



THE ULTIMATE **PREPPER'S** SURVIVAL BIBLE

5 IN 1

A Life-Saving Guide
to Be Totally Prepared for the
Worst Disasters. The Best
Strategies for Home-Defense,
Survival Medicine, Stockpiling,
Canning, and More



CHRISTOPHER JERKINS

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Christopher Jerkins

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Introduction



In 2020, there was a sudden shortage of toilet paper. I saw a video of two Australian women fighting over a package at a grocery store—they were pulling each other's hair, screaming, slapping, and punching. As soon as I

saw that video I knew: This is coming here. I already keep more toilet paper available than my family will use in three months, but I upped my supply to all the same. Lo and behold, soon after, there was a shortage in the US, as well.

When people arrived at the stores to see barren shelves, it started a chain reaction: People were now psychologically conditioned to think of toilet paper as a rare and important commodity. When the shelves filled back up, people rushed to buy as much as they possibly could. The shelves were once again empty. People who weren't lucky enough to get there early had that psychological conditioning reinforced. People were trying to prep long after the time they should have prepped. The only thing that ended this cycle of overbuying and emptying shelves was when stores put a limit of one package per customer.

This also happened for bottled water, canned foods, and dozens of other products that preppers already had well-stocked in their homes, and were comfortably enjoying without fistfights with Australian women.

What is the moral of the story? Be prepared *before* you need to be prepared. Trying to get prepared after you're already in a crisis situation is no different than putting coolant into your car's engine after it's already on fire.

The common misconception is that preppers are all lunatics who live in cabins like Ted Kaczynski, and constantly fret about nuclear warfare and a tyrannical government. In 2019, before the great toilet paper depression, I saw many very wealthy, comfortable people on cable news, mocking preppers as 'crazy' people. I don't see mockery so much anymore.

Prepping isn't about nuclear holocausts and guerilla warfare, as the critics seem to believe. Prepping is fundamentally about three things:

1. Your ultimate responsibility is the safety, security, health, welfare, and happiness of you and your family.
2. Crises are inevitable; Floods, supply-chain interruptions, blizzards, hurricanes, and other natural and man-made disasters will happen, and often do.
3. When crises strike, no one is coming to save you.

That's basically it. Prepping is preparing. Preparing for the worst—and

hoping for the best—has no political affiliation or religion. This type of thinking usually comes more easily to people who live a rural life. Police response times can be up to an hour; ambulances are the same; hospitals aren't nearby. Snow removal won't be done by 10 a.m., in fact it probably won't be done at all. If your car breaks down, you can't just call an Uber. Going to the grocery store is a more rare event.

People in these areas are naturally conditioned to live in a fashion closer to prepping than people in cities. But pay close attention, city people: This fact makes your life more convenient day-to-day, but in a crisis event, you are much more vulnerable than your rural countrymen. For that reason, this book is even more important for the urban reader.

Even if you believe that the government is responsible for protecting you, the reality is that they can't always be relied on to be there to do it. People fail to do their jobs every day. You see it all the time, and some of them work for the government.

THE RULES

Rule #1: Never Tell Anyone You Are Prepper

Under no circumstances should you ever tell neighbors, coworkers, or acquaintances, that you are well stocked and supplied. Your extended family can know about your preps. Maybe a few friends you trust can know.

If things get bad enough, people who seem nice now might not stay that way. If food and supplies dry up on shelves in stores and homes, people will start looking elsewhere. You do not want anyone coming to your home looking for stuff.

A desperate mind is predictable. At first, they will ask kindly. They will hope you are generous. If you are, that's a call you have to make. But if they cut into your supply fast enough, they will be hungry again, and so will you and your family. If you tell them no, they won't just accept it. They'll become angry. They'll accuse you of being greedy, of being a bad friend. They will

thoroughly talk themselves into believing that you are a bad person and that this gives them the right to take from you. You aren't dealing with the logical or moral part of their mind anymore. It is desperation talking to them, and desperation is very persuasive. Then they will try and take from you. They might recruit others. They might bring weapons.

As far as everyone else is concerned, you are as unprepared as they are. To borrow from a popular movie starring Brad Pitt, “The first rule of Prep Club is YOU DO NOT TALK ABOUT PREP CLUB.”

Rule #2: Prepping Is an Ongoing Project, Not a One and Done

This isn't about just purchasing a bunch of stuff, throwing it in your basement, and then forgetting about it. Even food that has a long shelf-life needs to be rotated and replaced. You need to be regularly using and replacing supplies.

New products come out all the time. A lot of it is junk or the same old stuff with a new label, but some of it is really great. You might add those items to supplement or replace other things.

If you have a garden, tending to that will be a daily part of your life.

The same goes for knowledge. This book will cover a lot of topics, but it simply cannot contain every possible piece of knowledge you might need for every situation. There is always more you can learn, more you can prepare for, more you can train for. Read books. Watch videos on the internet. Take classes.

Rule #3: Keep Multiple Redundancies

Whatever you have, get one or two more. If your trenching shovel breaks, what do you do? You might not be in a situation where a quick drive to Home Depot solves your problem.

Things break. Flashlights run out of battery power. Bottles of medicine dwindle.

Always have extra.

Rule #4: Make a Plan, Know the Plan

What are the situations most likely to affect you where you live? If you live below sea level, such as in New Orleans, you know that you are at risk of flooding. If you live in particularly stressed cities like Minneapolis, you are vulnerable to civil unrest, rioting, and supply shortages.

These are things you need to think about ahead of time. Your disaster and your environment will determine your plan.

Do you have a family? They are part of the plan, too. They need to know the plan. They need to be able to tell you what the plan is at a moment's notice.

You did fire drills in school. Do drills at home. How quickly can you get out the door with everything you need and in your truck or car?

Rule #5: Expect That Plan to Fail

Murphy's Law always applies. Plans rarely survive contact with the enemy. That is something you need to expect. Luck is always a factor. The best you can hope to do is maximize your own competence and preparation and minimize the impact that luck will play.

Expect the plan to fail. Be ready with a backup plan. If your backup plan fails, make a new backup plan.

Book I: Prepper's Long-Term Survival

Many disasters hit hard, but things reorient quickly. People flee their homes, find shelter, and can return to those homes or find new lodgings soon after. People need food and water, but can find aid stations. People need to find a place to sleep, and find a spot in a stadium or at a hotel. This is what happens when everything goes right while everything is going wrong.

Sometimes things don't go so easily. Sometimes things break, and stay that way for a long time. The 20th century is 100 years of horror stories about senseless wars, genocides, man-made famines, and other catastrophes of human arrogance. It's easy to think we've evolved past that.

Long-Term Events

Here are a few events from the last 20 years or so. Recent enough that you probably remember a few of them.

Afghanistan is a notoriously difficult region to live in. In 2008, it got even worse. The temperature dropped to -22 Fahrenheit and the sky dropped 70 inches of snow. That is not a typo. Almost 1,000 people died. Hospitals had to perform hundreds of amputations all across the country to deal with the frostbite from people who walked through the freezing cold snow. Afghanistan is a country full of farmers, and millions of sheep, goats, and cattle died. Even after the snow was gone, people still had to live with lost limbs, and fewer cattle, which, for a subsistence farmer, is like losing your livelihood.

August of 2003 was one of the all-time hottest August months on record for the northern hemisphere. According to the Earth Policy Institute, 35,000 people died from the heat. France had it worse than most countries, suffering almost 15,000 deaths. Those numbers make it about 20 times more lethal than the well-known SARS epidemic. This all happened in well-developed, first-world nations that have air conditioning and excellent medical care.

(Shaoni Bhattacharya, 2013)

In 2010, Haiti experienced a catastrophic 7.0 earthquake, followed by 52 aftershocks. The official death count is an estimated 3 million. This was an unbelievable humanitarian crisis—many fewer might have died, except that the relief efforts were a disaster in and of themselves. Transportation systems from the air and from the sea were dysfunctional. Hospitals had been damaged or destroyed. The entire electrical grid was down in much of the country. From satellite photography, there was a noticeable dark spot at night next to the Dominican Republic. Communication systems were knocked out. And then there was the simple managerial chaos: In one case, vast amounts of bottled water were found inside an airplane hangar long after the water issue had been solved. No one could seem to explain who put the water there or how long it had been there, or why it was there when there were people all over the country still desperate for water.

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina did 125 billion dollars worth of damage, sinking New Orleans underwater. The wind traveled at a terrifyingly fast 175 mph. The levees broke and flooded the city. The storm displaced thousands who were forced to stay with family outside the city or to live in tent cities set up inside of sports stadiums. Thankfully, because hurricanes are predictable with modern weather tracking technology, many were able to evacuate the area, and only about 2,000 people died. It took a long time for many of those people to find a new home. Many businesses were gone, and everyone working there was now unemployed.

There was a lot of blame to go around, because the city had apparently been putting off a lot of their flooding control maintenance for more immediate priorities. The army corps of engineers was held responsible after investigations, although they could not be sued and held liable because of sovereign immunity—which is a legal standard that means, essentially, you cannot sue the government unless the government allows you to.

In 2011, the Tohoku underwater magnitude 9 earthquake: The most powerful earthquake ever recorded in Japan, and the fourth most powerful on Earth since the year 1900. The enormous tsunami produced by this earthquake was 133 ft. tall, traveled 435 mph, and when it crashed into Japan, it made it six entire miles inland. I forgot to mention, it was March, and it was freezing

cold outside.

About 20,000 people died as a result of this; 6,000 injured, and well over 2,000 people missing. But what this tsunami is most known for is for crashing into the Fukushima nuclear power plants. Luckily for Japan and the world, Japan is situated historically to be perhaps the most well-prepared country on Earth for three types of natural and man-made disasters: earthquakes, tsunamis, and nuclear disasters. The engineers had contingencies to deal with this, so it did not become an absolute radioactive disaster like what happened in Chernobyl in 1986—when Russia botched a nuclear power plant and irradiated an entire city in Ukraine, forcing 110,000 people to evacuate, leaving behind everything at a moments notice.

2020: A disease of unknown origin appeared in China. The Chinese government reacted by sending men in hazmat suits to hose down every surface with chemicals and lock people into their homes, even welding doors shut. All in all, they were behaving exactly as though the world were about to end in a pandemic horror movie.

The disease spread all over the world. Good information was hard to rely on. Governments would say one thing, and then abruptly change their mind. Contrarian information was scrubbed from the public conversation by social media and technology companies. This information was removed before it could be confirmed or denied through public scrutiny and investigation, which sowed mutual distrust between people and their governments and tech companies, encouraging conspiracy theorizing, paranoia, and parallel scientific investigations.

People were forced to stay home and leave their jobs. Owners of small businesses were particularly disrupted, and many lost their livelihoods. Rules were made and changed at a whim and became increasingly confusing to people. Massive civil unrest began, and there was rioting all over the country. People who were already struggling often found their towns completely torched and looted. The supply-chain was disrupted, causing abrupt starts and stops of supplies virtually everywhere.

Worse yet, all of this happened during a presidential campaign season, so literally, everything happening became a political topic to be argued and

debated about, with either side digging in their heels and completely unable to work things out.

This is the most recent combination of natural and man-made disasters. It is still foremost on people's minds (at the time that this book is published) and it is likely one of the big reasons why you decided to purchase or borrow this book and read it.

Just imagine if Covid were a real plague, like the one that killed a third of all Europeans during the medieval period. Imagine that the government, citizens, medical system, infrastructure, news, media, and fellow citizens, all behaved exactly the same in that situation. Let me tell you: They would. They wouldn't do anything differently, except maybe to do it worse.

Get Out of the City

Here's what happens when things get out of control. You can see it on any news station when they broadcast natural disasters and wars.

Cities operate on constant resupplies. If trucks or trains can't go in, a city will be out of food in a few days. In a place like New York, if they are completely cut off, they will be out of food in less than a week. That's about 9 million people without food. They won't just stay and die. They will loot, and when they can't find anything, they will leave the city looking for food elsewhere.

You can expect instantaneous traffic congestion. People will try to flee. UHaul trucks and rental cars will all become unavailable. Supply trucks will not be able to move. Fire and police will not be able to move. Inevitably, people will become desperate and abandon their cars and start walking, thus making the congestion even worse.

Looting should be expected. Without any available law enforcement, and homes and businesses abandoned, a desperate few people will take the opportunity to steal. When others see a mob taking things without any consequence, they will join in. At a certain point, people who wouldn't ordinarily steal anything will see this and (correctly) deduce that everything of value in the store or home will be gone within the next 15 minutes, no

matter what, and they will rationalize that it might as well be them who takes it since it's a foregone conclusion that someone will.

Grocery stores will empty out. All bottled water will vanish. All canned food, rice, beans, and other non-perishables will vanish. Batteries, baby diapers, and things that would surprise you are all gone. People will begin thinking like preppers after it's already too late.

With police, fire departments, and ambulances overburdened, people with violent inclinations will take the opportunity to attack their rivals.

The wealthiest and most connected people will get out just fine. They have homes elsewhere or friends who will take them in. Those who don't will be funneled into sports stadiums, essentially an enormous homeless camp with little security, packed with both good people and the worst people. That's a best-case scenario. If the government is functioning well enough to actually provide a place. Otherwise, you will see columns of countless people moving on foot, stretching for miles.

The government will both overreact and underreact. They will suspend certain civil rights. As we saw after Hurricane Katrina wrecked New Orleans, local and federal law enforcement can be expected to go door-to-door, confiscating legally owned weapons. They will attempt to arrest people who are looting buildings full of contents that are about to be destroyed by water.

Cities exist because of a very complicated, very productive system. A city is an absolute miracle. In Manhattan, this system manages to feed millions of people every day, on an island, with no farms within miles. This system is brittle, though. Brief interruptions can throw the whole thing out of balance.

Are You Prepped?

If you are supplied and skilled enough to survive without any help for 2 weeks, you are more prepared than 99% of people. In most cases, this is more than enough. Even the worst situations are usually under control within a few weeks.

If you are well-prepared, you probably won't need to know many wilderness survival skills. That's the whole point. You are ready when others won't be.

That said, remember Rule #5: Things go wrong. You might find yourself in a bad situation far from your home or supplies. Your stockpile might be destroyed by a fire or flood. Maybe you accidentally wrote the wrong expiration date on your canned goods and they aren't edible anymore.

For whatever reason, you should know some basic survival skills, medical skills, and how to make and preserve your food.

How to Survive the Worst Scenarios

There's an old rule of thumb that's easy and crucial to know. It's called *The Rule of Threes*. It goes like this:

You can survive **3 minutes** without air or in extremely cold water.

You can survive **3 hours** without proper shelter.

You can survive **3 days** without water.

You can survive **3 weeks** without food.

With this handy mnemonic, it's easy to see how we need to prioritize our needs. Worry about shelter first, then water, then food. For that reason, that's the order we will cover them.

Shelter: How to Stay Warm and Keep Cool

Consider alternatives to your current home heating. Are you using gas or electricity right now? If you lost power for several days, what options could you use?

If you have a fireplace, you're already one step ahead. If you have a wood-burning stove system, that's even better.

For everyone else, consider alternatives like portable electric heaters for those

who have gas heating, and portable gas heaters for people who have electric heating.

Consider ways to maximize the insulation of your home. Plastic sheeting over windows helps keep the cold out and the heat in. Draught stoppers on the floor or nailing blankets like curtains in front of doors or drafty areas help a lot, and were very common before modern insulation. You can make your own draught stopper by using your choice of insulating substance (newspaper, rice, sand, cotton, etc.) and a pair of old socks: Fill the socks with your available stuffing and tie the 'open' ends together.

If you have no place to stay, you can do a lot with just some rope and a tarp. In cold weather, you need to be out of the wind and dry. A camping tent or a makeshift tent can allow you to achieve both of those goals.

Keeping cool is harder than staying warm. As the temperature approaches your own body temperature, the benefits of fans become less and less effective. Your options are basically to go into a body of water or find a cave, where a dozen feet or more insulates it from the sun.

Water

Every major ancient civilization was built next to a large supply of freshwater. You know their names: The Nile, the Euphrates, the Ganges, the Yang Tse, the Mississippi. Where you see freshwater, you will find people.

Without any freshwater, people can't live. Without lots of freshwater, crops can't grow and livestock can't be raised. A population without ample water cannot be sustained.

The five main places to find mostly clean freshwater are:

- municipal supply
- wells
- streams
- rain/snow
- the store

If your area's infrastructure is functioning normally, getting water is as easy as running a tap. We aren't all so lucky.

Wells are more challenging. People who are living off-grid almost always have wells to clean water sources. Digging a well is not easy and not cheap. In some areas, it is your best option to supply a lot of water. Digging a real well, the kind with an electric pump and enough output to sustain a home, requires a lot of stabbing the earth with very expensive equipment, piping, and praying for you to hit the water. This is a fine option if you already have it or have access to a place that does. After things get bad, this is not a realistic option in many places.

Streams are a great source if you can find one. You may clean the water before drinking it, which we will discuss in detail below.

Rain and snow collection are good options. However, most places simply do not have enough rainfall to provide the only source of water. Collecting rainwater can be a supplement. In most places, especially in the drier Western climates, it is not a realistic option. Snow has the particular benefit of being solid. You can pick it up, shovel it, melt it, boil it, and you have water.

Also, take note: It is illegal in many states to collect water for personal use from streams or rain. I'm not kidding. Collecting water in a rain barrel is a crime in many places. Take that into consideration. If things get bad enough, it might not matter.

How to Store Water in a Survival Situation (Finding, Storing, Water Treatment and Purification)

Finding and Collection

Streams and rivers are your best option if you can find them. If you already know your environment, finding water might be easy. If you don't, there are

a few ways to find them. If you have access to a map, that should make things rather simple. If not, remember a few things: Animals need water and also tend to congregate near it, so keep an eye in the sky for concentrations of birds, or the dirt for animal tracks that might indicate they have a place to drink nearby. Streams and rivers always follow the path of least resistance, so keep an eye out for valleys and gullies, and lower lands rather than higher. Many of those geological features were created by water cutting paths through the rock.

Rainwater is not a reliable source of water for the long term, but if it's raining, there's no reason not to take advantage. A home roof and gutter system can be modified very easily to collect water and empty it into a rain barrel.

If out in the wild, water can be collected with a tarp. Tying all four corners to different trees and leaving a bucket or barrel at the lowest dipping point is a great way to grab falling water.

You may have heard that a person needs to drink something like 12 glasses of water a day. That's only kind of true. We need that much water, but we don't need to drink that many glasses of it. Much of the water we consume comes from food, especially fruits and vegetables. As long as you are staying hydrated, you are getting enough.



Transpiration is light perspiration, for trees. Yes, trees sweat—kind of. Moisture is moved from the water in the ground through the plants' roots, and is expelled through the leaves. By placing something like a plastic grocery bag on a leafy branch or bush, you can collect the tree's 'sweat'. Be sure to tie it off and place something a little heavy like a rock so the water has a place to collect. This isn't the best method, but desperate times call for desperate measures.

If you have a shovel or entrenching tool, you can dig an **underground 'still'**.

1. Find a place that gets a lot of sunlight throughout the day
2. Dig a bowl-shaped pit. Three feet wide and two feet deep should be fine.
3. At the center, the deepest portion of the 'bowl', dig out another hole just the right size for your collection container: a bucket or a pot, whatever you have. Place the collection container in the pit.
4. Cover the hole with plastic sheeting or a tarp. Use rocks, branches, and soil to hold it down, whatever you have available.
5. Put a small rock in the center of your sheet. It should hang into the container.

6. Rain and morning dew will collect on the tarp. If the earth is especially cool, it will naturally collect condensation.

Cleaning

Water in the wild isn't usually as clean as from the tap, or in bottles. Water can contain microorganisms, microplastics, and pollutants. Water may look fine, but you can't always know if a dead possum isn't in the water just a few yards ahead. If you're lucky, drinking bad water will only cause you some stomach cramps and diarrhea. If it's something worse, it could be much more dangerous. Play it safe. Drink clean water.

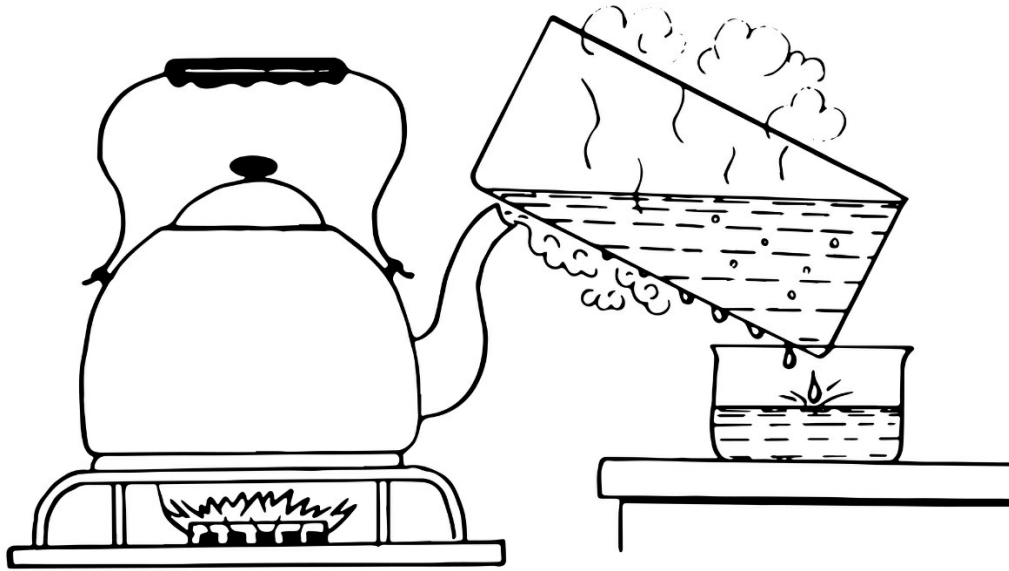
There are plenty of products you can buy that will do all the work for you. If you are adequately prepared for the long haul, these might be all you need. Even having just a few of these can be plenty for short-term disasters:

- water filtration
- survival straws
- UV lights
- disinfecting tablets

If you can't get these things or the crisis goes on so long that you run out, you can't get access to fresh stream water, you don't have a well, your next best option is **distillation**. It takes time and energy, but it works and it's the best way to clean water when you are out of other options.

Set up a heating element and a pot. Just above the pot, set up a tarp in a V-shape above it, but tilted at an angle.

When you boil the water in the pot, it will evaporate. Instead of floating away, it makes contact with the tarp, condenses just like on a can of soda on a hot summer day, and the water will drip down the easiest path it can. You need another pot or container for collection, just under where it will drip. This isn't the most efficient system, but if you are in a pinch, it can save your life.



A Few More Things

- Do not drink alcohol. That'll make you more thirsty.
- Do NOT drink your own urine. It has a high salt content and contains a bunch of stuff your body is trying to get rid of for a good reason. If you are going to die, it can be done, but prolonged urine drinking leads to kidney failure.
- Do NOT drink sea water. It will make you more thirsty, not less.

Food

Food is your third most important priority after shelter and water, even though it is the thing people usually worry about the most.

Where to Find Food

Depending on the nature of the emergency, food might be abundant or it

might be scarce. If the emergency response from the government is doing its job, you should be able to find a FEMA camp or NGO that is on the scene looking to help people out. That's the best-case scenario—but this book is not about best-case scenarios, so we'll be covering ways to feed yourself when grocery stores and the goodwill of others are not an option.

Some of these are short-term solutions for when you need it right now, some will work better as long-term solutions if the crisis is not settled in short order.

How to Find Food in the Wild

You have a few options. If they remind you of a paleolithic man, you are correct. Before humans invented farms, food was found or hunted, not created.

These are your basic options:

- Hunting
- Fishing
- Trapping
- Foraging
- Stealing

Hunting

Guns are great for personal defense, but also great for getting food. A deer can yield between 45-75 pounds of meat for the price of one round of ammo and the time spent hunting. At the time of this writing, one round of 6.5 Creedmoor ammo from a reputable manufacturer costs about \$2.40. Not a bad return on investment. If you are a competent archer, you can even retrieve the missile and use it again.

Not everyone lives in a place where they can easily get a gun. If you can, do so. We'll go into more depth about firearm safety and use in the next chapter.

Hunting is not easy. If you don't have experience with it, find someone who does, and go out with them in the coming season. There is a lot to learn, depending on the game you are looking to hunt.

If you live in a particularly wild part of the world, a gun might be necessary to protect yourself from wild critters such as mountain lions or bears. Most wild predators won't mess with people, but if one is particularly desperate and hungry, or they feel you are a threat to their young, they may attack.

Game animals are excellent sources of protein. Rabbits, deer, and other prey species do not have a lot of fat on them, which is a serious limitation. Many of us grew up being taught that animal fat is bad for us. That is nonsense. Humans need fat in their diets and animal fat is a great source. For fattier meats, a bear is fantastic.



Fishing

A lot of people don't like to eat fish. If you are in a tough spot, you'll have to get over it. 125 million Japanese people eat fish every day. You'll be fine, unless you have an allergy, of course. Fish is a fantastic source of protein and

one of the great things about fishing is that it can be done passively.

In a shallow stream or river, it is a simple task to set up a v-shaped wall of rocks. You aren't creating a dam. You are creating a gate, with spaces narrow enough that water can pass through easily, but fish can't. This barrier traps the fish in a spot so you can come up to them and snatch them up with a net or a spear at your leisure.

If you are near the shallows of an ocean, especially near reefs and sandbars, spearfishing is a great option. You can make a spear from wood, with a half dozen pointy sticks attached to the end, arranged in different directions like a porcupine's quills. You can get very close to a fish this way if you are patient and remain still.

For streams, you can set up fishing lines along the water with hooks and bait and wait around until one of them starts moving, and then reel them in. The more hooks you have out, the better you're on to getting a fish. One easy method is to run a rope from one end to the other, with both ends tied to trees. Then tie and hand a few lines along the rope so that the hooks and bait hang just on the surface of the water.

If you own or make nets, you can set them up along a river and wait for the fish to come to you.

Whatever method you're using, be sure to take down whatever you have set up. We don't want to completely disrupt the ecosystem by trapping and catching more fish than you need.

The best possible fishing situation is one where the fish catch themselves. The less work you have to do the better. This isn't about laziness. This is about maximizing the value of your time to get as much as you can with the time you have. If you can catch fish, wouldn't it be better if, at the same time, you could distill your water, improve your shelter, or tend a garden?



Trapping



Just like hunting and fishing, check your local laws to see what you can and can't do in regards to trapping. If things get bad enough that there is no law, then do as you like.

Trapping is like fishing in that you can set up a large network of traps and

come and visit them a couple times a day. It is a very low-energy, low-cost way to collect meat from the wild. Mostly, we're talking about rabbits, squirrels, maybe beavers. Not usually your first choice, but they are perfectly edible and go great in a stew.

I recommend using live metal cages, the same kind you would use to capture a raccoon who was prowling your property or a critter who got into your home. You can easily purchase one of these now, before things get worse, at any place that sells pest control methods.

If you have a garden, leaving a trap in your garden kills two birds with one stone: It will help protect your vegetables, and it can give you a rabbit for breakfast.

Snares are also good, but much more difficult and less reliable. The best technique I've seen for squirrel trapping is to lay a branch against a tree at a 90-degree angle. Tie a snare along the branch, so that a slipknot is on the business end, an inch off the branch. Squirrels, like all creatures, are lazy. It's easier to climb a 90-degree branch to get up a tree than it is to climb a 180-degree trunk. If you get lucky, a squirrel will run headfirst into your slipknot, tighten it, and accidentally hang itself. A dozen snares like this might produce a single squirrel a day if you make it right and get a little lucky.

The big metal leg traps that look like metal jaws are outlawed, impossible to find except as antiques, and are way too dangerous to use.

Foraging

If you want to forage, you will probably want a field guide. Which guide you want to use depends greatly on where you live. There are different plants in different regions, so having a guide suited for your natural environment is necessary. If you are living in New Mexico, your situation is completely different from someone in Alaska. These guides are very easy to find at the same place you found this book, and they aren't very expensive. I strongly encourage you to get physical, paper books, preferably waterproof/resistant. A digital copy is only useful if you have electricity, which might not be

available.

Foraging is a great way to get supplemental nutrition through plant sources, but it isn't enough on its own. For my vegan readers, in an emergency situation, you won't be able to rely on the availability of edible plants, especially if it is January in Minnesota. If you live in Florida, finding a banana or avocado might be as simple as looking at a tree in your neighborhood. But most people can't rely entirely on plant sources for food unless they have a very successful garden.

Do NOT eat mushrooms. I guarantee that you are not qualified to know which are safe to eat, even if you have a book handy for identification. Mushrooms do not have a lot of nutritional value, anyway. It's simply not worth the risk. Do not eat wild mushrooms.

Scavenging

You can eat roadkill. That might sound repulsive to a lot of people, and that's understandable. I personally know many people who have eaten deer and even possums that they found dead on the side of the road. I knew a man who kept a thermometer in his car's glove compartment. When he saw a dead animal on the road, he'd pull over, stab the animal to get its temperature. If the animal was still warm, and it wasn't a hot day, he concluded that it died recently. It sounds grisly, but medical examiners use this same technique to help determine the time of death in homicide investigations. With a little bit of common sense, it's not a bad idea.

A lot of deer is killed by cars. The latest estimate I could find was in 2012 in the USA. 1.2 million automobile collisions occurred from hitting deer. About 1 and 6 of all car collisions involve an animal. It's extremely common. If you live in an area where they are abundant, you already know this. Roughly 200 Americans die every year from collisions with deer. They seem gentle and majestic until you live with them, in which case, they often seem more like giant vermin.

Roadkill is no one's first choice. It's not filet mignon. But if you find yourself in a survival situation, an already dead animal just lying there for you to take might be a godsend.

Dead animals have to be very recently dead for them to be safe to eat. Meat spoils quickly in warm climates, and if you want to eat it, I guarantee that there are other rodents, insects, birds, and other critters who also want to eat it, and may have already started.

If you hit the deer yourself, you know for a fact that it is fresh as can be.

You can look at that animal and rather quickly assess its condition. If there are no open wounds, there is no splattering, it is probably safe to eat. If you see a dead deer that has ruptures, exposed entrails, or bugs crawling on it, it is risky. Animals killed in the winter will be naturally refrigerated, and a lot of the animals that would ordinarily make a meal of it are still hibernating, so the lifespan of a naturally refrigerated deer will be greatly extended. If flies have been laying eggs or there are maggots or anything else that is naturally repulsive to you, just stay away. Eating bad meat is very dangerous and you should avoid it. If it smells bad, looks bad, or feels weird, just trust your instincts.

I'm using deer as the main example because it is one of the most common animals that you can hit in North America and Europe, and one of the more palatable, but it's not unusual for drivers to hit large animals such as moose or bison in Canada.

Stealing

I'm not writing this here as a recommendation. While you may be able to do fine with the other four methods, others will not know how or won't want to put in the extra effort. Other people might resort to theft as their primary source of food and water. This is something you should be aware of. As someone who is prepped in both equipment and knowledge, you can actually produce new food. Most other people will not have the equipment or knowledge to hunt, fish, trap, or forage, and that means they will only have one option left.

In many places, this will be the majority of people. You can expect that unprepped can become thieves and will work in groups and use their numbers to take what they want.

How to Avoid a Starvation Diet

A starvation diet, also known as “rabbit starvation” and “protein poisoning”, is when a diet has plenty of protein but is lacking in other important nutrients. A person cannot live on rabbit jerky alone. Most importantly, you need fat. A lean game like rabbits and deer have very little fat. They want to be as swift as they can to avoid predators like wolves and humans.

Without fat in your diet, the liver starts putting ammonia and other toxins in your bloodstream, the byproducts of the process of digesting protein. If you eat more protein than your body can safely turn into glucose, it will put a lot of strain on your liver and kidneys, and cause an increasing buildup of ammonia and amino acids. This is why Native people living in the arctic were able to safely live off of whales; whales have a lot of fat. If you are eating a lot of lean game meat, you can still get your necessary fats from other sources such as carbohydrates, nuts, oils, and lard.

How to Grow a Survival Garden

If the crisis is the kind that might outlast your food stocks, growing your food might be necessary, in addition to all the foraging and hunting.

If you live in a dense urban environment, even a major metropolitan city, and you don't plan on leaving it during the crisis, you can still grow crops. There's a whole movement called urban farming which is catching on in several cities, particularly Detroit, where certain areas of the city have been essentially abandoned and left large amounts of land and limbo. Many locals have begun to essentially homestead it and put the land to work, which is also a solution to the poor, urban “food desert” issue.

Gardening won't work if you are in a situation where you have to move around a lot. It's also not viable if your security is in doubt. You can hide jars of food that you've prepped, but it's much harder to hide an outdoor garden. In early agricultural societies, the ones who discovered and developed the technology of planting their food instead of scavenging and hunting were the

people who gave up on their nomadic lifestyle and who were able to protect themselves from those who didn't. If you don't have a stable source of water, you don't have a garden.

What you put in your garden will depend a lot on things that the writer of this book cannot predict. Certain environments are better suited to certain plants. Just like people and animals, different kinds of plants have different personalities. Some like it hot, some like the shade, some like to drink a lot of water, some will drown if you water them more than once a week. That's a little bit of homework that you can do on your own and while we still have the internet. Getting that information shouldn't be too difficult, but make sure you get it before you need it.

That said, here are a few of my recommendations, insofar as your situation allows for them. These are a few crops that are selected for a survival garden because, combined, have a few crucial features:

- They are all robust and easy to grow.
- They provide nutritional density and balance, especially proteins.
- They have high caloric content.



Beans. A staple crop all over the world. High calories, high protein, and easy to grow. Easy to dry and store for years. Very easy to integrate into many recipes.

Corn. Corn has a bad reputation for being a nutritionally empty food. One thing that is often overlooked by people living north of Juarez is that corn can be dried and ground up into flour. You can use flour to make bread and tortillas. Bread is carbs. Carbs are sugar. Sugar is fat. You'll never get a large wheat crop out of a home garden, but some corn is a great supplement. Dried corn stalks can also be used as trellises to help grow vining plants, such as certain species of beans.

Potatoes and yams. Super high in calories and insanely easy to grow. You may have noticed that once you get from the grocery store, if left alone for long enough, you'll find the roots start growing out of it on their own.

Squash. So far it looks like we are designing a garden for Thanksgiving. Squash is a great vegetable, and it also has a secondary effect that wouldn't be obvious unless you are a seasoned gardener. The squash plant has leaves that grow out over a wide area. This vegetation covers the ground, kind of like a leafy, living mulch. When planted close to your other plans, especially the corn and the beans, the leaves of the squash will help protect those plants from abrupt environmental changes and weather, and it helps the other plans protect their roots. These plants cohabitate nicely with one another. Also, squash has a high nutritional value, decent calories, and is easy to store over the winter.



Lentils. Everything that is great about the bean is also great about the lentil. Easy to dry. Easy to store. High in calories and high in protein.

Cabbage and kale. A pair of the more nutritional leafy green plants and very good for stews, sauerkraut, kimchi, or anything else that you would want to pickle or ferment. They are very resilient in both cold and hot weather. It nearly grows itself. Low in calories and protein—however, no one plant can do everything.

Whatever plants you use, be sure to study up on them and learn their characteristics, how to nurture them, and keep them alive to keep you alive.

The short version is to till the soil, put seeds in the dirt, add earthworms, add water daily, remove weeds when they appear, and wait. If you know that much, you're most of the way there. But different plants have different needs.

The Garden Itself

Gardening is something that in itself could fill up many books, and has. We're going to cover some of the basics.

The time to start your survival garden is now, not after things go terribly wrong. If you're going to do it, you need all the practice and experience you can get, and you already want the plant rotation operational. In a desperate situation, you will not have time to spend months or even a year developing a living, fruitful garden. The best time to start was one year ago, the second-best time is now.

Composting for Soil

You might not be in a circumstance where it is easy to go to Home Depot and pick up excellent soil and fertilizers. For that reason, your next best option is to grow in a place that already has fantastic planting soil, which you might if you live in the southeast United States. If you can't get good soil, you may have to make it. This means creating a compost heap. Composting is about creating an environment where biological material can decompose in a controlled situation very quickly. What is produced can be used for the remaining material that retains all of the vitamins and nutrients that the previous trash had.

“Hot composting” requires a little bit of work from you, but it makes the process go by much faster. The ingredients for a successful compost are oxygen, water, carbon, nitrogen, and dead organic material. With all these things present, microorganisms will have a feast and begin to break down the material much faster. If you can add earthworms to the equation, even better. For your nitrogen, you want to mix in a plant particularly rich in the substance. Luckily, you can get that stuff from grass trimmings, dead leaves, tree branches, hay, and even cardboard. Mix these in with your pile.

Every week or so you're going to want to turn over your compost tea with a pitchfork or a shovel to make sure that it's getting lots of oxygen. If you're doing it right, then it will generate a lot of heat. This is the energy generated by the process of decomposing. Be careful. These compost seeps can get so hot that they can actually burn you, as high as 250° F.

Maybe it goes without saying, but I'll say it anyway. The compost heap is essentially parts of food you usually throw away in the garbage. Be sure to set up a compost heap where it won't be within smelling range, and where you won't be downwind of it.

When it starts looking like dirt again, you have excellent soil for your plants.



Protecting Your Garden

There will be critters who will be attracted to the things growing in your garden. These will be creatures such as rabbits. For that reason, I recommend leaving traps within your garden in order to capture them and eat them later. At the very least, be sure to put up fencing. A garden will be a magnet for hungry people who see it. Sometimes a fence is psychologically enough to deter someone.

Protect your plants from wind. Grow in somewhere it gets protection from

your house, or create another structure such as a hill mound or other barrier. This also doubles as a privacy barrier.

If you have the time and inclination, it is surprisingly easy to build a greenhouse in your own backyard. All it takes is some wood, plastic sheeting, and some ventilation. By creating a greenhouse, you're able to trap in the heat and extend the growing season of plants, which will increase your annual yield. A greenhouse also helps protect from invasive plants and animals.

The biggest hassle will be diligently weeding your crops. Weeds are thieves in your garden trying to steal nutrients and water from your crop. You won't have any chemical options, so doing it by hand will have to become a regular part of your daily chores.

Hygiene

With limited water and supplies, staying clean isn't always easy.

You already know that you need to brush your teeth. If your parents did a good job raising you, they taught you this when you were young. Poor dental hygiene can lead to damaged teeth and even injuries in the bone around the mouth. Do your best job to take care of your mouth. If you ever experienced serious toothache without the insurance and resources to deal with it, you already understand how painful chronic oral pain can be. One of the most common nightmares that people experience is of their teeth falling out of their mouths. This is a part of our psychology that goes way back in our evolution. Losing your teeth in the wild can mean losing your life.

One of the dirtiest parts of your body is your hands. This is for the simple reason that they are constantly touching things. Your knees touch your pants. Your shoulder blades touch a shirt. But your hands touch everything. Keeping your hands clean is one of the best things you can do to keep everything else around you clean.

In the summertime in warm climates, it's easy to wash if you can find a lake or a stream. And colder climates, taking off your clothes and getting in the water is suicidal. Your best option for the situation is the same as what nurses

have done for hundreds of years for invalid patients: sponge bath. In this case, probably a towel bath.

The first step is to boil some water until it is a comfortable temperature. Only attempt this if you are in a safe shelter, such as inside a tent. Place the rag into the boiling water for a moment and give the heat an opportunity to kill all of the germs and bacteria that may have been on the towel or rag. Ring it out, let it get to a comfortable temperature, and wipe your body down. If it's especially cold, you can remove individual articles of clothing, wipe down the area, and replace the clothing before moving on to the next body part. I strongly recommend you begin with your face and hands and other parts of your body, before moving on to the particularly dirty portions such as your feet, crotch, and hindquarters. You don't want the towel to go in the reverse order because you will make yourself dirtier, not cleaner.

“Going to the bathroom” in the woods was the norm for the majority of the time of our species.

Feces can be disposed of by digging a 6-in deep hole and covering it up. This is a courtesy to yourself and others who don't want to smell, see or step in each other's waste. Preferably about 200 ft. away from the trail and other people.

While on the move, one of the best things you can use when going number two, is baby wipes. They might not be environmentally optimal, but if this isn't a long-term situation and you are just trying to survive, it's not the end of the world. For the expert camper and environmentally cautious, toilet paper and feminine products can be saved in plastic baggies and carried with you until you find a better place to dispose of them.

If you need a spot, the old outhouse is a classic and successful system. Essentially you dig a deep hole, place sawdust in it, and build a shelter around it. A Crescent moon-shaped window on the door is optional.

Don't use leaves to wipe yourself. You don't know what those leaves have touched, and you don't know if those leaves will have a negative reaction. The last thing you want is to wipe yourself down with poison oak. You are better off with a reusable, frequently washed, and boiled rag, if it comes to that.

Useful Tools in Everyday Life

Often, if you look through a woman's purse, you will see a bag full of preps for every imaginable contingency: lip balm in case they get chapped, tissues in the event of a runny nose, mints in case of bad breath. In my experience, these things tend to be disorganized, but very well stocked and prepped for ordinary, everyday crises.

You want to have a bunch of tools and supplies for extraordinary situations. You probably already have many of these.

Right now I am going to open up my *everyday carry bag (EDC)*. This is like a purse in the sense that it is a bag that covers a lot of contingencies. Things don't only go wrong while you're at home. There's no good reason not to be prepped when you're at work or running errands. Mine is a small backpack. Here is what I carry around:

- flashlight
- extra batteries
- knife
- lighter
- snacks
- small trauma kit
- cash
- multitool
- extra cables and charging cubes
- spare set of clothes
- N95 mask (in case I go into a business that still requires masks for Covid, but mostly in case something bad is in the air. Might not be likely, but if there's wildfires smoke or other poor air quality situations, a single mask is light and uses very little space for something that can save your life)
- a plastic garbage bag (it might seem strange, but this has come in handy

in many ways I wouldn't have predicted—if I need to keep something dry, or keep something in my bag separated from everything else, a plastic bag is great)

Here are some things you should keep at your home, besides food. Many of the items on this list are specifically mentioned on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) website:

- hybrid solar flashlight
- batteries
- water filters
- propane stove and tank
- food supply buckets
- emergency/ham radio
- first aid supplies
- whistle or other noisemaker
- n95 masks and/or respirator
- duct tape
- rubber gloves
- a stock of any prescription medications you need
- ordinary tool set
- a saw
- hatchet
- shovel
- several bundles of rope
- plastic tarps
- portable HAM radios (license required, except for emergencies)



Bushcraft Basic Tools

- a good backpack
- fixed blade knife
- hatchet
- multitool
- saw
- knife sharpener / whetstone
- entrenching tool
- paper maps, plasticized, waterproofed
- fire starter, such as a ferro rod
- portable water filter
- lensatic compass
- pot, preferably aluminum
- tarp
- snares, fishing lines, hooks



Book II: Prepper's Home Defense

There's an old joke about two men being threatened by a bear. One of them puts on some running shoes and the other says, "You can't outrun a bear. Why are you putting on your running shoes?" The friend answers, "I don't have to run faster than the bear, I just have to run faster than you."

This is a very similar philosophy to home defense. There's no way to make your home a perfect fortress that someone can't get into—with enough time and energy, anyone can get into any house. Your goal is to make your home so defensible that it becomes unattractive to people who might try, so they might prefer to seek somewhere else to loot or invade.

All of your home protections will do one or more of a few things, all of which increase the risk to the trespasser:

- They will make breaking in take a lot more time.
- They will make breaking in louder and easier to be spotted by people inside the home and neighbors.
- Instead of a crime of opportunity, make breaking in a chore.
- Record the activities and make it easy for law enforcement to find the culprits after the fact.
- Make breaking in a serious risk to their health and survival.

If your security is doing all four of those things, then you're doing it right.

Thieves, looters, and other people who might threaten the security of you, your family, and your home, have predictable patterns. Home invaders tend to investigate, (i.e. 'case') a home before breaking in. Home invaders tend to choose the targets they believe will be the easiest to get into and out of. Security isn't perfect protection, but it strongly discourages criminals from taking a chance. If you are the little piggy who built his house out of bricks, the wolf ignores your house and targets the one made of straw.

Burglars tend to operate in groups of 2-4. They feel braver when in groups, and they are able to better subdue anyone inside if they have to. Those breaking and entering usually put a lot of thought into getting in, but much

less thought into leaving.

Defense of the Perimeter

Take a moment to look out of your windows. Get a sense of your field of view. What can you see? What can't you see? Then step outside and look at the areas you can't see. Develop a mental map of your visible spots and your blind spots. Take the time to think like a criminal. If you were going to attack the house, where would you come from? Which path would be safest? If you were going to sneak in at night, which path would conceal you the best from the windows, the eyes of neighbors, and lights? Which areas are most defensible and least defensible? Simply knowing this information is important because it will give you a clue about where to expect trouble when you hear a bump in the night.

What can someone casing your home see? Can they see the computer in your office? Can they see a fancy new TV? Can they see a wall full of canned foods through the kitchen window? All of these things are the payday and are factored into their calculation if the reward is worth the risk. A house with a lot of security and nothing visible worth stealing will not attract negative attention.

Depending on your situation, you may be able to change your lawn and environment to advantage you over a potential attacker. Call it "tactical landscaping"; reduce the places a potential burglar can hide and take cover. The fewer options they have, the better your ability to predict where they will be if the time comes. If the easiest point of approach and entry happens to be one of your children's bedroom windows, make the necessary modifications to your life to correct for this.

Windows Security

Your windows are the most vulnerable place in your home, which is why

breaking them is the most common means of entry for a B&E. One simple way to protect yourself is to do like they do in the roughest parts of Detroit: Put bars on your windows. Your home will feel like a prison, but it works. If you have the money and inclination, you could purchase break-resistant or plastic material that will give the would-be intruder a harder time of it.

The problem with windows is that they are loud. They will easily alert anyone in the house and potentially neighbors. A burglar with half a brain will only do so if no one is home.

In the summers of 1984 and 1985, a serial killer/rapist/thief/child molester nicknamed the “Night Stalker” was able to get into homes through windows silently, and easily. It wasn’t because he was great at picking window locks. Those were both exceptionally hot summers in California and people left their windows open to stay cool at night. The moral of the story is that a window is only secure if it is closed.



Doors Security

Deadbolts are great. Almost everybody has them already.

The screws holding your door and frame in place are probably ½” to ¾” steel. Those are not difficult to break down with a little bit of effort. You can purchase very simple reinforcement kits online or at your local home improvement store. One of these kits will make your door frame stronger and make lock picking much more difficult by shielding the door jamb with steel and thickening the screws to hold the whole thing together; a small Sunday home improvement project that won't cost too much to improve your security in a big way.

However, most burglars who would come in through the front door, won't pick the lock or break it down. They will do so by getting you to open the door for them. This means pretending to be a neighbor or someone delivering a package. The burglar will put on the disguise of a person who is a stranger to you, but who you would still open the door for, such as a courier delivering a package or a law enforcement officer. Once the door is open, they aren't fighting a deadbolt to get inside, they're fighting whoever opens the door. If that person is an old lady, the burglars are probably going to get in. For that reason, the most important defense for your front door is you.

A spyglass or a surveillance camera is very important in these situations. In general, you should trust your gut. If you don't feel good about whoever happens to be on your porch and knocking on your door, do not open it for them. If you have to, speak to them through the door. If you show any kind of resistance by not opening it, they will probably give up quickly.

Night Security



One of the cheapest home defense tools you can utilize also happens to be one of the best. Simply having lights on the outside of your home is one of the best things you can do to protect it from someone considering breaking in. In areas of cities where street lights have gone out and haven't been repaired, there is a noticeable increase in crime. Light is exposure. Exposure means a chance of being caught. There's a good reason why most crimes take place at night. The more you can make your home look like daytime at nighttime, the better.

Motion-sensitive lights that automatically click on—especially the solar kind—are more energy-efficient and have the added benefit of startling a trespasser who didn't do their research casing your home. Burglars don't like surprises. They don't like complications and problems.

Surveillance cameras are relatively cheap nowadays, and even ones that are capable of night vision aren't outside of most people's budgets. These kinds of cameras don't even need to be hardwired into the home anymore. The less expensive ones simply connect to the Wi-Fi and store all of their information on the cloud. This means that if someone breaks into your home, they can't destroy any tape or hard drive to cover up their crime because all the data is stored on the server farm somewhere out in Silicon Valley.

Weapons and Traps

In the United States, you don't need a license to own a gun. It is a constitutionally protected right, provided you aren't a felon. However, you should take a concealed-carry class or other firearms training and safety course if you are new to firearms. I cannot stress this enough. Guns are exactly as dangerous as the owner is ignorant. Owners who know what they are doing are only dangerous when they want to be. Owners who don't know how to operate their weapons are dangerous when they don't want to be and not dangerous when they want to be.

Get training. Practice regularly. Marksmanship is a perishable skill. Firearms are a right but also a responsibility. Firearms training is training to be the best you can be on the worst day of your life. Please don't try making Vietcong-style tiger pits in your yard.

Learn the Law

Laws vary greatly between states and localities. Some places have a castle doctrine, which means that you are within your right to presume violent intentions in anyone breaking into your home. Other states have a duty to retreat, requiring you to attempt to flee from your attacker before using deadly force in your own protection. Again, if things become completely lawless, this won't apply to you. But in case it isn't, you don't want to do 15 years in state corrections because you didn't know better.

Keep Your Guns Safe, But Available

There are many safes on the market that are secure but also offer ways to open them very quickly. If you have kids who are too young to be trusted to respect guns, these are a must-have. Some have digital locks that can be opened with bio-ID such as a thumbprint scan. If you get one, make sure that it operates every time. My cellphone's finger scanner works maybe 60% of the time. When you need a gun, it better work 100% of the time. Shop around. Find what works for you.

Prepare

Know the layout of your home. Bullets will pass through sheetrock like it is paper. If your child's bedroom is on the other side of that wall, you need to be aware of that well before you even think about picking up a gun. Remember that earlier exercise of looking around your home for blind spots? Do the same for firing angles. If you stepped out of your bedroom door and pointed a gun straight forward, what would be on the other side? A bathroom? Another bedroom with a sleeping family member? Where do you have cover from a burglar who also has a gun? Where are you exposed? What are the spots in your home that creak when you step on them? How quick is the average police response time for police where you live?

For the older members of the household, who can be armed? Where is their weapon? Can they get to it quickly? Others, such as young children, need a place to hide and a means to escape. A good place to hide is in bathrooms, lying inside the bathtub. If bullets go flying, the safest place for children is probably lying down, surrounded by a hard material of the tub.

Remember rules 4 and 5: Have a plan, and make sure everyone in your home knows the plan. Be ready for the plan to fail, and have another plan.

Prepping Rules Still Apply

Remember we said right at the beginning: DO NOT tell anyone you are a prepper. I encourage you to use the same policy when it comes to your weapons, and for the same reason.

You might be armed to the teeth and ready for anything. You might be a Navy SEAL badass with a blackbelt in Krav Maga. But if you have an arsenal and criminals know about it, they can patiently wait for you to leave, come to your home, and take them and your ammo. Guns are worth a lot of money, especially on the black market. Putting a target on your front door showing your tight groupings might discourage people from breaking into your home while you are there, but it will encourage them to do it when you aren't there.

Don't advertise that you are armed.

Just like your food, water, medical supplies, and tools, you need ammo in volume and it needs to be rotated often. Just like those other things, ammunition has a shelf-life. A few thousand rounds might seem like a lot, but if you can't replenish your supply, that can dwindle down quicker than you realize.

The Best Gun for Home Defense

There is a lot of debate on this issue, and I can only give you my best advice.

You want a gun that you are good with. The best gun to use is the one you have the most experience with, that you have the most practice with. It's really as simple as that. You should be an expert at loading, operating, and clearing jams. Not all guns work the same way, and you need to rely on muscle memory if the time comes that you need to use terminal force to protect yourself.

Within your home, all else being equal, you want a weapon that is effective at close range and won't over-penetrate. "Over-penetrate" means it passes through your target or a wall and keeps going. You do NOT want a bullet to pass through a home invader or a wall and to keep going and potentially hit something behind them, such as a neighbor or loved one.

Guns are tools. You need different tools for different jobs. A flathead screwdriver isn't better than an orbital sander, they are different tools for different jobs. Select the right tool for the right job.

For that reason, I recommend a pistol-caliber carbine (PCC) for home defense. Probably a 9mm is a good cartridge size, using hollow-point ammunition. A PCC is a shorter barreled rifle (not to be confused with a "short barrel rifle" that has a specific classification and legal meaning to the ATF) that uses ammo typically found in handguns. It has enough power to eliminate a threat but with less risk of over-penetration than you have with a 12-gauge shotgun or an AR-15 chambered in a rifle caliber. Yes, shotguns DO over-penetrate. Shotguns pack a ton of punch and will tear through walls easily, even using buckshot. If you doubt me, spend five minutes looking on your preferred video hosting site for clips of what shotguns do to sheetrock.

As a private military contractor once told me: Everyone sucks with pistols. Pistols are more difficult to fire accurately, suffer more recoil, and are easier to disarm. The PCC combines the benefits of the rifle and the pistol in one package.

While many people instantly recommend the shotgun for home defense, I strongly disagree. Shotguns have tighter spreads than many people imagine, so they don't always hit the target as people claim. The spread is also a disadvantage if you are concerned about accidentally hitting other people. Shotguns are very loud and in an enclosed environment, you're likely to make yourself deaf by firing one without ear protection. Some say that the "shaklack-klack" noise of cycling a pump-action will scare intruders. Maybe. But it also might just alert them to exactly where you are.

Whatever your selection, you will want a high-powered light mounted onto your weapon, a sling, and a good optic, in that order.

Most home invasions will take place at night. A flashlight lets you see the intruder but also blinds them so that they can't see you.

A sling will allow you to hold your weapon up for longer. Holding a rifle upright for even a few minutes can be tiring. A sling will also make it much more difficult for someone else to take your weapon from you and use it against you.

A good optic, such as a red dot sight (RDS) or a holographic reflex sight, is ideal. You don't need magnification. In fact, you shouldn't have magnification for your designated home-defense weapons.

The Rules for Firearms

These are non-negotiable.

These are the four rules of firearms safety that every qualified user can name by memory on command.

- **NEVER point a gun at something that you aren't willing to destroy.** Imagine there is a lethal laser beam coming out of the barrel. Never let the imaginary beams cross over other people. Keep the weapon pointed

downwards.

- **The gun is ALWAYS loaded.** I don't care if you are sure it isn't. ALWAYS operate it as though it has live ammo chambered and the safety is off. Anyone who watched the extremely successful Netflix series Tiger King knows what can happen when a person operates a weapon they falsely believe is unloaded.
- **Keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to fire.** The ultimate safety on a weapon is you. It is easy to accidentally discharge a weapon when your finger is on the trigger, especially in a very intense situation where your adrenaline is running high.
- **Always be aware of your target AND WHAT IS BEHIND IT.** That means rooms, people, objects, or anything else. You might miss what you are shooting at. The bullet might pass through your intended target and keep going.

Here are a few more rules that are used in my home, and I strongly suggest you adopt them as well.

If you have kids, their safety is 100% YOUR responsibility. This means teaching your kids firearm safety, making it as clear as possible that weapons are dangerous when mishandled. Keep weapons securely locked up when they are not in use.

Do NOT fire warning shots, even into the air. Bullets that go up, also come down, and you have no idea where it will come down or what will be there when it does. If showing someone a gun doesn't scare them off, firing it won't make much of a difference.

Do NOT fire through a door hoping to hit a target on the other side. EVER. There are countless horror stories of people accidentally murdering their loved ones by blind firing through doors.

Do not tell others about your guns. It invites thieves.

Protect Your Garage

It is very easy to break into a home through the garage door. Many burglars won't use this route if the garage door is facing neighbors and burglars prefer

to enter buildings from where there is the least chance of any eyes being on them. It's easy to get in using a piece of wood to wedge open a little space in the door and a coat hanger to disengage the lock. It's a lot like using a slim jim in order to unlock a car. With a little bit of practice, a good burglar could be in through the garage and about 15 to 30 seconds without making too much noise.

The garage door lock usually hangs from a string that's very simple to disengage. They can hook onto the string or anything hanging from the string, or the locking mechanism itself, just a few pounds of pressure is enough. If you have a tag still on the string, remove that. You can remove the cord entirely if you want, but at the very least it should be shortened so that it cannot be pulled to the wedge in the top of the garage door and pulled on manually. You can zip tie the lock closed if you plan on being away from your home for a while. You can use a 2x4 to reinforce the top of the garage door. Garage doors are usually made out of flexible metal like aluminum. By reinforcing it with a piece of wood, you remove all the flex, and trying to wedge it open becomes much more difficult. You can use another board or material in order to close off the Gap at the top making it impossible to feed a coat hanger through.

Dogs



Dogs were once wolves that humans essentially genetically engineered through selective breeding. Our relationship with dogs is about 15,000 years old. Humans and dogs have been living together since before humans had the idea to put a seed in the ground, add water, and wait for it to grow. Humans and dogs have been working together since before the stone age.

A dog's sense of smell is so strong, it is impossible for humans to really comprehend. One man I know trained drug-sniffing dogs professionally. He described it like this: When you bake a cake, you smell cake. A dog smells flour, sugar, eggs, butter, etc. A drug-sniffing dog can detect minute particles of drugs inside a plastic bag, inside a coffee can filled with coffee, wrapped in plastic wrap, inside a duffel bag, inside the trunk of a car, with a couple sniffs from a few feet away. With training, some dogs can even detect cancerous cells and low blood sugar.

Dogs have a wider range of sound they can hear, and they can pick up sounds from four times as far as you can, and turn their ears in almost 180 degrees F to better pinpoint the location of the sound.

Anyone who has ever owned a dog and ordered a pizza understands. Dogs are nature's Home Security system. A dog will know if someone is near your home well before you do, and they will make a racket about it. It could be

another dog, a mailman, or a serial killer. They don't care. They're going to make a lot of noise about it and make sure that you know what's up.

They also have a mouth full of sharp objects and jaws with terrifyingly strong jaw muscles. A Labrador Retriever has an average bite strength of 230 pounds per square inch. Most people can't bench 230, let alone bite that hard. By comparison, the tires on my car recommend only 40 pounds of pressure, and a human bite is about half as strong as a dog's. Dogs are carnivores. They are built to tear meat right off the bone and they have the tools to do just that.

In the wild, predators don't pick fights with things that fight back, unless absolutely necessary. Predators want to take down the weakest, easiest prey animal that they can. The same is true with people. Home invaders usually case locations before deciding to break in. A common tactic for thieves is to pretend to be a jogger or pretend to sell magazine subscriptions. This gives them a plausible excuse to get close to homes and get a quick look at the security and see if they likely have anything worth stealing. One of the things that capable thieves avoid is dogs. Dogs make noise that can alert the owners or neighbors. Dogs have a mouth full of dangerous weapons. Simply having a dog is often enough to persuade a criminal to move on to someone more vulnerable.

If you like dogs, you probably already have one or two. If you like dogs but don't have one, this is a perfect excuse to finally get yourself one. A chihuahua can't win a fight, but if you've ever met one in person, those little guys will make a racket and pick a fight with a person who weighs 40 times as much as they do.

Other Tips

- Nothing in your home is more important than the safety of you and your family.
- Do not take any unnecessary risks. Do not pick a fight that you don't need to. If you have the opportunity to escape a dangerous situation, that's almost always better than confronting someone.
- Confrontations are incredibly fast and frequently lethal. Even if you

have the advantage, even if you are a great shot, even if you are a badass: Punks pick fights. People who are trained and have seen actual combat do not, because they understand that a little bit of luck is more important than any other factor.

- Do not pursue anyone who has attempted to break into your home and flee. They're running because they are scared. If you corner a scared person they become much more dangerous. Just let them go.

Book III: Survival Medicine



There's a chance that you won't have access to the medical services we often take for granted. Hospitals could be overwhelmed. Roads could be flooded or blocked, cutting off access to the ER. Maybe phones are out of service and you can't call for an ambulance. You might be in a situation where the only person who can save a life is you.

Nothing contained in this book is a substitute for the advice of a medical professional. You should always consult a doctor who you trust before doing anything that could potentially harm you.

People spend a whole decade earning the credentials to call themselves a doctor. We can't pack all of that information into this book. Suffice it to say, the human body is a complicated machine and the list of things that can go wrong is monumental.

Everything contained herein for first aid comes from my own personal, reputable sources, who know what they are talking about.

Basics of Survival Medicine

The difference between medicine and *survival medicine* is that the latter is for when you can't expect someone to rescue you. Either you are isolated, or the infrastructure isn't intact, or the medical system is overcrowded. Survival medicine is about taking care of yourself or someone else until you can get treatment from well-supplied professionals with advanced degrees. Sometimes that might take a while.

The simplest and best piece of advice I can give is this: Know your medical kit.

If you don't have one yet, get one. Which one isn't crucial. You will add and adjust as you learn more about first aid. If you have a kit at home or in your car and you haven't looked inside yet, do so ASAP. You should know what is in there, what it is for, how to use it, and where to find it inside the kit. I'm not kidding. You should be able to find scissors and gauze with your eyes closed because when the time comes that you need it, you won't have time to rip it apart looking for what you need and reading the instructions about how to use it—you may be unfortunate enough to need them in a situation where your eyes really are damaged.

When elite soldiers like Navy SEALs aren't fighting, what are they doing?

Training. All the time. They train until they don't have to think. In an emergency situation, you won't be able to think clearly. They need to have their skills and training take over and do the job because the brain can't work as fast as the programmed training. You need to be so good that you can do it without thinking.

Most premade medical kits have all the essential items for emergency trauma circumstances. If there is anything in there that you don't understand or know how to use, that is exactly what you need to learn. What is in there? What does it do? How do I do it? If I ran out of this item, what could I use as a substitute in a pinch?

If your kit is good, there should be rubber gloves and hand sanitizer. That should be the first thing you find when you open your kit. In a seriously bad

situation where professional help isn't coming quickly, you really do not want to cause an infection or catch something from your patient. An important note though: The hand sanitizer is ONLY to be used to sanitize the hands of the person treating the injury; do NOT use hand sanitizer or alcohol on open wounds or cuts if you can help it, as it will kill all healthy bacteria your body needs to heal. Better to have some sealed saline and/or antibiotic ointment—such as Neosporin.

When you know what everything in your medical kit does and how to use it, you are already way ahead of the game. Your kit is your first teacher.

Different Between City and Survival First Aid

Inside the cities, everything is close. If you need to, you could probably put your patient in a wheelbarrow and wheel them to the ER if you had to. In the wilderness, or if you are snowed in, or isolated—you may be on your own.

For that reason, you should have a home that is very well supplied. If you go out into the wilderness, you also need to make sure you have everything you need on your person. It's also strongly recommended that you not go out alone. In the event that something bad happens, you want to have someone else to help. They can apply first aid or go seek help if it comes to that. Being alone is one of the most dangerous things that can happen to a person who is badly injured.

Preparing Yourself to Give First Aid

Reading this book is not enough to make you competent at first aid. There is no substitute for classes and proper real-life training, anything less is simply not enough. You need to learn the skills well enough that you can perform them without thinking about them under stressful circumstances. You need muscle memory. You need to be able to open your kit and take what you need without looking around inside for what you need.

By the way, these are skills that *everyone* should have. If I had any say in it, this would all be taught to children before 5th grade.

First Aid Skills

These are basic skills you should know.

We can't cover everything you might need to know; no book is extensive and comprehensive enough to cover everything—and if there was, it wouldn't be practical to carry in your go-bag. But these are the things that are going to be the most common and likely dangers and injuries a personal experience if they are living rough in a dangerous situation.

CPR

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is one of the most important and basic emergency medical aid skills that you can learn. If your patient is not breathing, the best thing you can do is to do their breathing for them.

1. Check to make sure that the environment is safe. Whatever it is that hurts your patient might be something that could hurt you too, such as a venomous snake or a live electrical line. You can't help someone else if you put yourself in the same position as them.
2. Try to wake the person up. This is simple as tapping them and asking them if they are okay loudly enough that they should be able to hear you.
3. Call 911. If you're in a situation where 911 won't be quick to respond, that's fine, but the sooner they get there the better.
4. If they are not on their back, carefully try to maneuver them onto their back without moving their head or their neck just in case they have a spinal injury
5. Check to see if they have a pulse and if they are breathing. If you don't feel a pulse or any breathing within 10 seconds, and they are not alert or responsive, begin CPR.
6. Put your hands on the person's chest. Put the heel of one of your hands

directly in between where you imagine their nipples are, directly in the center of their chest on their sternum. What's your other hand on top of that hand and center your waist directly above your hands.

7. Perform chest compressions. This doesn't take a lot of strength. You can let the weight of your own body do most of the work. You're going to push harder than may seem necessary, about 2 in, but no deeper than 2.4. This is about two compressions per second. There's an easy technique to remember the rhythm. Use the beat of the ironically titled Bee Gees hit disco song "Staying Alive", or the more morbid other option is "Another One Bites the Dust" by Queen. Your entire body weight should be lifted off of the patient's chest between compressions.
8. After 30 compressions or about 15 seconds, give them rescue breaths. Tilt their chin upwards and pinch the nose with your finger, place your whole mouth over theirs, and give them as much air as you can.
9. Repeat this process until help arrives or until the patient is revived.

The process for children is essentially the same, although you should adjust the pressure of your compressions to account for their smaller bones. For infants, it's a little bit different.

1. Instead of shaking and yelling, flick the bottom of the infant's foot to get a response. Infants are less responsive to shaking which would ordinarily rouse an adult or older child
2. Place two fingers of one hand in the center of the chest and use those for compressions. This will have a depth of only one and a half inches and will be done at the same rhythm as if it were an adult.
3. Same as with adults, 30 chest compressions and then to rescue breaths, although the infant's small face you can perform them over the nose and mouth at the same time. They also have a much smaller lung capacity, so don't try to force an adult amount of air into tiny infant lungs.

CPR classes are available through the American Red Cross. These steps listed above are better than nothing, but the real training is always better than reading.

How to Stop Bleeding (Or at Least Slow It Down)

For 90% of cuts, applying gauze to the affected area and applying pressure will stop the bleeding. For more serious cuts, the patient needs to get to an ER.

The color of the blood on an injury will tell you a lot about how bad the injury is. The smallest blood vessels in your body are capillaries and most of the time when you have an accidental cut, this is the type you'll be experiencing. With a little bit of time, these types of bleeds usually stop on their own

These veins usually have a darker color and these can be mild to severe depending on the person and the injury.

Bright red blood indicates that an artery might have been damaged. Arteries are the main interstate highway of your circulatory system. The blood is bright red because it is carrying a lot of oxygen. Arteries that are cut off can spurt out. These kinds of cuts are particularly dangerous because blood loss can be quite quick.

Most cuts can be controlled. If not controlled quickly and effectively, and bleeding is allowed to continue, it will lead to shock and ultimately death.

1. If you have the gloves in your medical kit available, get those on before continuing. The person you might be working on might have a bloodborne illness that could be contagious, such as hepatitis.
2. Find the wound. This isn't always a straightforward matter and you might need to remove clothes and wipe away blood in order to find it. Blood is very messy and can conceal the location of the cut.
3. Rinse the area around the wound with water.
4. Cover the wound with wadded gauze or cloth. If you don't have a medical kit available, use a towel or some torn clothing, anything that's available.
5. Apply direct pressure to stop the blood flow. This will help begin the process of clotting which is the natural process necessary for the bleeding to stop.
6. If the wound is on a limb or in the head, try to lift the bleeding body

part above the height of the heart, if the circumstances allow for it.

7. If the gauze or cloth becomes soaked through with blood, do not remove it. Leave it exactly where it is and just add more layers on top of it. If you remove the soaked cloth or gauze, you can potentially disrupt the clotting process and start the bleeding again.
8. Clean bandages can only be applied after the bleeding has stopped and the wound is fully clotted. This should be avoided if possible and left to medical professionals. Messing around with the cloth could restart the bleeding.

Burns

Burns can range from anything from mild irritation to a major life-threatening and disfiguring injury. The first step to treating a burn is to remove whatever is causing the burn. It means if the burn is derived from a chemical, it needs to be flushed off with water. If the burn is from the sun, the patient needs to be removed from exposure to the sun and put in the shade.

First-degree burns are the most common kind you'll get if you stay in the sun too long. It only affects the outermost layer of the skin. Symptoms include redness and swelling. This is a minor injury and should heal on its own, although they are quite unpleasant. They can be treated with aloe and some other herbal remedies.

Second-degree burns go down two layers, through the epidermis and into the dermis. These injuries will cause blistering, swelling, and redness. Consider this injury to be serious if it is more than 3 inches or so in size, or if it is on particularly sensitive parts of the body such as the face, hands, genitals; on a major joint, on the feet, or on buttocks.

Third-degree burns go even deeper. These will cause white or blackened skin. Often these affected areas become numb. These are very serious, and need to be treated by medical professionals ASAP.

Your first aid steps for treating Burns:

1. Have someone call 911 if the injury is serious enough
2. Treat the affected area with cold running water, or submerge it for

several minutes. Do not use ice.

3. Apply a light gauze and bandage over the affected area. You can keep a burn gel—which often contains lidocaine, a local anesthetic—in your medical kit, in case of these emergencies such as grease burns or deep kitchen burns. For more minor burns, you may want to place an ointment such as an aloe vera or another herbal or pharmaceutical remedy you have available.
4. Patients can take a minor pain relief or anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen.
5. Do not mess around with any blisters. Leave them alone.

Frostbite

Frostbite is a very serious injury caused when tissue is frozen. Ironically, the damage it does to the skin is very similar to the damage from a burn.

Treating frostbite is a slow and delicate process of warming the effective area. If at all possible, this should be done by medical professionals. But if you are in a situation when they are not available, this is something you have to do yourself.

1. Get yourself and your patient out of the cold. If you are outside, quickly get yourself back to a shelter or build one if necessary.
2. Cover the injury with warm water. A temperature of 100° Fahrenheit is about right. It should be warm, not hot. Leave the injury submerged for a half-hour. For very mild frostbite, sometimes skin-to-skin contact will be effective, such as taking cold hands and putting them in your armpits.
3. Don't use dry heat such as a fireplace, heating pad, or space heater. Do not rub the area to warm it up, you may not feel the damage you are doing to the injured tissues. Use warm water.
4. If the frostburn is affecting fingers or toes, stuff clean cotton balls in between the fingers or toes to help separate them.
5. Loosely wrap the injured area with bandages.

6. The patient can take ibuprofen or acetaminophen to help mitigate the pain.
7. Get the patient to professional medical attention ASAP. If the skin becomes physically hard or begins turning white, it is very serious and you need to get the patient to a hospital. If it's turned black and hard, that part may be too far gone to save.

Heatstroke

Your body has an optimal temperature, and it just happens to be the one that you feel most comfortable in, or within a few degrees of what we call “room temperature.” Heatstroke is caused by not drinking enough water, especially in hot temperatures, and when inactive; when the body is unable to regulate its internal temperature, the organs and fluids are running hot, and the affected person becomes dehydrated.

Before heat stroke, a person will experience something called *heat exhaustion*. The symptoms include:

- excessive sweating
- nausea and vomiting
- fainting spells and dizziness
- muscle weakness
- clammy skin
- weak pulse
- headaches

One of the earliest signs of the onset of heatstroke is called heat cramps. These are very painful and unpleasant muscle spasms that are caused by dehydration and the loss of nutrients and minerals, particularly electrolytes. You might know electrolytes from a well-known sports drink, but electrolytes are actually just salt, calcium, potassium, and other essential minerals that you consume every day in your ordinary diet.

A simple technique for keeping an eye on your own hydration is to look at the darkness of your own urine. If your urine is nearly clear, you are very well hydrated. The darker it gets, the more dehydrated you are. If your urine

is a deep yellow and very smelly, you need to drink some more water. If your urine is getting so dark that it is approaching a nearly brown color, you are in serious danger and you need to get hydrated immediately.

If these early symptoms of heat exhaustion are not dealt with, it can lead to heatstroke. Heatstroke is a very serious medical emergency. Sometimes this can come on very quickly, and even skip the heat exhaustion step.

If not treated it can lead to

- confusion, disorientation
- seizures
- loss of consciousness and slipping into a coma

A person is more likely to slip into heat exhaustion if they've been drinking alcohol. Alcohol is a diuretic that causes you to evacuate your body's fluids through urine which will dehydrate you. People who are obese are better at retaining heat, which can help in the winter, but is very difficult in hotter climates.

If someone is experiencing symptoms of heat exhaustion, there are some steps you can take, and they are probably exactly what you think they would be:

- Remove all excess clothing from the patient.
- Get the patient into cold or cool water.
- Cool them down with a fan.
- Get them into shade.
- Place a cold compress on their neck and armpits.
- Get them to drink water, or a sports drink with the aforementioned electrolytes.

If it's serious enough that it becomes heatstroke, you are once again going to want to get your patients to the care of medical professionals. The patient might need an intravenous fluid system to manage their dehydration if it's serious enough or if their nausea is preventing them from keeping fluids down. It possibly needs supplemental oxygen or anti-seizure medications.

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is the exact opposite of heatstroke. This can happen when it is so cold that your body is not able to keep up. The ordinary human body temperature is around 98.6 degrees F. Men tend to run a little bit higher than women on average, and a few degrees difference isn't a big deal. However if the body temperature goes down to 95 degrees or lower, they are hypothermic. If this is not treated quickly, it is a major medical emergency.

Symptoms include:

- fatigue
- confusion
- difficulty with fine motor skills
- loss of consciousness

If untreated, the patient can die. Even if it doesn't seem that cold out, there are other factors that can affect the person's body temperature. For example, children are more susceptible to thermal dysregulation, as are people with other injuries, people under the influence of alcohol, and other drugs.

Because hypothermia is cold, the solution is just as obvious as heatstroke.

- Get the patient to a warm place.
- If they are wearing any wet clothes, remove them immediately. A wet patient will lose heat at a rate 25 times faster than if dry. Water is extremely conductive and will take the heat right out of a person, which is why falling through ice on a lake and into the water beneath it is extremely dangerous. You may have heard of “dry heat” vs “wet heat.” “Dry cold” and “wet cold” work the same way.
- Get the patient into something dry, and get them warm as soon as possible. Be careful not to create so much heat that they will suffer a burn from it.

If the patient is not treated but somehow stops shivering—they are in very serious trouble and they need to be rescued immediately.

Broken Bones and Fractures

You can't always tell if a bone is broken just by looking at it. You will need an x-ray to make sure, but you probably don't have one of those lying around.

If you think you are dealing with a broken bone or a fracture, it's safest to presume you are, and act accordingly. These injuries don't necessarily require a trip to the emergency room, but if I were you, I would play it safe. Bad breaks can turn into worse disfigurements, or heal incorrectly if not properly reset or splinted.

A break is especially bad if any of the following things are true:

1. The person is bleeding, unresponsive, or they aren't breathing.
2. You think there might be a break or fracture around the spine, skull, hip, pelvis, or the femur (the thigh bone). People with these types of injuries should NOT be moved without professional help. If you don't know what you're doing, you can make it much worse.
3. If you can see the bone poking under the skin or through the skin.
4. If the area on the other side of the break is feeling cold or clammy, it might not be getting adequate blood flow. This is especially true if it loses color or becomes blue.
5. Any case where you can't immobilize the injured area enough to safely move the patient.

If none of these are true, you likely will not need a trip to the ER, or an emergency helicopter ambulance.

When dealing with a list of your broken bone do the following:

1. Do not try to straighten the limb or move the bone to where you think it "should be."
2. Use a splint and padding to immobilize the area. A broken bone is very painful if it is moved. If your patient has to be carried or has to limp, you want the injured area to remain as still as possible. A splint is an immobile long object, such as a tree branch, that is tied to the area so that the joints cannot bend.
3. Place a cold pack compound on the area. Be sure to use a thin barrier in-between so that the cold won't damage the tissue. Using ice in a plastic bag works fine. A wet piece of cloth can also be used if that's what's available.
4. The patient should take some anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen or naproxen. This will help with the pain and control the

swelling. *Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)* such as these are good for short-term, but they will actually slow down the healing over the long term so they should only be used sparingly.

Sprains

A sprain is a damaged ligament—the tissue that connects the bones, cartilage, and joints all into one working unit. Most sprains are caused by twisting the joint in the wrong direction, which overstretches and can even tear the ligament tissue. The most common places to get a sprain are on the ankle and wrist. A sprain and a broken bone can look very similar, and it's not always easy to know which of the two you're dealing with. The best way to know for sure is to get it x-rayed, just like with a broken bone.

Symptoms of a serious sprain look like the following:

- severe pain in the injured area and extreme sensitivity to touch
- inability to put any weight onto the affected area
- severe bruising
- numbness and the feeling of pins and needles in the infected area
- slow healing with very little progress after a week
- signs of infection

If any of those symptoms are present, you're going to want to get your patient to the ER as quickly and safely as you can.

For those with less severe injuries, the following first aid can be applied. These will look a lot like the solution to broken bones:

1. Immobilize the limb and make sure it doesn't move using a splint.
2. Apply cold packs or ice.
3. Elevate the injured area, if you can do so without causing the patient too much pain.
4. Help to mitigate the patients discomfort with NSAIDs.

If the injury doesn't seem to be healing on its own, seek professional treatment. They might need an x-ray.

P.O.L.I.C.E.

There's a handy little acronym for dealing with any acute injury, including breaks and sprains. Medical professionals love acronyms.

- **Protection.** Protect the joints and affected area.
- **Optimum Loading.** Slowly and progressively increasing the motion and strength of the injured area will help it after the emergency phase, when we are trying to help the healing process along. Just make sure not to overdo it.
- **Ice.** Use ice or cold cloth to control swelling.
- **Compression.** Compressing the area while affecting ice will also help with the swelling.
- **Elevation.** Keep the affected area elevated.

Infection

Historically, an infected injury has been one of the most lethal things that humans experienced. Surviving an injury is great, but there are all kinds of microscopic creatures out there who will try to set up shop in a wounded area. These infections killed people all the time, before the invention of antibiotics—which are truly one of the most valuable medical scientific discoveries in the history of our species. Yet unfortunately, infections are one thing you can do very little about as a layperson.

A wound might be infected if the patient shows any of the following symptoms:

- fever
- red, swollen, painful, or warm skin around the wounded area
- blood or pus coming out of the wound after it should have closed
- a disgusting smell emanating from the wounded area

This is an issue best treated by medical professionals and if any of the following symptoms occur, they need professional treatment IMMEDIATELY:

- shortness of breath

- unusually high heart rate
- confusion and disorientation
- bleeding that won't stop
- the wound opening it again, seemingly by itself
- intolerable pain
- red streaks coming from the wounded region
- experiencing a fever and or chills
- numbness

Antibiotics for these types of infections are not available over the counter, and you will have to seek a physician to get a diagnosis and a prescription. Without these very important medicines, there's very little you can do to help them except to make them as comfortable as possible, and do everything in your power to get them in front of a physician as quickly as possible. Without proper care, you will likely lose a limb, if not your life.

ABC's of First Aid

For all injuries, the ABC of first aid is useful for the immediate emergency phase, as a shorthand guide

Awake: Check if the patient is conscious.

Breathing: Check if the patient is breathing.

Continue: If their life signs are good, provide whatever help they need

FIRST AID



1

CALL EMERGENCY
NUMBER



2

CHECK VITAL
SIGNS



3

CHECK BREATHING



4

GIVE RESCURE
BREATHS



5

PERFORM CPR



6

TURN ON SIDE

Natural Medicine and Its Benefits



Natural medicine has a few practical benefits:

- You don't have to rely on a multibillion-dollar medical corporation to produce these products, or a doctor's permission to buy them. Many herbal products can be made at home from items in your own garden and they aren't heavily regulated.
- They don't cost an arm and a leg due to medical regulation and R&D costs for the company to invent it and research it.
- Unlike new drugs—which go through a few years of clinical trials, and invariably lead to unexpected side effects when finally released to the public—we have centuries of trials with herbs. We know what works, what doesn't, and what the risks are.

Many major pharmaceutical products are derived from natural plant sources. For example, the active ingredient in aspirin was originally discovered in the leaves of a willow tree. Aspirin is still used for many ailments, including blood clots, fever reduction, and pain management. The opioid epidemic was caused when doctors overprescribed drugs like oxycontin, which are chemically very similar to the active ingredient in opium, which comes from the poppy flower.

Herbs can't solve all of your problems, but they are very useful, especially for the ordinary, day-to-day issues that everyone struggles with from time to time. No herb can be used to substitute for insulin, for example. I don't want to overpromise what herbs can do. They are fantastic, but there isn't a plant on earth that can do the job when you need a bone marrow transplant or a cataract removed.

Don't deprive yourself of these wonderful, natural tools.

Categories of Herbs

Adaptogenic

Helps with stress.

Anti-Inflammatory

Reduces inflammation and swelling.

Digestive

Aids your body's natural systems of processing food.

Expectorant

Helps to relieve congestion.

Astringent

Can shrink or contract body tissue.

Immunity Aids

Helps with your body's immune response to fight infection.

Culinary

Great for eating

Aromatic

Great for smelling.

Stocking Your Natural Medicine Cabinet

These are all herbs that can be grown at home in your own garden. These are all used to treat common ailments. If you want to have a well-rounded medicine cabinet, with items that you can replenish on your own land, these are my top picks.

Many are perennial, which means they are available year-round.

Peppermint

Peppermint plants are easy to grow. Sometimes, it's too easy—be careful,

because they can grow like weeds and start invading other plots.

Peppermint is great for upset stomachs and stuffy sinuses. You already know that it has a great flavor and when added to water, it makes it more refreshing and seems cooler. It can be used as a balm on sunburns to help alleviate the discomfort as the cooling sensation works on the skin.

Some find that peppermint is helpful for headaches. It is also helpful for nausea, especially from morning sickness during pregnancy or motion sickness from car rides.

Elderberry

Usually your best bet for getting through the cold/flu season. This one is well-known to aid the immune system. It has a lot of vitamin C and is an anti-inflammatory, and is an excellent ingredient for making jam or syrup that you can pour over pancakes.

Calendula

A must-have for skin issues. Calendula is great with rashes and topical fungal issues. It helps alleviate discomfort in lymph nodes when you are sick. It can also be used as a dye for food or fabrics, anywhere from a bright lemon yellow to an olive-brown, depending on what it is you are coloring. Not everyone loves the flavor, but it can be covered up with other flavorings.

Once it is in the ground, it will drop seeds and keep going, which is nice because if you take care of it, you won't have to buy or harvest more seeds every year.

Feverfew

This grows fast and can be harvested twice a year. A very pretty addition to your garden, and also good for headaches.

Bee Balm/Bergamot/Monarda

Like mint, this can get out of control if you aren't careful. Bee balm is antimicrobial. This is a gentle herb that is good for coughs and stomach aches, and especially great for kids.

Valerian

Best known for aiding in stress and sleep. The blossoms smell terrific. This

plant is also known to attract cats, like catnip.

Lemon Balm

A member of the mint family, this one might have the widest range of uses. One of its best uses is helping to break fevers. People use it for stress management. The smell itself mellows people out, and lemon balm tea is useful for helping you or your kids get to sleep.

Wood Betony

Great for headaches and migraines. This plant is less robust than most of the others and really likes to grow in shady areas.

Tulsi/Holy Basil

Tulsi is an adaptogen and helps with stress. Some people find that it helps them with their focus and get them “out of their heads,” and feel more present. Tulsi is antibacterial and is even used as an ingredient in mouthwash. It can work as a substitute in cooking for the basil we all know, but some think the flavor is too strong.

Hyssop

Another plant that tends to take over a garden if not controlled. A very good option for respiratory issues. A top pick as a flu season plant.

Echinacea

When you harvest echinacea, you generally use the roots. For that reason, you need about two years of growing before your echinacea is large enough that it will be worth harvesting. The sooner you get a patch going, the better.

Most people who know about this plant know it for its powers to fight infection. It can be eaten, but it is also often used topically. Just chewing on the root has a numbing effect which is great for sore throats.

Horehound

This plant is still used on cough drops and should be used for the same purpose.

Elecampane

The best choice for bronchial troubles, like a cough or wheeze.

Sage

A fantastic herb for cooking but it also has other benefits. Another one for mouth and throat troubles, especially scratchy throats. People who make their own toothpaste from herbal powders include sage to help whiten teeth. Sage is also loaded with antioxidants, which is always a good thing.



HOLY BASIL



HYSSOP



ECHINACEA



ELECOMPANE



SAGE

Oregano

Delicious in marinara and a great antimicrobial. Oregano is very high in antioxidants, which are necessary for survival.

Garlic and Onions

One of the best ingredients to add to food and it goes in almost everything. Garlic is antimicrobial and antifungal. Cuts and small wounds are aided with small applications of garlic.

Horseradish

You either love it or you hate it. This is another plant that will spread if you let it. It's a tough plant and doesn't need much help, and a well-known remedy for urinary tract infections and sinus/bronchial trouble.

Marshmallow/Hollyhock

Not to be confused with the squishy white cylinders you melt on graham crackers, Hollyhocks are a very pretty plant, and every part of them is edible. A mucilaginous plant, it is another great herb for soothing irritation of the throat, stomach, or skin. Marshmallows are usually harvested by the root.

Yarrow

Yarrow is so common in some areas, you might not need to grow it yourself. It even looks like a weed. You can easily forage for it. It is known to help aid in blood clotting and its best use is to help stop bleeding. It can induce sweating, which helps to control body temperature if you are hot from a fever.



OREGANO



GARLIC



HORSERADISH



MARSHMALLOW



YARROW

Chamomile

Very popular with almost everyone: helps with gas, great in tea, and great to help calm you down and get you to sleep. Many people brew chamomile tea. If you let the tea bag sit in the cup for just a couple minutes, you'll barely taste it. Don't be afraid to use a lot and let it brew until you get a nice, deeper color than what you might be used to.

Great to help with irritation of the eyes. A used teabag laid on the eyes is fantastic.

Dill

Excellent with pickling, as we all know. Also, there is some early evidence that dill may help with depression and menstrual cramps, which makes it an excellent choice for anyone suffering from endometriosis.

Lavender

A beautiful plant that smells amazing. Most famous for being relaxing. One of the top picks for aromatherapy.

Comfrey

Do not eat this stuff. It's not good for you. Its best use is as a *poultice* over injuries, which we'll cover later in this chapter.

Essential Oils (What Are They; Buying, Storing, and Using Popular Essential Oils)



Essential oils are the “essence” of the plant, not because they are essential for you in the same way that vitamins are. They are the most concentrated form of the plant. You can make them by crushing and distilling a plant. Essential oils should be kept in a cool place, inside containers that are dark enough that they won't be exposed to very much light.

Introduction to Aromatherapy

The smell is extremely important. If you go on a date and the person at the other end of the dining table smells good or bad, it might be enough to decide if you go out again. The smell of perfectly cooked, warm cornbread out of the oven will draw everyone in the house towards the kitchen. Some takeout leftovers lost in the back of the fridge can smell so bad, you skip throwing them in the garbage can and put them straight to the dumpster, incinerator, or compost heap.

Memories are deeply tied to smell; the region of the brain that governs memory just happens to be neighbors with the portion that processes smells. Smelling an alcohol-based perfume might conjure memories of your grandmother. Smelling gingerbread might remind you of Christmas with your family.

Smell has a powerful effect on us on a deep, instinctual level.

The smell of essential oils affects mood. It affects how we process pain. It can make us feel more relaxed and at peace. The science on this is mixed because we don't yet understand the mechanism for why they work. Is the smell having an effect? Or maybe it has a lot to do with that other thing: memory. Smells that conjure up warm, good memories might be exactly what is causing the positive effects. We know it does because the research shows it. People will pay outrageous amounts of money for high-end candles, perfumes, soaps, and conditioners. People have voted with their wallets. All qualified chefs add aromatics to their foods to make them smell great, even if they add almost nothing to the flavor.

Smell matters. Aromatherapy is about using smells, particularly from essential oils, to gain those benefits. It is a very simple thing.

Personally, I love the smell of mulled cider. Apple, nutmeg, and cloves give me a feeling like I am home. I can't explain it. But if I walk into a store or person's home, I feel at ease immediately.

Find smells and oils that help affect your mood. When surviving, morale is important. Things are bad, but it doesn't mean you can't make them a little bit more tolerable.

The two most well-studied and replicated effects from essential oils are relaxation and focus. People usually respond particularly well to the smell of lavender and citrus fruits.

Recipes

There are many applications for your herbs and essential oils. Some of these are ancient and have been used for generations.

Infused Oils

These are very easy to make and an essential technique for many herbal remedies.

Simply place herbs and oil into a jar, at a 1:5 ratio. Any form of edible oil will usually work, but the most popular are olive, grapeseed, or coconut. Be sure to shake it up and mix it.

Then all you have to do is leave it out in the sun for about a month, just like brewing sun tea. The color, smell, and active properties of the plant will bind to the natural fats of the oil. That's the slow method.

To speed it up, you can preheat an oven to 300 degrees F, place your jar in the oven, turn the oven off, and let the jar sit in the oven for three hours.

You can also slow cook it in a pot on a stovetop for 30 minutes or so.

When you are ready to use the oil, you should strain and separate it from the remaining plant product. Be sure to squeeze it out, because the last drops are the best ones. These oils can last about a year, so don't be afraid to make a bunch keep on hand.

Essential Oils

Not the same thing as infused. Essential oils are created by distilling the plant, which means separating the water and the oil from the plant by turning the water into steam. The hard way involves a real distilling system, which is way more than you need for this, unless you also plan on moonshining, also.

To make essential oil, take whichever plant you are using and put it into a pot or crockpot, and cover it in water. It shouldn't be more than 3/4 full. Place the pot's lid on top, but upside down. As the water evaporates, the steam will

condense and then drip down back into the pot.

Heat the water on high heat until you can feel it, then simmer the mixture on low for 4 hours. Keep going until the plant is completely cooked down and barely recognizable.

Take it off the heat and store it in a cool place overnight, such as your refrigerator.

When you check on it the next day, you will find a very thin layer of oil sitting on top of the water. That's your essential oil. Skim it off and place it into another container, preferably dark-colored to protect it from the light. There may be a tiny bit of water left, which is fine, but you can boil that off if you like. Be sure to store in a cool, dark place such as a cellar.

Balms and Salves

These products are created by mixing herb-infused oil with beeswax. Balms and salves are almost the same thing, except that balms have more beeswax, which makes them thicker and easier for travel.

To make a balm/salve, you will first need an infused oil, as we covered above.

For a salve, mix about 4.5 oz of your oil, or a mixture of oils, with 1.5 oz of beeswax inside a jar. Place a saucepan on your stove, add an inch of water, and place the jar inside (with the lid off). Get the heat going to a medium. While it's heating, continue stirring. Once it's all melted and mixed, it is ready to take off the heat. The oil/wax mixture can be added to tin, like the kind you would see for lip balms. Once it cools, it will become a waxy disc that is easy to apply by dabbing your fingers and then rubbing on whatever you like.

Poultice

This is a soft mass such as a wet, ground herb, spread on a piece of cloth and then laid onto an injury, such as a sore or a cut. They are usually heated, but not always.

To make a poultice, begin by chopping then blending or grinding the plant into as fine a paste as you can. You will probably want to add water a little bit at a time during this process. When you have a thick goo, it is ready. This

goo can be applied to cloths or paper towels. Fold the cloth a few times at the edges so the herbal paste doesn't spill out, however, the liquid should begin to bleed through. That's what we want.

You can make these in advance, store them in plastic bags, and freeze them, or you can use them right away, depending on your needs. A frozen poultice can be used as a cold compound to reduce swelling, or it can be warmed up. In either event, the poultice cloth should be bound to the affected region with a bandage or other wrapping to hold it in place. These can be replaced daily.

Tincture

A tincture is an herbal extract dissolved in ethanol (aka ethyl alcohol). The complete solution should be less than 20% alcohol. You can also substitute alcohol for vinegar. These won't last though and should be made when necessary. The alcohol and vinegar tend to "denature" the herb over time, making it less effective after a while. This is a fine way to make a concentrated, liquid version of the herb for ingestion.

Cream/Lotion

A lotion is made very similarly to a balm and salve, but the ratio makes it much thinner. To make a lotion, do the same thing as the balm but try ½ oz of beeswax with ¾ cup of oil. When you have the oil/wax compound melted and blended, there is one more step to make a cream: Add the mixture to a blender. Get it going at a slower speed and gradually add a cup of water. It may take some experimenting, but you want it blending just enough to produce a vortex in the center, and then pour the water into it. as fast as possible without making a mess. As you add the water, the oil should emulsify, so the fats are broken up into droplets too small to see and suspended in the water. As the blend becomes thick and creamy, you'll know it is working. If you have any essential oils on hand, now would be a great time to add a drop or two if you like, for health effects or just to give it a nice smell.

Survival Medicine Tips

- If you don't know what you are doing, you can make things worse.
- Just because you saw it on TV one time, doesn't mean it's a good idea.

Movies and television will hire professional consultants to make the show seem as real as possible. But they have limits. Shows are about entertainment, and the writers and producers ultimately write whatever they want to make it enjoyable. If you actually watch these things in the company of a real professional, they'll be happy to explain how many things TV gets wrong.

- If you have more than one person around when you are treating a patient, give other people jobs to do. Ask them to grab a pillow to elevate a leg. Ask them to call 911. Delegate to others. It makes everyone feel better because they have something to do to help and removes the feeling of helplessness and panic, and you'll be able to get more done with extra sets of hands.
- If you are visibly in a panic, they will panic. If you are calm, they will be calm. Calm is better. Calm is careful, precise, and thoughtful. Be calm, and you'll calm others.
- Keep and carry a portable HAM radio, preferably with a boosted power source. Be sure to know what the emergency channels are in your area. You need a license to operate a HAM radio, except for emergency calls. Know your local frequency for emergencies. If cell phone towers are down, or you are in a spot where you can't get a good phone signal, an old-fashioned radio may be your only shot at contacting emergency services.

Book IV: The Prepper's Canning Guide

The next most important thing after getting food is preserving food. In modern life, we are accustomed to foods with very long shelf-lives, usually, because they have preservatives added. When you are in the game of gathering, hunting, and growing your own food, you can't simply add sodium nitrite or calcium phosphate—and honestly, you don't even want to. There are better ways that don't require additional processing or chemical additives.

People have been coming up with ways to preserve food and extend their life for thousands of years. Humans all over the world that developed agriculture had to survive on feast and famine cycles; reap way more food than you need during the harvest season, but then try to make that food last for the whole winter. Seafaring people had to manage dozens or hundreds of people on a boat for voyages that could take months before resupplying, which meant keeping that food safe for the sailors. If you want to know how seriously people can prep and ration, look into how people lived during trans-Atlantic voyages between the 16th and 19th centuries.



List of Foods to Have: Duration and Conservation

Do you have the following items in your home right now? If you don't, I recommend you start accumulating them. These are all chosen because they have good nutritional value, high caloric content, and because they are easy to store over the long term.

You can't just buy these and forget about them. You should accumulate much more than you will need, and then eat them. Rotate your food supply. Replace what you've eaten with newer, fresher food.

Rice

A staple of human agriculture and survival since the invention of agriculture. Literally, just add water and heat and you have yourself a high-calorie carbohydrate. I know that "carb" has become a dirty word in recent years. This is a survival situation, however. We're not trying to trim ourselves to 5% body fat to look good on the beach. We need energy and we can't afford to be super picky about where we get it.

Beans

Black beans and pinto beans are your best bet. I prefer dried over canned. Dries take up less space, and they are easy to rehydrate overnight. They last a long time and have a lot of protein and calories.

Lentils

High in protein, keeps for a long time, and tastes great when prepared correctly. A very underappreciated food.

Nuts

High in fat at protein. Great for snacks while you are on the move and they require no cooking or preparation of any kind, except maybe adding salt or other seasonings.

Animal fats

Remember, you need to have fats to avoid rabbit starvation. Save all your fats from meat. Anything that cooks off should be stored in a cold place, or frozen. I have seen a jar of bacon fat selling at the store for \$15, which is absurd. I can fill a small mason jar with bacon fat just by saving all the liquid from one pound of bacon. Save your fats.

Oils

Preferably not seed oils. Seed oils are cheap, but there is mounting evidence that they are not very good for your health. You want coconut, avocado, and olive oils. They all hold up well, are great for cooking, and add important fat to your diet. Avocado has the highest smoke point, meaning it won't burn easily. It has no flavor, but it is a phenomenal cooking oil.

Canned Foods

Especially canned fruits and vegetables. These are foods that are nutritious, but won't last a long time if not preserved correctly. You'll be making most of these on your own, as we'll discuss later in this chapter.

Salt

Necessary for survival and for pickling. Also, most food doesn't taste any good without it. Inexpensive and easy to find.

Vinegar

Necessary for pickling. Great in a lot of recipes, such as Chinese hot & sour soup. It also can be used as a cleaning solution, without the toxicity of many standard products.

Flour

Lasts a long time and can be used to make bread, thicken stews, bread meats, and make tortillas. Like salt, this stuff comes very cheaply, so you might as well have a decent amount on hand. Many people find baking to be a challenging and satisfying hobby.

Other Seasonings

Just because things are tough, doesn't mean everything should be flavorless, either. Europe conquered most of the world between the 13th and 19th centuries because they wanted their food to taste good. Have your favorite seasonings in large quantities. Most are dried already and will last a good long time. Cumin, peppercorns, cinnamon, garlic powder, and anything else you and your family enjoy.

Vitamins

I like to keep a ton of multivitamins on hand. It's better to get your vitamins through food, but in a pinch, some pills can help fill in the gaps if you can't find the necessary nutrition elsewhere. Maybe not technically food, but they deserve a mention here.

Canning Basics: Methods and Safety Tips to Preserving



Canning is simple and absolutely amazing for preserving food. If you haven't done it before, you probably know that it is a hobby enjoyed by many people, especially those who have their own gardens and farms. One of the beauties of canning is that you can do just about anything. You're able to can things like salsa, soup, ground beef—nearly anything.

This is your go-to method for preserving food. It's called "canning," but really it should be called "jarring."

The process is very simple. If done correctly, they can preserve your food for years. In a hypothetical perfect environment, they could be preserved (theoretically) forever. But since we don't live in a perfect world, you will have to suffice with preserving your food for two to five years. That's a remarkable amount of time to keep food in an edible state, especially very perishable foods such as meats. They can be preserved for even longer than that, however, it might compromise the flavor or texture, or nutritional value. If you know what you're doing, you can safely bank on a two year lifespan, though.

The one big purchase you need is a *canner pressure cooker*. These can get a little pricey for a kitchen appliance that only does one thing, but in the long

term, it will pay for itself. A canner pressure cooker is a great investment and if you don't already have one, I strongly encourage you to go out and get one. It's one of the best tools to have in anyone's kitchen if you are prepping; I don't mean Insta Pot. These are specifically made for maximizing the value and safety of your canned foods. Your grandmother might have just used a pot with boiling water. That works, but it just simply isn't the best way. No one who is into canning does that anymore. It is strongly discouraged because it is much less safe and reliable.

You also need to purchase yourself some jars and lids. You also want a lot of extra lids and rings because they won't be reused. The jars and lids have to be sterilized. If you can disinfect it chemically with antibacterial soap, that's great. If not, you should boil the jars and lids and give them a good scrub with a clean sponge. Any kind of microorganisms or bacteria that's in it might go to town on whatever you can and eat it before you do.

Before canning, have everything already set up and ready to go. Have your pressure cooker ready, the heat on, with the water boiling and the platform on the bottom. Food ready, jars and lids clean.

Whatever you are canning, the jar needs to be completely full up to the first groove at the top where the ring screws on. Most of the time, that means adding a liquid. For meats, I add bone broth. For vegetables, I might add water or even salt and vinegar to pickle them. Whatever you choose, there cannot be any air in it at all below the neck of the jar. If you are canning crumbled ground beef, that means there are a lot of nooks and crannies where air bubbles can be trapped. Be sure to remove any air bubbles. Poke it with a spoon and bang it on the table a little bit. Don't skip this step. May seem like a little more work right now, but if you are desperate for food in 2 years, you're going to be really glad you did it right the first time.

Once the jars are full, you want to make sure that the rims are as clean as possible. Be sure to use a very clean rag. Again, you don't want any unwanted microscopic friends hanging around.

Place lids on top of the jars without touching them with your hands. Your hands are covered in all kinds of invisible gross bacteria that would love to get inside of that jar. For this reason, you can use a special tool to pick up the

sterilized lids and place them onto the sterilized jars without using your hands, or you can use gloves that you know are safe. Then screw the lids on until they are finger tight, meaning as tight as they go without using your palms and full grip. As these heat up, the remaining air will attempt to escape, and we want it to have an exit.

Place the jars, into the boiling water, right side up, and cover the jars with the lid. These will be pressure cooked for 75 minutes. The heat will agitate the little bit of air remaining at the top of the jar causing it to escape, thus creating a suction effect. This will keep the jar remainder in a vacuum and keep the lead and ring fastened very tightly.

When they are done, let them cool naturally. Don't try running cold water over them to speed up the cooling, or else they are liable to crack. If you can press the top of the lid and it doesn't give and it doesn't "pop" back up, you've achieved a good seal. Write down the date, including the year, so you can be sure to eat whatever is in the can before the expiration date.

You should always read the instruction manual thoroughly before operating a pressure cooker. If you don't know what you're doing, a pressure cooker can be very dangerous. For a grizzly example, consider that the bomb used by terrorists against innocents at the Boston Marathon in 2013 was housed in a pressure cooker. So please be safe.

When canning meat, personally, I like it cooked at least a little bit, just lightly browned in the case of beef, or removing the pink if it's pork or chicken. Does this help preserve it? I honestly don't know. I do know that it gives me peace of mind and it certainly doesn't hurt. Hunting a deer or butchering an animal can produce a lot of meat, and you want to make sure it is all eaten or preserved before it goes bad.

Fermentation (Processes and Stages)

Fermentation is literally a living process. Fermented food is a great means of preserving food, it adds a lot of flavors, and it is also excellent for good gut health. A little bit of kimchi or sauerkraut in the morning can be a great way to keep your gut working at peak condition.

If you can ‘can’ something, you can pickle something. Fermenting something is an ancient way of preserving it, and it is as easy as adding salt and/or vinegar, and time.

Food disintegrates and decays when left alone. Fermenting is the process of controlling that natural process. Microbes such as mold and yeast eat the sugars and starches, and leave behind gasses and alcohol. The object of our controlled fermentation is to allow the bacteria and microbes we want to do their job and keep out the bad ones.

There are three ways to ferment: lactic, alcoholic, and acetic. For the sake of this book, we’re covering lactic. If you want to make vodka, the process is similar, but you’ll need another book for that.

For veggies, we use lactic fermentation, which creates lactic acid that gives the food a distinct, tangy flavor. This needs to be done in an anaerobic, meaning oxygen-free environment. For that reason, the things we are fermenting need to be completely submerged in liquid.

You can use the same kind of jars for fermenting that you would use for canning, and you ought to clean them just the same. Wash the vegetables, too. Chop any vegetables to your preferred size, just so long as they can fit in the jar. Then add water until they are completely covered. I mean completely; a tiny bit, even 1/16th of an inch exposed above the water, can ruin the whole jar.

Then you add salt. The amount of salt you add is a simple equation. The weight of the salt is equal to the combined weight of the vegetables and water, multiplied by 0.025. For example, if the veggies weigh 6 oz, and the water weighs 3 oz, you need 0.225 oz of salt. $(6+3)*0.025 = 0.225$

Lid it and then shake it until the salt is completely dissolved. Remember, it is very important that the veggies are completely submerged at all times, so once the salt is dissolved, it's okay to open the jar and move the contents around or push them down. Some people will add an object to help push or weigh the food down, which is a perfectly fine solution if they are being pesky.

If the cap is placed on tightly, the gasses will stay in and it will become mildly carbonated. Some people prefer that. If you don’t, you can also leave

the lid on loosely or use a small airlock to allow the gas to escape. Some people barely leave on a lid at all, just enough to cover it so dust and insects don't get in. That's not a problem.

Try to keep your fermenting veggies at about 60–75 degrees F. If you can't find a good place in your home, you can actually dig a hole in the earth a foot deep and bury them there to keep them cool and out of direct sunlight. This was the traditional method in Korea for making Kimchi and many families in the country still do it that way. Just be sure to leave a marker so you don't forget where it's buried.

Within a day, the good microbes will eat off all the bacteria that we don't want in our fermentation process. Lactobacillus will start eating sugars and converting them to acids. In four to five days, you might start seeing bubbles, which means it's doing what it should. The longer it goes, the tangier and funkier the flavor will get.

If you don't submerge them well, you'll find mold growing on the exposed bits, and you'll know it's ruined.

Pickling

Basically the same process, but you'll be using a solution of equal parts vinegar and water. You will multiply this weight by 0.05 to get your salt amount, and add any seasoning you like. We'll cover pickling a little deeper in the next chapter.

Freezing

If you have access to a freezer, take advantage of that. If you don't have a chest freezer, consider purchasing one. Many families purchase half or quarter cows. It's a lot of cash and meat upfront, but it keeps you fed for a long time, and the savings over the long term make it an absolute bargain.

If you live in a climate that gets cold during winter, you can store your food outside. In January, everything outdoors is a freezer. Just take care to protect it from any animals who might sniff it out. This is not your best option,

though. There are risks. Food can potentially attract bears and coyotes. Weather is not as predictable as a freezer temperature. As soon as the temperature gets above 40 degrees F, the food can begin to spoil. Whatever you use to protect it, it has to be rat-proof, coyote proof, bear-proof, and raccoon-proof.

If you have meat and it thaws, either eat it or get rid of it. I strongly recommend you do not try refreezing it.

Dehydrating

If you own a functional dehydrator, then you already have everything you need. If you don't, then an oven will work just fine. Besides that, you need air-tight jars that you can store them in.

In the oven, get the temperature to the lowest setting you can. Place the food on a wire rack so it can get air passing over and under it, otherwise, the tops will get dry but the bottoms will stay soggy. This can take a long time, so you have to be patient. Don't rush it by raising the heat, or you will get a dry outside and a wet inside, which is not good. Fruits that have a lot of water will take longer. If the food is cut thinner, it'll dry faster.

Adding salt will pull water from the food to the surface, so this can speed things up, but it will make the food salty. Great for venison, not so great for cranberries.

Depending on many factors, drying something can take a wide range of time. The dryness of the climate, the temperature, the altitude, and the movement of the air all factor in. This usually takes 4–6 hours, but there is no hard rule about how much time it takes to dry something. When it's dry, it's dry. If it's not dry, keep going until it is.

If it's still warm, you don't know yet how dry it is. Warm food in the drying process will seem wetter than it is. After you let it cool to room temperature, a lot of moisture will be released, and only then will you know exactly how dry it is. While drying, periodically remove samples and let them cool so you can accurately gauge your progress.

After the food is dehydrated, it'll be good to eat for about as long as you can

keep it dry. Store your dried foods in an airtight glass jar. But you need to check up on it. Rattle it around inside the jar. If it *clinks*, it is dry. If it *thuds*, it is still wet. If it's wet, it will grow mold, so at the first sign of thuds, get it back into the oven to dehydrate it more. Also, keep an eye out for any moisture or condensation. If the food sticks to the sides or each other, it isn't dry enough.

If you see mold growing, it's game over. Get rid of it. If you open it and it smells off, get rid of it. Clean the jar thoroughly.

A well-dried food can last as many as two years. But be sure to keep checking on it every day. Rattle it around and look for the signs that it isn't as dry as it needs to be.

You can dry red meats and fish, but they won't last as long as fruits and vegetables. Do NOT try to dry chicken or pork. It's way too risky. I am assured by some people that it is possible, but I cannot in good conscience cover this topic without cautioning you against it.

Smoking

This is not easy to do without the right equipment. If you have a charcoal or pellet grill that is capable of smoking, that'll work. If you have a lot of mouths to feed, or you want to smoke large batches for the longer term, consider building yourself a smoke-house dedicated to the process.

The greatest benefit of smoking is that it is delicious. Smoked fish is absolutely wonderful. Extends shelf life quite a bit, but not nearly to the same extent as the other means covered in this chapter.

Salting

The original. Salting foods has been with humans for a long, long time, which is why salt was an incredibly valuable commodity in the ancient world. No salt means no food storage. No food storage means no nautical travel. No nautical travel means no empire. Perhaps all of history hinges on something as simple as nutrition... but that's a conversation for another time.

If you have access to lots of salt, you can use it to preserve beef and fish for a decent amount of time without any refrigeration. Salt removes the water. Microorganisms and bacteria can't survive long without moisture, so your meat can become inhospitable to the things that make it go bad.

This isn't my favorite method and it won't work well for a lot of foods. If you want to make some meat suitable for a weeklong hike, good salting is fine. It also has the added negative effect of, obviously, making the food VERY salty. Salted meat can be added to broth in a stew or soup, which is a great solution because it seasons the soup on its own without needing to add more salt.

Book V: Prepper's Cookbook



A recipe is just a list of ingredients and instructions. With a little bit of preparation and mindfulness, anyone can follow a recipe. Being a great cook, however, is measured when you can't follow the recipe. It might be because some ingredients are missing, or maybe because some tools are missing, or maybe someone you are feeding has some particular limitations on what they can eat or any of the countless things that can screw up a perfectly planned dinner. These are some of my favorite recipes, all of which use ingredients and tools that a well-prepped person should have available to them. But, the

whole point of prepping is to expect things to go wrong. So when you are in a situation where the recipe isn't perfect, this is your time to learn to be a great cook because you will need to improvise.

Maybe you really like the recipe for chili, but you do not have any beef available. Well, maybe substituting beef or rabbit is just as good. I have no idea if it is. I've never made rabbit chili. But when times get tough, you have to figure things out. So consider these recipes as for when everything's going according to plan. When things don't go according to plan—and they won't—I trust that you can make some adjustments and figure out something that tastes good.

So maybe this is less a list of recipes, and more a list of loose recommendations for you to work with.

Foods You Can Prepare With Appliances

Hardtack / Ship's Biscuits

Hardtack were used as rations on ships in the 18th century and during the American Civil War. These are super dense. Are they any good? Absolutely not. This is food to survive on, not to enjoy. These things last a very long time without refrigeration. Add water to them if they are too hard to soften them up. There are American Civil War songs about how much the soldiers hated this stuff. Enjoy.

- 2 cups flour
- 1/2 tbsp salt
- 3/4 cup water
- You can add herbs and pepper if you like.

This makes 6 biscuits. They are very dense and very high in calories. One way of eating them is to put them into a soup or chili, to soften them up.

Preheat your oven to 300 degrees F.

In a bowl, stir everything together, adding the water gradually. Knead the

dough. When you're done, you will have a slightly sticky dough ball.

Roll out your dough to about 1/2-inch thickness onto a floured surface. Cut it up into 6 equal portions. Traditionally, they'd be rectangle-shaped.

Place the biscuits on a baking sheet. Poke them with a fork so they won't puff up.

Bake them for about 2 hours, then flip them and give them another 30 minutes. They're done when they start looking a little brown.

Let them cool before eating. If they make a strange crackling noise, that's normal.

Bone Broth

This has become a very popular fad food recently, but only because a whole lot of people only recently discovered it. Bone broth has been with humans for as long as we've had fire. The greatness of this recipe is that it leaves very little waste and it is a fantastic source of collagen and fat, which is great for your hair, skin, nails, and joints.

Many people—myself included—like to have a cup of hot bone broth first thing in the morning just like a cup of coffee. It is a surprisingly light breakfast and a great source of many nutrients that modern people seem to have difficulty keeping upon. Whenever you eat processed meat, they remove a lot of the cartilage collagen, fats, and other necessary products. You want all that stuff in your diet. If you don't like to eat it, the next best way is to make it into a broth.

If you see the stuff at the store, you will see outrageously high prices for small amounts. This is absolutely ridiculous. You can make massive volumes of bone broth at home for a tiny fraction of what they want to charge you at stores.

- 2 lbs of bones (more on this below)
- 1 Garlic
- 1 Onion
- Carrots

- Celery
- Salt and pepper + 2 bay leaves
- 2 tbsp apple cider vinegar or white vermouth

The vegetables don't need to be high quality. They can be just whatever scraps you have lying around, like old limp celery or carrots that look like they won't last much longer. The exact measurements aren't very important.

Cook bones in the oven, at 400 degrees F for 1 hour. This roasting process adds a lot of richness and depth to the flavor. I strongly recommend you don't skip this step. Some people also roast the vegetables just until they show a little bit of brown.

When they are done, pour them into a soup pot or a crockpot. Be sure to get all the liquid in there, and scrape all those little brown bits that stuck to your pan. Do not skip this. That is where a lot of the flavor is.

Add water until the bones are covered and bring the water to a boil. Some foamy stuff will rise in the water. It looks gross, but it's fine, it's just proteins. You want to use a spoon and skim the gray foam. The white foam is fine. All this does is help the flavor.

After an hour, add everything else to the pot. Add water until everything is covered. Bring to a boil again, then reduce to a simmer, and put a lid on it.

If you have an Insta pot, cook on the "soup/broth" setting on low pressure for 4 hrs. If you are making it on a stovetop or over a fire, keep the heat low and let it go for 10–14 hours, lid on. Keep checking on it every 30–60 minutes. Keep adding water as it evaporates, otherwise, it's liable to boil all the way down, and that would be a disaster.

When it's ready, strain out all the stuff, separating the liquid. That leftover stuff can be composted. Be extremely careful, this broth can get scalding hot over time, and splashing hot fats onto exposed skin can cause second-degree burns.

The liquid is pure gold. This recipe makes a lot, so you might want to can it or freeze it in an ice cube tray. It's good in the fridge for about five days before it gets gross. I usually freeze the majority and keep a little bit in the fridge. You know you did it right after refrigerating it overnight. If the broth

is gelatinous, you have yourself a perfect bone broth. That jelly is all the good stuff your body needs that other people just throw away. Don't worry, it'll liquefy again when you warm it up.

The best bones come from pigs and cows. The following are the ones you'll want to keep an eye out for at a butcher market or when you are slaughtering your own animal:

- *Marrow bones.* Save the marrow and use it as a spread. Incredibly nutritious and a very expensive delicacy in fancy restaurants. I like to mix my marrow in with the broth.
- *Shanks.* You can keep the meat.
- *Short ribs.* Expensive, but very good.
- *Oxtail.* Also very pricey, but one of the best.
- *Knuckle bone.* My personal favorite.

You can use any kind of bones. Chicken, rabbit, turkey, or anything else. I save all my bones for broths and usually mix one or two kinds, depending on what I have on hand.

Buns

Used for burgers or sandwiches. Toast them and put butter on them, or just eat them as they are.

- 2 cup warm water
- ½ cup warm milk (you may be in a situation where powdered milk is your only option)
- 2 tablespoon instant (rapid-rise) yeast
- 4 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 3 teaspoons salt
- 1 egg (not necessary, but great for the outside; a couple possible substitutes for egg are yogurt or mashed bananas, but this will alter the flavor)
- 4 cups all purpose flour
- 3 cups white whole wheat flour
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, but other fats will work

Mix the warm water, the yeast, and sugar until fully dissolved. Wait about 15 minutes. If the water isn't bubbling a little, it means that the yeast is dead. You need new yeast and you need to try again.

If the yeast is good, add the other ingredients and stir. Knead it until it is smooth. Place in a bowl and let the dough rise. Cover with a lid or a moist towel. If you see it getting big in an hour, it's working. I like to leave my bread in the fridge for at least one night. The flavor gets better and better over a few days. Press it down and deflate it once a day.

When you are ready to bake it, give it another knead, then divide it into 16 balls. Place on a baking sheet and slide into a preheated 400 degree F oven for 13–15 mins, depending on elevation. If it's looking brown and done, it probably is.

Remove and let it cool.

Pickled Anything

You can pickle almost anything. Cucumbers, asparagus, onions, hard-boiled eggs, or pig's feet. We already learned how to ferment veggies in the previous chapter. Pickling isn't much different.

- 3 cups of vinegar
- 3 cups of salt
- 5 tablespoons of water
- your favorite seasoning
- anything

Prep your vegetables by cleaning them and slicing them however you like.

The key ingredient is brine. The brine is what makes a pickle. Add the vinegar, water, and salt together in a pot and boil it and stir until the salt is completely dissolved. Then remove from the heat.

The rest is just like the fermenting process we covered in the last chapter, but instead of using water, you use the brine.

Other great things you can add, depending on what you like and what you have:

- a bay leaf
- olive oil
- dried chili pepper flakes
- pickling spice
- turmeric
- dill
- garlic cloves
- horseradish
- oregano
- mustard seeds
- black peppercorns

The longer the pickles go, usually the better. Don't become impatient. Let time do its job. If you love eating pickles, keep a regular stock in rotation so you don't run out.

My family likes to make a blend of veggies in a single jar. Usually, these have chopped carrots, celery, garlic, onion, pepper, and jalapenos.

Green Chili

An absolute staple for the good people of Colorado. The capsaicin in chilis are a natural preservative, are good at discouraging critters like raccoons, and the spiciness trigger endorphin and dopamine release in the brain, similar to the mildly euphoric feeling experienced

IMPORTANT: WEAR COOKING GLOVES!! Or your hands will be spicy for up to 12 hours!

No amount of washing your hands will get it off. The first time I did this, I did not wear gloves. A tiny amount got under the fingertip and an hour later I rubbed my eyes and—wow, I will never make that mistake again.

- 3 lbs. pork shoulder, trimmed and cubed
- 2 tbsp. cooking oil (approximate amount)
- 2 tbsp. all purpose flour on the meat
- 2 poblano peppers
- 2 anaheim peppers

- 2 jalapenos
- 4 garlic cloves
- 6 tomatillos, husks removed
- 1 large white onion, peeled and quartered

...all roasted

- 3/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1/2 tsp. cumin
- 1/2 tsp. oregano
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 bunch cilantro, bulk of stems removed

There's not much to this. Remove the seeds from the peppers. This can take a little while. Take all the veggies, place them on a tray, splash them with oil and salt, and broil them until they start showing brown and black. It won't take long.

Blend all the veggies and other ingredients (except the meat) into a salsa. Brown the meat in a pot. Pour the salsa into the pot. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer and cook it on low for 8 hrs.

Collards

A fantastic and underappreciated dish. It's basically steamed leaves and bacon. As I'm quick to remind others, it can technically be considered a salad, but the only hot salad I know of.

- collards, 2 bunches
- chopped onion
- chopped bacon or other smokey meat, if you have it
- hot sauce
- smoked neck or trotters, preferably pork, but other animals work great
- maybe a half cup of chicken stock
- saute onion and bacon

Throw it all in a pot, slow cooker, or pressure cooker. Add heat until it's sizzling. Reduce heat and cover.

3 hours in a slow cooker, 20 minutes in a pressure cooker, or 40 minutes on a stove top.

That's it.

Pasty / Hand-Pie

Every culture on earth has a form of food that is a pastry filled with stuff. Sandwiches, dumplings, empanadas, potstickers, tacos, and pasties. Like all great lunch foods, the great thing about the pasty is that it is easy to bring with you when you are on the move. It is self-contained and very filling.

- 3 cups all purpose flour, plus a little extra
- 1 cup shortening or lard; I prefer lard
- salt
- 1 cup of cold water
- ground black pepper
- egg (not mandatory)
- stuff (we'll get to this...)

Mix everything except water until it starts clumping. Slowly add water and continue mixing until it's consistent. Form that into a ball. Wrap that up in plastic or a damp towel and let them mellow in the fridge for an hour—literally. You want the gluten to relax, so you can roll it out easier.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

Cut the dough into six equally-sized pieces, and roll them into balls, just like you did with Play-doh when you were a kid. Sprinkle some flour onto your counter or whatever surface you are working with and roll them into 8" circles.

Here's where we mentioned the mystery ingredient, "stuff." What's the stuff? Whatever you want it to be. It could be leftover sloppy joe mix. It could be chicken alfredo. It could be peaches. It can be anything you want, so long as it's cooked and you like it.

Evenly divide the stuff onto each dough circle. About $\frac{3}{4}$ a cup will be perfect. Fold the dough over so the stuff is covered. Smoosh the edges down with a

fork, so the stuff is sealed inside a pocket of the dough, just like a dumpling. Make three small cuts on top of each pasty. We want the steam to have an easy escape route while this is cooking, otherwise, it'll bust open the seam. Brush the tops of the pasties with a beaten egg. I like to let them sit for a few minutes to make sure the dough is relaxed and that the seams on my pasties won't open.

Then, put them on the baking sheet and let them go for 1 and ¼ hours. Let them cool before eating. A fantastic lunch food that you can eat with your hands.

Jerky

Beef or venison. You can even make gator jerky if you find yourself in the company of our contemporary dinosaurs. Jerky is a fantastically versatile food. You can make them sweet, salty, spicy, vinegary, BBQ flavored, mustard flavored, sriracha flavored, or any other flavor you like. Whatever you use to marinate your meat, that's the flavor, and a marinade doesn't have any hard rules, except that it should be salty. All-time greatest backpacking food.

- 3 pounds of meat (be sure to trim off any fat or silver skin; keep the fat, discard the skin)
- 1 cup of brown sugar (aka best sugar)
- 1 cup soy sauce, or if you don't have that, a seasoned brine like pickle juice
- 3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
- 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tsp red pepper flakes
- 1 tsp of minced onion or onion powder
- ½ tsp minced garlic or garlic powder

Slice the meat into strips, about ¼" and ¼" thick. If you can, keep the length of the strips perpendicular to the grain. It makes them much easier to chew and less stringy.

Make the marinade by combining all that stuff (except the meat) and mixing

it up until it's dissolved.

Add the meat to the marinade and mix it up so all the pieces are well coated. You can do this inside a Ziploc bag, which is my preferred method. Let that sit in the fridge overnight, minimum. I like to go 24 hours, personally. A longer marinade makes the final product more tender and flavorful. Be sure to toss that around a couple times to make sure everything is getting coated nicely.

Place two wire racks over two pans. Preheat the oven to 175 degrees F, or as close to that as you can. If you don't have enough pans or wire racks, then make it in batches.

Place them in the oven and let them do their thing for 3 or 4 hours, depending on how thick your cuts are. It's done when the meat is dried out and it looks done.

Take it out and let it cool down. Have a taste. You'll know if you did it right.

Store your jerky in jars, just like any other dried food. Don't forget to check on them and make sure they stay dry.

Foods You Can Prepare Without Appliances

These are all doable without electricity or any special appliances. You can make these with a fire, a pot, a knife, and a stick.

Rabbit Stew

- 4 strips of bacon, if you have it. (It's not a deal-breaker if you don't. People overdo bacon. This is a mistake. Bacon is not the starring role. If bacon got an academy award, it should be for best supporting actor. Salty, fatty, smokey. Just a little will add a lot to many recipes.)
- 2 lbs. of rabbit meat cut in 2-inch pieces (tossed with black pepper and at least 1 tsp salt); one wild rabbit will have about 1 lb of good meat on it.
- 2 onions, chopped

- garlic
- 1 can of beer, if you have it
- 1/4 cup of tomato paste, or dehydrated tomatoes that have been mashed up
- thyme
- 3 carrots (chopped)
- 2 ribs celery (chopped)
- 2 1/2 cups chicken stock (use bone broth from the earlier recipe if you have it)
- 1 tsp sugar
- salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Throw it all into a pot. Heat until it's boiling. Add the lid. Simmer the stew covered 2 hours, until fork tender

Goes great with mashed potatoes.

Lebanese Lentil Soup

One of the all-time great winter comfort foods. If you don't like lentil soup, it's because you've never had it prepared properly. Lentils are a great source of vegetable protein that can be stored for the long haul.

- 6 cups of stock (ould be chicken or beef; I like chicken)
- 1 pound red lentils
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp minced garlic
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 1 tbsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp cayenne
- juice from one or two lemons, depending on how tangy you like it
- salt and pepper to taste

Optional, but encouraged

- 2 diced carrots
- 2 diced celery stalks
- 1/2 cup of chopped cilantro

- 1 bunch of kale, collards, or chard

Put the lentils and the water and broth into a pot. Add heat until it boils, then reduce the heat and cover with a lid, and let it simmer for a half-hour.

Then add the vegetables, cover them again, and let them go for another 15 minutes or so, until they are tender.

Last, add in the aromatics: garlic, cilantro, and lemon. Then give it just another 2 minutes.

Remove from the heat. If you are using any leafy greens, add those now. Cover and let go for another 10 minutes or so.

This recipe makes, so if you have leftovers, be sure to freeze them or can it.

Red Beans and Rice

The entire Cajun way of cooking is about making do with what they had. Classically trained French chefs in Louisiana didn't have all the options and ingredients that their colleagues in Europe had, so they made substitutions. This is your philosophy for cooking when you can't just get any groceries you like.

- 1 cup diced onion
- 3/4 cup finely diced celery
- 3/4 cup finely diced green peppers
- 1 smoked ham hock (that's a pig's foot; don't knock it till you try it—it can be easily substituted for any other smoked boney tough meat such as a smoked turkey neck)
- 1 pound red kidney beans
- 12 ounces of cubed andouille sausage, or some other meat
- 4 cups of broth, and maybe a little more
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper, or to taste
- 4 cloves minced garlic
- black pepper
- 2 bay leaves
- rice

If the beans are dehydrated, place them into a bowl with water and leave them overnight. These things will swell up to twice the size, so use a lot of water.

When it's cooking time, fire up a pot and throw in the meat and some oil. When those are 70% cooked, add in the veggies. When those are looking soft, add the seasoning.

Add the red beans, drained. You don't want the leftover water from rehydrating them. Add the broth. If 4 cups aren't enough, add until everything is completely covered. Raise the heat until it's boiling. Then reduce to medium-low, lid on, for about an hour.

After an hour, check on it. If the beans are soft, you can start mashing them. Some people like it more mashed, some less. It's entirely up to you. It's as easy as squishing them against the side of the pot with a spoon. Kids enjoy this, so if you have any handy, this is a good job for them. Add more broth if it looks like it's boiling down too much.

Those beans will go for another 30 minutes, so now would be a good time to make the rice.

Only use a pot with a very tight lid. Rice is super fussy to cook and takes practice to master, which is why all technologically advanced people use rice cookers. Add rice and water into a pot at a 1:2 ratio. A little goes a long way. 1 cup of rice and two cups of water should do the job. Add a few dashes of salt and a splash of oil. Butter or lard work great as substitutes.

Put the rice and water on high heat until it starts boiling. Immediately reduce the heat to the barest minimum possible and cover it with a lid. **DO NOT REMOVE THE LID.** You will ruin it. Let it slowly cook and absorb the water for 20 minutes. Now remove the lid for just two seconds and release some steam. Put the lid back on and let it sit without any heat for another 10 minutes.

After 10 minutes, remove the lid, and fluff it with a fork.

Serve the beans and rice together. Extremely cheap, delicious, and filling, making beans and rice one of the most perfect foods for survival or otherwise.

Recipes While Away From Home

These are recipes for when you are camping, out in the woods for the day, or maybe you just feel like cooking outside. For these all you're going to need is your ingredients, a campfire, a Cast iron skillet or a pot, a metal spatula, and maybe some gloves to keep your hands safe.

If you can, try and have your meals planned so you bring exactly what you need, and don't haul extra.

Hobo Pie

As easy as it gets. This isn't so much a recipe as it is a method. Place food on tinfoil. Add salt and oil. Wrap it up tightly. Place on low-burning coals. Let the food steam and cook.

What goes into a hobo pie? Pretty much the same things you'd put in a stew. Carrots, cubed beef, cubed potatoes, and really anything else tasty that you have on hand.

Iron Pie

This one has a special place in my heart because I've been eating these since I was a small kid. It's also an extremely versatile recipe, because essentially all we're doing is making a toasty Hot Pocket filled with whatever it is we like. For this recipe we need a pie iron, also sometimes called a pudgy pie maker, depending on your regional dialect.

Very, very simple. You need two slices of bread, some kind of fat so the bread doesn't stick to the pie iron, and stuff to put inside. What can you put inside? Well, here are a few ideas.

Every pudgy pie requires two slices of bread. Besides that, try some of these.

Sloppy Tidy Joe

Thoroughly cook some ground beef and crumble it. I like to use a potato masher to help break it down into finer pieces.

Add some diced onions, tomato sauce, green peppers, and garlic if you have it. Definitely add salt. You work with what you have, not what you wish you had. If you have ketchup and mustard, use that. If you have ground venison, not beef, use that.

Add some to the bread, lock it, and cook it until the outside is crispy. The best thing about this is that the sloppy joe is much less sloppy when it is contained in a pocket of bread. For that reason, we'll call this a Tidy Joe.

Pizza

Just use all the ingredients for pizza: cheese, sauce, meats, and veggies. Might not be a substitute for your favorite pizzeria, but better than you might expect.

Breakfast

Add an egg or two, bacon or sausage, some cheese, and whatever veggies you have. When you get good, you'll be able to cook it just right so the eggs are how you like them.

Pie

If you've been canning and preserving fruits, you can make a pie pocket. If you want it to be like the gooey stuff in a can at a supermarket, you can make a simple syrup by boiling equal parts water and sugar until the sugar is fully dissolved. Add the fruit and stir and let it cool. You'll have a sweet gooey treat with little work.

Skewers

If you can marinate your meat first overnight, all the better. It'll add a lot of flavors and help tenderize the meat. If you can't, that's not a deal-breaker. All you need for this is a fire and something narrow and long with a stabby end. You can make a skewer with a stick by whittling it down.

Simply stab your meat and veggies, and apply heat. Easy. It's done when you want it to be.

Trail Mix

As simple as mixing things in a bag. Combine your favorite nuts, dried fruit, and other goodies. Make sure they are chopped up small. Add salt. Last in the field and a great little snack when taking a rest.

Fish Tacos

If you've made your own tortillas from your garden's corn, you can make any kind of taco you like.

Cook the fish until it's edible. On a skillet, add some oil. Rub a little water on both sides of the corn tortilla. If you don't, the tortilla will be dry and crumbly, and it'll just burn. A little water steams it and makes it pliable. Heat on both sides until you see just a few brown spots appear. Serve quickly, before it gets cold.

Fish with pepper and salt is great. This should be no problem if you've already caught one in a nearby river and cleaned it. If you have onion, cilantro, oregano, or any other herbs from your garden, these are all great to dress up a fish.

Conclusion

For the most part, things just seem to work. We order things on the internet and they show up. We go to the gas station, and there is gas. We turn on the television, and the electricity, internet, and streaming service are all doing what they are supposed to. To enjoy the life we do now requires a vast and very complex, interconnected web of interactions. Take something as simple as a cheap plastic pen. How do you make a pen? Could you make one from scratch if you tried?

A single pen takes a lot of things. A pen is mostly plastic. Plastic is made from petroleum. Petroleum comes from oil. So the source of your plastic might be an oil well in Alaska, or Saudi Arabia, or Russia. That oil was removed by professional engineers, looked over by safety experts, guarded with a military. All those people had to be compensated with money for food, water, and lodgings. The locations were probably scouted by credentialed geologists. The oil was then sold on a market and transported to another location, also with countless professionals, who used many machines to convert that petroleum into plastic. That plastic was sold to another company that used another set of machines and people to shape the plastic, color it, and add a logo or art on the side. And some more plastic was probably used in the packaging.

All of that only covers the plastic. We haven't talked about the ink and the plants grown to create it, the metal and the mines to extract it, or the cardboard and lumberjacks used to package it, or the truckers and warehouse workers, the marketing, and countless other things. All of those things are necessary to bring us just one pen that is so cheap, banks give them away. It is a remarkable thing. But it is all much more brittle than we may realize. Remove one of those things, and the pen can't be made. The entire chain of production and distribution stalls. If oil triples in price because of an embargo or a war, the plastic gets more expensive, and every time the ingredients, people, and products are transported also gets more expensive. If the mine collapses, they have to find another way to find metal as fast as they can.

That's just a pen. That's not even something that matters like an electrical

grid or clean water. If one thing goes wrong, the people affected find a solution. If two or three of these things break down at the same time, an entire chain reaction of problems will follow. We think this is the ordinary state of affairs. It is not. This new world is only about 50 years old, and humans have never existed in anything remotely as complex and brittle and fantastic.

Everyone who is old enough to remember 2020 has experienced a small sample of what can happen when things get bad.

You can't prepare for everything. You can't have every possible contingency for every imaginable disaster. The goal isn't to be perfect.

A nutritionist friend once gave me a little piece of advice. I asked her if she had any good rules of thumb for eating well. She answered, "When you are in the grocery store, look ahead of you and behind you. What are the other people in line ahead and behind you eating? Are you eating healthier than they are?"

If you are eating more healthy than the two people standing near you, you are 67th percentile of nutritious eating. If you go to the grocery store again, and you are still eating better than they are, you're in the 75th percentile. A third time, you're in the 85th percentile, etc. I don't need to be the most prepared person imaginable. With a little bit of preparation, I am already more prepared to protect my family and my property than are 99% of people.

If you have a tool for hunting or trapping, camping equipment, means to collect water and clean it, basic emergency medical supplies, and a few pounds of rice and beans, you are already in better shape than almost everyone in the town you live in.

Humans have survived some of the most horrific conditions imaginable. We are all the descendants of these people. We are all the descendants of an unbroken chain of survivors that traces all the way back to the beginning of life on this planet. Every person has the potential to continue in that tradition. We are one of the most adaptable species, which is why we are on seven continents: the wonderfully Eden-like environment of the Mediterranean, the seething heat and dryness of the deserts, the tundras so cold barely anything can live there, the diseases and predators of the jungles, and thin oxygen and

dangerous geometry of the mountains.

It doesn't take much to prep. It doesn't require a major lifestyle choice or a set of beliefs or politics. All it requires is a little bit of knowledge and a little bit of effort and mindfulness to become a person who can get themselves—and the people they love —through things that countless humans went through long before us.

There is a way the world ought to be. We all have a sense of what that looks like, even if we often disagree on the particulars. But part of growing up is learning that the *ought to be* and the *is* don't always have much in common. There was something every parent has said to their child at least once, and from the kid's perspective, it's one of the most frustrating statements they've ever heard: "Life ain't fair." Even hearing that sentence seems unfair. But it also happens to be true a lot of the time. Your parents were right, so take that wisdom and act accordingly.

Don't wait for help; be the help. Don't pray to be saved; be the person that other people pray will save them. Take care of yourself and the people who matter most to you, because those people are the best reason for living at all.

Be safe out there.

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