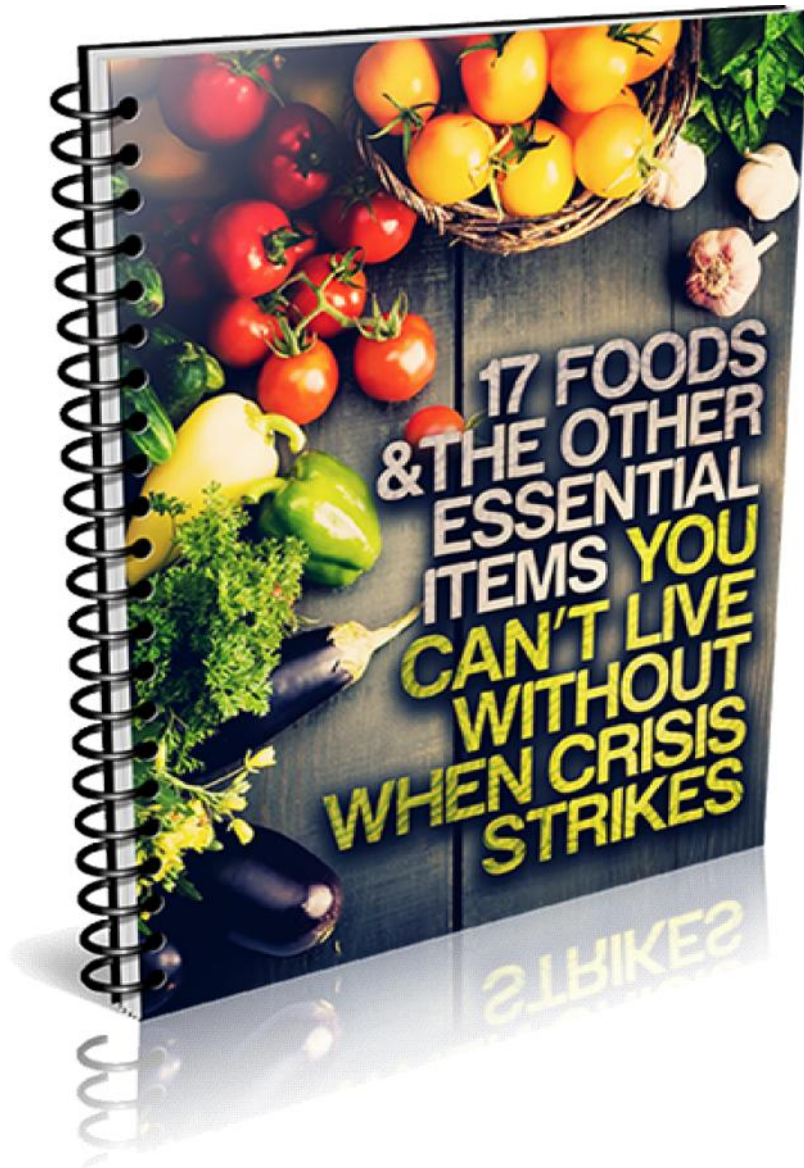


17 FOOD ITEMS TO HOARD IN A CRISIS



By **REBECCA BAERMAN**

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Introduction

There are dozens of reasons for creating your own hoard of food and crucial items: natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, or tornadoes can strike at any time and leave you not only without home and food, but fighting against a tide of other fellow Americans in the same predicament. You might endure shoulder-to-shoulder jostling while everyone is striving to grab that last can of beans on the shelf in the grocery store. In times of extreme hardship food can go fast, especially when so many personal pantries have been depleted or washed away and when downed power lines mean refrigerated food spoils quickly.

It isn't just natural disasters either; many economists and various professionals are predicting an oncoming food and money crisis, great enough to affect on a global scale. If or when that time comes food will be more precious than gold and rarer to find. Perhaps a terrorist attack will do more damage than ever expected. You'll want to be prepared if any of the above happen so you and family can weather the storm and maybe even have enough to assist your fellow man.

Please note there's no such thing as a perfect, complete list of things you simply *must have* to survive and opinions will vary. However, there are some crucial items you will need and certain things that cannot be done without if you want to survive for any length of time in a healthy manner. Food is necessary, of course, but there are a few other things that shouldn't be overlooked either in your preparations for possible disaster.

First, Food Storage

While not the most crucial item for longevity (that would be breathable air followed quite closely by water), food is nonetheless a necessity for health and hope. Before you can begin a stockpile of edibles, you need a place to put it all. As you'll most likely be dealing with a great many cans, barrels and bottles, you need ample space. A basement or a large storage room will work provided they stay dry and at a constant temperature so as not to encourage mold growth; you can even rent a storage unit nearby though keeping items on your personal property is preferred.

If you rent a storage unit choose one that is climate controlled so that during peak summer heat, your cans don't burst and during winter colds your bottles don't burst. Having found your space you will need some semblance of organization and probably more storage options such as shelves or shelving units. Use pallets to keep items off the floor for sanitation and spoilage reasons. Arrange for a FIFO structure- First In, First Out so the older items are used first. Ideally you will want to store about six months worth of food. That's actually quite a bit and you'll need to calculate for each person in the house and include water consumption.

You will want to stock your food shelves with items that have lengthy expiration dates. Longevity of food items comes mostly from how it's preserved such as pickling, canning, and dehydrating. You can also vacuum-pack items to help extend their careers. Many of these methods you can even accomplish yourself so save not only on expense, but to provide a little security in that your stores are less obviously being put into place. There's something to be said for not advertising your food cache so you're not the first house hit when the stores run dry.

Remember that All Food is not Created Equal and some will yield better end results than others. In a situation where food is scarce you will no doubt desire to have the best, which means the largest nutritional and caloric impact in the least amount of portions.

You'll want protein, healthy carbohydrates, fiber and vitamins; and while variety is great when you have the ability, it shouldn't be your number one concern in a crisis. That you live long enough to be bored with your food is actually a fantastic eventuality. You'll be looking into large quantities of dried or canned fruit, canned or freeze-dried vegetables, and canned, dehydrated or freeze-dried meat along with properly sealed dry goods.

There are a number of protein bars and fiber bars that keep their shelf life for a good while. try to avoid junk foods that may have a long life but don't do your life any favors by being nutritionally empty. Go through stock every six to twelve months and check for expiry so you always keep things fresh.

Aim toward food that is filling, sustaining, and can last a little while without refrigeration before spoiling like soups or stews.

Crucial Foods to Hoard

The foods you'll want don't need to be bought all at once by drop ship, though certainly that's an option. You can pick up what you need here and there so you don't break the bank. Huge amounts all at once may be technically cheaper because you're buying in bulk but you have to be able to afford it up front. And unless it's something that doesn't spoil for ten years, it's best to do this kind of mass storage in increments so it doesn't all go bad at once if expiry date is reached before the crisis hits. Don't forget to use your coupons. The following list is not in any particular order.

- 1. Iodized salt.** Salt is crucial and usually hard to find in a crisis. In ancient times it was so rare and precious that it was used as wages, hence the word 'salary'. It is a basic form of preservation, as well; salting meats can make them last longer. It's harmful in excess but essential to animal life including humans. Salt is also used in treating leather and making certain dyes.
- 2. Flour/Cooking Powders.** Flour is a staple and a basic. You'll want this in both the flour form and the kind you have to hand grind, just in case. Bread doesn't keep for long outside of refrigeration but it can be made. You won't be using your very

- cool bread making machine to do it, but it can be done. You can use the flour to make gravy with meat drippings and numerous other items. Cooking powders include baking soda, baking powder, and yeast. Coconut flour is incredible for those with gluten and wheat intolerances. Coconut flour is high in both protein and fiber, and cooks the same as wheat though it has a natural sweetness. Coconut flour is not suitable for thickening liquids as wheat is, but it offers many other uses, Almond flour is another alternative. No harm in keeping some pepper or other dried spices around, either.
3. **Beans/Legumes.** High protein, high fiber, and cheap in bulk. Beans can substitute for meat and provide good nutrition. They last a good long time in storage, don't take up all the room, and offer some variety. This includes garbanzo beans, split peas, black beans, pinto beans, kidney beans, lentils, and navy beans among the most commonly known.
 4. **Meat/Fish.** Beef and chicken store well in cans, freeze-dried or dehydrated as in a jerky. Beef provides not only protein but iron as well. Pork and ham store well in cans too, lend variety and tend to be a bit salty in this form, so taste before adding seasoning. Tuna is well-known as the king of canned fish, but salmon and even crab are quite tasty and available in canned form. Fish can provide essential fatty acids for a strong immune system. Fish also stores well freeze-dried and dehydrated or packaged in salt.
 5. **Cereal/Grains.** Multigrain dry cereals are best and good for quick snacks and a burst of morning energy. This doesn't mean only hoard Cheerios or Kix, though those are good to store too; just remember to rotate them often and keep them in airtight containers so they don't get stale. Grain also includes millet, whole rolled oats, quinoa, and grits. Millet is an especially healthy grain not often used in the United States these days, but its fame and importance goes back many thousands of years and it's ranked among the 6th most important grains in the world. Its nutritional value is very high while being non-glutinous and easy to digest. Allergies to millet are very rare and it is a warming grain, meaning it can help heat the body if the climate is cold or rainy.
 6. **Coconut Oil/Vinegar.** Cooking oils can be an important factor in several things and coconut oil is one of the best out there for you. It is very slow to go bad, doesn't break down into bad fats when heated, is healthy, flavorful, and an excellent source of good fats. It also assists with vitamin absorption and has a whole host of beneficial attributes, including being a major source of lauric acid, which is an antimicrobial. Peanut oil also has a long (5 year) shelf life, but none outdo the longevity of coconut oil.
 7. **Eggs/Dairy.** Eggs can last awhile stored out of a refrigerator, but they are not imperishable. For dairy and eggs you will want to hoard powdered forms: milk that can be whisked into a liquid form by adding water. Store dried yogurt cultures so you can make your own and cheese or butter will need to be freeze dried or dehydrated. Shelf life of freeze-dried dairy is 5 to 10 years. Evaporated milk and canned milk is also a decent option.

- 8. Sugar/honey.** Honey is an amazing sweetener chock-full of great benefits. The less refined it is, the better it is for you. It has healthful fats that other sugars don't and it can last a *very* long time on the shelf. Raw cane sugar is another sweetener that stores well when stored properly and because it's raw, it's not as bad for you as white sugar. Coconut palm sugar is another possibility, especially for those who need to worry about glycemic impact that sadly is not affected by a crisis. Coconut sugar also offers significant amounts of magnesium, phosphorus, iron, and calcium. Brown sugar may be desired for cooking purposes in addition to a main sugar. For white and brown sugars consider using a stone sugar preserver in your bucket or jar to keep the sugars soft.
- 9. MREs/Dehydrated meals.** Nutritious and good to have on hand for special cases or variety. You don't want to rely on MREs alone, but they are good to have in a crunch especially until you get yourself and your family established. Or in case no one wants to cook dinner that night.
- 10. Water.** Not a food per se, but for all the freeze-dried and dehydrated items in your storehouse, along with the need to drink it among other things, you need to hoard water. It is one of your most crucial items and there may not always be a clean source of it in a crisis. Gather both distilled and spring waters. Water is heavy and takes up space, so be aware when you choose a location for yours. Also, if the container of water is opened, molds and bacteria can get in and will eventually contaminate the source beyond it being safe to drink, but that doesn't mean it can't be used to wash clothes when detergent is also employed. Don't use 'bad' water to wash dishes.
- 11. Vegetables.** As electricity may be a questionable luxury in some scenarios, frozen vegetables, or any frozen foods, should not make up the bulk of emergency rations; canned, dehydrated, vacuum-sealed, freeze-dried, pickled, or jarred should make up the majority. Vegetables are very important for all kinds of vitamins and minerals with a good rule of thumb being to 'eat the rainbow'. You want at least a small variety of veggies funning from dark greens like spinach for fiber and iron to broccoli for calcium and carrots for vitamin A.
- 12. Peanut Butter.** A great source of protein, energy and healthy fats. Most peanut butter doesn't have to be refrigerated after opening, but check the label; if the peanut butter is completely natural it may need refrigeration along with stirring before use as the oils separate from the butter. Of course, the more natural and less refined, the better.
- 13. Pasta/Rice.** Brown rice and whole wheat pastas will be your friend; they have a little bit of protein, good amounts of fiber and the darker, unbleached version have less of a blood sugar impact while delivering better health benefits and more of them than their pale or hulled counterparts. They're also, reportedly, more flavorful.
- 14. Nuts/Seeds.** Nuts and seeds provide convenient snacking, added flavor and texture to dishes, and many are higher in fiber and protein content than not. They also provide some healthy fats. Storage should be in a vacuum-sealed

package to keep air out. This ensures they don't oxidize and lose freshness or potency.

- 15. Soup/Stews/Chili.** These are canned meals, often ready to go. They can be eaten out of the can if necessary, even cold though definitely not as tasty that way. Stews especially have a lot of sodium in them for preservation, so do be aware of that. Otherwise they are hearty, filling, and delicious. Canned chili is also a good source of protein and fiber, easy to heat and eat. These canned items last a very long time on the shelf. Also keep bouillon on hand to make your own soups.
- 16. Fruit.** There are many ways to store fruit: jarred, canned, dehydrated, as preserves, pickled, freeze-dried, and candied. Fruit is excellent for something sweet, a dessert, a treat, for variety, and healthy too. Fruit can be mixed with cereal and nuts for a high-energy trail mix or snack.
- 17. Vitamin Supplements.** Because you'll be limited in what you can eat, at least for awhile, and because foods lose nutritional value over time no matter how well packed or preserved they are (fruits and veggies start to lose potency as soon as they're picked), you will need supplements to ensure your body is working as close to optimum as possible. In the case of a financial crisis, doctors and physicians may not be either as accessible, available or as affordable as before. Remaining in good health should be a priority.

Other Methods of Hoarding Food

The above is a good list of foods to buy and stockpile. There is a distinct lack of condiments though certainly, if you have the space and the money, those could be added. Having little to no nutritional value however, they should not be high on the list of priorities. (Pickles get counted under jarred vegetables.) Now that you have a nice little store of edibles that will see comfortably through several months of crisis, what happens if things don't quite go back to normal before the food runs out?

It's possible events might even take a further nosedive. In this case you'll want to be even prepared for absolute worst and that means life like the forefathers, before the advent of electricity or fluoridated water. You may be forced to grow your own food; it would be wise to store seeds as well, in case this happens.

You may not be able to sprout a garden full of every comfort food you had before the power lines went down but you can grow what you need to survive and still prepare tasty meals. Items that are fairly simple to grow in a variety of soils even for beginners include lettuce, beets, potatoes, pumpkins, tomatoes, beans, asparagus, cabbage, carrots, onions, summer squash, leeks, New Zealand spinach, onions, sweet potatoes, and radishes. Don't overlook herbs, strawberries, shallots or garlic.

Many of these items can be grown in window boxes or other small areas. If you have space for fruit trees and bushes, and the water for them, they're a great choice too. Don't buy canned seeds as they need aeration, and invest in non-hybrid seeds for gardening.

For a grain that grows well in low moisture and soil that may be otherwise poor for growing, turn to millet. It appears like a grass when grown and can even thrive in desert-like climates. It's far better for the human body than wheat, easier on the system due to low acidity, is chock-full of goodness and, as mentioned, is a warming grain. Very little of this plant needs be wasted: the stalks can be used for bedding, fuel or fodder. Once threshed, the grain can be milled into flour and made into bread.

It's a hardy grain that is less susceptible to pests than most other grains, so pesticides are not entirely necessary. Millet can be harvested several times a year, reaching maturity in three months; quite a fast turn around. 1/10 of its value is protein and none of it contains gluten, making this a real no-brainer and excellent replacement for wheat. Oddly enough, most developed countries, like the U.S., give millet to the birds instead of people, but it is still a major staple all over the world in countries like Russia, India and Africa. Millet does not grow well in very wet areas.

Crucial Items for a Crisis

You have all your food and water stocked, you're ready for the world ending as you know but you're determined to be fine... all of that does you no good if you forget the can opener. Or fuel for the generator, if you even grabbed one of those. How about planting without tools or building a shelter with no hammer or nails? Surviving a global crisis is not just about food and water; it's about having the proper tools for the job at hand. Considering this, you will want to stock up on more than items to much on, but the basics necessary for actually cooking what you have squirreled away.

- **Can opener.** A hand-cranked one, not an electric one. You may even wish to have two of these or more, just in case, but with all your many cans of food this is an essential item to have.
- **Tools.** It would behoove you to have a decent -not a cheapie- set of tools around equipped with the basics you'll need to build a shelter or make repairs to the home. While an electric screwdriver or other power tool is fine to keep on hand, make sure you have manual tools as well. This includes shovels and items for tilling land or gardens.
- **Pots and pans.** You will certainly need items in which to cook your food; tongs to hold the cans while you heat the bottoms if nothing else. Truthfully, you will need pots and pans even in a crisis because food need to be prepared in something. Even the most rugged campers keep a pot or two in their packs. You will most likely have an entire family to consider so these tools of basic food preparation are a priority.
- **Utensils.** You will want to stir hot foods with your bare hand or hold meat over a fire without some kind of assistance. Sure, a stick is nature's wooden spoon, but why not just set some utensils aside to make life a little bit easier when the world falls into chaos? You'll want to have a small set of kitchen utensils and

eating utensils are also nice if the room can be spared. Some grilling items would not be remiss either.

- **Dishware.** It might seem like dishes are luxury items, but eating soup out of your hands isn't recommended. Perhaps you can salvage bowls and plates after the fact, maybe scavenge them, or even whittle a few out of wood not needed for a fire to cook your food, but generally speaking humans need dishware. Good china isn't necessary, in fact you'll want something that can withstand drops and dings, but certainly plan for bowls, plates, strainers for food, and flatware including kitchen knives for chopping, paring, filleting, carving, boning, and whatever else you'll need to do.
- **Generator.** A generator is great but a luxury item, not a necessity. They also take fuel that could be better used elsewhere or too hard to find later on, like gasoline. Gasoline doesn't have the greatest shelf life, is highly flammable, and goes quickly. A generator tends to be noisy and should it break down, it will require repairs. If you choose to buy one, get a good quality one, not the cheapest available just to have one at hand.
- **Portable Toilets.** It's a huge health hazard not have your human waste properly disposed of and kept away from people and food. Some portable toilets are incinerators, some are special bio toilets, others may just be a big bucket with the lid in shape of a seat on it. However you choose to respond to this call of nature, make sure you have lye or chlorine to help break it down and make it less of a hazard. Ask any soldier who was on burn duty and they will tell you that shoveling latrine waste into a big pile and then standing around as it burned was not a favorite task; it stinks, it's unhealthy and it's just plain nasty. Work smarter, not harder and be prepared for the need to get rid of waste in a less toxic way than burning it in a trench.
- **Charcoal/Lighter Fluid.** As a short-term answer, charcoal and lighter fluid are items that will go quickly at the announcement of a serious disaster, but they won't be sustainable for long and lighter fluid isn't the safest thing to store. Make sure you have something that will work when these run out, like stored wood to burn. Wood needs to be sufficiently dry to burn properly, so give it plenty of time to dry out or buy seasoned cords of wood.
- **Water Filters/Purifiers.** You've gathered quite a bit of water in your stockpile and you will use it all eventually. When it runs dry where do you find clean water? Maybe infrastructure has been restored by then but never count on others for your family's needs: you will have to be able to purify a water source. There are many ways to do that which go beyond the scope of this list, but there are many ways to accomplish this: iodine tablets, chlorine, solar oven pasteurizers, gravity-fed filters, charcoal filtration, and so on. Definitely research this aspect to survival and stock accordingly.
- **Weapons.** Guns, knives, pepper spray, ammunition, all the way to slingshots, bats and clubs, your family's safety is paramount. Times of crisis can bring out nobility in people or savagery; you need to be prepared to defend lives and

belongings as sadly there are many who would rather take your property and food from you than ask for it. Some may use quite brutal means. Also, you may have to resort to hunting for meat or fishing. While pepper spray hardly works wonders in either situation, it might just help with a wild dog attack or some bad guy who's decided to grab you. Ammunition may also be valuable for bartering later on if society collapses.

- **Lamp oil, lamps, extra wicks.** Hurricane lamps are still a great way to get a good amount of light but they take fuel in the form of special oil and will eventually require a new wick as the old one burns away. For those who store hurricane lamps, don't forget the extra wicks! Store lots of clear oil or lamps that run on kerosene. There are other, environmentally friendly alternatives as well in the form of solar-charged camping lanterns and hand-crank charged lanterns. They don't use batteries, give off some powerful white light, and last a very long time. Also stock some solar-charged or hand-crank powered flashlights. Many flashlights come with a radio built in for the short amount of time stations might still be on the air to deliver news. Candles are great and have their place, but don't rely on them too heavily. Plus, they eventually burn down.
- **Lighters/matches.** Absolutely one of the best things you can have on hand is a convenient way to create fire. Do be careful about how and where you store these as they are combustible. Still, in this case, the pros far outweigh the cons.
- **Camping stoves/pressure cookers.** Camping stoves run on fuels but certainly are a comfort to have, even if you do have to settle with such a small surface to cook on. Pressure cookers have come a long way since the one you saw in grandmother's kitchen that needed cold water poured on it to bring the temperature down to safe levels. Modern versions have a quick-release valve so you don't have to waste gallons of water cooling it down. Standard recipes call for a 6-quart cooker. The higher the temperature your cooker reaches, the faster the cooking time. Steam is automatically vented to prevent the blow-outs of the past. These pressure cookers allow for quicker meals with less time spent hovering over and around the pots or pans. You'll still need the camping stove for a source of heat and it will quickly become indispensable, so stock plenty of fuel. Cast iron stoves are durable and you'll want at least 2 burners. Some camp stoves can even use two different kinds of fuel.
- **Medical supplies/surgical kit.** You don't have to be a doctor to know these supplies are valuable. Bandages, gauze, butterfly stitches, needle and thread, antibacterial ointments, etc. You can buy medical supply emergency kits already made but there's no way to prepare for every eventuality. Here's where it pays to make friends in the medical field. Medicines can be hard to stock as most have expiration dates. Simple items like aspirin and non-aspirin, ibuprofen, allergy medications, antacids and cold or flu tabs, cough drops and throat lozenges- they have a shelf life of a few years and should be rotated out when they expire. During a time of hardship though, they will be worth their weight in

- gold. If you have children, make sure you either know the adult conversions for the smaller doses or you stock kid-specific meds.
- **Propane/butane/kerosene/fuels.** It's hard to stock enough fuel to make sure you can keep cooking three times a day for months on end. Eventually, you'll run out and have to use wood or the stalks of your millet crop, but in the meantime it's not bad to have fuel for your camp stove, grill, or other items you need in place of electrical devices. Fuels are combustible and flammable so be very careful how you store them. It's not even the fuel itself but the fumes that are flammable, so in tight quarters where fuels are being stored no sparks, please.
 - **A washboard/drying line/detergent.** Without electricity we lose the beloved clothes washer and dryer. A washboard will help get the clothes clean instead, while clothespins and a drying line take care of the rest. Make sure to stock detergent.
 - **Hygiene products.** Ladies don't need elaboration on this but it can often be overlooked, which would be an uncomfortable mistake. It can also be a very fragrant mistake if soap and deodorants were not stocked. However, deodorants can be considered a luxury item where soap cannot. Toothpaste and brushes, hair brushes and hair ties (to get unruly locks out of the eyes), scissors, shaving items if you wish, washcloths, baby wipes -whether you have a child or not, they're good for cleaning the body- alcohol, peroxide, floss and lotions, even hand sanitizers to help conserve water should all be stocked and most of it never goes bad. Women may wish to look into a reusable menstrual cup at least for the crisis.
 - **Raise animals.** An exceedingly good way to ensure you have protein, dairy and meat is to raise your own. A couple of goats, rabbits and less than half a dozen chickens will see you just fine. In the city this may not be at all plausible or even legal, but if you're serious about survival and have a little room to spare outside of downtown Urbana, you may wish to seriously consider this option.

General items. There will be no end to the number of items you'll want to have available and how many you'll wish you had available after the fact. The list is long and hardly all-inclusive; you may find your own items you want to hoard, too. There are many uses for most of the items listed and in a crisis they will become indispensable.

- Trash bags, plastic bags, zip locks bags, storage bags, all sizes. These are for sanitation, storage and a million other reasons.
- Aluminum foil, plastic wrap, wax paper, paraffin wax for sealing.
- Paper, pens, pencils, envelopes for seed storage, staples and stapler.
- Sheets, blankets, pillow cases, linens, towels, bedding.
- Hardware such as nuts, bolts, screws and nails. Also sewing supplies: needle, thread.
- Twine, rope, shoe laces.
- Rubber bands and hair ties.

- Boxes- cardboard and plastic containers with lids, buckets.
- Tape, all kinds especially duct tape, electrical tape and packing tape.
- Toilet paper, paper towels, paper coffee filters, tissues, cotton swabs and cotton balls.
- Batteries; choose rechargeable and invest in a solar recharger. Solar calculator.
- A magnesium stick with a striker is a better bet than matches, but if you store matches get the kind that can be struck anywhere and waterproof ones.
- Flares, torches, light sticks, flashlights, camping lights that are solar powered.
- Fishing supplies, fishing tools, fishing line.
- Insect and pest repellent as sprays, lotions, creams. You'll possibly have to fight the bugs for your food. Avon Skin-So-Soft is truly a good mosquito repellent and has multiple uses.
- Shelter materials like tarps, stakes, glue, screen patches, some pieces of lumber or plywood.
- Backpacks, duffel bags for quick packing and flight.
- Work gloves, heavy boots, work attire, thermal underclothes.
- Grain grinder to grind your own flour.
- Baby supplies if you have young children. Store cloth diapers and safety pins. These can be used for many things too, even for trade.
- Board games, cards, puzzle books; some entertainment should be considered if there's room.

Survival isn't just lists of things to keep on hand in case of a global crisis; there's a good deal to understand and for which to be prepared.

People can start showing a side you would never have imagined to see when they notice you have supplies and they don't... and they want them and will do anything to get them.

Events can turn grim fast. Even unmolested by others, be aware everything you stored is perishable and eventually you'll need to replenish it. Read up on better gardening techniques, hunting, fishing, and water filtration.

The more you know, the stronger you'll be when and if something terrible should, heaven forbid, fall upon your family. One last suggestion: if you or your family are followers of a faith, whichever one, you may wish to have some religious items stored away too. Books, devotions, perhaps items of importance. Hope and faith will greatly increase your chances for survival and keeping a positive attitude.

Resources:

<http://www.areyouprepared.com/Food-Storage-Calculator-s/109.htm>
<http://outdoorsnative.com/outdoor-life/survival/top-10-foods-to-store-for-a-food-crisis/>
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/calorie-calculator/NU00598>
<http://www.texasescapes.com/DelbertTrew/Salt-History.htm>
http://www.wellspring.org/mhc_home/hcfit/activity_calc.htm
<http://store.honeyvillegrain.com/>
<http://crisisfoods.com/>
<http://chetday.com/millet.html>
<http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-millet.htm>
<http://www.gardenguides.com/123238-easy-vegetables-grow-garden.html>
<http://www.survival-center.com/foodfaq/index.htm?>
<http://modernsurvivalblog.com/preps/55-preparedness-items/>
<http://www.blogtosurvive.com/survival-preparedness/ammunition/survival-economics-what-to-ward.html>
<http://www.top10stop.com/lifestyle/ways-to-survive-a-food-crisis-top-10-list>
<http://preparednesspro.wordpress.com/2009/02/27/items-to-ward/>