, Stephen is still trying to understand what happened and how much it has continued to affect his life. No longer are the days he can go unnoticed. Despite trying to avoid constant attention, like picking the most secluded and dark part of his local diner, people somehow find a way to spot him.



As soon as the stranger found out Stephen's profession, he put two and two together. He looked over at his wife and said, "Honey, this is the guy who stopped the bad man."

According to Stephen, however, anyone would have done the same.



It was November 5, 2017. On any other Sunday, Stephen would have been carrying out his long family tradition by attending the Church of Christ along with his family in San Antonio. But on this particular Sunday, Stephen had decided to rest up for an expected busy week of being on call for any plumbing emergencies at San Antonio's University Hospital. He had fallen asleep a little before 11:30 am when his oldest daughter, Stephanie, ran into the room and woke him. She wanted to know if he'd heard gunshots.

Stephen rose up in bed and listened. He could hear some loud noises, but it sounded to him more like someone was tapping on a window. Both looked outside and didn't see anyone. Stephen grabbed

walls were a lot thinner. The sound was much louder there, and Stephen knew what he was hearing were, in fact, gunshots.

Without hesitation, Stephen ran into one of his back rooms and opened his steel gun safe where he keeps an impressive collection of rifles, pistols, and shotguns. He immediately grabbed his AR-15 that he had put together himself over the years with upgrades along the way, including tactical sight. It wasn't the most accurate weapon out of his collection, but it was good for mobility, easy to carry, and could shoot fast.

While Stephen was grabbing and loading the weapon, Stephanie had taken the car around town to see if she could spot anything unusual. Central Sutherland Springs is a small town, filled with a blue-collar agricultural community of around 600 people. After a minute, Stephanie was back with news. She told Stephen she saw a man at the Baptist church about 150 yards down the street wearing tactical gear.



Stephen and his family know the place well and know most of the people that attend Sunday service. Some of the oldest members still remember Stephen's great-grandparents. And every Christmas, Stephen would jump on his Harley and hook up with a motorcycle club from the church that would deliver toys to underprivileged kids around the county.

Once he heard the man was at the church, Stephen called his wife Pam who was across town working on a new house they were putting together for his pregnant daughter, Rachel, and her husband. Stephen told Pam there was an active shooter at the church and not to move from where she was. The last thing Stephen heard Pam say was "Don't go over there!"

But it was too late. Stephen was out the door and running down the street with his AR-15 and without any shoes on.

Stephen approached the chapel, and for some reason, yelled “Hey” at the top of his lungs. As a retired NRA instructor, he knows all about how dangerous it is to give away your tactical position, and until this day does not know why he did it. But friends inside the church later told him that his cry caused the shooter to stop and head for the door. Now Stephen tells people that “It was the Holy Spirit calling the demon out of the church.”

As he moved across from the church to the front yard of Fred and Kathleen Curnow, a man wearing black tactical armor and a helmet with a visor came out from the church. Stephen quickly ducked for cover behind the front tire of Fred’s parked Dodge Ram just as the gunman fired off three shots. One hit the Dodge Ram, another hit a Dodge Charger parked behind Stephen, and the third hit Fred and Kathleen’s house.

Once the gunman lowered his weapon for a split second, Stephen propped his AR-15 on the hood of the Ram and locked onto his target through his sight. He could see the holographic red dot on the gunman’s chest and fired twice. Stephen wasn’t a hundred percent certain he had hit him because of the body armor. But whatever had happened, the gunman stopped shooting and raced to an idling white Ford Explorer parked right outside the church, around 20 yards from Stephen’s cover. Later, Stephen would find out that the shooter had contusions on his chest and abdominal.

As the gunman ran to the driver’s side of the Explorer, Stephen quickly realized that the man’s body armor had left some areas exposed. Stephen once again took aim and fired twice; hitting the gunman once beneath the arm and once in the thigh.

Though hitting him, the gunman jumped into the driver’s seat and shot twice through the driver side’s window. Stephen aimed for where he thought the guy’s head could possibly be and fired, obliterating the driver’s window. The gunman then sped off down the street toward FM 539. As a last-ditch effort, Stephen

shattering the rear window, before it turned right.

One second the Explorer was there, the next second it was out of sight. Stephen thought the man had gotten away. Then, he looked over and saw a navy-blue Dodge Ram stopped at an intersection.



The man in the Dodge Ram was Johnnie Langendorff, who had driven 30 minutes from Seguin to visit his girlfriend that morning. He had just pulled up to the intersection across from the church when the gunman came out and began shooting at Stephen. By the time Stephen, who Johnnie had never met before, reached his truck with his AR-15 in hand, Johnnie was already on the phone with 911.

“That guy just shot up the church,” Stephen yelled at Johnnie. “We need to stop him.”

The only thing Stephen remembers from that encounter is the sound of Johnnie’s doors unlocking, him jumping into the passenger seat, and both of them speeding north on FM 539 after the white Explorer.



Photo: Truck Hardware, CC 2.0

4 ran into the street and fired at the speeding Explorer,

The two had a lot of catching up to do. With a straight road, they could've caught up in seconds. But north FM 539 is a two-lane blacktop that winds around rocky hills and pastures, making their speedy pursuit that much more dangerous. At one point, Johnnie was going 90 miles per hour and passed at least 5 cars as they sped after the Explorer. Meanwhile, he updated the 911 dispatcher of their location and called out every crossroad they blew past.

After driving for 8 miles or so, the two whipped around a bend and finally saw the Explorer a few hundred feet in front of them.

"If we catch him, we may have to put him off the road," Stephen said.

Langendorff nodded, "I already figured that."

As they got closer and closer, they watched the Explorer swerve from lane to lane before it abruptly careened off the road and into a ditch. Johnnie stopped his truck about 5 yards away from the crashed Explorer, while Stephen secured his AR-15 in his right arm and opened the door with his left. At this point, Stephen only had two bullets left and knew it was not enough to endure another gun battle. Just as Stephen took a step onto the ground, the Explorer came back to life and sped off again, hitting a street sign on the way out back onto the road.

Stephen jumped back in the truck and Johnnie stepped on the pedal. But the SUV only made it another couple hundred yards before veering off the road again, plowing through a fence, and coming to a stop in an empty field.

Johnnie pulled up about 50 yards from the crashed Explorer and put it in park. Stephen told him to duck down as he took up his position on the hood of the truck, pointing his AR-15 back on the SUV. He is not one to use strong language, but that's exactly what came out as he yelled at the man in the broken-down Explorer. He later said he wasn't proud of it, but the anger he felt in the moment was overpowering.

No sound came from the SUV. The man was silent. Stephen didn't budge until he heard a police officer over a PA system behind him.

"Driver, put down your weapon and come out with your hands up," the officer said.

The officer repeated himself again. Stephen, thinking the police had mistaken him for the active shooter, slowly laid his trusty rifle on the hood and turned to face the police car when the officer screamed, "Not you!"

A short time after, more police units arrived on the scene, including those from different jurisdictions. They decided the best way to approach the vehicle was with a drone and after an hour of searching for any signs of movement, they saw through the camera that the gunman was dead in the driver's seat.

Once the officers reached the vehicle, they established the death was due to a fatal wound to the head caused by a self-inflicted gunshot.



Stephen Willeford still believes he is not a hero. He is no vigilante out to get revenge. To Stephen, it's quite simple: that day was a war between good and evil, and he had the Holy Spirit in him to guide through it unharmed. He admitted that he was scared the whole time. Not something you'd hear a hero say. But he also believes that God had been preparing him for that very moment to help stop evil from prevailing, without him even knowing it.

He was born into an environment that was deeply connected to the community and hard work. Stephen's great-grandfather created a trade route between Sutherland Springs and Seguin during the Great Depression; ultimately giving others the opportunity to stay financially stable during such a rocky time.

Stephen later learned the importance of effort while he worked on the family dairy farm, along with the power behind a gun.

At 5 years old, his father had him shooting a bolt-action .22 rifle at Coke cans in the backyard. Later, he excelled in competition shooting and could shoot the string of a balloon from a little over a hundred yards away by his 30s. He continued that tradition with three of his own kids, and under his supervision, they all had become expert shooters by the age of 9. As a family, they would join their Church of Christ Bible group at a local gun range before refocusing their attention on scripture.

Sometime before the mass shooting in his hometown, Stephen had asked his police officer buddy where to aim on a moving human target that is heavily armored. To him, it was yet another example of God's work playing in the background.

But Stephen's life was less than ideal. He, like many people, felt at times his life was straight out of the Old Testament, as if he was the embodiment of Job. The love and sense of community he felt seemed to balance out with several tragedies that tested his resolve, starting with a tragic head-on collision that claimed the lives of his parents when he was 31 years old. It was Labor Day and the two had gone out on a motorcycle ride when a drunk man, who had four prior DUIs, collided with them head-on on FM-539, around the same area where Stephen ended up in 2017. To make matters worse, an arsonist burned down his parents' house a week later before he could collect any childhood memories.

One day after his parents' funeral, Pam informed Stephen that she was pregnant. When they went in for a second trimester checkup, the doctor could not detect a heartbeat. They hit yet another road bump when Stephen lost his job soon after. But the two kept strong and used their faith to guide them through the piling hardships.

God had not bestowed superpowers onto Stephen, but instead had tested him with life-stopping obstacles along the way that inevitably shaped him into a man who was "no stranger to pain," as Stephen puts it. Something that most people can relate to yet might

not realize they have deep down inside of them until they are faced with a life-changing event.



The mass shooting was one of those events for Stephen. Although he had his fair share of bad luck, he remembers crying more after that numbing day than his whole lifetime, especially when he was on the scene talking with officers.

Due to all the agencies that were involved in the case, Stephen was forced to tell his story to each one over and over again. First it was three different county sheriffs followed by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, and then the Texas Rangers. He would finish up that night with yet another conversation with the FBI and Department of Homeland Security. It was overwhelming, and all Stephen wanted to know was "how bad is it."

He wanted to know about the people in the church, but he could never get a straight answer, which worried him even more.

On top of that, Stephen was under the impression that at any time one of the agencies was going to arrest him. He used to always remind people that even if they use a gun in a self-defense situation, be prepared to spend a night or two in jail before everything is sorted out. Many sheriffs tried reassuring him that nothing would happen, but his worries weren't put to rest until Audrey Louis, the district attorney for Wilson County, disclosed she had friends at the church and gave him a big hug.

Once Stephen returned home that evening, he was met with a chaotic neighborhood crawling with reporters, police, and mourners, as well as family and friends who had been anxiously awaiting his arrival

at his home. They had thought Stephen would know more details about what had happened, but he found out how bad it was at the same time as everyone; through local media coverage.

No one expected what they heard next. The shooter had unloaded fifteen 30-round magazines on the unexpected church goers. A total of 26 people had been killed, and 20 more were seriously injured. Amongst the deceased, eight were just children. One of the victims was also pregnant. Three siblings had died, as well as three married couples. The Holcombes, a family Stephen knew very well, lost nine family members. And the lead pastor of the church, Frank Pomeroy, who ironically would carry a gun during services, was out of town. Although he escaped death, his 14-year-old daughter was not as fortunate and was claimed as one of the victims.

Stephen was still grappling with the news when Governor Greg Abbott held a press conference that night conferring the total amount of victims. As the Governor thanked the responding agencies for their diligent work, the press wanted to know more about the citizen who had intervened and chased the shooter. But they weren't given a name. Naturally, Stephen thought he would continue to be anonymous as he went to bed.

"We had no clue what was about to happen," he said



The United States is no stranger to mass shootings. Prior to November 5, 2017, that year alone had already seen a total of 10 mass shootings, where 4 or more people were killed. It continues to happen with many not getting a lot of media coverage. But the mass shooting in Sutherland, Texas, struck a different chord with the public. The amount of people who

died seemed like a lot for such a small community where everyone knew each other by name. On top of that, there was Stephen Willeford - the good guy with a gun.

Whenever a mass shooting occurs, a public gun debate always ensues with one side arguing for stricter gun regulations and the other siding with NRA leader Wayne LaPierre, who famously stated "The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun," after twenty schoolchildren were slaughtered in Newtown, Connecticut, in 2012.

Before Stephen realized it, he had transformed into the poster child of gun rights overnight. He awoke the next day to a front yard filled with news outlets and reporters wanting to talk to him. All he wanted to do was mourn the mass losses in his community. The local police soon stepped in to try to contain the growing crowds that would show up at Stephen's house. One officer told Stephen that the best way to get rid of them was to sit down for a one-on-one interview. He was reluctant but finally set up an interview with conservative host and YouTube personality Steven Crowder, who happened to be his daughter Rachel's favorite. One day after the shooting, viewers were finally able to hear from the hero himself.

Stephen told Crowder "I'm having all kinds of issues. I can't put my finger on what my feelings are."

The rawness of his emotion was something unexpected, especially from someone who had put his life on the line for others. He further distanced himself from the role of a hero by saying, "I want the focus to go to the families, to the community that I grew up in, the people that I love there, the people that I know. The church was a very small congregation, and [26] people are dead. Children are dead. Twenty or so are injured. That's decimated their congregation. There's very few left in their congregation."

All he wanted to do was grieve like any other person; because in Stephen's mind, that's exactly who he is. But with the media frenzy following his every move, dealing with the grief alongside his community was becoming more and more unlikely.

“They’re having a memorial at the baseball stadium, and the media’s gonna be there. Guess who can’t be there if the media’s there? I wanna hug some of these people,” he emotionally told Crowder.

From that point on, Stephen continued to be propped up as the ultimate hero. Top government officials visited his hometown, including Senator Ted Cruz and Vice President Mike Pence. Cruz later personally invited him to be a guest at the 2018 State of the Union Address. He later had his picture taken with President Trump, but according to Stephen, “I think I could meet Trump tomorrow and he wouldn’t recognize me. But Mike Pence would. And Ted Cruz knows me well.”

It makes total sense to Stephen why certain people are attracted to his story. His actions that day made him into the ultimate symbol for gun advocates across the nation. In addition to using his legally purchased firearm to stop an active shooter, he used his AR-15, the same gun most gunman use during a mass shooting, and the same gun that the opposing side continues to try to ban. He even did a commercial for the NRA in which he states, “It’s not the gun, it’s the heart.” It’s not just talk, Stephen agrees with gun advocates who cite his name in an argument about banning AR-15s and similar guns. Without his AR-15, Stephen would have had a harder time dealing with the active shooter.



Despite all the recognition, Stephen still doesn’t see himself as a hero and never asked for the attention. To him, he is a simple man who has dedicated his life to his family, community, and faith. The hero label is not something he relates to.

“If you’re breaking it down into heroes and survivors, I’d rather be with the survivors,” Stephen said. “I got shot at too.”

Even with so many book and endorsement deals waving in front of his face, his main focus remains the same. The events on that day had a major effect on his life, but the hero image never changed who he is deep down. To him, he is no different from anyone else and believes others would react in the same way he did if they were caught up in a similar situation.

That perception was put on full display when he was invited to be a guest of honor at the NRA’s national convention in Dallas in May of 2017. Once he made his way to the stage, he delivered a speech that tapped into the idea that every American has heroic tendencies deeply rooted in their system and if they were faced with an armed gunman, they’d see that.

“We are the people that stand between the people that would do evil to our neighbors,” he said. “I’m nothing special. Look at you guys. Every one of you would do what I did. And I love you all.”



Always Be Prepared: A Last-Second Gift Guide



We know what you might be thinking... Christmas Preparedness!? C'mon guys, give it a rest!

And we agree that any article about “Christmas Survival” or any such nonsense from a SHTF prepper perspective would be ridiculous. We promise, this is not about emergency eggnog storage techniques, how to make reindeer jerky, or how to hide your gifts in plain sight.

Not to mention, this one critical detail: If you're not prepared for Christmas by now, you've pretty much missed the boat on that one. The key to preparedness is, of course, making plans in advance.

Well in advance, preferably. You take time to think of people in your life that you want to honor in some small way. Then, you select a thoughtful token of your appreciation.

But no matter how much preparation you've put into your Christmas master plan, there is one contingency that you may well have missed. It's a little something we like to call “gotcha gifts.” This is a gift from a friend, relative, or coworker (someone with whom you don't usually exchange gifts) that you just didn't expect.

As soon as it happens, you immediately feel guilty, like you should have known this was coming... but you didn't. You've got nothing for them. Now, you

can always buy yourself some time and say you left it at home (unless you're already at home), but there's a better alternative to that.

Sound mysterious? Don't worry, we'll tell you what it is. 'Tis the season of giving, after all. And in the spirit of giving, we decided to share a few of our absolute best "Gotcha Somethings" here at NSRA, so you won't be caught off guard.

What the Heck's a "Gotcha Something?"



A "gotcha something" is an item you buy without knowing exactly who it's for. That way, if you do get ambushed with a surprise gift, you can truly say, "I gotcha something."

Much like a stocking stuffer, this is a low-priced item that you can afford to take a chance on, under \$20. Unlike most stocking stuffers, however, this is something that's actually really cool and desirable – something that actually comes off as thoughtful and clever.

Think of it like this: A "gotcha something" is the kind of gift that you secretly hope that you'll get to keep yourself.

We've gone around the building and surveyed our team to find out the very best sub-\$20 gift items they've either given or received. These are exclusively items with maximum bang for the buck sizzle.

Because, come on, giving and receiving gifts is supposed to be fun. That's why we decided to write this gift guide: Fun.

That's also why it's important not get caught off-guard by that unexpected gift from a random friend. Instead, because you're a black-belt in preparedness, you've got a real humdinger of a gift ready and waiting in your back pocket. How thoughtful of you!

So, now that we've given a little explanation on what a "gotcha something" is, let's a look at the NSRA's top 10 picks. Because sometimes the best way to really drive home a concept is to give examples.

Without further ado, and in order to help get everyone prepared for maximum fun this Christmas, here they are in all their inexpensive glory.

Energizer Tactical LED Headlamp



We don't care where you are or who you are, you need a headlamp; even if you don't know it. We're not sure what exactly makes this headlamp "tactical," but despite the fact that they're stretching the use of the word "tactical" pretty thin, this is one excellent go-to gift that fits lots of recipients.

With three lighting configurations (spotlight, floodlight, and night vision), the Energizer headlamp is an excellent fit for hunters, hikers, and anyone who needs to get chores done in the dark.

One application that few people think of for headlamps is becoming part of your roadside emergency bag. Only those who've had the pleasure of changing a flat tire in the dark truly appreciate how much more efficient a headlamp is versus a conventional flashlight.

For under \$17, the Energizer has a comfortable headband, ultra-bright LEDs, and comes with batteries. All that's left for you to do is find someone to gift it to.

Heirloom Seed Vault

Let's face it; not everyone wants to get a gift that says, "Survival Garden" in bold print, or "I believe the world is about to end, and I'm lovin' it," or any



similar messaging targeting preppers. That doesn't mean, however, that they wouldn't enjoy receiving a comprehensive pack of high-quality, non-GMO heirloom seeds.

Backyard vegetable gardens are a great way to get top-quality produce for pennies on the dollar. And, yes, they're also an excellent way to sharpen self-reliance skills and build a working knowledge of what it truly takes to grow a crop. Plus, who doesn't like a nice self-congratulatory conversation starter when they

host a dinner party. "Did you really grow this squash yourself?" they'll ask.

If your recipient is into healthy eating, gourmet cooking, or DIY projects, then seed packs are obviously an excellent gift. They're also a good buy. At only \$14 on Amazon, it's truly a gift that keeps on giving, growing in value all spring. Even better, it's an interesting gift that is thoughtful, even if you didn't think of exactly who you were going to give it to.

Ka-Bar Dozier Hunter

This Bob Dozier designed pocket knife was an instant classic when it was launched in 2003. Since then, well, there really hasn't been another knife that



matches it in terms of quality, value, and long-term satisfaction. It's really that good.

For a whole mess of reasons, including a \$20 price tag, the Ka-Bar Dozier Folding Hunter is a welcome addition to any knife collection. What makes it so good, though?

The 3-inch drop point blade comes razor sharp and features a relatively large cutting edge for its size. The workmanship on these blades is very good, even better when you consider the cost. At 2.4oz, it's an extremely ergonomic package that rides so well in your pocket that you won't even notice it's there. The pocket clip on this bad boy gets high marks as well. Though it's not a true deep ride clip, it is reversible for tip-up or tip-down carry.

Look, everyone needs a knife; not just hunters or outdoorsy people. By and large, the Ka-Bar Dozier is going to be viewed as a good option for men. We happen to know that lots of women also love pocket

knives, or purse knives, as the case may be. Anyway, that's something to keep in mind.

Yeti Mug



File this one under: Gifts you hope you won't have to give away. Just about everyone who hunts or tailgates is beyond familiar with YETI products, maybe even sick of the hype. Thing is, the hype isn't based on nothing.

And while it was their "bear-proof" coolers that put them on the map, YETI grew to become a leader in the world of ridiculously well-insulated tumblers as well. The Rambler series of double wall vacuum-insulated tumblers is about the best out there, both way over-engineered and nearly bulletproof.

This mug will keep your beverage hot (or cold) to the last drop, even if you're a slow sipper. YETI tumblers also won't sweat and leave rings on your table, which is nice if you plan to use this for cold drinks. Also, whether you go with the mug (\$20) or a larger Rambler model, the lids are where YETI has the competition beat. The lids just seal better and insulate better.

They may not be the cheapest travel mugs out there, but they are the best. Add in the lifetime durability these things are capable of and you've got something that's well worth the \$20.

If you have occasion to give it to someone, they'll be impressed. If you're lucky, you might just keep it for yourself.

Carhartt Beanie



Here's a rock-solid stocking stuffer idea that works for anyone with a head that may also get cold from time to time. This beanie stands apart from the rest for several reasons, none of which are the fact that the tag on the front says "Carhartt."

Most knit caps out there are designed to be a fashion statement, not actually an insulator. Not so with the "Carhartt Acrylic Watch Hat" (the name could use a little work). This thing is ready for the coldest of cold New England winters. This hat is rugged and durable, packing some serious R-values.

It may not sound impressive, but the fact remains, it's a damned fine knit cap. And apart from being the best knit cap you've ever owned, it can be had for only \$15 – a pretty reasonable price for a best-in-class anything.

Kershaw Cinder



Yet another guaranteed people pleaser is the Kershaw Cinder. Another "knife," technically speaking, but also a keychain sized utility blade with a multifunction wire stripper and bottle opener built in.

As you might have noticed, we're peppering in a number of brand name items in this list. When it comes to gifting, it's always nice to have your recipient open something with a high perceived value (especially when the gift actually didn't cost much). That's definitely the case here.

Kershaw manufactures a number of the NSRA's top-rated knives of all-time. And it stands to reason there's a little extra wow-factor with anything that says Kershaw on the side.

The best thing about this tool, in addition to its ultra-compact size, is that it is actually a tool-quality blade that's fully capable of slicing zip-ties and prying batteries out of tight spaces.

If you want to carry a utility blade that's capable of actual real-world use, that also doubles as a bottle opener and carries comfortably on your key ring, this is the ideal knife. Then of course, there's the fact this knife is under \$9. Like we said, a very high bang for your buck.

Stanley Classic Flask



Know anyone who might need a high-quality flask that's discreet and rugged? Trick question; who doesn't need one? In a marketplace where there is lots of competition, it's surprising how few flasks actually get good reviews online.

13 Or, if you've ever used a flask, you're probably not all that surprised. So many flasks fail to hold up to the

rigors of infrequent use, usually finding ways to leak whiskey all over your backpack. Now that's exactly what you wanted from a discreet liquor dispenser, right? To make you smell like you just crawled out of the bottle.

If you've ever owned a Stanley anything, then you know their design philosophy is to make over-engineered products for the kind of person who might accidentally drop it off a roof they're framing. That's to say, these things are pretty dang tough.

The Stanley Classic Flask is made with 18/8 stainless steel, is BPA-free, and is a very sturdy vessel, especially considering it only weighs 5.6 ounces. With this flask, you can have confidence that your 8 ounces of 18-year-old Scotch are in good hands, not a chance of leakage.

Coast G20 Penlight



You know those nice-to-have items that you've always meant to buy, but never seem to get around to it? Yeah... a penlight is definitely on the short list.

Sadly, unless you need a penlight for your work, it's highly likely you've never owned one. These things are so handy that just about anyone from a DIY mechanic to a stay-at-home mom will find 1,001 uses for their Coast G20.

Activated easily with a quick click on the G20's water resistant tailpiece, this penlight's LED puts out a surprisingly powerful beam that stretches 65 feet. Powered by 2-AAA batteries, the G20 has a very solid battery life of 10 hours.

It's also drop-tested up to 9 feet, so it can take pretty much whatever you dish out. When you combine all of that into a 5.5-inch, pen-sized light that weighs only 2.3oz with a nice pocket clip, you get a gift that pretty much anyone would be thrilled to receive. Wouldn't you be?

PPFISH Peanut Keychain Lighter



Do you have any pyromaniacs on your list? For anyone that's terrified of being deprived of the power to create fire at a moment's notice, there's nothing more convenient than an EDC keychain lighter.

Poorly chosen name aside, the PPFISH peanut lighter is tiny, unobtrusive, waterproof, and highly reviewed. Several users have remarked that this micro lighter is, in fact, "better than a Zippo."

One thing is sure; this lighter's design owes something to Zippo, given that it functions in exactly the same way. Fill the canister with Zippo fuel, pop the canister into the body, spin the wheel, and light the wick; it's a tried and true design for sure.

It's the size and carry method that makes this lighter a conversation starter, in addition to a fire starter. The rubber O-ring seals the fuel compartment, which not only makes the lighter waterproof but also prevents the evaporation of your fuel. For under \$10 on Amazon, this is a great little stocking stuffer and an even better "gotcha something."

Carhartt Work Flex Gloves

While it's well-established that socks are an obligatory stocking stuffer, we've always found it odd that so many gift givers ignore the extremities that are most exposed to the elements. Whether you're working out in the cold or you just need something to protect your fingers from some splintery task, quality work gloves are a must.



These ergonomic work gloves aren't ski-gloves by any means (they're somewhere in the medium-warmth category), but they do provide decent insulation from those icy winter winds. What these gloves excel in is providing both protection and dexterity, when you're working on the car or pruning plants out in the garden.

Carhartt makes quality work wear (see Gotcha Something #5) that stands up to rough tasks. That's exactly what these gloves do. Made of spandex with a reinforced, water-repellent palm, these \$16 gloves could save your recipient some serious money in ER bills.

Merry Christmas



So, even if you've checked off everyone on your shopping list, but you still have that sinking feeling that you forgot someone, we've got you covered. Not only that but you've got some options that are practical, inexpensive, and have some wow-factor built in.

We know how it feels to be stuck in the time crunch of the holidays, walking the aisles at the MegaLoMart trying to find a gift that seems even remotely heartfelt. It's no place to be on the days where you should be relaxing and catching up with your loved ones. With that said, we're giving you an out.

If you still need a gift or two that you can have delivered to your doorstep at the absolute last moment before Christmas, we doubt you'll do much better than our Top 10 "Gotcha Somethings." Each of these can be ordered online (many of these on Amazon with 2-day delivery), so you can hopefully knock out your to-do list and get back to Christmas.



**HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN SHTF
BOOZE... BECAUSE THERE ARE
NO GOOD BARS DURING DOOMSDAY**

Few things in life are as satisfying as a cold beer on a hot summer day or a glass of scotch in front of a crackling fire. The good news is that these simple pleasures will endure long after the lights go out and stores shut their doors for good.

Those who prepare diligently for the day when the SHTF may hoard food, store weapons, stockpile ammunition, and gather survival gear. But they would also be wise to grab a few cases of their favorite tittle, along with the ingredients and equipment they will need to make more. The prepper with a drink to share will be a popular figure when all around are succumbing to despair. That's because alcohol will be an extremely valuable commodity in a post-civilization world.

Alcohol will be a currency: We live in a world where the dollar is king, but paper money will be worth the square root of a busted flush after the SHTF. Shotgun shells, seeds, and booze will be the currencies in this new paradigm, and the prepper who knows how to concoct inebriating elixirs out of fruit, grains, and thin air will be valued as highly as the fiercest warrior.

After all, beer has been part of society for at least 13,000 years. After the SHTF won't be the first time alcohol was used as currency, either. Our love for a good, stiff drink inspired ancient poetry, and it was even used as payment for workers in Uruk 5,000 years ago. Knowing that, imagine how much people would be willing to do to keep their chemical codependency alive during an apocalyptic situation.



16 **ALCOHOL IS MEDICINAL:** Strong alcohol, like spirits or moonshine, serves as an excellent disinfectant, which could mean the difference between life and death when dangers are all around

and emergency rooms are a dim and distant memory. Alcohol can also be used as a painkiller and mixed with herbs to concoct all manner of medicinal potions.

ALCOHOL IS FLAMMABLE: While using a bottle of 50-year-old scotch to start a fire may be sacrilege, a dash or two of sugar hooch could be just the ticket. Save the good stuff for when the fire is burning and the atmosphere is a little more relaxed.

ALCOHOL GETS YOU DRUNK: The post-civilization world will be a harsh place, and those who inhabit it will be waging an unending war against fear and desperation, as well as an unforgiving and merciless environment. That is why alcohol will be worth more than what gold is worth today. Alcohol will offer preppers a brief respite from relentless hardship with a few priceless hours of oblivion.

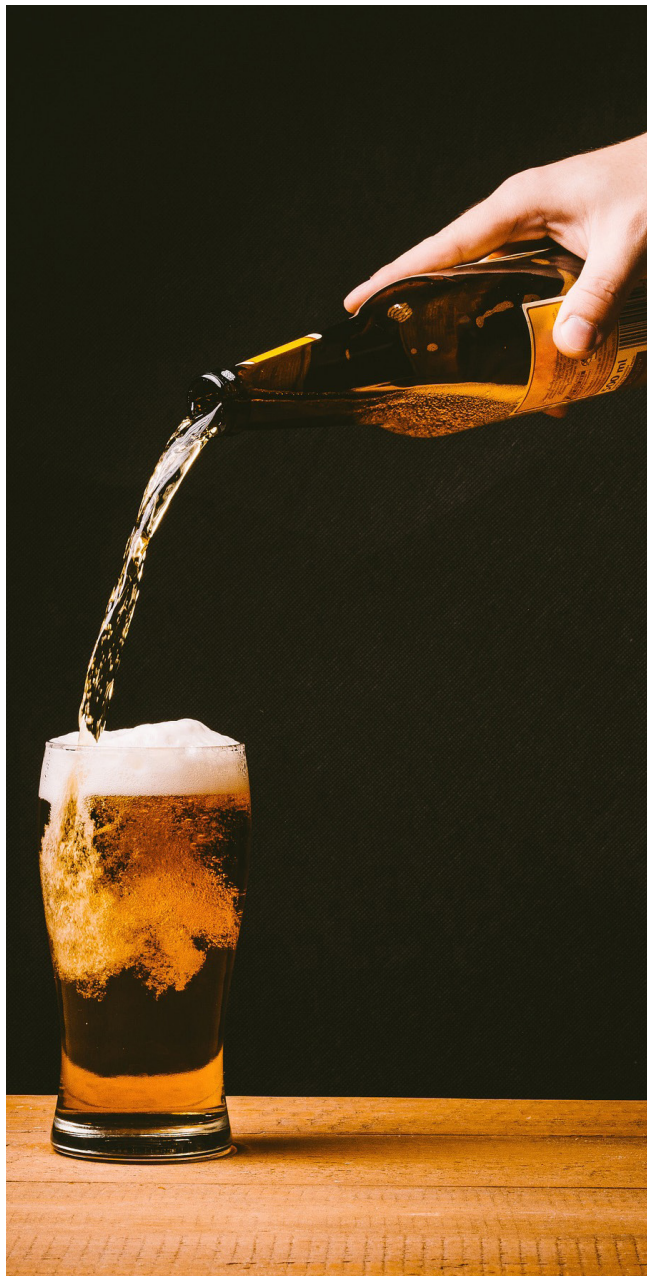
CHOOSING YOUR ALCOHOL STOCKPILE



The two questions to ask yourself before choosing what type of alcohol to stockpile are: how long will it last and how drunk will it get me? The key consideration is strength. Stronger alcohol will put you on your rear end quicker and last a lot longer.

The strength of booze is usually measured by its proof or its alcohol by volume. Proof is an old English measurement that was originally gauged by trying to ignite gunpowder that had been soaked in the alcohol being tested. This kind of test will probably become popular again when the SHTF. Alcohol by volume is far more straightforward. It is

simply the percentage of the liquid that is alcohol. In the United States, proof is double ABV. This means a bottle of beer that is 4% ABV would be 8% proof.



BEER: Beer is good for drinking, and that's pretty much it. Even strong beers have an AVB of only 5% or so, and an unopened bottle of beer will only last for about six months, even if it is refrigerated. Anyone who has lugged a keg around will also know that enough beer to get you reliably drunk weighs a ton. Plus, who the heck wants to drink warm beer?

WINE: Wine is stronger than beer, but not by much. It also does not last nearly as long as most people believe. That centuries old bottle of wine sold for thousands at an auction would almost certainly taste

like vinegar if it was ever opened. Wine has an AVB of between 9% and 18%, and red varieties generally last longer than whites.

SPIRITS: Now we're cooking. Whisky, vodka, rum, and other spirits have AVBs of between 33% and 50%, which means they can serve as disinfectants as well as inebriants. Spirits also last forever, and a single bottle could knock a silverback gorilla out.

MAKING YOUR OWN BOOZE



Knowing how to create intoxicants out of what nature provides will make you as popular as a seven-footer at a basketball tournament when the SHTF. Beer, wine, and liquor commercials often harp on about brew masters, vintners, or distillers who practice their crafts with skills that have been handed down from generation to generation, but the truth is that making beer, wine, or spirits is actually pretty straightforward.

However, making beer, wine, or spirits that don't taste like the contents of a puddle left by a farm animal is the tricky part. Of course, flavor will take a backseat to horsepower when the days are long, the nights are cold, and nothing is ever on television. The three key ingredients to all alcoholic drinks are water, sugar, and yeast. The good news is that these ingredients are abundant in nature all over the world.

WATER: All post-civilization settlements will be located close to a water supply, so getting the H₂O you need to make booze should not be a problem. A stream or river can also be used to cool down boiling liquids more quickly, which will improve the taste of the beer or wine you make.

SUGAR: Wine gets its sugar from fruit, while beers and spirits get theirs from grains. One of the first steps in the brewing or distilling process is extracting the sugar from the malt, barley, fruit, or other base ingredient.

YEAST: This is the silver bullet that turns an unappealing mixture of ground up plants and stream water into a magical liquid that can help you to forget all of your troubles.

Yeast is a microscopically small fungus that is all around us. It is in the air that we breathe and the water we drink, and it will find its way into the booze you are making every single time. If you don't have packets of yeast on hand, simply leave your booze mixture out and let nature take its course. Just be sure to cover your pot with a cheesecloth or similar material that will allow the yeast to get through but keep everything else out.

POTS AND PANS



Making your own beer, wine, or spirits will require several pieces of equipment, but you should be able to find pretty much everything you need in even a small settlement. Once you have gathered these items, you should clean them thoroughly, as even a little grime can drastically alter the flavor of the final product. The kind of booze you can make will be dictated by the natural resources and equipment you have on hand, but any kind of brewing or distilling effort will require at least some of the following:

POTS: Boiling, fermenting, and steeping all take place in large pots. The larger the container, the more booze you will be able to make. Your pots should also have an airtight lid.

FERMENTER: This is the place where the heated grain or fruit solution ferments. It can be made from plastic or metal, but it must have an airtight lid.

A tube runs from the top of the fermenter to an airlock jar containing water. During the fermentation process, carbon dioxide will leave the fermenter through the pipe and escape into the airlock jar. The airlock jar should be clear so you will know when the bubbling has stopped, and the fermentation process is complete. The seal around the pipe hole in the fermenter should be airtight, but the airlock jar should have holes in the lid to allow the carbon dioxide to escape.

STRAINER: Nobody likes to chew their booze, so a reliable strainer to separate your liquid nirvana from the mashed-up fruit or grains is a must.

Cheesecloth and mesh bags: If you want to make beer, you will need a mesh bag to steep your grains. If you don't have packets of yeast, you will need some cloth to cover your fruit or grain mixture, which is known as the wort, to allow airborne yeast to get in.

MASHER: Some sort of implement that makes quick work of pulverizing fruit or mashing grains will save a lot of elbow grease. A potato masher works well.

BOTTLES: Once your booze has been fermented, you will need some bottles so that you can share your bounty with others. A case of Grolsch is a smart buy for preppers as the flip-top bottles can be used again and again. You also get some pretty good beer.

BARRELS: An oak barrel is a godsend if you want to make some whisky or bourbon, but some oak chips in some other sort of container could work in a pinch.

STEP-BY-STEP

Turning fruit or grains into liquid intoxication involves steeping, pulping, boiling, fermenting, and distilling. The steps you follow will be based on the kind of drink you are making. Time is the key ingredient, and patience will be rewarded.

STEEPING: This is the first step when making beer or spirits. The grains are placed in a mesh bag and then steeped in hot water. The heat activates enzymes, which converts the starches in the grains into a rich sugar. The resulting solution is known as the wort.

PULPING: Fruit is already brimming with fructose, so wine can be made without steeping. Just mash the fruit up and mix it with fresh water. What you have made is known as must.

BOILING: You will follow this step when making beer. Add malt and then heat the wort slowly. Add in the hops once it has reached a boil. Adding the hops too early will result in a bitter final product. Once the wort has boiled for a few minutes, it should be

cooled as quickly as possible to improve flavor. This is best done by placing the pot in a cool stream.

FERMENTING: Once you have added yeast to your wort and strained out any fruit or grain residue, the fermentation process can begin. During fermentation, sugar is turned into ethanol and carbon dioxide. Leave your beer, wine, or spirits in the fermenter until no more bubbles are visible in the airlock jar. This means that the carbon dioxide is all gone. Fermentation can take a week or longer.

DISTILLING: This is the final step when making spirits. The fermented wort is removed using a syphon and then heated in a large pot. Once again, it is important to heat the mixture slowly. The pot should have a tight lid with some copper tubing coming out of the top. The vapor that escapes through this tube will become your booze. Just make sure that you have something to collect it in.

Keep any eye out for “Simple Recipes for DIY Brewers and Distillers” in next month’s NSRA Update, where we’ll share a few of the most fool-proof and delicious methods for those looking to dabble in the ancient art of fermentation.





NSRA's Super Easy "Deer Chili" Recipe

Hunting season winding down and we all know what that means: Tons of deer meat to grub on! And good thing too, because venison has one of the highest protein profiles and is extremely healthy if prepared correctly.

Here's one of the NSRA's most popular venison recipes, and it's simple to boot!

Venison Chili

Ingredients

- 2 onions medium in size, chopped and sautéed
- Pepper and salt to taste
- 2 medium sized peppers (red, orange, yellow or green) chopped and sautéed
- 3 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. ground red pepper
- 1 ½ tsp. paprika
- ½ tsp. oregano
- 4 – 5 tsp. chili powder
- 1 dash of Worcestershire sauce
- 3 lbs. venison (ground, diced or sliced) browned
- 4 (16 oz.) cans diced tomatoes
- 1 (18 oz.) can tomato paste
- 1 (32 oz.) bottle ketchup
- 1 (28 oz.) can pinto beans
- 1 (28 oz.) can black beans
- 1 (28 oz.) can red kidney beans

Directions

Sautee the onions and peppers until tender in a large cooking pot. Add the venison until nicely browned. Mix the rest of the ingredients together and stir gently. If you like your chili spicy, you can add liquid hot sauce until it's to the desired spiciness. Simmer over low heat, covered, approximately 3 hours. Stir after every hour. The chili is especially good a day after cooking and reheated just before serving. You can add your own toppings such as cheese, jalapenos, chopped onions, black olives and diced tomatoes.



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