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MEMBERS UPDATE

October 2023

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You Paid For It, Might As Well Use It

These old warriors still have many years of service left in them, no matter their age. With the proper care and maintenance, these equipment will serve you just as well as the original owner. Therefore, we will take a tour through the old surplus store, giving a thorough report of what is available and what to look for.



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33 Foods That Almost Never Go Bad

Are some food types better than others? You bet they are! While some items you could add to your food pile won't last more than six months, we're much more interested in finding out what type of food will last for years. After all, if the SHTF, you're going to need to rely on your food storage to keep you going.

How To *Plan Ahead* For Things Your Spouse Might Forget



Survivalists are also one-half of a marriage. If you're lucky, your spouse takes society's imminent collapse as seriously as you do. Regardless, having a spouse means you've got two times the packing power. Plus, having two heads to put together will help you with things you may have forgotten to pack.

Of course, having a spouse also means you may get a bit lazy. If you weren't married, you'd better believe that you'd store tons of bottled water. But if it's a job your spouse has taken on, you might just move forward without ever checking to see if your significant other has actually stocked up enough water – or any water at all!

The truth is that you will each remember different things, and you **MUST** be aware of your spouse's faults. This is the only way you'll be able to **CYA** before it's too late.

How To CYA When Prepping With Your Spouse

The apocalypse has happened. You're so glad that you and your spouse took precautions and are all set. But what's this? You need a bandage, but there are none to be found! It seems that your spouse

failed to get a refill for your first aid kit. What in the world are you going to do now?

First, we're going to back up. Fortunately, the above scenario can't have happened yet because the S hasn't HTF yet. It does bring up an important point, however. Unless you double-check what you've both packed, you could be in for a nasty little surprise after society collapses.

Know Your Spouse's Mind

When we say you should know your spouse's mind, we're not talking about mind reading. Instead, we're asking you to use all of your knowledge about your significant other to help determine what parts of their prepping job may not go perfectly.

Here is an example:

- Your wife always seems to forget the importance of water.
- Your wife is given the job of gathering enough water for the two of you.
- Your wife doesn't complete her job, as she's pulled in a different direction.
- Your wife never goes back to the water job, and you're both going to be so screwed once the SHTF.

Now, can you think of a better way for this to go?

How about:

- Your wife always seems to forget the importance of water.
- So you give her the job of collecting food instead.
- This is a good choice because she tends to get hungry often.
- The food supply will not be forgotten. It may even grow so big that you can't eat it all.
- Meanwhile, you get the water, and your pantry becomes stocked with emergency food and water.

Which plan sounds better? Which plan also sounds like it will lead to a lot less bickering?

That's right—it's option number two. Because you know your spouse and how his or her mind works, you were able to anticipate the area where your prepping could fall apart. Even better, you corrected the situation without placing blame or even letting him or her know that there could have been a problem. Well done!

Planning Ahead For Emergencies

Figuring out that you should take care of the water is obvious, but what about things that don't stick out as much? Just as you each have your strong points in the kitchen, some things will stick out to her that you've never even thought of and vice-versa.

The first thing you can do is split up your packing by area. For instance, you could have her pack everything you'll need from the bathroom, while you pack up the necessary items from the kitchen. Naturally, this also means purchasing some items for the very first time.

We suggest that you both take a look at the following list, then assign yourselves to the areas that make the most sense for each of you.

Food



Under this category, you're going to need to gather many, many supplies. In brief, you'll need:

- Canned food
- Cooking fats
- Bulk dried goods
- Freeze-dried food
- Spices and seasonings
- Vegetable seeds
- Mylar bags
- 5-gallon bucket
- Pet food

Many people believe it's best to have each person focus on an entire category. But if you take a moment to really think it through, you'll see how this type of thinking can lead to all kinds of trouble. The best thing to do is to split the food category in half. That way, if your spouse somehow forgets to bring bulk dried goods, you'll still have everything else from this list.

Cooking Utensils

The same basic rules apply to ensuring that you've got everything you'll need to cook.

- Unbreakable dishes/plates
- Can opener
- Wood-burning stove
- Cast iron pan
- Kettle
- Solar oven
- Aluminum foil

- Liquid stitch
- Antihistamines
- Eye drops
- Blister pads
- Medical tape
- Vaseline
- Q-tips
- Tweezers
- Scissors

If your first aid kit doesn't have all of the items listed above, you'll need to add them. Additionally, you'll need a trauma kit that contains:

- Gauzes
- Tourniquets
- Compression bandage
- Antibiotic
- Slings
- Suture kit

There are also several other items you'll need to have a fully complete first aid kit.

- N-95 masks
- Thermometer
- Sunblock
- Chapstick
- Insect repellent
- Rubber gloves
- Oral hygiene kit, including toothbrush, tooth paste, and floss
- Compact mirror
- Soap
- Hand sanitizer

Once you and your spouse have all of these items collected, you'll be ready to move onto the next phase.

Illumination

Now that you can eat, drink, and take care of any injuries, it's time to think about making your situation more human. This means you'll need to have a way to light up the room.



- Pocket lamp
- Headlamp
- LED flashlight
- Lighters
- Solar power kit

Again, no matter who has taken responsibility for lighting up your world, be sure to give it a quick double-check. If, for instance, you're missing a headlamp, it's going to be much easier to add one now than to try to find one after everything falls apart.

NOTE: As much as is possible, DON'T make a big deal out of the stuff that was forgotten. You've still got time to gather your supplies, and there is no reason to start a fight.

Tools

This is a big category – literally. Therefore, the easiest way to accomplish this category is if you split it up. You'll see why in just a second.

- Knife
- Multi-tool
- Hatchet
- Fire starter
- Saw
- Hammer and screws
- Shovel
- Buckets
- Zip ties
- Glue
- Duct tape
- Bungee cord

- Scissors
- Maps
- Compass
- Waterproof bag
- Fishing gear
- Pepper spray

Are there items on this list that your spouse may be able to remember better than you? Then, by all means, give the responsibility for that item to your significant other. Just be sure you've crossed each item off the list before moving on.

Communication



If you ever want to have any hope of contacting other survivors, you're definitely going to need a decent communications set.

- HAM radio
- Walkie-talkies
- Hand crank radio
- Whistle
- Solar charger
- Contact numbers (this item may or may not be useful when the S begins to HTF, but having them handy is never a bad idea)

Additionally, at least one of you will have to learn how to use this equipment. After all, having a HAM radio is great, but if you can't use it, then what's the point? Be sure to sign one – or both – of you up for a HAM radio class.

Bug Out Bag

Finally, we come to your bug out bag. Since there are two of you, you'll most likely each have a bag. Be sure not to place all of one specific item in the same bag. That way, if you lose a bag, you won't lose your ability to cook or take care of an injury.

Some of the contents that should be inside each bag include:

- Lightweight food (freeze-dried)
- Pocket water filters
- First aid kit
- Navigation tools
- Small handheld tools
- Backup communication
- Lightweight cooking equipment
- Sleeping bag/tent
- Cash
- Appropriate clothing
- Firestarter

When deciding where to put each item, you should split whatever can be split up. For example, split your cash in half. Anything could happen to you, and you don't want to exist without any cash at all.

Knowledge Is Key

Is that everything you need to know? Unfortunately, no. Bet you're glad you have a spouse to help you, huh?

Having each item listed above is going to give you a massive head start over everyone else. But if one of you doesn't have the skills we're about to list, then you need to take care of that as quickly as possible.

- Canning and food preserving
- Cooking skills
- Basic medical training
- Basic survival skills
- Morse code
- Map reading
- HAM license and operation

- Gardening
- Beekeeping
- Animal husbandry
- Foraging edible plants and mushrooms
- Land navigation
- Animal tracking
- Animal trapping
- Preparing game and fish
- Hunting and fishing
- Machine mechanic
- Woodworking
- Hand-to-hand combat
- Basic firearm training
- Welding
- Sewing
- Knot making

And that's just for starters. Yes, when it comes to surviving after the SHTF, being part of a couple may just be your best option. As long as your spouse cares enough to contribute, that is.

Final Thoughts

A good marriage can be improved by learning how to survive together. Even better is the fact that you can both ensure that the other person lives up to their commitments. By bringing this into your marriage, you'll learn how to really trust each other.

Now, think about the things that your spouse is good at, along with what they're bad at. Instead of acting surprised after society collapses, double check everything they've put together right now. To make it more fair, also invite them to do the same thing for you.

Any missing items should be added immediately, but don't start a fight over them. You should save your energy for when it truly matters. Besides, you don't want to let a couple of items that you caught and took care of anyway come between you and your spouse.



HIGH STRANGENESS IN THE BACK 40

BY ERIC RUSTGEN

Throughout the wide world we live in, there are great expanses of wilderness either explored or left pristine as God intended. These spaces provide refuge for a variety of exotic animals known to the world of Zoology or those with just a passing interest. There is, however, an entirely different type of critter classification that lurks alongside their not-so-shy counterparts.

These creatures are the type you see out of the corner of your eye or catch a blurry image of on your trail cam at three in the morning. Though no physical specimens of any of these animals that fall within the Cryptozoological category have been successfully captured, the eyewitness accounts of the strange and seemingly incomprehensible encounters of those who spend their lives in the woods are legion.

Through these accounts, those who study such things have been able to learn more about these creatures and their behaviors. I am, of course, asking you to suspend a little disbelief and go along with me on this distraction of sorts from the worldly woes we slug through daily. Besides, it's a helluva lot more interesting than the U.F.O.s the powers that be are pulling out of their playbook.



NOT THE BIG GUY CRASHING WITH THE HENDERSONS

I figure we would start off with a friendly, familiar face so as not to scare you away too early. This guy has been plastered all over the place, snagging coveted positions on the covers of numerous tabloids, and making a pretty good living selling beef jerky. However, for one veteran hiker in the Willamette National Forest of Oregon, what he encountered was neither cute nor cuddly.

A hiker out for an extended trip into the remote regions of the Cascade Mountains became acutely aware that he was being stalked, perhaps even hunted, by something that he could not see but could definitely sense. He reported that the hair on his neck stood straight up about a week into his trip. Thinking it was nothing more than a curious predatory denizen of the range, the hiker pressed on and set up camp shortly thereafter, intending to stay for a few days. That night was when the strange activity began.

It started with a howling noise unknown to the hiker as belonging to any wolf or coyote. Instead, he described it as the type of sounds a primate would make. This persisted for the next couple of nights. Things soon escalated when the camp was rummaged through and the food bag was removed from the trees.

The line holding the bag had been cut through, and all of the food looted. Deciding to make lemonade from this fresh lemon delivery, our intrepid hiker decided to charge ahead and fish along the way for his supper. He also hoped that he would be in peace the rest of his trip. This, of course, would not be the case; in fact, things would begin to go to a completely different level with man pitting his mettle against the frightening unknowns of nature.

Two nights after breaking his previous camp, the noises started up again, only that it was followed by rocks being thrown at his tent this time. The hiker was now positive that he was being followed, and in a fit of annoyance and rage, yelled at whatever was perpetrating this rude intrusion to leave him alone. Absolute dead silence permeated the air before a scream louder and more vicious than before pierced the darkness, and then nothing but a total, uneasy quiet left to fill the void.

Wearied from a restless night's sleep, the hiker continued onward to the end of the trail, a man on a mission rather than a leisure excursion. This stretch of the trail is when he became aware that there were no forest noises; a silence had fallen over the woods that caused the self-preservation alarm to go off. He knew, at this point, that whatever was toying with him was now hunting him as payback for the shouting match the previous evening. He didn't have long to wait to see who his secret admirer was.

Taking a much-needed rest, the hiker popped a squat to gather his thoughts and gain some motivation to put some more miles behind him. The light was already waning. However, through the thick trees and brush, he saw something tall and large, bigger than any animal he had ever seen before. The thing never made a sound as it slid through the trees. Now that the stalker had been seen, the hiker had nothing to lose or fear. He started yelling at it and throwing rocks. Only the creature remained still, staring at this crazed human. It later retreated once the hiker pulled his knife out and made a bluff charge toward it, taking off in long, agile strides.

The night passed in utter silence, and our hiker, mentally and physically exhausted, covered the last 10 miles of his trip with hopeful optimism. It wasn't until he was close to the end that the cheery sounds of the forest returned, the feeling of dread departing as quickly as it came, and leaving the hiker wondering just what was stalking him out there.



THIS IS NOT MAN'S BEST FRIEND

For any fan of the old Universal monster flicks, the Wolfman has always been a crowd favorite, being the only one of the bunch really deserving of any pity. Our next subject is anything but pitiable; hell, it isn't even a human that was bitten by a wolf. This is something far more sinister, with the blanket term of upright canine or dogman affixed to it. Two nighttime feral hog hunters in Oklahoma would get a bit more than they bargained for looking through their thermal scopes.

A rancher and his buddy in the Red River area were out waiting for the hogs destroying another friend's field, looking through their scopes every once and again to check for that yummy wild bacon. The moon was also brilliant that night, making visibility excellent even without optics. A half-hour of waiting and lie-swapping passed before they both heard a screaming sound. They were unsure of the direction in which it came or if it was a wild cat that made the noise.

It was then that a hog let out a loud squeal to their right. Wanting to confirm that a big kitty cat might be in the area with them, the rancher looked through his scope in the direction of the squeal. What he saw caused his blood to run cold. By his own admission, he completely froze, unable to squeeze the trigger on his rifle even though his brain was screaming at top volume to fire at will. A creature 8-10 feet tall had a 200-250 pound hog in its hands, fighting against Babe's futile struggle to survive. It was hairy and had a long beard hanging from its doglike snout.

This thing had tired of this bout with dinner and proceeded to rip the pig in half, throwing it on the ground, and began walking towards the hunters to have a show before eating. Both hunters became unfrozen when a 30-foot long, 3-foot fat log was tossed over their heads quite casually. They made much haste to their ATVs, hauling keister as fast as their machines could haul them, crashing through the pasture gate, hitting a ditch, and ending up on their hinder.

Their impromptu stunt work left them surprisingly unhurt and conveniently next to their truck and trailer, a minor head-scratcher, considering the previous few minutes. They quickly loaded the trailer and drove to his friend's home in complete silence. It wasn't until they had arrived at the house that they realized they had left their rifles behind in their flight from abject terror. The rancher said his goodbyes and headed out to his pad about 40 miles away. Upon his arrival, he noticed the rifle he had left behind sitting 20 yards from the front door. The horrendous thought that that thing knew where he lived was too much to handle that he no longer ventures out at night and certainly not to that spot near the creek where he was confronted



A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF BEING SURE OF YOUR TARGET

Hunting is a fun, leisurely activity that promises a good supply of meat, and if not, at least a chance to relax and purge the toxicity of daily life from your soul. Well, I hate to throw a monkey wrench into your personal nirvana, but there is an animal out there that will have you double-checking your scope to make sure you are indeed bagging a real deer. A father-son hunting duo in the Hell's Canyon area of Northern Idaho was in for quite a shock on the youngster's first rifle-hunting outing.

As is the case for many experienced hunters, there is a perfect place to set up a comfy tree stand and hunt. Our hunters arrived at theirs early one morning and spent most of the time in boredom, waiting for the perfect prize to step into view. A few hours into their vigil, an 8-point buck popped its head out from the forest about 50 yards from the tree stand. The teenager propped his rifle up to scope out the buck and noticed that something was a bit off about the animal, the way it moved and how it looked. As the deer moved further into the clearing, he noticed that the hair on the front shoulder looked weird, mentioning to his father that the deer looked diseased and should be spared. With a quizzical look, Dad took a gander through his binoculars and for the first time outside of a sporting event, let out a short expletive.

The curse alone was enough for the young man to understand the gravity of the situation. He looked through his rifle scope again and found the deer fully exposed in the middle of the clearing. The legs of the animal were not that of a deer; rather, it had what looked like muscular human arms in a tight-fitting suit, and instead of hands it had

hooves. Looking for parental tutelage, the son asked his father what should be done. As they were both under the cover of the stand and Dad wasn't sure if it was a human screwing around, he suggested firing a round off into the air to scare it. The old man's only explanation to the son's query about why a human would dress up like that was pretty simple, "people are stupid." The tone and inflection in his father's voice indicated that he was fighting a Herculean battle to keep a crack from forming in his foundation. The son wasn't making the effort, and he squeezed off a round, sending the odd-looking creature packing back into the woods.

Once they were satisfied the thing had departed, they descended from their perch in the trees, and made their way to where the deer had been standing. It had been raining on and off for a few days before then, so all manners of tracks and prints were discernible in the soft ground. Not that of the deer. Absolutely no tracks were left behind by this beast, a fact confirmed by the father based on his tracking experience. Puzzled heads were shook and it was decided to pack it in and head home. Although the encounter was unnerving, it wasn't enough to deter father and son from continuing to presently hunt the same woods.

One lazy Sunday driver enjoying a trip through the backroads of rural Kentucky encountered a doe that wasn't acting quite right and decided to hightail it out of there before any shenanigans could unfold. The driver in question was sitting at the only light outside of a small town, windows down, music blaring, and distracted with thoughts of life when he noticed a feeling of electricity. Then the hairs on his arm stood straight up, and that's when he saw a doe in the rearview mirror. The deer was standing some distance away, preventing a detailed examination, but close enough that the driver could see the silhouette.

He thought it odd that a single doe should be in the middle of the road and expected her traveling companions would emerge from the trees when he left. Despite the loud music emanating from the car and the fact a human was present, the deer started to walk toward the car.

The feeling returned, except that it felt heavier with a sense of dread hitching a ride. He looked in the rearview again only to see the deer walking on its hind legs with the front legs 4-5 inches off the ground, almost as if he had caught it in mid-stance or its attempt to become a fully erect bipedal hell beast. He wisely decided not to hang around to find out what would happen next. Instead, he jumped the light 30 seconds before it went green, bored cops be damned, and never went less than 30 over the posted limit the entire way home. He kept his high beams burning brightly as well, just to make sure whatever it was wouldn't surprise him again.

WRAPPING IT UP

If that wasn't enough to curdle your blood and make you paranoid every time you go out recreating in the forest, just be glad I didn't mention the Chupacabra, Reptilians, Skinwalkers, tall pale humanoids, Wendigos, Mothmen, UFOs, ghosts, Thunderbirds, and every other thing under the paranormal blood moon. You might ask if I believe any of what I have reported to you. The only thing I can say is that while I have not had an experience with the Cryptozoological world, ever since I was a kid and camping deep in the mountains, right around dusk, my gut would start throwing warning signals to my brain quite urgently. It wasn't because of the impending darkness; one so thick it would literally swallow the beam of the most powerful of flashlights; or the emergence of the normal nocturnal critters that were peacefully coexisting with us. No, Siree Bob, not in the least. This was a feeling of simmering dread, as if the forest itself came alive to shake loose a little extra for those foolish enough to brave the pitch of the night. Call it what you will, but I still get the bubble guts to this day, and I don't consider it fear, but rather a healthy respect of where I am and being aware of my place there. It would be wise the next time you venture afield to keep a sharp lookout, pay attention to your senses, and always trust your gut. So, until next time, dear reader, stay safe and let's be careful out there.

YOU PAID FOR IT, MIGHT AS WELL USE IT

BY ERIC AUSTGEN



The government and its perpetual waste of taxpayer greenbacks has been a long, tired running joke among the citizenry. Whether it be millions squandered on hammers, toilet seats, or studies conducted on midwestern jumping field mice to determine if they can smell their own farts in mid-leap, everyone gets a little chuckle or spike in their blood pressure when they hear what sort of tomfoolery is afoot. The government, on very rare occasions, actually puts our money to good use by throwing it at contractors that make quality material for our armed forces personnel at home and abroad.

The use of surplus military gear should never be passed up, even if someone is waving a brand, spanking fresh from the factory gear in your face. No, these old warriors still have many years of service left in them, no matter their age. With the proper care and maintenance, these equipment will serve you just as well as the original owner. Therefore, we will take a tour through the old surplus store, giving a thorough report of what is available and what to look for. For those of you who are partial to foreign military surplus, we have you covered also, as I am a fan, and there are some quality equipment being released by our allies across the globe. And, if you have the stomach to do so,

you may deal directly with the government through auctions, but we'll delve into those goodies later.



SHOPPING IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

Shortly after the U.S. gave the Axis forces a sound thrashing, Army/Navy surplus stores started springing up like toadstools across the fruited plain. The government ordered a bunch of goodies during the war and gradually began canceling contracts when it looked as if the end was in sight. Consequently, military warehouses were packed to the rafters with more uniforms and equipment than was needed, so the material was usually auctioned off at dirt-cheap prices in bulk to entrepreneurial spirits recently returned from combat. Nowadays, surplus stores generally carry wares with oddities or

a handle. It is stowed in a canvas or nylon pouch that fits right on the belt. This shovel removes the annoyance of having a straight wooden handle getting in the way. Although the foldable shovel is more convenient, durability and reliability are very important when selecting equipment for the field. Short-handled entrenching tools with fixed straight spade heads are available, usually supplied by Eurasian militaries. One should be able to track down G.I. issue shovels from WWII until Vietnam. These spades had a head that hinged, so they could be folded down for storage, halfway for scraping and shaping the hole or trench, and fully extended to really get in there. Some models had a pick along with the shovelhead to break up compact earth. The two-foot handle gives the user better leverage when hacking and removing soil than the short-handled foreign affairs. So, if you ever run across one of these tools, buy it immediately, and treasure it because it will dig you a fine hole in a pinch, especially when you need to be lower than the ground.

As I mentioned, truckloads of surplus aren't backing up to the doors and dumping off products like they used to do. In order to combat this shortfall of wares, many stores have needed to supply comparable civilian products, and since bona fide military surplus is supplied by civilian contractors, it opens up a variety of choices for you. I know that I am extolling the virtues of used military equipment; however, I am very practical, and if an item is superior to its military cousin, I'm inclined to choose the best performer, even if it doesn't have the heavenly stink of military use to it. One should also beware that items not made in the good ole U.S. of A have infiltrated some stores, so make sure to check where the item was made. If American-made is not available, European counterparts are perfectly good alternatives and should be given some consideration.



DO YOU COLLECT IT OR USE IT?

Soon after the smelting down of the Iron Curtain into a non-aggressive puddle, the militaria collecting and surplus worlds were flooded with tons of uniforms and equipment that had languished for decades in communist warehouses. There was also a short period during that time when German equipment from WWII were discovered in a couple of long-forgotten warehouses in one of the Eastern Bloc countries. That caused quite a stir for various reasons. The exciting thing about this proliferation of surplus material was that virtually every piece was in a stored, unused condition which, given the age of some of this stuff, was completely unheard of. For example, about a year back, I picked up a pair of unused Cold War leather Czech Y-straps made in a similar fashion to the one the Germans had in the Second World War. The ink stamps indicated that they were over seventy years of age, but after a good saddle soaping, and some conditioner, I would probably be able to convince you I made them last week. The fact that this leather didn't need much more than a light cleaning and oiling is quite impressive, considering that everything communism touches usually turns into a pile of horse apples.

Eastern European military surplus is by no means the only equipment from the continent to look at. Countries on the western side of the Berlin Wall were certainly no slouches when it came to quality military gear, which is no surprise since Europe was ground zero for many of the pedigreed trades we have today. Therefore, outside of U.S. surplus, one is faced with a sumptuous buffet of morsels from different countries, and depending on how you shop for such items, whether through ancestral allegiance or it simply looks badass, just remember when all is said and done, practicality and durability should be your guiding light.

Outside of large and small-scale militaria collecting shows, I have never found one dedicated place or store that sells all manners of European military surplus. Then one glorious day, my youngest informed me that there existed a fantastic website full of nothing but surplus from Europe. Varusteika is a Finnish concern that speaks my

kind of no-nonsense language and has really neat stuff with jaw-dropping prices, not high-priced sticker shock. Rather, you would think yourself the king of all bandits after a shopping spree at their site. Just like many brick-and-mortar surplus shops in the U.S., Varusteleka is thoroughly equipped to handle any want and desire, although it does suffer a supply and demand problem that is also felt in American stores. The only way to remedy that problem is to wait a few months until another warehouse or stockpile is “discovered” somewhere and then replenish the supply to start the cycle again, but that is part of the fun; you never know what manner of tasty military morsels will come down the pike.



DEALING WITH THE GOVERNMENT DIRECTLY

Many people don't relish the opportunity to deal with the government or its representatives in any capacity; however, there is one instance in which I am sure you will be most pleased with the outcome. The feds regularly hold auctions to get rid of all outdated and other items that have outlived their usefulness. This operation was capably helmed by the Defense Reutilization Marketing Office or D.R.M.O for those who remember when the government used easy-to-remember acronyms. As is their privilege to do, the government saw fit to rename the organization the Defense Logistics Agency Disposition Services, more words and syllables, and no cool abbreviation. Anyway, this is the place where surplus goes to “die,” so to speak, when in actuality, it is a marshaling area for this material to be sorted into salable lots for auction.

As the military is a microcosm of civilian life, only with a martial theme to it, everything that is used in the world of civics can be had through

these auctions, and the best part is that regardless of gentle or hard use, the feds sell this stuff for next to dirt cheap in many instances, and pass the savings on to all of us. If you are looking for vehicles, shop machinery, and other mechanical items, the auction might be a good place to check out, as you can be sure that all mechanical items have been regularly maintained up to the point of being sold. You might not believe it, but older model vehicles used for light duty around the base or trips for short distances have ridiculously low miles on the odometer that would make anyone wonder who was getting cheated in the deal.

Regardless of what you are looking for, if the big box stores don't have the one item to fill the void in your heart, get on the internet, and research whether or not your state has a dedicated physical auction site. If not, auctions are conducted online, much like eBay. Just remember it probably would be wise not to buy any large items that require more freight than what you paid for it, that is, if you just happened to buy that neat M1 Abrams in Texas, but need to ship it to the boonies in Idaho, that kind of thing.

As you can see, there is a little something for everyone when it comes to military surplus. Whether you are an outdoorsy weekend or a daily office warrior, the surplus trade can set you up in fine style. If you are frustrated with the offerings or lack thereof in your local stores, motor on down the superhighway, and check out the many surplus sites that populate the web. The aforementioned bunch in Finland, dealers across the States, and sellers in England and Canada eagerly await all of your business. When shopping online, it is important to vet any items to make sure that you are getting the real McCoy, as reproductions have been known to slip by every once in a while. These reproductions are seemingly churned out daily from some hellish sweatshop in places where capitalism has yet to infiltrate. To say that these are crap and you will end up with a sad veil of tears when the darn thing gives up the ghost on the first use would be a gross understatement. A practiced eye will make short work of this task in no time. So, until next time, dear reader, stay safe and let's be careful out there.

33 FOODS THAT ALMOST NEVER GO BAD

You know that you're supposed to stock up on food before society collapses, but are some food types better than others? You bet they are! While some items you could add to your food pile won't last more than six months, we're much more interested in finding out what type of food will last for years. After all, if the SHTF, you're going to need to rely on your food storage to keep you going.

First, though, let's expose a commonly believed food myth. You've most likely heard that Twinkies last forever. You might even envision yourself finding an old Twinkies factory and living it up. However, allow us to bust your bubble. Twinkies do not, in fact, last forever. Do you want to know how long they're actually good for? About 45 days. And that's much better than it used to be (25 days, for those who are interested). So, put aside your Twinkie plan and go for the foods on this list instead.

33 FOOD ITEMS THAT DESERVE A SPOT IN YOUR PANTRY

If *The Walking Dead* taught us anything, it's that you eat whatever you come across that happens to be edible. Of course, this also means downing a lot of disgusting food and drink. It doesn't have to be like this, though. As long as you put in the necessary time right now, you can ride out the apocalypse eating food that's actually – dare we say it – good.

1. DRIED BEANS



Beans provide a lot of nutrients. A quick look at the nutritional value of pinto beans reveals that a single cup offers 15 grams of protein, 15 grams of fiber, 20% of your daily iron, 74% of your daily folate, etc. As you can clearly see, beans are good for you. Even better, if you take care of them properly, they'll last for years and years.

Essentially, the way to get the most out of your beans is to store them in a dark, cool, dry place. To get the absolute most out of them, be sure they're vacuum-sealed or in another type of airtight container.

No one really knows how long your beans will last, but some have estimated you can hold on to them for up to 30 years. We're not sure about that, but we do know for certain that you can take a properly-

sealed bag out of your pantry after five years and still get delicious results!

2. MAPLE SYRUP

If you want your maple syrup to basically last forever, be sure to purchase a container of pure maple syrup. Next, stick it in your freezer. The syrup inside the bottle won't actually freeze – how cool is that? – but you'll basically extend its useful life forever.

What about after you've opened maple syrup? Well, you can do that same thing, and you'll get at least a year out of the bottle.

3. TEA



Do you love to drink tea? We've got good news for you, then! All you have to do is store your tea in a cool and dark environment. Oh, and it should also be an unopened box. If you follow these easy steps correctly, black tea will last at least three years!

Want it to last even longer? Simple! Purchase high-quality tea. For instance, loose-leaf will last longer than tea bags.

NOTE: Green tea will begin to lose its flavor after about six months, so if you do decide to stock up on it, be sure to regularly rotate your stock.

4. GHEE BUTTER

As long as you don't store your Ghee next to the stove, it can offer unlimited usage as a cooking oil. The only thing that will prevent your Ghee from lasting basically forever is if the jar is exposed to steam and/or water. Therefore, keep it away from

these substances, and you'll have cooking oil for a very long time.

5. ALCOHOL



Let's face it; you'll be spending a lot of time around the same few people. And, at some point, you're really going to need a fun evening. Well, that's when you'll be extremely happy that most hard liquors can last forever!

That's right; as long as you have, for example, whiskey or tequila, you're set to have fun parties for a very long time. Please note that the manufacturers of these hard liquors have most likely put an expiration date that's only a year or two into the future, but you can ignore it.

NOTE: Cream liqueurs do NOT work the same way, and neither does beer. To ensure you enjoy your creamy beverage, be sure to use it within two years. Beer, on the other hand, only has a six-month life in your refrigerator. If it's warm beer, that life is cut in half.

6. SOY SAUCE

Do you enjoy flavoring your food? Soy sauce works great, and it happens to last forever if it's left sealed up. After you open it, you've got about three years to use it all. No wonder some people take soy sauce with them everywhere!

7. POWDERED MILK

The USDA gives powdered milk a big thumbs up for its ability to be stored indefinitely. It can be used in your bread maker or while baking, so it has definitely earned its spot on this list.

8. RICE

Left on its own, brown rice lasts six months, and white rice lasts 12 months. But if you freeze it, you've just extended its useful life to two years! Make sure you place your rice inside a vacuum-sealed or ziplock bag. Also, be careful to avoid getting moisture inside the container.

9. BOTTLED WATER

Have you noticed that bottled water has an expiration date? Well, you can toss that out the window because it is basically worthless! Yes, water may not have the exact same taste if it has been five or ten years since it "expired," but it will still take care of your basic water needs. This is one item that can be stored forever!

10. SPICES AND SEASONINGS

One of the most important things for a survivalist to remember is that your food will get very boring unless you have some spices and seasonings on hand to spice things up a bit. What's essential to remember is that these things NEVER go bad. However, unless they've been kept in a cool, dark place, they will begin to lose some of their flavor and coloring.

11. BUCKWHEAT

Buckwheat lasts for 10-12 years as long as you store it properly. Put it in a sealed, airtight container for storage. You can also keep durum wheat, spelt, millet, soft white wheat, hard red wheat, Kamut, and dried corn for approximately the same length of time.

12. VITAMINS

This may not technically be food, but it can replace your many missing nutrients. And, despite many things that have provided contrary information, vitamins really do work. In fact, I got rid of my foot neuropathy by taking vitamin B-12. And you're definitely going to want vitamins C and D around, too. There is no use in getting scurvy after all, or in being seasonally depressed.



Here's what you need to know to get the most out of your vitamins. Regardless of where you store them, they should give you about two years before their potency drops. Of course, it only falls by about 10%, so you can keep taking those vitamins for years even after they expire.

13. BROWN SUGAR

Want to be able to keep indulging your sweet tooth a bit, even after the SHTF? Store brown sugar in an airtight container. To prevent your sugar from clumping, drop a few marshmallows into the mix. You can also apply light heat to soften the sugar.

14. BOUILLON CUBES

Have you noticed a bit of a trend with this list? Yes, you want (and need) the essentials. But you're also going to need something to flavor your food, or it's going to become way too boring. If you stick bouillon cubes in an airtight container, you can keep them for 18 months. Alternatively, stick them in the freezer, and they should last for 10 years!

15. HONEY



Honey is the one substance on this list that has been found to be edible after hundreds and hundreds of years. It may not be quite as appetizing after centuries have gone past, but if you warm it up, it will still taste good!

16. VINEGAR

There are several kinds of vinegar. Fortunately, there's also this handy guide to help you determine what type will last the longest:

- White and Red Wine, Rice Vinegar - Two years
- Balsamic Vinegar - Technically lasts forever, but toss it after three to four years
- Apple Cider Vinegar - Five years

Once you reach each vinegar's allotted time, you can turn it into a cleaning aid. That way, vinegar can last forever.

17. PURE VANILLA EXTRACT

As long as you've got Pure Vanilla Extract, it's never going to go bad! If, however, you've got an imitation product, it should last about two to four years. To get the most out of it, keep it away from heat and light.

18. INSTANT COFFEE

Would you like to be able to store your coffee for up to 20 years before it goes bad? Better stock up on instant coffee, then! Using ground coffee beans instead will only give you a few months past the expiration date. It's time to put away your inner coffee snob and go with what works.

19. CORNSTARCH

You can use your cornstarch forever as long as you store it with its lid on and keep it in a dry, dark place. This versatile ingredient can help you bring tons of meals to life.

20. CANNED FOOD

As long as you treat your canned foods right, they should last for a minimum of three years. This will give you a lot of variety, especially because you don't

need to be able to cook your canned food – just make sure you have a can opener!

21. PASTA



We've all heard about how great of a staple pasta is. But did you know that you can keep it edible for a stunning 15 years?!? Simply place your pasta into mylar bags (with oxygen absorbers). Then, put them in the freezer for four or five days before storing them. That will kill any potential larvae eggs. Once you take them out of the freezer, find a cool, dry place for permanent storage.

22. PEANUT BUTTER

Would you like to make your peanut butter last for several years? Store it in a cool, dark place, and make sure you've bought a major brand (Skippy, Jif, Aldi, etc. are great choices). Just make sure that it's still soft and creamy and that the color hasn't changed before you eat it.

23. DRIED HAZELNUTS

All nuts provide you with healthy fats and protein. We've chosen dried hazelnuts because they have the longest lifespan. If you keep them frozen, they should last you for two years.

24. SALT

Salt has plenty of uses, including flavoring your food and helping to preserve food. Even better, it lasts FOREVER! Store it in mylar bags, but do NOT include oxygen absorbers.

25. FREEZE-DRIED FOOD

Freeze-dried food will last practically forever. When it's time to eat it, be sure that you have enough water on hand to reconstitute it.

26. PINK SALMON

Pink salmon is the winner as far as canned fish go. It can last for 3-5 years, as long as you keep it stored in (say it with me) a cool, dark place. Once you open it, though, be sure to consume all of the pink salmon within 2-3 days.

27. JELLIES AND JAMS

You can really punch up your food by adding jam or jelly to it. Fortunately, you can have access to strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, etc., as a jam or jelly for at least a full year. And, according to some, your jams and jellies may last for as long as five years, provided you store them properly.

28. POPCORN



Are you ready for some delectable popcorn? As long as it is not already popped (2-3 weeks) or made for your microwave (6-8 months), this tasty treat can last forever!

29. PROTEIN BARS

When it's time to grab a quick pick-me-up, there isn't much better than a protein bar. Check the expiration date, and you'll find that you're probably going to get around five years out of them. We wouldn't recommend having a protein bar daily, but they can definitely give you a big boost.

30. HARD CANDY

Giving your sweet tooth a little something doesn't have to be impossible. As long as you keep the hard candy away from moisture, light, and heat, you'll

- Starburst, Skittles, Candy Canes - Good for two to three years.
- Jelly Beans - Good for up to two years.
- Chewing Gum - Good for 18 months.
- Plain M&Ms, Sour Ropes, Candy Corn - Good for one year.
- Caramels - Good for 8 to 12 months.

31. POWDERED CHEESE

Cheese is one of life's little pleasures. That's why we're so happy to teach you this trick! Dehydrated powdered cheese has an amazing lifespan of 10+ years when yet unopened!

32. INSTANT POTATO FLAKES

Store instant potato flakes in a cool, dry, dark place, and you'll be able to enjoy their rich flavor. Be sure to use mylar bags with oxygen absorbers in them.

33. DEHYDRATED FRUIT

Take the time to dehydrate some peaches, mangoes, bananas, apricots, and apples, and you'll be able to taste their sweetness for one year.

BONUS: Pet Food

Whether you've got a dog or a cat, it's imperative to store food for them as well. A cat can catch some of its own food (mice and other small critters), but you'll still need to stock up on canned and dry food. Either way, dog and cat food only tends to last a year or two at best. Therefore, be sure to rotate your stock on a regular basis.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Although there are plenty of foods that will go bad quickly, you now know how to get the most out of what you have. Also, how bad will it be after society falls apart if you've still got dehydrated fruit, dried candy, powdered cheese, and many of the other fantastic items on this list?

It's wise to pay close attention to this article while there is still time to do something about it. The last thing you want to do is procrastinate until it's too late. Instead of scrambling to find something as basic as tea or coffee, you'll have plenty of it to spare!

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