



A Quick and Dirty Guide To Survival Planning

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Water

A death by contaminated water

A few years ago my grandfather told me a story that illustrates how deadly contaminated water can be. It happened in the summer of 1934 when he was only 9 years old. He was out in the fields gathering corn, with his dad, brothers and sister. He said it had to be at least 100 degrees because the sun was bright in the sky and the sweat burned his eyes.

His eleven year old sister got thirsty and instead of going to the house to get water, she drank from a nearby stream. She died a few days later. Upon further investigation it was discovered that a cow, from a nearby farm had died upstream from where she drank, contaminating the water.

They had used the water from this spot for years with no ill effects. They thought it was safe but it wasn't - at least not at that point in time.

From U.S. Army Field Manual 21-76

By drinking non-potable water you may contract diseases or swallow organisms that can harm you. Examples of such diseases or organisms are:

- * Dysentery - Severe, prolonged diarrhea with bloody stools, fever, and weakness.
- * Cholera and typhoid - You may be susceptible to these diseases regardless of inoculations.
- * Flukes - Stagnant, polluted water--especially in tropical areas--often contains blood flukes. If you swallow flukes, they will bore into the bloodstream, live as parasites, and cause disease.
- * Leeches - If you swallow a leech, it can hook onto the throat passage or inside the nose. It will suck blood, create a wound, and move to another area. Each bleeding wound may become infected.

Not to mention pollutants from human activities that often find their way into the water - trash, pet wastes, fertilizers, herbicides, oils, heavy metals, salts, pollutants from vehicles etc. and it's impossible to tell what is safe without laboratory testing.

But there are some general guidelines that can help:

- * Running water is generally safer than still water.
- * Look for clear water
- * Avoid water that has algae growing in it
- * Avoid discolored water
- * Avoid water from marshes / swamps
- * Avoid cloudy water

Homemade Berkey

The spring water where I live runs in a constant flow from the side of the mountain and it's as clear as bottled water, but I won't drink it or use it for cooking without first running it through my [homemade Berkey](#) filter.

My dad and grandfather drive out here on the weekend and fill their jugs from the spring - drinking and cooking without any filtration or other purification. They've never had any trouble but I'm the paranoid type and can't risk getting sick over something so easily avoided.

The Berkey filters are extremely effective at removing pathogenic bacteria, cysts, parasites, chemical contaminants and impurities – the elements have an indefinite shelf-life and will filter at least 3000 gallons before needing replaced. I store mine in zip-lock bags until ready to use.

If you suspect the water to contain viruses, add 10-12 drops of chlorine bleach to the water or boil for ten minutes, then filter through the Berkey. This may sound like over kill, but it's not – you can never be cautious enough with your health.

Boiling

Boiling is one of the the surest methods of water purification. All you need is a heat source, suitable container and water. Bring the water to a boil for at least five minutes to kill any viruses or bacteria that maybe present. Boiled water tastes like crap but can be improved by pouring back and fourth between two containers to re-oxygenate and improve taste.

Storage

As for water storage, I have six – five gallon containers bought at Wal-Mart in the sporting goods department. Thirty gallon isn't much , but I don't see water being a major issue for me at my location.

If you live in a dryer region, water would be a major concern that may necessitate the storage of hundreds of gallons for an emergency.

Don't store water in used five gallon milk jugs. They're not strong enough for long term storage and eventually breakdown and leak. The five gallon containers sold in the sporting goods section of most department stores work great, as do the 55 gallon plastic drums. Just be sure the drums are clean and contained no harmful chemicals before filling.

If you must us small containers, empty 2-liter pop bottles work well. They are stronger than the afore mentioned milk jug and have better lids and are more covenant. Avoid glass containers because they break to easily.

Tap water

If your storing tap water from a municipal water system there's no need to add bleach as suggested by some. Water from the municipal tap already contains enough chlorine to thwart any bacterial growth and can be stored without any other additives.

Food

Wheat

This is the backbone of your survival diet. Wheat is nature's longest storing seed, with an indefinite shelf life given proper conditions. The wheat can also be sprouted adding fresh greens to the diet even in winter. Put back 400 pounds per person.

Salt

While not a food but a mineral salt is none the less essential to the diet and individual health. Salt is also used in the preservation of food and animal products. Salt like wheat has an indefinite self life. At least 20 pound per person.

Honey

As a sweetener honey makes an unequalled contribution to the diet. Some think of it as a super food giving energy and renewed vitality. Being an extract from the plant kingdom, it is sure to contain numerous components which contribute to health. Honey like wheat and salt has an indefinite self life. At least 10 pound per person.

Powdered Milk

Most people turn their nose to even the thought of powdered milk, preferring whole milk from the supermarket shelf. Granted it does have a slightly different taste but it's not unpleasant to drink, after a week or two it seems to "grow" on you. Studies have shown that fat-free powdered milk, when kept dry and reasonably cool, will store with little change in value for over 15 years. You need 60 pound per person.

Other Foods

After you get the basic four foods (wheat, sugar, powdered milk, and salt) in the needed proportions, it is a simple matter to add other foods as you get the extra money. Pinto beans, white rice, split peas, soybeans, dried green peas, whole corn and canned meats, fruits and vegetables can be added giving more variety to the diet. And don't forget to include pepper, baking powder, baking soda, canned yeast, dried eggs, cooking oil, multivitamin and mineral as well as extra vitamin C caplets.

How to store

I store all my grains, beans and powdered milk in food grade plastic buckets. There is a lot of confusion and controversy over whether a bucket is food grade or not. A #2 inside a small triangle on the bottom of the bucket means it is made from HDPE plastic and is of food grade.

I bought mine from the local hardware store in the paint section. They also had them at the Wal-Mart but I prefer to buy from local business owners if possible. Sometimes they can even be gotten free from bakeries and restaurants, just be sure they only held food products not paint, chemicals or other things that can make you sick or dead.

Foods packed in oxygen don't store as well as those in an oxygen free atmosphere. Oxygen absorbers (available from [Nitro-Pak](#)) remove the air from the enclosed container, leaving an atmosphere of 99% pure nitrogen in a partial vacuum.

Don't open the bag of oxygen absorbers until ready to use because they will absorb oxygen from the surrounding air and become useless. Have everything ready to go before you open the package. Any unused absorbers can be stored put in a small canning jar until needed.

Be sure to have everything ready to go before you start. Then pore the food you are planning on preserving into the buckets a little at a time shaking each one as it is being filled to settle and distribute the contents. Fill each bucket to about ½ inch from the top and throw in three oxygen absorbers to each bucket of food.

Quickly put the lids on each bucket and pound shut by laying a board across the top and striking with a hammer or rubber mallet. After a few hours the absorbers will create a vacuum that will cause the lids on the buckets to "pop down" indicating a good seal and a proper atmosphere for long term storage. Be sure to label each with date, content and weight, written on the front with a permanent marker.

Where to Store

The next question is where to put all this food? Lack of space is the main drawback to living in a 26ft' travel trailer. Just about everything needs to be stored outside. Even in most homes and apartments living can get cramped as more crap gets brought in to fill the space. One option is to sell some of the stuff you don't use, maybe cleaning out a large closet and filling it with your stored foods. You will need to take a look at your personal situation and space available, storing your foods accordingly.

I have the bulk of my foods cached in my outbuilding behind my trailer. This may not be the idea set up but it is dry and shaded in the summer. I took a number of concrete blocks and laid a sheet of 4x8' ply board on top to form a platform to stack the buckets on keeping them off the ground. I would love to have a root cellar big enough to hold the bulk of my food storage, but for now I must deal with less than perfect.

Choosing A Grain Mill

You need a grain mill now, don't put it off another day, even one of the least expensive models beats the alternative of not having one at all. I know many of you want the best and that is great, get the best if you can afford it, just don't put it off any longer, get a mill now.

If you can't afford one of the better models, get a cheaper one, buy two or three of the cheaper models, that way if one breaks and can't be repaired you have spares to fall back on.

This goes along with my philosophy of the [rule of three](#). Always have at least three independent sources of any survival necessity. Never put all your eggs in one basket, too many things can happen, leaving you with nothing. Which is what we are trying to avoid by prepping in the first place.

While I can't give recommendations on all the models currently available, because I haven't use them all, I can tell you what I have and my thoughts on these, which should at least get you started in the right direction. I currently own three different grain mills, a [Corona Landers](#), [Back to Basics](#) and [Grizzly H7775](#).

Corona Landers Mill

I love this mill. It is strong, robust and well made. This is the mill I use most often to grind grains and beans here at the homestead kitty.

The Corona is a hand cranked unit that uses rotating steel burrs to crack and grind corn, beans, grains, nuts, and seeds.

It is machined from cast-iron parts with an electro-tinned finish to guarantee a rust-proof and easy to clean utensil. I give it my highest recommendation.

Back To Basics Mill

This mill works well and is actually very easy to use. My main complaint is the small hopper, that needs to be refilled after a few cranks of the handle. It is light weight when compared to the Corona and I don't think it would stand up as well to continued usage.

Grizzly H7775 Mill

This mill it is not my first choice, but it beats the crap out of having nothing at all. It sits low on the table, low enough that getting a large enough bowl under the head to catch the flour is difficult, but then I have this same problem when using the Corona, this is the main reason I use a homemade sifter to catch the grindings.

My other complaint is the small hopper, refilling it every few cranks can be an annoyance, at least for me. On the plus side the grinder is efficient and the grinding plates are easily adjusted to the desired consistency.

While this is a fairly good mill it is not of the quality of the Corona, but then it is half the price so buying two or more is an option.

Country Living Mill

While I don't own one of these mills they are given the highest recommendations by those that do. A recent advertisement proclaims:

“The [Country Living Grain Mill](#) is one of the highest quality grain mills ever made. You could drop it on the floor, and it would likely hurt the floor more than the grain mill. The Country Living Grain Mill is one of those high quality items that could be passed on to the next generation.”

Grinding Grain

When grinding it is often necessary to regrind the grain several times before reaching the desired consistency. Some of the meal comes out perfectly fine the first time through, while other parts remain coarse and need to be reground several times.

One way to make grinding easier is to use a grinding screen to sift out the finer flour while leaving the larger pieces of grain behind. The grinding screen is simply a four sided box with sides but no top and a bottom made of nylon window screen from the hardware store. Mine is 15' X 12' with sides made of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch by 3-1/2 wood.

Cut the wood to length and nail or screw the pieces together. Lay the screen out on a hard surface, sit the box down flat on top of the screen and cut to fit with a utility knife. Turn the box over and tack the screen to the box with several thumbtacks or small nails to hold the screen in place.

Take all purpose cement from the plumbing department of the hardware store, and spread generously around the rim of the box over the edge of the screen forming a permanent seal between the wood and the screen.

When grinding place a section of newspaper under the grinder head and set the box on top. Grind as normal but this time after each pass through the grinder, shake the finer meal onto the newspaper and transfer into a bowl.

Pour the coarser meal back into the grinder and regrind repeating until reaching the desired consistency. This saves running the finer mill back through the mill, making grinding easier and quicker.

Spices and Seasonings

Let's face it; during a survival situation you could be forced to eat things you would not normally eat. A supply of seasonings makes a lot of sense, allowing the survivor to make even the most peculiar foods palatable.

Recommended Spices and Seasonings

Basil
Chili powder
Cinnamon
Garlic
Sage
Marjoram
Oregano
Rosemary
Thyme
Black Pepper

All supermarkets and most small grocery stores have well-stocked shelves offering a wide selection of herbs and spices, these are cheap enough that you can stock your years supply for very little. Be sure to date, use and rotate so you always have fresh supplies on hand.

Comfort Foods

We crave variety and having a supply of familiar comfort foods can go along way toward retaining our sanity and self-worth after the balloon goes up.

You can only deny yourself for so long before desperation and depression set in. Life will be difficult enough – give yourself a treat. You deserve it.

It is a proven fact that if we are forced to eat foods we don't want or the same things for extended periods – just to stay alive - dissociation begins to set in.

We begin to float away as an escape – we still eat to stay alive, but suffer a lack of focus and become disorientated to our surroundings.

This is dangerous in a **survival** setting. Don't think it can happen? Try eating nothing but beans and rice for three months and you'll see what I mean. Store a variety and eat what you store.

Older folks and children will have the hardest time adjusting to new or unfamiliar foods, with many refusing to eat altogether, especially if the food is unnecessarily bland or unappetizing.

During the 1845 the Irish potato famine thousands starved even though they had barns full of corn, oats, rye and barley that they people refused to eat, considering the food only fit for cattle.

In Belgium and France, millions starved after WW I, despite America sending hundreds of thousands of pounds of corn. They turned their noses considering the food only fit for livestock. So they starved.

Everyone in the survival community has heard the phrase “eat what you store – store what you eat” yet many fail to do so, thinking they will adjust when the time comes.

This is one of the biggest mistakes I see being made. Don't do it!

Those of you that have been with me for awhile know I am a big proponent of storing basic foods – wheat, beans, rice, salt, sugar and powdered milk. I also have a number of things like spices, coffee, hot chocolate and tea to alleviate boredom and food fatigue.

Most of this stuff is cheap enough that a years supply would cost less than \$100. Why go through unnecessary suffering and hard-ship just to “save” a hundred bucks? Doesn't make sense to me

Shelf-Life Recommendations

Food Product	Storage Life In Months
STAPLES	
Baking Powder	18 or exp. date
Baking Soda	24
Bisquick	Exp. date
Bouillon	24
Cereals	6-12
Chocolate	12
Pre-melted	18
Semi Sweet	18
Chocolate Syrup	24
Cocoa Mixes	8
Cocoa Mix	24
Coffee	24
Coffee Lighteners (dry)	9
Cornmeal	12
Cornstarch	18
Argo Cornstarch	Indefinite

Country Time Lemonade Drink Mix	24
Crystal Light Drink Mix	24
Tang Drink Mix	24
Kool Aid Drink Mix	18-24
White Flour	6-8
Whole wheat	6-8
Gelatin, all types	18
Jell-O	24
Grits	12
Honey	12
Honey	12-24-
Jellies, Jams	12
Molasses	12+
Marshmallow Cream	3-4
Mayonnaise	2-3
Milk	12
Condensed	12
Evaporated	6
Pasta	24
White Rice	24+
Minute Rice	18
Bottled Salad Dressings	10-12
Salad Oils	6

Oil – Crisco or Puritan	24
Corn Oil,	18mo
Crisco Shortening	Indef.
Vinegar - Container With Plastic Lid	Indef.
Salt	Indef.
Sugar	Indef
Brown	18
Confectioners	24+
Granulated	24+
Syrups	12
Tea	18
Bags	36
Instant	24
Vinegar	24+
<i>MIXES AND PACKAGED FOODS</i>	
Biscuit, Brownie, Muffin Mix	9
Cake Mixes	9
Casseroles, complete or add own meat	9-12
Cookies	2-3 wks
Krusteaz Mixes	24
Pillsbury Mixes	18
Betty Crocker Mixes	8-12+

Jiffy Mixes	24
Crackers	3
Stove Top Dressing Mix	Exp. Date
Frostings	3
Canned	8
Hot-Roll Mix	18
Pancake Mix	6-9
Pie Crust Mix	8
Pies and Pastries	2-3 days
Potatoes, Instant	6-12
Pudding Mixes	12
Rice Mixes	6
Rice-a-Roni	Exp. Date
Pasta-Roni	Exp. Date
Rice & Sauce	10-15
Noodles & Sauce	12-24
Pasta & Sauce	9-12
Sauce/Gravy Mix	6-12
Soup Mix	12
Soup Base	120 mos
Country Kitchen Soup	36
Toaster Pastries	2-3
<i>CANNED AND DRIED FOODS</i>	
Canned Baby foods	12

Canned Tomato Sauce	12
Canned Cheese Sauce	24-36
Canned Tuna, Fish & Seafood	5 years
Canned Cranberry Sauce	Exp. Date
Canned Fruits	36+
Canned Fruit Pie Fillings	24-36
Dinty Moore Spam Ham Chunks Chili Dried Beef	Indefinite
Black Label Ham	Exp. Date
Canned Meat	36
Canned Chicken	36
Canned Soup	Exp. Date
Canned Tomatoes	36+
Canned Vegetables	24-48
Canned Baked Beans	24-36
Canned Black Beans	24
Canned French Fried Onions	24
Canned Ragu Spaghetti Sauce	Use By Date
Canned Five Brothers Pasta Sauce	24

Canned Fruit Juices	6
Juices	12-24
Dried Fruits	6
Dried Vegetables	12
Dried Peas & Beans	12
<i>SPICES, HERBS, CONDIMENTS, AND EXTRACTS</i>	
Catsup	18-24
Chili Sauce	24
Mustard, Yellow Prepared	24
Jar Pickles	12-24
Spices	12-24 mos
Steak Sauce	24
Tabasco Sauce	60
Extracts	24
Vanilla	12
Vegetables, dehydrated flakes	6
<i>OTHERS</i>	
Cheese, Parmesan grated	10
Coconut, Shredded canned or pkg.	12
Meat Substitutes TVP; imitation bacon bits	12
Metered-Caloric Products, instant breakfast	6
Nuts	4

In shell pkg	24
Nutmeats pkg.	3
Peanut Butter	6-9
Jif Peanut Butter	24
Popcorn	24
Freeze Dried Mushrooms	24
Whipped Topping (dry)	12
Yeast (dry)	Exp. date

Basic Survival Gear

It seems everyone likes lists. Lists can be used as a quick reference point and a guide when stockpiling survival gear, keep in mind that this is only a guide and not formed in stone, the end product should be tailor made for you and your needs. After all who knows your skills, location and resources better than you? But with that being said; I feel this list is a good starting point and a thrust in the right direction.

I have purposely left out such items as cookware, clothing and other everyday household items, for the fact every home should already have a plentiful supply of these everyday staples. I have also not included food, barter goods or firearms since these have already been covered in my [Survival 101](#) series.

I have tried to keep this list as short and to the point as possible, including only items I feel to be absolutely essential. Sure you could survive with less, but with some basic gear things become less of a challenge. If nothing else it should generate discourse, lets get started.

1. (Grain Mill – [Back to Basics 555](#) or [Universal 500](#).) are basic budget mills that will get the job done with a lot of work and elbow grease. The **Country Living Grain Mill** is much faster and easier to use, but more expensive then the other two, and out of our budget here.
2. Water Filter - American-made Aqua Rain brand and if budget allows the [Katadyn Hiker PRO Microfilter](#) is a good back up unit.

3. [Coleman Dual Fuel Gas Stove](#), extra mantles and [Coleman Two-Mantle Dual Fuel Powerhouse Lantern](#) and at least six gallon of white gas.
4. Sleeping bag for each person in your group. A good rule of thumb is to think about the coldest condition you might experience, and then drop down ten or twenty degrees in the temperature rating when choosing a bag.
5. A [good belt knife](#) and a [Victorinox Swiss Pocket Knife](#) or [Leatherman Multitool](#) for each person in your group is recommended.
6. A large box of 4-mill plastic sheeting.
7. 250 feet of 3/8 inch nylon rope.
8. \$20 worth of wooden kitchen matches, stored in waterproof containers.
9. A rake, shovel and hoe for every two people in your group.
10. [Chain Saw](#), extra chain and box files, mixing oil, bar oil and five or more gallon of fuel. Choose a saw that is powerful enough to get the job done but light enough so it doesn't wear you down prematurely.
11. [Two-man crosscut saw](#) and file, bow saw and extra blade, ax and sharpening files.
12. Comprehensive Medical kit and the skills to put it to use if the need should arise.
13. Flashlight, Maglite or equivalent with extra batteries and bulb.
14. [Walkie Talkies](#) rated at a 5 mile range or better; check at Wal-Mart in the electronic department.
15. [Shortwave receiver](#) with AM and FM, weather and citizens (CB) bands .
16. Leather Work Gloves.

The Bug-Out Bag

"Which is heavier a soldiers pack or a slaves chains" Napoleon

Soon after you confront the matter and necessity of survival planing and home / retreat stockpiling, another question will occur to you: "What will I do if I loose all this stuff?"

It's a fundamental question, and it has a fundamental answer: You need a backup plan.

There are many things that can happen separating you from your main cache and retreat.

Theft and fire are two that come to mind and the threat of organized gangs of raiders scouring the countryside looking for sources of resupply are always a threat to the survivor.

No matter how well armed or prepared you are, you can be overran by a large enough force, remember Waco? Sometimes escape is the only option, or at least the only one that will keep you alive.

Having a survival pack and avenue of escape makes sense. If you can put some distance between yourself and the threat, there is always the option of a launching a retaliatory strike from a more favorable position.

For example; I have two separate and independent escape routes worked out, both leading to a vantage point 462 yards away over looking my place. If I know I am going to be outnumbered and out gunned, I will grab my survival pack and rifle, making my way to this point.

The range has been marked with a range finder and I have set-up and shot silhouettes positioned around my place, so I know anything in that area is an easy target.

They may take what I have – but the cost will be high.

Anyway; you need to work out an escape plan so you can get to a safer location or vantage point or even completely out of dodge, depending on the situation. You need a grab and go bag or “survival pack” that will supply your needs if you are forced from your main stockpile.

Pack and Contents

1. The Pack - I have a LC-1 “Alice” pack but any quality pack with enough capacity will do. Stick with camouflage, dark green or other natural colors that blend with the terrain.

2. Water - A canteen with cup and cover for your belt, water bottle and a good filter..

3. Fire - Waterproof matches, a magnesium fire starter. and tinder.

4. Food - Pack enough to last 5 to seven days. Rice, oat meal, beef jerky, energy bars etc. Another option is MRE's and the freeze dried foods often sold to campers and hikers. Choose foods that are light weight and a suitable shelf life.

5. Stove - A small stove is essential if you want to stay hidden. Smoke and noise from the cutting and burning of wood would be undesirable if you are in hostel territory or being pursued. I have a Peak-One backpackers stove, there are others but this is what I have and can recommend.

6. Sleeping bags - If you are in a cold area a good sleeping bag could mean the difference between life and death. Get a light weight "mummy" style bag rated to -20 degrees.

7. Shelter - Rain poncho and tarp or compact tent, stick with natural colors that blend with the surrounding area.

8. Cooking - I have a Stainless Steel 5-Piece Mess Kit, that I ordered from amazon.com but any light weight kit will do.

First aid kit - It's best to assemble your own kit, tailored to your individual needs, or if you are lazy you can purchase a ready made kit. Don't forget to add personal meds.

10. Light - I have a 2-AA Cell Mini LED Flashlight Mini LED Flashlight and a 9-Hour Candle..

11. Tools - A folding saw, Swiss Army pocket knife, and fixed blade knife. A light weight shovel and Machete. are nice, but add extra weight.

12. Extra Clothing - At least one extra pair of socks and underwear add other items if you feel the need and have the space.

13. Fishing kit - Line, hooks and sinkers and a few small lures. I also have a small gill net for catching

fish.

14. Snare wire - I make my own from copper wire. Don't forget to include at least 50 ft of parachute cord.

14. Plastic bags - Two or three large lawn bags and several zip-lock sandwich bags, can be used for a number of tasks and to keep things dry.

15. Small Binoculars - See the game and enemy before they see you.

16. Sewing kit - Needle and thread don't forget to include a few extra buttons.

17. This n' that - Head net, electrical tape, face paint, gloves, sharpening stone etc.

18. Firearms - This is where feathers get ruffled and wounds opened. Everyone has their own idea of what the "perfect" survival firearm is or should be.

Survival Guns

Below I'll outline five arsenals covering a broad range of tasks, needs and budgets. If nothing else my suggestions should generate discourse.

I work at Wal-Mart Arsenal

1. Mosin Nagant 91 rifle
2. Single Shot .12 gauge
3. Smith&Wesson model 10

The Government Welfare Arsenal

1. Short Magazine Lee-Enfield
2. Mossberg Maverick 88 12 gauge pump
3. Smith&Wesson model 10
4. Ruger 10/22

I have a full time Job Arsenal

1. Ruger Mini-14 Ranch Rifle or AR-15
2. Mossberg 500 12 Gauge
3. Glock Model 19
4. Ruger 10/22

Two Jobs and Maxed Credit Card Arsenal

1. Ruger Mini-14 Ranch Rifle or AR-15
2. Remington 870 express with spare riot barrel
3. Glock 19
4. Ruger 10/22
5. Winchester Model 70 in .308 Win.
6. Taurus CIA Model 850 .38 SPL. Revolver

And Finally the Yuppie Survival Arsenal

1. L1A1 Rifle chambered in .308 Winchester
2. Remington Model 7 bolt action chambered in .223
3. Winchester Model 70 in 308 Win.
4. Remington 870 express with spare riot gun barrel
5. Colt 1911 A1 .45 ACP
6. Taurus CIA Model 850 .38 SPL. Revolver
7. Savage Model 24F .223 Remington over 12 gauge (if you can find one used)
8. Ruger 10/22

Urban Survival

Even if you are fortunate enough to have a retreat out in the country getting to your safe haven maybe impossible during upheaval. Roads blocked by wrecked and fuelless vehicles will stop most [bugouters](#) in their tracks. Maybe you were born lucky and can make it out safely before the balloon bursts, then what?

People in rural areas, will start shooting if threatened by mobs of [refugees](#) fleeing the city. Don't expect to be welcomed with arms outstretched. Most country folks don't trust outsiders; you will likely be greeted with a load of buckshot and not the cup of fresh coffee and meaningful conversation you hoped for.

After the cities are in ruins, criminal gangs will start to migrate to the country where they will continue their business of stealing and terrorizing in more fruitful territory. If you can stay hidden and survive the first weeks after a collapse you may at some point have the entire city pretty much to yourself. If you can't or won't get out NOW at least start making plans to survive where you are.

Food

You should store enough food to last at least six months. This means enough food to live on without leaving home. Food staples include, rice, beans, honey, wheat, sugar, tea, coffee, salt, pepper, baking soda, cooking oil etc. Also canned soups, meats, fruits and vegetables should be included for verity.

The [food storage calculator](#) is an excellent tool for approximating needed quantities of foods and is a great help here.

[Sprouting seeds](#) will keep you supplied with fresh greens even in the winter. Sprouts are germinated seeds of vegetables, nuts, grains and legumes. Sprouts are nutritious, inexpensive and high in protein. Sprouts should be included in your survival food plans. All that is needed is a couple of quart mason jars, a square of nylon window screen, rubber bands and viable seed stock.

If you decide to include whole grains in your diet, you will need a [grain grinder](#). Grinders should be steel-burred, not stone. Some people suggest that steel-burred grinders cause heat that could damage the nutrient content of the grain. Don't buy it. Hand grinding doesn't cause enough heat to cause damage. Don't waste your money on stone grinders or combination steel and stone, get the much cheaper but entirely functional steel-burred grinder.

Next you will need something to cook on. I recommend one of the [Colman multi fuel camp stoves](#). I have the Peak1 which burns both Coleman fuel and kerosene. These stoves are small, light weight and very energy efficient.

Remember, when using stoves like these indoors the fumes must be vented to the outside, if not [carbon monoxide](#) can build up and kill you.

If you don't have one already go by your local shopping center and pick up a Stanley Aladdin narrow-mouth [thermos bottle](#). You will use the thermos as an energy efficient appliance for cooking. Don't get a wide-mouthed thermos; if you intend to use it for cooking, these are less efficient at holding heat.

It is best to use a different bottle for cooking than your everyday thermos. Coffee smell for instance, tends to leach into whatever you are cooking, even if the bottle has been cleaned.

Thermos cooking is in no way difficult or complicated, all you need is some simple [directions](#).

Water

Without a source of clean drinking water most of us will die within seven days, three during extreme weather conditions. The problem with water is it's difficult to store enough to last through an extended emergency. Most of us just don't have the space required to store the volume of water needed.

The water from waterbeds can be used in an emergency if you have a method of purifying the water before drinking. The average waterbed will hold approximately five hundred gallons; a family of four could have two thousand gallons in waterbed storage.

Collecting rain water on the roof could be a solution in areas that receive an ample amount rain fall. Use plastic sheets, tarps etc, to funnel the life giving liquid into clean trash cans, buckets or other containers.

When I lived in an apartment building in the late 1990's I bought several "kiddy pools" just for this purpose. They can be stored neatly one inside the other and slid under the bed out of the way until needed.

Some urban areas have lakes or streams near by. Never drink directly from the source; there is no way of knowing if the water is contaminated without proper testing. Don't take chances; invest in a good [water filter](#) to be sure. The best filters filter out Bacteria, Organic Chemicals and Protozoa (Giardia) Viruses.

Shelter

I hated living in an apartment. I felt like I had no privacy what so ever, I could literally hear every word, whimper, moan or scream through the walls, ceiling and floor. I am sure every one in the building felt the same way. If you are stuck in the city an apartment is likely the situation you will need to deal with despite its limitations.

There are a few things you can do to make your place more secure. The first thing I did was replace the front door with a steel security door with dead bolt and peephole. I hid the old door in the closet and replaced it when I moved. I also replaced the door leading into the bedroom with the same type door, lock and peephole set up for an instant safe room inside the apartment.

Don't forget [smoke](#) and [carbon monoxide](#). Keep at least two fully charged fire extinguishers on hand at all times. Also the magnetic break [door and window alarms](#) work well when used to guard the windows and doors leading into the apartment.

If you are above the second floor an escape ladder or rope should be put back incase of fire. A proper mask should also be considered.

When we pay rent we are always faced with the possibility of eviction. If possible keep the rent paid up at least six months or more in advance. If you have no other way of paying in advance, borrowing the money from the bank will keep you sheltered during hard times. I hate debt but this is an area where it could be to your advantage depending on your personal circumstances and how you work the situation.

Going mobile could be an option for the city survivor, but fuel would become a problem post peak-oil. Like everything else in life we must weigh the good against the bad and make our choices based on that knowledge. If you are interested in this, a great information can be found [here](#).

Weapons

Defense in the city will likely be a short range engagement. For city work I recommend a good pump shotgun and a handgun. The Mossberg 500 or Remington 870 with 18 inch barrel are both excellent choices. The double barreled coach guns should also be considered. For versatility put back a variety of shot shell loading as well as buckshot and rifled slugs.

Handguns should be at least .38 caliber or above. I like both revolvers and automatics, in skilled hands both can be effective. Stay with what you know and practice. If you have had little or no training in this area seek out a competent instructor and become qualified. If you are fortunate enough to live in a state that issues concealed carry permits, you should apply for yours as soon as possible.

My favorite foraging tool in urban areas is the [Springfield Armory M6 scout](#). It was developed for the U.S. Air Force as a survival tool for downed pilots and works quite well in that role. I think the main advantage this little rifle has over others is the fact it can be broken down or folded up and hidden in a backpack until needed.

Wild Game

As the human population continues to decline, look for a huge increase in the number of wild and semi-wild animals. Mostly small game such as rabbit and squirrel but what most people fail to realize is that the outskirts of most urban centers harbor a good number of [whitetail deer](#).

Small game can be taken with traps, air rifles, slingshots or even killed with a club or rock. When I lived on a lot in a small city I shoot squirrels that found their way into my back lot with a .22 caliber single rifle loaded with [CB caps](#), (down-loaded .22 rimfire ammo) the little rounds are very quiet and can take most small animals out to about ten yards. Deer can easily be [snared](#) or shot.

Look for huge numbers of semi-domestic dogs and cats to populate urban areas after a collapse. If you can get past the thought and your own limitations these can be good sources of meat. Dogs can be caught in snares and cats are easy to trap using homemade [box traps](#).

Most cities have an abundant pigeon population. It is a simple matter to follow the flock to their roost at dusk. Shinning a light into their eyes they tend to set still where they can be caught or killed with little trouble. Air guns and sling shots work well.

Without a doubt the most abundant source of meat in any urban environment is the common rat. They have thrived under even the most challenging circumstances. It is almost a certainty if there are human survivors after any catastrophe rats will be in abundance. Like most small animals they can be trapped in homemade [box traps](#) or shot.

Gardening

Don't expect to support yourself entirely from a city garden, at least not at first. I have raised tomatoes in a window box and hanging baskets on the terrace. Perhaps in time large community gardens would spring up that could be worked by groups of survivors.

During the first months preceding a collapse gardens will need to be [hidden and out of site](#). A lot of vegetables are easily mistaken for weeds and are not all that difficult to keep hidden from passers-by.

The first rule of avoiding detection is to never plant your crops using the traditional row method. The [three sisters](#) gardening method comes to mind, the some North American Indian tribes used this technique to grow corn, beans and squash to great effect and it acts as a natural camouflage.

When it comes to survival gardening, obviously we must start with seed; therefore it becomes a necessity to have a source of viable seed on hand. Look for non-hybrid ("heirloom") varieties, you want to be sure the seed saved from year to year will breed true and continue to do so. Hybrid varieties for the most part are unpredictable and seem to only do well during the first year of planting.

Most garden varieties should be included in your stock. Include such vegetables as: artichoke, asparagus, beans, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chives, corn, cucumber, eggplant, garlic, gourds, kale, leeks, lettuce, mustard green, onions, parsley, parsnips, peanuts, peas, peppers, pumpkin, radishes, soybeans, spinach, squash, sunflowers, swiss chard, tomatoes, turnip, watermelon, zucchini etc; In general put back seeds that grow well in your area and of foods you like to eat.

Conclusion

Even in the most populated areas after the rioting, burning and looting subsides there will be survivors. The most difficult part is surviving the first few months after the crash, and then the rebuilding can begin.

Medical

Formal Training

The first step is education and training. Taking a First-Aid / CPR class is the absolute minimum training every survivor should have, and should be the first step taken to becoming as medically independent as possible. Home nursing / home health care and Paramedic / EMT classes are well worth the effort, and will take you well beyond the knowledge level of the average first aid class.

Book Learning

We can learn a lot on our own from books and independent study. There are many good books available to the survivalist; I recommend, Where there is no Doctor, Where there is no Dentist, The American Red Cross first-aid and safety handbook, The Physician's Desk Reference, The Merck manual of Diagnosis and Therapy, Ship's Medicine Chest, U.S. Army Special Forces Medical Handbook. There are many others but this is a good starting point to a complete medical library for the survivalist.

Prevention

The best medicine is prevention. Personal hygiene and proper sanitation are the first defense to maintaining good health and preventing disease. Keeping clean and washing your hands often goes a long toward the prevention of transmittable disease. Most people are rather nasty. I have, on several occasions witnessed this with people using public restrooms. They go in crap, get up leave never washing their hands, acting like it is no big deal. Everything they touch is contaminated, if you come alone and touch the object, and touch your face, well you know... Keep your hands clean and avoid touching your face.

In the 1800's thousands of people became sick or died from dysentery. The bacteria from outhouses had polluted the drinking water. Clean drinking water is a must for maintaining good health. Guardia, bacteria, viruses and other nasty stuff is present in most water sources. Invest in a good water filter and avoid drinking from water sources that you are unsure of.

Healthy Diet

Eating correctly is very important to maintaining good health. Avoiding salt, sugar and fatty cuts of meat will be of great help in keeping healthy. The old saying we are what we eat, holds true and is very important to health and survival.

Exercise

Take a walk. Walking for at least 30 minutes a day, according to studies, is as effective, as running for the same amount of time, and with less strain, on the joints and less stress on the shins and feet. Everyday I try to get in a walk, stretch and perform a set of push-ups and set-ups. Every little bit helps even 15 minutes of brisk activity a day will put you ahead of most. But first you need to get off the couch.

Supplements

Make sure you are getting the proper amount of vitamins and minerals. I take the one source ultimate men's from Wal-Mart as well as an extra 500 mg of vitamin C and two spoon tablespoons of flex seed oil everyday.

Getting in and maintaining good health is just as important to survival plans, as guns and ammo. After all if you are sick or wounded, without proper treatment or the knowledge to treat yourself, you have lost the battle already.

First Aid Kit

The basic item in the medical kit should be [The Merck Manual](#), a reference book covering all diseases and their treatment. This is a must if you don't have available medical help. It is written in easily understood language and is updated each year. Chemical names and dosage amounts for treatment of each disease are listed. I'm sure you could get any bookstore to order you a copy, or check the library.

Probably the most common problem at the retreat will be the preservation or treatment of infection in cuts and abrasions. For prevention you should have tincture of [Merthiolate](#), alcohol or [Zephiran Chloride Solution](#) to sterilize any open cut or scratch before it gets infected. Then, of course, plenty of band-aids of all sizes, gauze and adhesive tape to cover cuts or scratches.

A deep cut can be pulled together with tape if no medical man is available to suture it shut. For any injury which is bleeding profusely, put some gauze over the wound and hold pressure directly on the cut. The bleeding will stop more quickly and hence less blood will be lost by direct pressure than by trying to use a tourniquet, and direct pressure reduces the chance of complications. Always clean any open injury well with soap and water, removing all dirt and other foreign matter before applying the dressing.

For control and treatment of infection, external and internal, you should have some antibiotics in the kit. I would suggest you get a prescription from your doctor for enough antibiotic to treat each member of the family at least once for a five day course; more if possible.

Judge whether infection is present by fever and inflammation or swelling (include a thermometer in the kit). Heat will help surface infections so include a hot water bottle or two. Polycillin is probably the drug of choice now because it is effective against a wide variety of conditions. Because liquid antibiotics have a limited shelf life, dry type antibiotics should be selected if possible. Also sulfa powders and tablets which last indefinitely are well worth obtaining.

Pain maybe a serious problem so you should include Darvon compound 65. You will need to take one or two about every four hours as needed for pain. You should include an anti nauseate such as Bucladin and take one as needed for nausea.

Fractures should be treated by splinting. There is a good plastic inflatable splint in each arm and leg length. These take up very little space and are far more effective and comfortable then wood splints.

Treat abscesses with heat and when the center gets white, open it with a needle or similar object which has been sterilized with Merthiolate.

I'd advise a fairly good supply of sleeping pills, tranquilizers, anti-histamines and antacid tablets. Buy some over the counter variety or get a prescription from your doctor.

Be sure to have a good supply of any drugs that you take frequently. You should also get hundreds of aspirin. Trib ointment is an anti-biotic cream that should be included. Put in as many vitamin capsules as possible; these will provide good insurance that dietary changes will not result in vitamin deficiency diseases.

If you will be in areas where irritative plants like nettles and poison ivy abound or where stinging or biting insects are a problem, a good supply of antihistamine / anesthetic ointment would be a good investment. Also a supply of an effective insect repellent. If poisonous snakes are a problem, a snake bite kit should be carried on every person whenever you are afield and you should have an antivenin kit at the retreat.

Other books to be considered for the retreat medical kit might include a [Red Cross First Aid Handbook](#), a good book on nutritional values of foods, an [exercise book](#) for periods of reduced activity, and books on specialty subjects such as delivering a baby at home, care of children's health problems, etc.

If you can fit it into your schedule, a good first aid course would stand you in good stead.

Finally, be prepared with [a good kit](#) but don't be overly concerned about health problems at the retreat. Because of lack of exposure to those carrying communicable disease like colds, flu, etc., these should be reduced significantly. And because you will be keeping active enough to be in good shape, many of the health problems of the desk bound rat race will no longer plague you.

Basic supplies

- Adhesive tape
- Aluminum finger splints
- Antibiotic ointment
- Antiseptic solution or towelettes
- Bandages, including a roll of elastic wrap (Ace, Coban, others) and bandage strips (Band-Aid, Curad, others) in assorted sizes
- Instant cold packs
- Cotton balls and cotton-tipped swabs
- Disposable latex or synthetic gloves, at least two pair
- Gauze pads and roller gauze in assorted sizes
- Eye goggles
- First-aid manual
- Petroleum jelly or other lubricant
- Plastic bags for the disposal of contaminated materials
- Safety pins in assorted sizes
- Save-A-Tooth storage device containing salt solution and a travel case
- Scissors, tweezers and a needle
- Soap or instant hand sanitizer
- Sterile eyewash, such as a saline solution
- Thermometer
- Triangular bandage
- Turkey baster or other bulb suction device for flushing out wounds

Medications

- Activated charcoal (use only if instructed by your poison control center)
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Over-the-counter oral antihistamine (Benadryl, others)
- Aspirin and nonaspirin pain relievers (never give aspirin to children)
- Calamine lotion
- Over-the-counter hydrocortisone cream
- Personal medications
- If prescribed by your doctor, drugs to treat an allergic attack, such as an auto-injector of epinephrine (EpiPen)
- Syringe, medicine cup or spoon

Dental Emergencies

One thing is certain dental services will always be in demand - but will you be able to afford competent care or find it when needed?

This is one instance where I think having a small gold or silver reserve is a good ideal.

After a collapse the dollar maybe worthless or severally devalued - but gold and silver will retain some value that can be traded for dental and medical care in an emergency.

Unfortunately; no matter how prepared we are some medical emergencies cannot be dealt with without proper and professional care. Plan accordingly...

But there are steps that can be taken to better deal with minor problems or provide care until a permanent solution can be implemented.

Preventive maintenance cannot be stressed enough. Take care of your teeth. If possible, visit a dentist at least once a year to find and take care of any potential problems.

Brush, floss and rinse - stock up on oral hygiene supplies. This can be done cheaply compared to the alternative of paying for repair of major problems, resulting from poor oral hygiene.

Stocking sufficient toothpaste, brushes, rinse and floss to last several years can be done rather cheaply, this stuff would also make excellent barter goods, in the event of an all-out collapse.

I buy all of my toothpaste from a vendor dealing in overstocked and outdated items from a large drugstore chain for \$.25 a tube. I get a number of other first aid and medical items from there also, but that's another article...

If pressed; it's easy to make your own toothpaste, by mixing equal parts of baking soda and salt. The result tastes like crap, but it does an excellent job of cleaning your teeth and gums. Simply moisten a toothbrush and dip it in the mixture and brush as usual.

Basic supplies

- Temporary filling material Temparin or Cavit
- Tweezers
- Gauze
- Toothbrush
- Soft dental floss
- Toothpaste
- Oragel or other dental pain reliever
- Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin)
- Clove Oil (pain relief)
- Rubber gloves (some people are allergic to latex)
- Dental wax
- Toothpicks
- Cotton
- Dental Mirror
- Hand Sanitizer

Or if you prefer you can purchase a [ready-made kit](#) and expand it into a comprehensive package. I also suggest you get a copy of "Where There Is No Dentist" available as a [free download](#) from Hesperian.org.

Resources

[Earth4Energy](#) - Make Your Own Solar Panels and Wind Generator.

[1000 Military Manuals](#) - CD or Instant Download.

[Urban Survival](#) - Three Week Correspondence Course.

[Mountain House Freeze-Dried Food](#)

[Water Barrels and Storage](#)

[Emergency Communication](#)

[Executive 72-hour Kit](#)

[Ultimate Family Preparedness Pak](#)

[MRE's](#)

[Emergency Lighting](#)

1st Aid Kits

Water Filters, Purifiers and Storage

Emergency Radios

EMT Medic Rescue-Pak

Solar Battery Charger

Water Test Kit - Individual

MSR MiniWorks EX