

Poor Man's Prepping Guide



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You don't need an overflowing bank account to adequately prepare your family for an uncertain future. If you watch how you spend money on your daily living expenses, and watch for bargains on your prepping gear even poor folk can be ready for whatever comes their way.

PREPARE FOR WHAT -

If you live near a coast you probably have a hurricane plan of some sort in place. If you live in the Midwest you have a tornado and blizzard plan. Your plan will vary depending on your location and the combination of factors to consider, like earthquakes, fires and floods. As you can see natural disasters of one sort or another can hit all of us without much warning.

The first thing to prepare for is any natural disaster that may occur in your area. The Government wants you to be able to feed yourself for three days, while most preppers will laugh and say they can live much longer than that out of a little Bug Out Bag (BOB).

Prepping is not a one time thing. You don't buy a survival kit or pre-made BOB and call yourself a prepper. Preppers look at what could harm their family and takes steps to get through it if it happens. Some call us paranoid, I counter with; if that is the case you are paranoid for carrying a spare tire in your car.

This is not to say some preppers aren't

paranoid. The level of paranoia in the prepper community varies greatly. Some of the more paranoid will be preparing for when it is revealed that aliens do actually run the government and we all need to take up arms and resist. This is a little overboard but you get the idea.

More mundane things to prep for could include a natural disaster, a terrorist attack, another great depression, a global financial meltdown, a nuclear war, a foreign invasion, or a pandemic. Some people of a religious bent are preparing for end times. Any or all of these things could happen in our lifetimes, or they may not.

It is up to you what you think may happen to you, and it is your responsibility to prepare for it.

A good way to go about it is to play the "what if" game. Just start throwing out what ifs, and answer how you would react. Ask questions like "What if a trucker's strike shut down the local market for two weeks?" Then go about answering the question with how you

would handle it. If your answer reveals a hole in your preps, you just discovered the reason to play the game. Start asking

yourself questions about everything, and fix any problems your answers expose.

I'M POOR; WON'T THE GOVERNMENT HELP ME?

There are two types of poor in this country. There are those who struggle to make ends meet while working hard and contributing to society. There are others who wallow in their poverty, making a career of avoiding work and responsibility.

If you feel society owes you something, unfortunately you probably fall into the second group. Prepping is taking responsibility for yourself and your family. When you can do that, you have made strides in the right direction.

The first type can be broken into two more groups. Those who accept help from the government while working to get ahead and be able to get off assistance. The second is the group that looks down their collective noses at those who would dare take help. They tend to heap everyone who accepts help from the government together with the lazy and no good. These same people will be first in line for FEMA handouts of water and food during a disaster. Same

government, they just feel better when most people need help. While you may have been able to prepare in advance if you got the help you qualified for.

If you are working (or attempting to work), not playing the system and still getting behind, you are the kind of person public assistance (in a perfect world) is actually designed to help. Be honest and don't play the system and get out as soon as you can. Everyone needs help of some sort at different times in their lives. There should be no shame in taking help when you need it.

If you qualify for public assistance of some sort it can make prepping easier since they are helping with living expenses. The key thing is to not spend the money your assistance frees up on frivolous things that won't get you ahead. No tattoos, flat screen TV's, smart phones, new car payments or anything like that.

Use it to get out of debt, stock up on your preps and buy things of lasting value.

WORKING WITH LESS

The poor man prepper can't afford to go out and buy a surplus missile silo, remodel it into a home, build a totally independent power system for it then stock your new bunker home with thousands of dollars worth of supplies. We have to work with what we can scrape together, sometimes with no money at all.

We start small and make a little progress

each day. That might include buying an extra can of beans or learning a new skill. It could even be just talking to someone of a similar outlook and finding out you have someone you might be able to work with in the future.

Little things add up in the long run. A few preps now are like money in the bank (back when they actually paid interest) they can pay off big at a later date.

FIX IT, REUSE IT OR DO WITHOUT – DO YOU REALLY NEED IT?

Americans today live in a throw away society. Things don't necessarily need to be broken and useless before someone will throw it away because they want something better (all the better for us dumpster divers). But the poor man prepper can't afford to have that attitude.

It is an easy trap to fall into. By the time you have used something so it breaks and needs to be repaired, you are tired of dealing with it and want something new.

Poor man preppers work with other peoples junk. We make what we need when we can. We fix things that are broken so they are useful again. We borrow if we can or we figure out a way to get the job done without whatever it

is we thought we needed.

When you borrow things, always return them in better shape than when you got them. This will built up a good working relationship with other people and is a way of prepping your relationships.

A good investment is repair items. I know my grandpa thought he could fix most anything with bailing wire, but in the real world just about anything can be fixed with the right equipment. Used metal machining tools are not that expensive if you keep your eye out. 3D printers are dropping in price and software is becoming more available all the time. With the addition of a welder, epoxy and some basic wood working tools, you can fix almost anything.

QUALITY VS. CHEAP

It doesn't always pay to save money. Sometimes buying a cheaper model of something is just throwing your money away.

A good example of this is a chainsaw. I needed one when I installed an outdoor wood furnace at my house. These things use quite a bit of wood and I planned on cutting my own. A friend who works in a hardware store talked me into buying a cheaper brand of saw available at big box stores. His idea was they have a warranty and since I planned on using it a lot I could just wear it out and return it when it broke. I bought the biggest saw available and proceeded to cut wood.

Two years later it was still running (sort of). While it had the same size bar as my dad's Johnsered, it was way underpowered and couldn't cut even close to the same amount of wood. The final straw came one winter day when I had pulled two large ash logs up to the house to cut up. I filled the tank and labored through three and a half cuts before I was out of gas! I went out the

next day and bought a Stihl. When I got it home the Stihl cut the rest of the two ash logs in the time it took me to make the three cuts with the cheap saw.

The moral of the story is, before you buy something, figure out how you plan on using it. Cheap chainsaws are fine if you use them intermittently to clean up fallen branches or cut a little firewood. But if you plan on using a tool like a pro (cutting several cords a year), buy a professional quality tool.

This should go into all aspects of your prepping; don't buy cheap just to save a buck, because it might cost you in the long run.

On the other hand just because something is cheap, don't write it off right away. A good example of this is Hi Point firearms. While they are bulky and ugly, they are also reliable, have a lifetime guarantee, and are made out of polymer and steel, not some zinc based pot metal like some other inexpensive firearms. Do your research and purchase accordingly.

WAYS TO SAVE MONEY NOW

Almost anyone can start saving money right away with a few adjustments to their lifestyle. There are a few things everyone can save money on if they are serious about it.

- **Addictions**

Anyone who uses tobacco can stop using it and save a lot of money. With the sin taxes that have been levied on tobacco products you are giving your money right to Uncle Sam when you buy them. If you smoke a pack a day depending on brand this could save you \$1500 a year...Think about it.

The same things can be said about alcohol as tobacco. If you are buying your alcohol instead of making it you are pouring money down your throat. Just the other morning I saw a man in a convenience store buying his morning 12 pack with handfuls of pennies.

Money spent on an addiction is wasted money. I realize it is hard to quit, but it will be worth it if you are serious about your prepping. I quit smoking cold turkey years ago when I saw Yul Bryner (right after he died) on TV telling me he was dead because he smoked.

- **Drop cable**

If you are paying for television you are sending money to a company that in turn beams worthless junk into your home. Sure it is fun to watch all those Firefly reruns but is it money spent wisely? We dropped satellite/cable years ago and get by just fine with farmer vision (an antenna and a digital converter box).

- **Shop smarter**

Shopping smarter is not driving from store to store in order to save \$.19 on a bag of chips, and \$.25 on a six pack of Coke. Figure out where your best total deal is and get most of your stuff in one place in order to save time and gas.

There are exceptions of course. Don't pass up a killer deal on something just to save a bit of gas either. Always consider where you want to go and what's along the way that you could hit on the way to combine trips.

- **Thrift stores**

When you are a poor man prepper you need to check your arrogance at the door. If shopping in a thrift store is beneath you, you need to decide if you really want to prep or not.

Thrift stores can provide all your clothing needs, although I refuse to wear

someone else's underwear. Aside from that thrift stores have a wondrous selection of things for the prepper (more on that later).

- **Drop home phone**

In the day of cell phones in every pocket do you really need a land line in your home? Many people are going the route of cell only and liking it. We have been without a landline for several years now with no problems.

- **Raise deductibles on insurance**

Talk to your insurance carriers and see about raising the deductibles on your insurance policies. A few years ago I discovered I had a very low deductible on my car insurance and was able to save quite a bit by having it raised.

You can do this with auto, health and home owners/renters insurance policies.

- **Cut out car payments**

Get rid of your car if you are paying on it, and replace it with a cheaper older model. Sure it might not be as nice but the money you save on payments each month can go towards any repairs you might need.

If you look at paying even \$150 a month on your car you can do \$1800 a year in repairs and break even, if you don't have a payment. I have done this for years and always come out way ahead. Even major repairs every few years will be cheaper than making payments.

If a car is a total lemon, sell it and get another cheap one.

- **Eat out less**

I love to eat out, I admit it. This is one of the money sucking holes for me. One meal eaten out could pay for several at home. One way to get around this is to plan on a certain night once a month or even week where you fix a totally unhealthy food you like meal at home. This will fill your "need" for comfort food once in a while and will cost you far less in the long run.

- **Junk food**

My place of employment has a snack tray full of junk food just three feet from my work area. Is it any surprise this is where any extra money I get goes? Or

is it a surprise I weigh more than I should when I give in and indulge myself? Avoiding places that make junk available is the key to cutting out the junk food.

Buy cheap healthy snacks for your home and bring the same to work to keep you from blowing your money. A couple candy bars can buy a box of .22 ammo, even at today's inflated prices. When shopping, avoid the aisles with junk in them, if you can't help yourself, do whatever it takes to keep yourself on track.

- **Credit cards**

Pay that sucker off and stop using it if you can't keep it paid off. Interest charges will beggar you if they haven't already. Credit on a card is not your money and you need to stop thinking of it that way. It is what some banker somewhere will lend you for the most interest they can legally charge you.

How much do you pay your credit card company to let you use its card? You need to ditch any card that is charging you an annual fee. After you have done that, look into cards that pay you cash back or have some other incentive/points program. And once you do that, don't let the incentives sucker you into spending more than you should.

We put 90% of our bills on a cash back card, saving us several percentage points due to the cash back we receive. Of course, we pay the bill off every month. There is no point in putting bills on a credit card if you are going to carry a balance.

- **Entertainment**

Cut out movies and nights on the town. Learn to be content spending time at home reading, watching movies, playing games, etc. Your local library should have DVD's to check out. New releases can be reserved so you can get them soon after they go to disk.

A good way to start saving money is to keep track of what you are currently spending with a money log. Write down every penny you spend, from your house payment right down to the coffee you pick up on the way to work. When you see how your money is spent, you will find ways to save.

FINDING GEAR CHEAP OR EVEN FREE

Once you get into the poor mans mindset you will develop an eye for taking advantage of any deals you might run across. Part of your preps should include a little cash or some trade items to take advantage of these deals.

- **Bartering**

Nothing beats being able to get rid of some of your excess in trade for something you need. Before you let go of your hard earned cash, you should try to trade something for what you are looking at.

If you are producing some of your food, start with that, since it didn't cost you anything but a little sweat equity. Try trading eggs for something small like a box of .22 or a silver coin. I once traded 50 hand-tied trout flies plus \$50 for a car.

Mow someone's lawn for a couple months in trade for a larger item. Trade your butchering services for some of the meat, or cut firewood on shares. Your labor is a useful barter item.

Some preppers stock up on items for trading that they think will be useful in an emergency situation. If you are a poor man prepper, you might not have the extra money to invest in something like that, but you can put away extra of something you might use and plan on trading it if you need to, since everyone will overlook something they need .

- **Yard sales**

Yards sales are wonderful things. I love to look at all the cool stuff people want to get rid of. Try to make a plan if you are going yard saling so you don't waste time and gas driving all over the place.

A poor man prepper should have a plan of attack when they hit a yard sale. For us the Mrs. always hits the clothing looking first to see if any of it fits anyone in the family, then if there is anything that will be useful to us. She then looks at the frilly stuff she likes. It is up to me to check out the guns, ammo, tools, building supplies, and miscellaneous gear that might be available. We both look for books and movies, plus any items of resale value that might be available.

If you see interesting things in the ad, be sure and get to the sale first when they open. If they are proud of their junk and it is expensive don't be shy about offering less. All they can do is say no. If they turn you down but have some really good things, come back towards the end of the day and make another offer.

- **Thrift stores**

Thrift stores can be a gold mine if you check them regularly. If you are a regular, you can get the clerks to hold things for you. You also might hint about being an outdoorsman, hunter or something similar. I scored a bunch of shotgun shells like that once, since they can't sell them.

You can score some really great deals if you are lucky. I bought a pair of nearly new Chippewa boots for \$.40 since it was half off shoe day. Yes I got \$120 boots for less than a dollar, and they were just my size. Sometimes you can score military clothing or at least hunting clothes along with wool socks.

I have seen a few stainless water bottles and every once in a while a good backpack. You can stock up on candles, pots and pans to be used for cooking over fires, battery powered radios with shortwave, flashlights, Coleman stoves and lanterns, food dehydrators, and all sorts of useful books.

Just check in whenever you can since you never know what will be donated.

- **Dumpsters**

The very first dumpster I looked in after learning about dumpster diving contained a tool box about half full of tools. Needless to say I was hooked!

Dumpster diving is kind of like treasure hunting. You never know what you will find when you lift the lid. People toss a remarkable amount of things that have nothing wrong with them, especially at the end of the month when renters are moving out of a place.

Hitting apartment complexes at the end of every month along with college move out days, you may find all sorts of useful things stacked right beside the dumpster just waiting to be picked up and put to good use, or even sold.

Keep an eye out for books, food, appliances and any outdoor gear you may

come across.

- **Auctions online and otherwise**

If you need a specific piece of gear, looking at an online auction will usually be your best deal. If you aren't desperate you can afford to let a few pass that may be out of your budget. Bid only what you want to pay and don't forget the shipping.

A few years ago I was in the market for a recurve bow, so I staked out the online auction site bidding on several over the course of a couple weeks. I got so that I knew I was going to lose with my low bids so I was bidding on three or four at a time. Well as you probably figured, I won two on the same day. So I now have a 42# Ben Pearson and a 50# no name all fiberglass bow.

Traditional auctions are also great for getting things if you have some extra cash. You never know what will be in the miscellaneous that never gets listed in the auction bill. If it looks like the auction is for a sportsman it will pay to go even if you might not want anything listed. Just don't get caught up in the bidding frenzy and pay more than things are worth.

- **Antique stores**

You might not think it, but antique store can be a good place to pick up some poor man prepping supplies. I have gotten knives, silver coins (below spot), animal traps, books and arrows at good prices. There are always cast iron and oil lamps, if not cheap, at a decent price.

If you want prepping supplies to use when there is no power, think early 20th and late 19th century. When you do that, the antique store is a place to look. Just don't pay a premium for something old that you can order new online.

- **Flea markets**

Flea markets can be another gold mine, depending on what vendors happen to be there. At a local one we have annually near here, I almost always buy reloaded ammo cheap. Several times I have bought high quality pocket knives very cheap. Sometimes they will be rusted or need the broken tip of a blade reground. One of my best deals was a large bowie knife for \$2.

A word of warning; there will probably be some stuff there that is totally worthless. Like anything else, buyer beware.

WATER

Everyone needs clean water to survive. Finding a reliable source of clean potable water is key to your survival. If your water is not clean, you need to be able to clean it.

It is always good to have several options for a water source. A few years ago we had an ice storm that knocked out our power for over a week. We have a backup hand pump well in front of our house, but the power line came down and was draped right on top of it. We ended up using roof runoff that we ran through our filter with good results.

- **Sources**

If you turn on your tap and nothing comes out, what do you do? You need to identify some alternative sources of water.

If you have a well, you will need to either hook up a generator to supply electricity to the pump during outages or get a hand pump that fits your casing and can replace the electric pump if the outage is permanent.

You can dig, drill or drive a spare well with a hand pump head for use in emergencies. You can also collect rainwater and use that. If you have to you can haul water from a stream, spring or lake for home use.

- **Filtering**

Any questionable water should be filtered before use. A good investment is a gravity filter that uses ceramic and carbon filters. These filters can be cleaned several times, making them last quite a while.

The straw type filters that you carry with you are becoming more popular along with the canteen type. And then there is the more expensive pump type filter.

You can improvise filters with sand cloth and charcoal at home or in the field. Just remember; clean water is very important to staying healthy.

- **Distilling**

The poor man prepper can improvise a distillery from an old pressure cooker. Just put the water in, close the lid and attach a hose to a cooling coil to the vent. Some of the back woods type poor men might already have access to a large distilling system back in a holler.

If you have power, a dehumidifier creates distilled water. You can save it instead of dumping it down the drain.

- **Storage**

The old farmhouse I live in has an old cistern for catching rain water. When I was a child there were separate spigots at a couple of sinks for cistern water. Now there is just a hand pump mounted on the lid outside.

You can build your own cistern with a relatively inexpensive poly tank available at farm supply stores. Or you can pick up surplus food grade poly barrels and store water in them.

You can also purchase drinking water at the store and store that. Avoid buying the cheaper water in the milk jug type containers. They are made with plastic that breaks down quickly and after a few months in storage they may begin to leak. Buy the better clear bottles.

You can store your own tap water by using heavy duty vinegar or bleach bottles. Add a couple drops of bleach to each gallon and you should be good to go.

There is a product on the market that goes by the name of Water Bob. It is a bladder that fits in your bathtub. The idea being at the first sign of an emergency you fill the bladder with water from your tub's spigot. Then you have several gallons of water to see you through.

SANITATION

In an emergency, it is very important to keep yourself, along with your food and water, clean in order to avoid sickness.

- **Dealing with your waste**

Have a plan in place for what to do with your waste. When the toilets no longer

flush, what are you going to do?

You can buy or make a civil defense toilet, which is basically a five gallon bucket with a toilet seat on it. The bucket is lined with heavy plastic bags, and either bleach or camping toilet chemicals are poured in. You can substitute sawdust, dry powdered dirt, leaves or even cat litter.

Just be sure to keep your waste covered since you don't want flies transferring any fecal matter to your food.

- **Keeping clean**

Wash your hands. Plain and simple, keeping your hands clean can keep you healthy. Wet wipes and moist towelettes can also be used for sponge baths. Cleanliness is next to godliness, and it is also important for staying healthy in an emergency.

FOOD

Feeding your family on a limited income is a challenge for every poor man prepper. Putting back enough to count towards lean times is even harder. There are several ways to go about preparing your food supply as a poor man.

- **Finding it**

What can be easier than going out and picking it up? Well it's not quite that simple, but with a little knowledge you might be able to supplement your food storage.

1. Wildcrafting

To wildcraft a goodly portion of your food you need to be able to identify local edible plants. Invest in a color field guide to help identify anything you aren't sure about.

You should be able to supply all your greens during the summer. Wild greens taste stronger than domesticated greens; it is an acquired taste.

For your storage needs, look to nuts. In the east it is walnut and hickory, and if you are willing to do some processing acorns. I was just checking on paw paws this afternoon and cracked open a few hickory nuts. I will be heading

back out with a bucket this evening to load up on them.

With some ambition you can turn the nuts you collect into cooking oil.

Speaking of paw paws, they are a nice sweet fruit that makes a nice fruit leather in your dehydrator if you can get them ahead of the raccoons.

If you have cattails near you, you can collect the pollen and use it to extend flour. You can roast the young tops or slice them and cook them like carrots. Finally you can dig the roots and roast them. The same goes for the roots of Jerusalem artichokes.

Wild fruits abound in certain parts of the country. Wild plums, persimmons, elderberries, blackberries, cherries, raspberries, strawberries, blueberries, rose hips and apples can be found in many old fence rows or by a walk through the forest. Just be sure you know what you are picking, because some berries are poisonous.

2. Herbs

Just like normal wild foods, medicinal and culinary herbs can be picked in the wild. Herbal teas can replace your store bought coffee and tea. Try goldenrod or pine needle tea.

Get a good book on herbal medicine to help identify what to pick and how to use it.

- **Hunting it**

Some people have the thought in their minds that they will head off into the woods and shoot something when they get hungry. While this might be possible during normal times, it poses something of a problem during a collapse, since lots of other people will have the same idea.

1. Wild Game

If you are hunting for food to keep you alive, you don't have the luxury of being picky as to what you will shoot. In the early days of any collapse, you might be able to do fairly well hunting. Try for large game since you get a lot of meat at once. If you have a way of preserving it, take what you can and put it away for later.

Small game, while easier to hunt and process, requires ongoing daily work if you plan on keeping your family fed. Small game is much less likely to migrate under hunting pressure, so you are in danger of wiping out the population of game animals if you hunt them too hard. Of course this doesn't apply to migratory birds.

Only kill what you can use immediately, preserve or barter away. Don't waste your wild game resources. Current bag limits are a best guess by your state biologists on what kind of harvest certain species can sustain. Use it as a rule of thumb but don't let it tie you down in an emergency situation. You are only hurting yourself if you kill off everything because you want to.

2. Fishing

If you live near water that produces fish, you can obtain high quality protein by fishing. I include things like turtles, fresh water mussels, frogs and crawdads in fishing.

You can spend your days on the shore fishing with a line and pole or you can set out trot lines, minnow traps and spring poles so the fishing is done while you are off doing something more useful. Crawdads can be caught in minnow traps with the ends opened up a little.

You can invest in some automatic fishing reels to hang in a tree over the water, or you can rig up a spring pole that will trip and set the hook when a fish takes the bait, leaving him for you to pick up on your next round checking your lines.

3. Trapping / snaring

Trapping is a very useful skill for the poor man prepper. Fur bearers can provide you with meat and fur for bartering. Water trapping of muskrats and beaver will give a more palatable meat than dry land trapping of fox and coyotes.

Traps work for you while you are off doing other things, and in an emergency situation you need to save as much of your time for important things as possible. Along the same lines your traps are working while you are away so you don't have to be in the same place as an animal to harvest it like you do

while hunting.

You can use traps and snares for taking normal small game such as rabbits and squirrels. Once animals become scarce or nocturnal because of hunting pressure, trapping may be the only viable source of taking game. It is a good skill to learn now before you need it.

4. Poaching

In certain parts of the country poaching is commonplace; in others it is unheard of. I can't make a decision for you on whether you will follow the law or not. All I can say is if your life depends on it don't let a rule stop you from staying alive.

I have heard it said that more whitetail deer are taken with the .22 long rifle round than any other cartridge. Since it isn't legal to hunt deer with a .22 this should tell you that a lot of people consider it a good poaching weapon. It is relatively quiet and plenty powerful enough to take deer with close range head shots.

5. Eating wild food you aren't used to

When I was younger and used to date liberal girls, I always got a kick out of making spaghetti sauce or chili with venison. I would only tell them what it was after they had told me how good it was.

If your family is squeamish about trying new foods, don't tell them what it is. Just fix it and say "that's all there is". They will eat it or go hungry.

It is a good idea to get used to eating wild game now when you don't have to. It can save you on your food bill now, and prepare you for a future that might include a diet of mostly wild game.

- **Raising it**

Most anyone can raise some of their own meat. The trick will be making it cheaper than you can buy in the store. If you have to pay retail prices for all the feed it will end up costing you more in the long run to raise your own meat, although the quality will usually be much higher.

1. Animals

The two most common animals raised by preppers are rabbits and chickens.

Rabbits can be raised anywhere, even an apartment. Just start with a trio (male and two females) and soon you will have a steady supply of meat. If you have a yard you can make your own hay. Just rake up your grass clippings after they have dried, and store them where they won't get wet and moldy. You should supplement the clippings with grain so the rabbits stay healthy. Many people raised rabbits like this during the depression, feeding nothing but grass clippings and table scraps.

Chickens are coming back into vogue as many municipalities are allowing them to be kept inside the city limits. Some cities are even allowing roosters. Chickens give you two products with their eggs and meat. You can barter the eggs for things you might need. If you don't want to do your own butchering you can barter that out also. Many people are willing to trade for old hens for the pot. This will be especially true when food becomes scarce.

Chickens eat a variety of things. Most store bought chicken food is mainly grain along with a high protein source added in (whey many times) and some calcium (usually oyster shell). However they can be fed a diet of greens and sprouted grain and do well. Sprouted grain is considered a complete food since the sprouting process raises the nutrient content of the grain considerably. They will eat most of your table scraps and if you have a worm bin you have a ready made protein source.

If you get an incubator you can get a heritage breed and raise your own flock, selecting for traits you want to perpetuate in your flock. As I write this we have 12 chicks hatched this morning from our still air incubator. It should continue for one or two more days.

If you live in the country or have a very open minded city you should consider goats. Goats provide meat and milk. You can do so much with goat milk to increase its value. Any dairy product can be made with goat milk and in a societal meltdown you should be able to barter your raw milk without the .gov sticking their noses in your business.

Goats can be fed on sprouted grain also but will need the addition of some

hay to their diet. Goats are escape artist and will need pretty good fencing to keep them close and protected. If you have fence in place goats can be very inexpensive to get into.

- **Growing it**

Everyone, even those in apartment complexes, can grow some of their own food. You can make a small window box with some herbs in it and make your own pesto if nothing else. If you have a yard you can convert it into food production.

One of the biggest mistakes you can make is trying to go too big too fast. If you do this you may end up with an oversized garden that is totally overgrown with weeds and out of control.

1. Gardening

Don't make the mistake of buying one of those survival seed banks and then when society collapses, popping the top and expecting to grow a bunch of food. Don't get me wrong - a survival seed bank can be a good investment if you have the know-how to use it.

Gardening takes preparation, practice and lots of sweat. You must get to know the soil and weather where you live. You need to learn your zone and the micro zone of your own home garden. You need to figure out what grows good in your soil. What is worth your time and what is more trouble than it is worth.

No one can tell you what to raise in your garden. You should start with things you like and see if you can grow them. If it works, start experimenting with new crops every year.

Farmers take years learning how to grow things best in their fields; gardeners are the same way. Do you do best with a deep mulch system? Container gardening? Raised beds? Do you need irrigation? You need to practice different things in your garden to find what works best for you.

2. Heirlooms

The plants you should be growing in your garden are heirloom varieties.

Heirlooms can be planted from seeds saved from the year before. Heirlooms breed true, meaning when you save the seed from your corn one year and plant it the next you will get the same variety.

If you are planting hybrids or GMO seeds, they will revert back to whatever they were crossed from when you try to save the seed from year to year. If you have no choice but to save this kind of seed, you will probably get something to grow but you never know what it will be. You can continue to grow these saved seeds year after year saving them and eventually you will create your own heirloom variety.

You will do the same with the heirlooms you grow. After many years growing in your climate they may take on totally new traits different than the original variety. You can speed this along by selecting specimens that have desirable traits to save for seed. This is how heirlooms are created to begin with.

3. Grains

Anyone can grow grains on a small scale. Your best bet if you have the climate for it is to grow field corn of some sort. There is a reason corn is called “king corn”; it is because it produces so well with relatively little work. It is easier to harvest than other grains, being able to be picked by hand and it packs a lot of food energy.

Wheat, rye, barley, sorghum, oats, buckwheat and many others can be grown in small patches in your garden. You can gradually increase the amount of space allotted to them until you find a happy medium that allows you to get enough grain to satisfy your needs.

4. Three sisters

The three sisters growing system was developed by Native Americans. It starts with a hill of corn being planted (3-5 seeds) when they sprout climbing beans are planted in the hill (usually 2 or 3) when they come up a squash is planted.

The corn stalks provide a platform for the bean vines to grow on while the beans, being a legume, take nitrogen from the air and add it to the soil. The squash grows its vines out providing ground cover that help keep weeds

down and the soil moist. They also create a viney barrier of sorts discouraging animals from stealing your corn.

You can experiment with different combinations and varieties of corn, beans and squash in your own garden to see what gives you the best return.

5. Perennials

Perennials are plants that regrow every year without you having to plant them. Some of the most popular are rhubarb, asparagus, Jerusalem artichokes and horseradish.

Perennials should have their own space on your property so you can take care of them separately, and they won't be damaged by any tillage you do in your regular garden.

6. Fruit / nuts

Fruit and nut trees can be wild or planted by you. Fruit and nut trees should be planted as soon as possible since some take many years to come into production.

You don't have to got out and spend large quantities of money on nursery stock. My grandmother had a thing about planting fruit seeds and pits. When we moved into her house we had two peach trees she grew from peach pits. She did learn however that apple trees don't breed true to type, so if you plant apple pips you never know what you will get in a few years.

If you can domesticate wild varieties, so much the better, since they will be very hardy.

7. Herbs

You should grow some of your own herbs in a separate herb garden. Try to grow things you like to eat and that will season your food and add variety. Adding in medicinal herbs is a good idea if you have space and can keep up with everything.

Garlic, chives, mint and lemon balm all grow easily and can be used in a variety of dishes. Other good herbs are dill, basil and fennel. Experiment a little and find your balance.

8. Feeding your plants

The lazy man way of feeding your garden is to buy a bunch of miracle grow and pour it on your garden at intervals during the growing season. While this will get the job done, you are not building your soil or making it better. And even more important is that it is not sustainable. You have to continually purchase more fertilizer every year to keep your plants growing.

The more organic matter you can get into your soil the better your plants will like it, although too much woody matter mixed into the soil will tie up nitrogen while it decomposes. It is best to let the woody matter be a mulch of sorts. This way it is only in contact with the soil surface and won't tie up nutrients below where the plant roots are.

Every poor man gardener should have a composting operation of some sort. It can be a traditional bin system, piles, Japanese tomato ring, or worms (vermicomposting). Compost recycles your organic waste into food for your plants.

My mother skips composting and just buries her kitchen scraps directly in the garden between the rows. If you can keep vermin out of them, this system has worked wonders on her garden soil over the years. As a bonus she usually gets a crop of potatoes whenever some peelings are feeling productive.

If you have animals you should be adding their manure to your garden every year. You can put it directly on the garden in the fall or early spring. Or you can add it to your compost and let it age.

Other things to add to build your soil include wood ashes (never coal ashes), leaves, grass clippings, animal bedding, sawdust, straw, feathers, fur, even meat scraps if you can keep the critters away. Anything that will break down eventually can be added.

It is a good idea to invest in some basic soil fertility test kits. You should test your soil every year to keep on top of any deficiencies. If you run into an extended period of years of economic collapse you can test every couple years if you have some kits put away. I have gone several years without testing some parts of the garden.

If you include legumes in your garden and rotate where you plant different types of plants every year you should have only minor adjustments to make.

- **Salvaging it**

There are a couple ways to salvage food that otherwise would go to waste. There are salvage grocers who buy pallets of food that is set to expire or already expired. They sell it for a steep discount. But you can salvage your own food if you know how.

1. Dumpster diving

Food from dumpsters is often perfectly good to eat. It is usually just expired and thrown out. It is usually still in its original packaging.

Once you discover it, dumpster diving can be your main source of food if you aren't picky about the variety of things you want to eat. Check grocery stores, fast food restaurants and bakeries.

Grocery stores offer the best variety of outdated goods tossed out. I have found frozen hams, frozen pizzas, literal tons of expensive bread, bagels and doughnuts. There is always produce that could have bad spots cut out and used along with bananas that are just right for eating or slicing up and filling your dehydrator. I usually only take meat if it is still frozen.

If I needed to I am certain I could feed my family well exclusively on food from dumpsters.

2. Gleaning

If you live in farm country you have the option of getting permission from a farmer to glean his field after he is done harvesting. Even the best harvesters leave quite a bit behind and if the farmer has an older harvester it might leave a lot.

All you need for gleaning is a container to put the crops in. I use a five gallon bucket or my pockets if I have to. If you have a lot to do, making a sack with a strap on it to carry over your shoulder should fit the bill.

Look for standing crops that might have been missed. Many times you find places where the crop is knocked over instead of picked. Always walk the

edges and corners of the fields since this is the best place to find spots the harvester may have missed.

A metal garbage can makes a decent improvised granary for whatever you are able to salvage. Don't use plastic unless you are sure the area it is stored in is rat proof. Rats can chew right through plastic. A large garbage can will easily hold 150 pounds of grain.

- **Buying it**

Everyone should start buying food for their prepping supplies. Even the government wants you to have some food stored away. It is amazing how many people have only one or two day's worth of food in their homes. Poor man preppers should plan on building up at least a 30 day supply of food. Even better yet shoot for a year's supply for each person in your home.

You must be careful buying regular grocery stocks for prepping supplies. They are not intended for long term storage. Start building your supply locally of foods you regularly eat then get extra and rotate your stock so it doesn't get old.

1. Canned

Canned food is where you should start your preps. Watch for sales to load up but otherwise take the "one for me and one for a friend" approach. When you shop just buy an extra can of something you already eat and save it. If you do this every trip you will soon have a small stockpile of canned food.

You should rotate through your canned food so it doesn't get too old. You can get in the habit of putting new cans behind the cans already in your cupboard or you can write the date you buy it in sharpie on each can.

What you buy will depend on your tastes; everyone is different. If you are prepping for your family, look into the super sized cans. If you are alone check out the single serving size. Be sure to check the unit price since sometimes they will trick you and a sale will make it cheaper to buy the smaller size. Whatever you do, buy food you will eat.

Shoot for getting one weeks' worth of canned food stored up. Then expand it a bit at a time up to 30 days. This will be your first line of food preps.

2. Frozen

A deep freeze is your friend, if you can keep it powered. You can preserve lots of things in the freezer that don't store well otherwise. Things like all that dumpster dived bread and frozen food.

Frozen veggies are not a real good prepping food since they can be treated in different ways for storage. They take up space better devoted to the aforementioned baked goods. You can, however, take your frozen veggies and dehydrate them. So if you find a good deal on them go for it.

Frozen pre-made meal items such as pot pies or other items like them are marginal prepping items. They are a good comfort food if you like them, but if you lose power they will need to be eaten soon.

If you plan on buying frozen food as part of your prepping plans be prepared to deal with the power outage.

3. Freeze dried

After you have your 30 days of canned food put back it is time to start looking at buying cans of freeze dried food. Most of the "survival" food you see advertised online is freeze dried, packed in #10 cans, pouches or buckets. This food stores for an incredible amount of time without any discernable deterioration in flavor.

My wife's grandparents gave us some cans of freeze dried stuff soon after we were married. It was close to 30 years old at that time. We ate it off and on when we felt like it with no ill effects.

One thing I have noticed about freeze dried food is that once you open a container it will start rehydrating unless you are able to seal it back up well when you are finished. This will vary depending on the humidity in your area. We've had our freeze dried fruits soften to a leathery state, rather than the crisp state it was in when we first opened the can. It's kept still, but we are watchful of mold formation since there is more moisture. We have also had issues with powders turning into a solid block. Tossing a dessicant pack into the can after it is first opened does help to delay the rehydration process.

You can start investing in things like soup mix that will give you a soup base

to stretch any other food you can come up with. If you watch online you are sure to find great sales where you can stock up and save some money.

Even some bigbox markets are starting to carry #10 cans of freeze dried food. Some of them consider it a seasonal item so pay attention at the end of the “season” whenever that is in your area and you might be able to stock up in the closeout aisle.

4. MRE's

Meals ready to eat (MRE's) are prepackaged meal that our military uses for field rations. They contain 1200 – 1500 calories and can be eaten in the field without cooking or heating.

FEMA has started using them in response to disasters. They bring in truckloads to hand out for people to subsist on.

A lot of people complain about the taste but I like them. I'm not the only one I know who likes them so I like to keep a few on hand. They are great for hunting trips, and the Bug Out Bag (BOB) has a few in it.

The price of MRE's has been steadily climbing so they are not the most economical emergency food to store but you should get a few for your BOB and other short term emergencies.

If you don't want to buy them you can make your own by packing 1200 calories of shelf stable food items into a half gallon plastic bag and sealing them up.

5. Bulk foods

Your local grocery or health food store should have a bulk foods section. Buying food from the bulk section is usually cheaper than buying prepackaged food. You can buy large quantities if you can safely store it.

If you are in farm country you might be able to buy direct from the farmer. Easier than gleaning you just have the farmer unload right into your pickup truck.

The Mormon storage system bases much of their food on wheat. You can put away a lot of wheat for a little money. If you are a member of one of the

big box clubs you can buy rice and other things in 50 # bags.

Much debate has been had over buying grain from the feed store for human consumption. I think it is fine as long as it is not seed grain for planting since it will most likely be coated with things you don't want to eat.

Bulk grains can also be sprouted to increase their nutritional value.

- **Preserving it**

No matter how you end up getting your food; if you can't store it somehow you are going to have to get fresh food every day to stay fed.

1. Canning

When most folks think of preserving food the first thing they think of is canning. Always use the most up to date information on canning you can get, and have the pressure gauge on your canner checked every year.

While you want to use the newest information, you might want to seek out older jars to can with. They are usually heavier duty and will last much longer in use.

Lids are a problem with canning being sustainable. There are manufactures such a Tattler who make a reusable lid for canning. Another option is to use the older jars with glass lids that use a rubber ring for sealing. These rings can be reused.

When canning always check your seals and use ones right away that don't seal right.

2. Freezing

As I said in the purchasing section storing frozen food depends entirely on if you can keep your electricity running or not. Freezing is best for keeping your food tasting fresh longest. Freezing is the easiest way to store your produce and meat.

Some people have several deep freezers or even walk in freezers to put up their food supplies. Freezers can be expensive to run; you will need to decide if you can afford the extra power requirements before investing in them.

If you have a deep freeze (or several) you will need to make plans for keeping it working when the power is down. A small generator specifically for your freezer is a good investment.

A good tip on putting up meat in your freezer is to wrap it in plastic wrap first and then wrap it with freezer paper. This prevents it from getting freezer burnt much longer.

3. Drying

Drying your food is a time honored way of putting it up for storage. Native Americans didn't have freezing or canning capabilities so they dried their food.

If you plan on purchasing a dehydrator (a very good investment) make sure and get one with a fan for good air movement.

The internet is full of plans for do-it-yourself dehydrator plans. The simplest way is to place fruits, veggies or meat on window screen and set them out in the sun. Bring them indoors at night and put them back out the next day until dry.

You can place them in your car on a hot day with the windows cracked and they will dry faster. Or you can build a dedicated solar drier.

This old homestead has an old dehydrator that was dumped in the woods when they stopped using it. One time my grandpa told me how it worked. It looks like a modern smoker being about four feet tall, three feet wide and 18 inches or so deep.

It has several layers of racks two or three inches apart. The racks are wooden frames with hardware clothe on them. The bottom foot or so have a small round chamber where a small fire was built for heat (not smoke). This drier is rotted beyond repair or I would have used it by now to see how this method works.

Dehydrating in my opinion is your most cost effective way of putting up your food stores.

4. Brining

Brining involves salting meat for storage. If you have an abundant supply of salt, brining is an option for you. While not as healthy by today's standards, brining will preserve meat and keep you from starving.

5. Fermenting

You can also look into fermenting food for storage. Think krauts and fermented pickles for veggies, yogurts and cheeses for milk and beers, tofu and others for grains. You can also make kombucha and kefir for your drinking pleasure.

There are also the arguable health benefits to consuming fermented foods.

6. Smoking

Smoking meats has become an art form in some areas. But you don't have to limit yourself to meats. You can smoke fruits and vegetable with good results. You should try smoked peaches as a base for your next homemade barbeque sauce.

- **Create your own reserve**

So you've taken the plunge and decided to put back food to see you through an emergency. That's a good thing, but where are you going to store it all?

1. Pantry

The first place on your list should be your pantry. Even if your pantry consists of a tiny cupboard in your apartment, fill it up with canned food. A lot of older homes have their own pantry. Fill the space you have and when you run out start making more.

You might be able to put a shelf on the wall near the ceiling. You can store a surprising amount if things up on these high shelves. The back of your door can have a rack hung on it. The most ingenious thing I have seen is someone took the sheetrock off the interior walls then built shelves between the studs.

2. Root cellar

A root cellar is meant to keep things cool and dark, kind of like your refrigerator, although not quite that cool. It will keep your fruits and veggies that can

be stored without any other treatment in good shape. Things like apples, potatoes, carrot, beets and turnips.

But don't write off the root cellar for storing cans, jars and boxes of other foods. In modern times most people don't store that much of the aforementioned fruits and veggies so there is plenty of room in the root cellar if you have one. Since root cellars are designed to stay cool but above freezing, they make excellent storage spaces for most of your other foods as well.

3. Other storage options

Plastic containers like Rubbermaid are your friend. You can use the cheaper ones from the dollar store without any problems. Shelf stable foods can be loaded into them and they can be stashed under your bed or stacked in closets, your crawl space or above the ceiling tiles on your dropped ceiling.

Use your imagination to find suitable storage options for your situation.

- **Cooking**

Cooking your meals in an emergency can be a challenge if you haven't planned ahead.

1. Campfire

Everyone loves cooking on a campfire...for a while. If you are properly equipped you can make some good meals over a campfire. Read up on dutch-oven meals and campfire breads.

A grate to put over the fire makes it just like grilling on your barbeque. If you have to you can use skewers for cooking (shish kebob anyone?). All the cheap pots and pans you picked up at yard sales are for cooking on your fire. You can even make an oven out of brick or a steel box for your baking needs.

2. Solar

Store bought solar cookers may be out of the price range of poor man preppers. But you can make a home-made version from cheap parts that works surprisingly well.

3. Campstoves

Campstoves that use whitegas or butane are like having a hotplate to cook on. They work well in situations where you can't have a camp fire. You can get all sorts of accessories like windscreens and ovens for them at camping supply stores.

4. Thermoses / Insulated cooking

To save fuel you can concentrate on cooking meals in a thermos or insulated cooking box.

Insulated cooking is very easy. You add your ingredients to the thermos such as rice dried veggies and seasoning, then add boiling water, seal it up and let it sit a few hours while the food cooks inside.

The same thing can be done with a well insulated box and a large pot. Just add diced veggies some precooked meat (canned, dried, smoked or brined), noodles or rice, then add the boiling water and quickly cover it and place it in the insulated box.

This save some fuel since you only need to quickly boil the water and all the cooking is done from that one heating.

INCOME

Poor man preppers don't necessarily have to have an income but it sure helps when you are trying to put back supplies and equipment.

- **Job**

I hate to say it but your best bet for cash income will be to get a job.

- **Second job**

If you have time for it a second job can be used to buy preps. I have a friend who is an accountant and makes a decent living at that. But he also works weekends at a convenience store as a clerk and saves all of this "extra" money and buys himself a nice guided hunting trip every year.

- **Part time business**

If you want to work for yourself in a part-time business, your best bet will be in the service sector. People hate doing things for themselves anymore, so things like cleaning, lawn care, cutting firewood and hauling can pay you half decent for the amount of time you put into them.

- **Selling online**

While you are hitting all those places looking for cheap gear you will probably run across things that are way under priced. If you buy them you can resell them online. Places like ebay, craigslist and etsy are places to check out.

- **Marketable skills**

If a part of your preps you are working on is survival skill sets (and you should be), often it is something you can use to make things to sell.

Brain tanning of fur is a good example. If you spent the time learning how to tan furs, you can reap the reward by selling the tanned fur.

Any other skills you have from your regular line of work or that you have picked up on the side can be used to make a little extra money helping people out. If nothing else you can rent yourself out as a laborer.

- **Wildcrafting**

Again, working with skills you should be cultivating anyway, you can start wildcrafting. This is harvesting things that nature provides.

Things like medicinal plants, pine cones, balsam boughs, mushrooms, wild foods, praying mantis cocoons and any other plant or animal product that you can harvest from the wild and sell. Gold mining could even be considered wildcrafting for our purposes.

- **Fur trapping**

Another skill you should be picking up before you need it. Fur trapping will teach you how animals think and move. It will also provide you with a fur check and in a bad collapse a skill you can use to provide food.

You can keep an eye out for used traps in all the places you look for your other

gear. Then read everything you can on trapping and fur handling. Then start on your own by trial and error or hook up with an experienced trapper and help him out in order to learn the basics before you go off on your own.

SHELTER

Like food and water, shelter is basic to your survival. If you do not have decent shelter you will not survive for long. The rule of threes tells us you can only survive three hours without it.

Shelter is an ambiguous term, as it can apply to your clothes or even a fire. Shelter means being able to keep your body temperature in the normal range.

(Rule of threes states you can survive: three minutes without air, three hours without shelter, three days without water and three weeks without food...the rule sets your priorities in an emergency situation)

- **Your home**

Your home is your ultimate shelter, it is where you live your life, and it is your base of operations. Since this is the case you should take all the steps you can to harden and preserve it so it will serve you in an emergency.

- **Your vehicle**

Your vehicle is most likely your main shelter while you are away from your home. It is a good idea to have a kit stored inside it in case you need to spend some time in it.

There are plans out there showing how to turn your car into an expedient nuclear shelter. Your car can provide shade in the barren desert and can provide a place out of the elements in the freezing mountains.

- **Tents**

Tents are designed to be temporary shelters, although with care they can last through years of use. They allow you to be mobile and if you set them up under another shelter like a rough lean-to they will withstand some serious weather.

- **Homebuilt and emergency shelters**

Your root cellar can double as a tornado shelter, or the other way around. You can also turn it into a nuclear fallout shelter with a little more work.

Some preppers have bought steel shipping containers and put them together to make a pretty secure and thorough shelter. Some have gone as far as to bury them. You can also bury a couple of the large sections of culvert for an underground shelter, or if you are short of cash like most poor man preppers you can dig out your own hole, pour a slab, and use concrete blocks for wall to make your own underground shelter.

If you have the money, buying a prefab unit is always an option, but if you have that much money why are you reading this?

LIGHTING

Before electricity, most people got up and went to bed with the sun. In an emergency a return to those practices will be a good idea, although you will want to have the ability to light up the area if the need arises. You will also want to be able to have light if you need it for security reasons.

- **Candles**

The old cheap standby is to use candles in a power outage. If you watch closeout sales after Christmas you can pick up large candles relatively cheaply. Be careful with wooden candle holders since they will catch fire if you allow the candle to burn down too far.

- **Oil lamps**

Oil lamps like candles are old technology that still works. They provide decent light and put out some heat so they will keep you semi- warm as well. They work well enough that the Amish still use them extensively for lighting.

They will work with lamp oil, kerosene citronella oil (outdoors please) and can even work with cooking oil.

As with all open flames in your home you must be aware of fire safety. Treat an oil lamp with care. Keep it out of the way of children who have not grown up

with them since a knocked over oil lamp can have a similar effect as a Molotov cocktail.

- **Lanterns**

Lanterns are like an enclosed oil lamp. They are intended for area lighting that can be moved around for working, such as in a barn. They work ok for walking in the woods but I much prefer a flashlight.

Modern whitegas lanterns put out many times more light than old oil lanterns. Make sure and stock up on wicks and mantels if you make use of lanterns for your lighting needs.

- **Glow sticks**

A nifty modern light is a glow stick. A plastic tube with two chemicals in it (one in a glass vial) that when “broken” make light through a chemical reaction.

In my experience they are not worth spending a lot of money on, but they do have some uses. One drawback is they put out a colored light that can be hard to work by if you need to see details.

They are great for kids to feel secure. Give your kids a light stick and they will sleep through the night with their own night light.

The other use could be perimeter lighting. If you feel someone is stalking your location at night toss a few light sticks around your perimeter. They last longer than a flare would although they put out far less light.

- **Road flares**

Road flares are great firestarters for wet weather. Aside from that they put out good light up close and can be seen a long ways off if you need something for signaling.

- **Flashlights**

Everyone should have a good flashlight and several changes of batteries for it. Some of the newer LED lights are worth the money. You will make it back by not having to constantly buy new batteries to feed it.

Last year I got my kids each a squeeze light that have three LED lights. You

squeeze it to charge up the battery and then the light lasts a good while. I thought they were going to be something cheap, but it turns out they put out a lot of useable light for a little money. (yes, I experiment on my kids)

- **Alternative energy**

Poor man prepping is all about building and making your own stuff. I have seen some cobbled together power systems by poor man preppers that work good enough to keep the lights on.

STAYING WARM

Keeping your home heated should be a priority. You can minimize your space by closing off rooms you don't need to use.

- **Power**

Most heating and cooling systems require power of some sort. How you provide that in an outage is something you need to prep for.

1. Solar

As I said poor man preppers are the perfect people to mess with small solar set ups. We can cobble together a system using parts we pick up here and there.

Another thing with solar is you can set up and hot air heater and preheat air going into your home. You can also make a hot water heater for all your domestic needs. It all just depends on how handy you want to be and how much you want to experiment before you need it to see how it will work.

2. Wind

Home brewed wind power is easier than you think. Websites like otherpower.com are a great resource for building a wind turbine from scratch. As an alternative to build a large whole house system you can purpose build small units for a certain task like providing lights in the chicken house.

3. Generator

Every prepper should have a generator if they live in a house. Even a small

one can be run every few hours to make sure your freezer keeps your food frozen. Whole house backup generators have come down in price and could possibly be affordable for the poor man prepper.

- **Wood**

If you have a wood lot you should seriously consider using wood for your main heating source. Wood is a renewable resource the poor man prepper can harvest with the sweat of his brow.

We installed an outdoor woodstove after a \$1000 propane bill around the first of December. We have used it now for about nine years. Depending where the thermostat is set we use between 10 and 20+ cords of wood a year. This is a drafty old farm house with leaky single pane windows. (We had small children so we kept it warmer than just my wife and I would need)

Yes they use a lot of wood but we also get all our hot water heated since we added that option. Ours was fairly expensive installed but I have a friend who built his own unit for about one quarter of what ours cost.

I grew up with an indoor wood stove heater. I like them because you adjust your own comfort zone by how close stand to them.

WEAPONS

After you have accumulated your gear and put away a year's food supply, it won't do you any good if you allow someone to take it from you. Part of your security must include weapons for personal protection. You also need weapons for hunting.

If you can legally do so, you should own at least one firearm for every person in your family. Firearms are better than other weapons since they plain work, but if you cannot own one look into bows, crossbows, air rifles and even slingshots.

Someone has said the minimum survival arsenal should include a centerfire rifle in a military caliber, a rimfire rifle, a centerfire pistol, a rimfire pistol and a shot gun. Another good saying is "beware the man who only owns one gun, since he probably knows how to use it".

MEDICAL

If you don't have any medical training, at least get some books on first aid and herbal medicines. It will pay you to befriend a medical professional so that you can pick their brain in an emergency.

It is important to seek medical attention from a professional if at all possible. People can get themselves into serious situations trying to treat themselves with home remedies when they don't need to. Even medical professionals seek professional help in treating their own illnesses.

DON'T BECOME A REFUGEE – BUGGING IN

When the balloon goes up your first choice should always be to shelter in your home. As I said before it is your home base, it is where you live and probably where most of your preps are located.

Ragnar Benson points out in some of his book the dangers of becoming a refugee. When you are a refugee you are at the mercy of those who already live wherever you decide to flee to. They are at their homes and have all their resources. If you go into a government shelter, they will take most of any supplies you have with you.

Your home is your castle; treat it like that and stick with it unless there is real danger.

IF YOU HAVE TO LEAVE – BUGGING OUT

The key to bugging out is not becoming a refugee; always have a plan. Have the place you are heading to already planned out. Have a destination in mind-- in fact, have several if possible.

It is a good idea to have more than one location prepared in a relatively straight line away from your home. If you have to flee from your home a place close by is sufficient. If the affected area is larger a place farther away (maybe 50-100 miles) might be what is called for. Just make sure it won't be affected by the same emergency that caused you to leave your home.

About 300 miles is the outer limit for a normal bug out since this is about the safe range of a tank of gas in most vehicles. You can go further but you must prepare for refueling or other means of transport.

When you leave is almost as important as where you go. Many people from New Orleans had safe places to go but they all left too late and were caught up in the ensuing traffic jams. Leave early if you are sure you are not going to be able to ride it out in your home.

BASIC BUG OUT BAG

Your basic BOB should contain everything to keep you functioning at a high level for three days. This should include shelter, water (and filter) spare clothes, tools, communications, food, first aid, compass, flashlight, cordage, knife and a weapon. All this should be stored in a pack that will be comfortable to carry if you should have to walk.

Everyone has particular ideas of what should go into their personal BOB. You should build one for each member of your family so everyone has the capability of providing for themselves.

A variation of the BOB is the get home bag you carry in your car when you go to work or anywhere away from your home.

LOOSE LIPS SINK SHIPS

The old war time saying has much application to the poor man prepper. Don't go shooting your mouth off about being a prepper and having XYZ stored up unless you plan on sharing it with all the folks who show up at your door when something bad goes down.

RECREATION

Time spent bugging in during an emergency without internet and video games will make people get on each others nerves, so it is a good idea to lay in a supply of cards and other board games.

Jigsaw puzzles can be good and lots of books full of crosswords and other puzzles along with books for reading will help the time go by.

Don't forget paper and pencils along with notebooks so that you can chronicle what is happening for posterity.

BUILDING YOUR REFERENCE LIBRARY

Being a bibliophile, I have thousands of books. In contrast my sister makes a joke of a book I gave her a few years ago as the only one she owns beside her bible.

No one can know everything and having a reference library of your own is a way to have the information you don't carry around in your head available to you. You never know if the internet will be functioning if something bad happens so old fashioned books might be the only way to look something up.

I always keep an eye at yard sales for books that deal with things of interest to preppers. I rarely buy a fiction book any more. Most everything I get are books on how to do something. I am partial to old farming books from the turn of the 20th century. They tell you how to do things before all out modern conveniences.

Another good thing to have is a set of encyclopedias. I know they are bulky and out dated, but the history doesn't change (well at least it isn't supposed to) and there is a lot of info you won't find anywhere else.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

I can't tell you the best way to prep for you and your family. All I can do is give you ways to save some cash, and some things to consider when you make your preps.

If you can provide your family a warm, dry, secure place to sleep, clean water to drink, and food to eat while the world falls apart around you, you have done all you can.

I hope you can put some of this information to good use and make your family safer while saving some money in the process.



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