

# 100 Non-Perishable Foods

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This is what normally comes to mind when thinking of shelf-stable foods. Almost all of these dry foods can last for years without refrigeration or any special storage methods. However, they can succumb to mold growth, pest infestation, and oxidation.

If you really want dry foods to last for a long time out of the fridge, you'll need to repackage them in [Mylar bags with oxygen absorbers](#).

1. **Grains:** Such as instant rice, quinoa, couscous, barley...
2. **Flours:** Whole grains last longer than flour. You can still stockpile flour though. Just keep them a cool, dry place or repackage in Mylar bags with oxygen absorbers. See [how to store flour for the long term](#).
3. **Beans and lentils:** Note that these take a very long time to cook. See [how to store beans for the long term](#).
4. **Dried bean powders:** This includes instant refried beans, hummus mix, and falafel mix. The brand Fantastic also makes a black bean mix and vegetarian chili mix.
5. **Cereals:** When unopened, most boxed cereal will last around 1 year past the expiration date.
6. **Pasta:** The expiration date of pasta is usually 1-2 years, but it is usually still safe to eat past the expiration date. Discard if there are signs of mold or it becomes slimy when cooked.
7. **Tortillas:** The expiration date on these really varies, so check before you stockpile them.
8. **Instant mashed potatoes**
9. **Dehydrated fruits and veggies:** Note that home-dehydrated foods don't last as long as store-bought ones. Read [how to dehydrate food here](#).
10. **TVP:** This stands for *textured vegetable protein*. There's also *textured soy protein (TSP)*. Just cook in water and you've got a healthy vegetarian protein.
11. **Jerky**
12. **Powdered eggs**
13. **Oatmeal**
14. **Pancake mix**
15. **Baking mixes**
16. **Cacao**
17. **Nuts**
18. **Seeds**
19. **Breadcrumbs and croutons**

# Canned, Jarred and Pouch Goods

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In addition to not requiring refrigeration, these foods can (in theory) last forever and [are good to eat long past their expiration dates](#). I prefer canned foods over jars because glass can break easily.

If you do want to stockpile jarred food for disaster preparedness, be sure you use earthquake-proof shelving.

While easy to stockpile, canned/jarred foods aren't always the healthiest option. Savory foods are loaded with sodium and fruits are often loaded with sugars.

I've divided the list of canned and jarred foods into categories by their type. Remember to get a variety of each type of food.

## Fruits and Vegetables

20. **Pickles:** Think beyond pickled cucumbers. Pickled peppers, carrots, and asparagus are some yummy options. Read more about home pickling.

21. **Vegetables:** Firmer veggies like peas and beets don't get as mushy when canned and are thus better choices.

22. **Fruits and fruit sauces:** Whole fruits, jam, applesauce, cranberry sauce...

23. **Mushroom gravy**

24. **Tomatoes**

25. **Olives**

## Proteins

26. **Peanut and other nut butters:** Note that some types of nut butters (like pistachio) do go rancid quickly.

27. **Beans and lentils**

28. **Meat:** In addition to Spam, there's now endless options for [canned beef, chicken, turkey, sausages, bacon](#), and more. You can also find some meats in pouches.

29. **Tuna and other fish:** Look for pouches in addition to cans.

30. **Hummus:** This is great for spreading on crackers for an easy lunch. You can also buy dry hummus and falafel mixes.

31. **Gluten:** Also known as seitan; it's often found in Asian stores. It's basically pure protein and definitely not gluten-free!

## Meals

32. **Pasta meals:** Spaghetti-Os, ravioli, spaghetti and meatballs, Beefaroni...

### 33. Soups and stews

### 34. Chili

35. **Dolmas:** These are grape leaves stuffed with rice and are a personal favorite of mine; can be found in Greek specialty stores.

36. **Eggplant stuffed with rice:** Another favorite of mine; found in Middle Eastern stores.

37. **Peppers stuffed with cheese or rice:** These are gourmet as hell and delicious!

### Other Canned Goods:

38. **Canned cheese:** Including nacho cheese spreads, spray cheese in a can, and other processed cheeses.

39. **Bread:** Yes, this is really a thing! The brand B&M makes a canned brown bread.

40. **Canned Butter:** It tends to be very expensive but is a good treat to have if you don't have refrigeration for real butter.

41. **Desserts:** Like canned cake and pudding. It's easier than making them from scratch, especially if you are without power.

42. **Milk:** In addition to normal milk, you've got options like condensed milk and coconut milk.

# Instant Foods

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Instant meals are the easiest foods that don't require refrigeration. You usually just dump the entire contents into boiling water and cook for a few minutes.

Many instant meals don't even require cooking: they can be made by soaking in water for about 15 minutes (more on that later).

- 43. **Boxes meals:** Think Hamburger Helper, Mac and Cheese, Stove Top Stuffing, Near East meals, and Rice Sides. For the best shelf life, remove them from the box and repackage them in Mylar bags.
- 44. **Self-heating meals:** These have packaging which has a heating element in it. One popular brand is Chef 5 Minute Meals.
- 45. **Backpacking and emergency freeze dried meals:** There are tons of these. Check out [our top picks](#) here.
- 46. **Freeze dried bulk foods:** You can also build your own meals out of freeze dried staples, like freeze dried veggies mixed with freeze-dried meat and cheese power.
- 47. **MREs:** This stands for Meals Ready to Eat and usually refers to military-style emergency food rations.
- 48. **Ramen:** This is probably the cheapest shelf-stable food you can get. Make it more nutritious by adding canned veggies and proteins to it.

# Sweeteners

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Most sweeteners will last forever without any special packaging. Keep them where insects (especially ants) can't get to them. Even if they do get infested, [most insects are edible](#) and actually very nutritious!

- 49. **Sugar** – See [how to store sugar for the long term](#)
- 50. **Honey**
- 51. **Maple Syrup**
- 52. **Molasses**
- 53. **Corn syrup**

# Flavorings and Condiments

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Don't forget to stock up on shelf-stable flavorings and condiments or your meals will end up very bland and boring. Almost all of these can last for years unopened. Once opened, most condiments will keep for 1 month (or even 1 year!) without refrigeration.

54. **Vanilla extract and other extracts**

55. **Herbs and spices**

56. **Seasoning Mixes**

57. **Bouillon cubes and broth**

58. **Soy sauce**

59. **Ketchup**

60. **Mustard**

61. **Mayonnaise**

62. **Salad dressings**

63. **Vinegar**

64. **Salt**

65. **Sauces and Spreads:** BBQ, horseradish, salsa, pesto, cheese, cheese sauce mixes...

66. **Nutella chocolate/nut spread**

# Staples and Baking

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It's pointless to stockpile dry flour if you aren't also going to stockpile these staples, many of which are required for baking. I've also found that olive oil makes bland grains taste much better.

67. **Corn Starch** – **Uses:** cosmetics, removes stains, loosen knots

68. **Baking soda** -zillion uses

69. **Baking powder**

70. **Dry yeast**

71. **Cooking oil and shortening**

## Beverages

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72. **Instant coffee**

73. **Vitamin drink packets**

74. **Tea**

75. **Creamer**

76. **Powdered milk** – See [how to store dried milk for the long term](#)

77. **Canned milk**

78. **Juice boxes**

79. **Alcohol**

80. **Coconut milk**

81. **Powdered yogurt**

82. **Meal shakes**

# Snacks

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Most snack foods are so full of chemical additives that they can last for years without refrigeration or special storage. The main issue is that their packaging is very bulky, which means they take up a lot of space. Because of space issues, I wouldn't recommend stockpiling items like chips or popcorn.

83. Crackers

84. Gelatin/Jell-O

85. Pudding mix

86. Chips

87. Protein bars

88. Granola bars

89. Pop tarts

90. Rice cakes

91. Trail mix

92. Cookies

93. Popcorn

94. Pretzels

95. Chocolate

96. Candy

97. Gum

# Supplements

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98. Multi-vitamins

99. Protein powder

100. Greens powder

# Bonus List: Foods which Don't Require Refrigeration or Cooking

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When the power is down, your refrigerator *and* electric stove won't work. If you are prepping for power outages or other disaster, then I recommend getting a [small stove](#). I personally like propane backpacking stoves best, but there are plenty of other options too.

What if it isn't safe to cook, such as during gas leaks? Or what if you run out of fuel? Then you can use the **cold soak method**.

The cold soak method involves soaking a food in cold water until it softens. A lot of foods can surprisingly be made this way. Obviously many taste better when heated, but it's a good method to know in a pinch.

**Here's a list of foods which can be made with the cold soak method.**

- **Oatmeal with freeze-dried fruits:** Soak 5-10 minutes or until desired softness. Dehydrated fruits take much longer to soften.
- **Instant mashed potatoes:** Soak 1 minute.
- **Ramen:** Soak 15-30 minutes or until it is completely soft. \*Pastas unfortunately do need to be cooked to break down the proteins.
- **Couscous:** Soak 20-30 minutes.
- **Instant rice:** Soak about 2 hours.
- **Hummus mix:** Soak 10 minutes.
- **Cream soups (no noodles or pieces of vegetables):** Soak 10-30 minutes.
- **Rice noodles:** Soak 1 hour.
- **Freeze dried backpacking meals (no noodles or pasta):** Most backpacking meals are designed to be cooked, so can't be made this way. However, the ones without any type of pasta in them can usually be cold soaked.