

Five-Day

Meal Plan & Recipes

Hey Friend!

We're so excited that you've joined our three-day pantry challenge. But even with the checklists that we've included in the pantry challenge, we know it can still be hard to figure out where to start. Sometimes we're overwhelmed with option paralysis or we just want to stock all the things! So, to make it even easier to get started, I'm including a five-day meal plan and recipes for those less-obvious meal items. Hopefully this will make it even easier to get your one-week emergency pantry prepared.

The beauty of these recipes is that they're tasty, inexpensive, filling, and easy to prepare. And although they may not have been in your regular line-up of meals before today, you might find yourself using these recipes when you're pressed for time or on those days when you've forgotten to get something out for dinner!

A few things to note as you get started:

- We chose a five-day plan rather than seven because we assume that your family likely already has at least a couple of favorite meals (whether shelf-stable or not) that you'll incorporate into your one-week emergency pantry.
- This meal plan and the associated recipes assume that you're preparing for emergencies that will keep you in your home. Therefore, we assume that you'll generally have access to your refrigerator, stove, oven, and microwave as well as basic kitchen staples.
- Although we try to use mostly shelf-stable foods in this meal plan and the associated recipes, we assume that you'll likely still have access to non-shelf stable foods. Some main course meals may include the addition of meat or fresh vegetables as an option, but I'll note where a recipe is entirely shelf stable. And, I'll note where and how you can make variations (e.g., using fresh food vs shelf-stable food).
- You'll notice we didn't include lunches in our meal plan. The reason for this is when we're anticipating a need to use our emergency storage, we'll generally eat something like sandwiches or canned soups for lunch (not particularly inspired!) or we'll eat leftovers from breakfast or dinner. But you can certainly include lunch items that your family will enjoy.
- We encourage you to add the additional side items that your family will enjoy. This is usually fruit (canned, fresh or dried) with breakfast. And veggies or salad and side dishes such as potatoes, rice or mac n cheese for dinner.
- Although not included in the meal plan, we've also included a few recipes for simple desserts and treats that your family may enjoy.

The Meal Plan

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
Overnight Oats	Egg & Cheese Strata	Blueberry Oatmeal Bake	Biscuits and Gravy	Pancakes
Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner
Chicken Pesto Pasta	Tuna Noodle Casserole	Chili Mac	Salmon Patties	15-Bean Soup

Dessert/ Snack Ideas

Although we're not including dessert and snack ideas in our meal plans, it's nice to occasionally have something sweet, especially during trying times. We've included a few ideas here and we'll include a couple recipes after our meal plan recipes.

- Mug Cake
- Granola/Trail Mix
- No-Bake Cookies & Bars
- Applesauce
- Dump Cake
- Canned or Dried Fruit

How to Use

Replacement Ingredients

Since most of these recipes use milk or eggs, those are the replacement ingredients that I will focus on. (Look for an upcoming blog post at www.halfmoonridge.com outlining all kinds of other replacement ingredients!)

Powdered Milk. Unless I indicate otherwise in the recipe, you'll substitute regular milk with prepared powdered milk (as opposed to just milk powder). Simply mix the powdered milk with the amount of water indicated in the instructions and mix well. (Mix *really* well. In fact, you may want to let it sit and then mix some more.) Replace regular milk with the same amount of prepared powdered milk. (For example, if a recipe calls for one cup of regular milk, use one cup of prepared milk instead.)

Powdered milk often comes in bulk packaging. Here are some common quantity preparations (but be sure to check your brand for exact preparation):

For this amount of milk	Use this much fresh water	And this much milk powder
¼ cup	¼ cup	1 ½ tbsp
1/3 cup	1/3 cup	1 tbsp + 1 tsp
½ cup	½ cup	3 tbsp
1 cup	1 cup	1/3 cup
1 quart	3 ¾ cups	1 1/3 cups
1 gallon	15 ½ cups	5 1/3 cups

Prepared powdered milk is the equivalent of skim milk. For recipes, you may opt to add a teaspoon of oil or butter to your prepared milk to increase the fat content.

If a recipe requires milk powder (instead of prepared powdered milk), I'll indicate such on the recipe.

Powdered Eggs. Powdered eggs are super versatile. If you'd like to use them to eat as scrambled eggs, you simply mix the egg powder with water and then cook accordingly.

- 1 tbsp of egg powder + 2 tbsp of water = one medium egg
- 2 tbsp of egg powder + ¼ c of water = one extra large

When baking or using in many other recipes, you don't need to rehydrate the eggs before adding to your mix. Simply add the needed egg powder and the needed water to your mix and proceed according to your recipe.

Note: If you're preparing powdered eggs to eat as scrambled eggs, I recommend scrambled egg mixes (as opposed to straight powdered egg mix). I think the scrambled egg mixes taste better and have a better texture. However, straight powdered egg mix works great as an ingredient in recipes and costs less than scrambled egg mix. So, use powdered egg mix for your baking. However, I encourage you to test different brands to determine which ones you like best.

Day 1 Recipes

Breakfast

Overnight Oats

Overnight oats are really easy to make, but they need to refrigerate overnight (or for several hours) before they're ready to eat. However, you can make these in batches and they'll last for up four days in your fridge.



When you make overnight oats, you should use old-fashioned oats. (If you use quick oats you'll have a more pudding-like consistency. If you use steel-cut oats, you'll want to refrigerate for two nights and your oats will be chewier.)

Ingredients for a single serving of basic overnight oats

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| • ½ c old-fashioned oats | • ¼ c chia seeds (optional) |
| • ½ c milk (any kind) | • ¼ c yogurt, plain or flavored (optional) |

In case you're wondering, chia seeds bind everything together and give your overnight oats a pudding-like consistency. Yogurt will make your overnight oats creamier (and add different flavors).

Mix your ingredients together. Place in a single-serving airtight container. Refrigerate overnight.

When you're ready to eat, enjoy as is or mix in any combination of the following:

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| • Fresh or dried fruit | • Honey | • Maple syrup |
| • Peanut butter | • Cinnamon | • Vanilla |
| • Chopped nuts | • Chocolate chips | • Sugar |

Although most add-ins are added when you're ready to eat your overnight oats, there are a few that you should add when preparing. For example, if you'd like to add brewed coffee (1/4 cup, cold), pumpkin puree (1/4 cup) or cocoa powder (1 – 2 tbsp) to your oats, add them to your oat mixture before refrigerating.

Dinner

Chicken Pesto Pasta (vegetarian, vegan alternatives)

This delicious meal is super simple to make from all shelf-stable foods. And it's easily converted to a vegetarian or vegan meal. It also keeps well in the refrigerator and can be enjoyed either hot or cold, so you may want to make extra for lunches.



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8 oz dry penne pasta (or pasta of choice) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ¼ c chicken broth (for vegetarian or vegan, substitute vegetable broth) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ¼ c prepared pesto | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 oz sun-dried tomatoes in oil (reserve 2 tbsp of oil) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 cloves garlic, minced (or 1 tbsp minced garlic) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ½ c grated parmesan cheese (omit for vegan) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 12 oz canned chicken, drained (for vegetarian or vegan, substitute chicken for 1 can of cannelloni beans) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Salt and Pepper to taste |

1. Serves 4.
2. Cook pasta according to instructions. Reserve ¼ c of water. Drain.
3. In a pot over medium heat, add sun-dried tomatoes, reserved oil, pesto and minced garlic. Stir and cook for 1 minute.
4. Add cooked pasta, reserved water, broth, and chicken (or beans). Cook for 1 – 2 minutes, until heated through.
5. At this point, you could mix in the parmesan cheese and warm for another minute to incorporate the cheese. (Or, if you prefer, garnish with parmesan cheese after serving.)
6. Salt and pepper to taste. Serve.

Day 2 Recipes

Breakfast

Egg and Cheese Strata

Strata is one of those dishes that I'm on the fence about for emergency situations. On one hand, it's great meal for throwing left-overs into (think older bread, left-over bacon or ham and greens). And it's a filling meal. On the other hand, it takes about 45 minutes to bake and the recipe calls for large quantities of ingredients like eggs, milk, meat, and cheese which aren't the least inexpensive items on the grocery list. So, I thought I'd give it a try with less-expensive, shelf-stable items. Here's what I've come up with. Give it a try and decide if it's a good item for your emergency meal planning.



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-stick cooking spray	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 large eggs (or prepared powdered egg equivalent)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 c milk (or prepared powdered milk)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pinch each, nutmeg and cayenne pepper
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ½ tsp pepper	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 tsp salt
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8 oz leftover bread, any kind (about 2 ½ c packed) torn into 1-inch pieces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 c cubed Velveeta (If you want to be fancy substitute for 1 c shredded Gruyere, Gouda or Provolone cheese.)
If available:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 handfuls of leafy greens such as spinach, arugula or kale, chopped (about 1 c packed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 c diced salty meat such as Canadian bacon, ham, cooked bacon or SPAM

1. Serves 4.
2. Preheat oven to 350*. Spray a 1 ½ quart baking dish with non-stick cooking spray.
3. Whisk the eggs (or prepared powdered egg equivalent), milk (or prepared powdered milk equivalent), cayenne, nutmeg, salt and pepper together in a large bowl. Fold in the greens, meat and ¾ of the cheese into the mixture. Pour into prepared baking dish and top with remaining cheese. (If you're not using Velveeta, split the cheese evenly: ½ in the mix and ½ on top.)
4. Cover with foil and bake for 35 minutes. Uncover and bake until the strata is puffed, golden brown on the edges and set in the center; about 15 minutes more. Let cool 10 minutes before serving.

Dinner

Cheesy Tuna (or Chicken) Noodle Casserole

I love this dish. It's warm and creamy. It just screams comfort food. And I remember it fondly from my childhood. Cheesy tuna (or chicken) noodle casserole is tasty, filling, inexpensive, and easy to prepare.



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| • 1 (10oz) package of egg noodles | • 1 tbsp olive oil |
| • 1 tsp salt/1 tsp pepper | • 6 oz Velveeta cut into cubes (or substitute 1 c of melting cheese such as Provolone) |
| • 2 cans (5 oz) chunk light tuna in water (drained) (or substitute with canned chicken) | • 1 can of peas, drained (optional) |
| • 1 (10.75 oz) cream of mushroom soup | • 1 (10.75 oz) cream of celery soup |
| • 1 c milk (or prepared powdered milk equivalent) | • ¼ c bread crumbs |

1. Serves 4.
2. Preheat oven to 350*. Prepare casserole dish with non-stick cooking spray.
3. Prepare egg noodles according to package instructions, drain, return to pot. Add olive oil and salt to noodles.
4. Put Velveeta into large microwave safe bowl. Heat in microwave, stirring every 30 seconds until melted. Pour over noodles.
5. Add tuna (or chicken), peas, celery soup, mushroom soup, milk and black pepper to noodle/cheese mixture. Stir to coat noodles completely. Pour into prepared casserole dish and top with bread crumbs.
6. Bake in preheated oven until mixture is bubbly and bread crumbs are beginning to brown; approximately 20 – 30 minutes. Let sit 5 – 10 minutes before serving.

Day 3 Recipes

Breakfast

Blueberry Oatmeal Bake (vegetarian friendly)

This meal is like dessert for breakfast. Seriously. It's delicious and it's actually really healthy. But, fair warning, if you prefer heartier fare for your breakfast, you may want to skip this one.



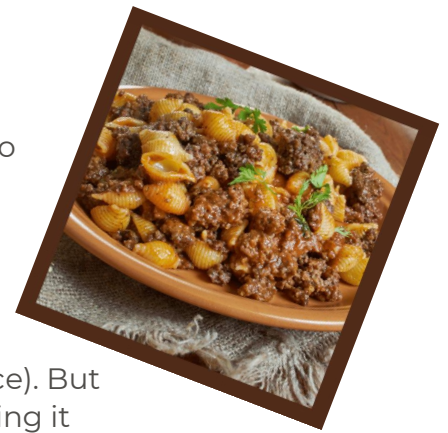
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| • 4 c old-fashioned oats | • 2 tbsp cinnamon |
| • 1 tsp baking powder | • ¼ tsp salt |
| • ¼ c chia seeds | • ¼ c coconut oil, melted |
| • 1 tsp vanilla extract | • ¼ c honey |
| • 3 c water, milk or prepared powdered milk | • 3 c fresh or frozen blueberries |

1. Serves 8.
2. Preheat oven to 375*. Prepare a 9x13 baking dish with non-stick cooking spray.
3. In a large mixing bowl, add oats, cinnamon, baking powder, salt and chia seeds.
4. Add in melted coconut oil, vanilla extract, honey, water or milk and mix well to combine.
5. Fold in blueberries.
6. Transfer mix to prepared baking dish. Bake for 45 minutes (or until set).

Dinner

Chili Mac

Chili Mac, like Cheesy Tuna Noodle Casserole, is a comfort food. No doubt about it. And it's so easy to make. In fact, I've occasionally made with it by just mixing a box of prepared macaroni and cheese with a can of chili con carne. Voila! Dinner is served. And if you use the mac n cheese that includes the creamy cheese rather than the powdered cheese, it's truly a shelf stable meal (since you won't need butter and milk to prepare the cheese sauce). But you can elevate this meal with a few simple ingredients still keeping it inexpensive and mostly shelf stable.



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| • Box of Macaroni and Cheese (with prepared, not powdered cheese sauce) | • 1 lb ground beef or ground turkey |
| • ½ white onion, chopped finely | • 1 can Rotel |
| • 2 cans chili con carne | • 1 package chili seasoning |

1. Serves 4.
2. Boil pasta noodles according to package instructions. Drain and set aside.
3. While pasta is cooking, brown the ground meat in a large skillet for five minutes. Add chopped onion. Continue cooking until onion is translucent and meat is cooked through. Drain meat and return to skillet.
4. Once meat is ready, add noodles, Rotel, chili, and chili seasoning. Mix to combine all ingredients and continue cooking until warmed through.
5. Add the prepared cheese sauce and mix to combine well.

Note: Did you know you can buy canned ground beef? You may find it with other canned meats in your local supermarket, or you may have to order from Amazon.com or Walmart.com. It's pretty convenient if you don't have fresh ground beef. Or, if you're interested in preserving your own food, you can pressure can ground beef. Look for upcoming posts on preserving food on www.halfmoonridge.com.

Day 4 Recipes

Breakfast

Biscuits and Gravy

Ok, y'all, biscuits and gravy is seriously one of my favorite meals. I like to make mine from scratch. (I'm sort of known as the Gravy Queen around here.) But you can easily whip this meal together from prepared ingredients (although the prepared biscuits usually require refrigeration or freezing).



The easiest way to do this...

- 8 Pillsbury Frozen Biscuits
- 1 package Williams Sausage Gravy Mix (you can use water, milk or prepared milk to prepare your gravy mix)
- Sausage patties or crumbled sausage (optional)

1. Serves 4 (you may need more gravy, though).
2. Preheat oven according to biscuit package instructions. Bake 8 biscuits according to package instructions.
3. Prepare gravy mix on stove top according to package directions. For completely shelf-stable gravy, use water or substitute milk for prepared powdered milk. For creamier gravy prepare with all milk or prepared powdered milk.
4. Slice biscuits in half and top with sausage gravy.

Note: You can easily season the gravy to give it more of a homemade taste. I like to add salt, pepper, garlic powder and cayenne pepper to taste. (If you're not familiar with or don't care for spicy food, skip the cayenne or proceed with caution. Just a little bit goes a long way!) You can also add $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp of chicken-flavored Better Than Bouillon (or other bouillon mix) to your gravy. Finally, you can add one or two heaping tablespoons of cream of chicken soup (straight out of the can) to your prepared gravy.

Note: if you have sausage available, you can easily elevate this meal. Prepare your sausage one of two ways.

- Fry sausage patties in a frying pan over medium heat, drain and set aside. When you prepare your plate, split biscuits in half, add a sausage patty on top of each biscuit and top with gravy. OR...
- Add bulk or sausage patties to a frying pan over medium heat, crumble sausage and cook until brown, drain and add sausage to prepared gravy mix. Slice biscuits and top with sausage gravy.

For homemade biscuits & gravy, check www.halfmoonridge.com. I'll be adding my recipe soon.

Dinner

Salmon Patties

I think salmon patties are an old-fashioned, retro food that a lot of us have forgotten about. I had completely forgotten about them until my mother-in-law prepared them for dinner one evening. But they are delicious, easy-to-make, and can be prepared from shelf-stable items. Plus, they're relatively inexpensive. A win for your emergency pantry and meal plan.



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| • 1 (14.75 oz) can salmon, drained and flaked | • 2 eggs, beaten (or substitute with the equivalent of prepared powdered eggs) |
| • 1 small white onion, diced | • ½ c seasoned bread crumbs |
| • Salt and pepper to taste | • 3 tbsp vegetable oil |

1. Serves 4.
2. Remove any bones from your salmon.
3. In a mixing bowl, prepare your eggs and add diced onion, salmon, bread crumbs, and salt/pepper. Mix thoroughly.
4. Shape into 2-ounce patties (7 -8).
5. Heat oil in large skillet over medium heat.
6. Fry patties for five minutes on each side, until crispy and golden brown.
7. Serve with tartar sauce or any favorite dipping sauce.

Day 5 Recipes

Breakfast Pancakes

Who doesn't love pancakes? And they're so easy to whip up. I wanted to see if we could come up with a recipe that uses all shelf-stable ingredients. It turns out it's pretty easy and they're pretty delicious. This recipe uses Bisquick baking mix for ease of preparation, but you could certainly mix your own pancake mix from flour, baking powder and baking soda or use pre-made refrigerated pancake mix.



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 c Bisquick baking mix | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 c milk (substitute with 1 c prepared milk) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 eggs (substitute with the prepared powdered egg equivalent of two eggs) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 tbsp vegetable oil |

1. Makes about 14 3-inch pancakes.
2. Heat oil in large skillet over medium heat.
3. In a large bowl combine Bisquick, milk, and eggs. Mix until thoroughly blended.
4. When skillet is ready, drop batter by $\frac{1}{4}$ c on to hot skillet. When bubbles on surface begin to pop, flip pancakes (usually about 3 minutes on each side).
5. Serve with toppings as desired, such as butter (or ghee), maple syrup, honey, jam, or fresh fruit

Dinner

15-Bean Soup

Have you ever tried HamBeen's 15-Bean Soup? If you haven't, I highly encourage you to grab a bag or two of this incredibly hearty soup mix on your next shopping trip. It certainly meets the requirements of filling, inexpensive and easy to prepare. If you simply cook the beans with water and the included flavoring packet you have a super easy shelf-stable meal. But we can probably kick it up a bit, still using shelf-stable products (or maybe one or two non-shelf stable ingredients). Give this one a try.



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 package HamBeen's 15-Bean Soup | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 c water |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 c chicken broth | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 smoked ham hock (or leftover ham or sausage) (For a shelf-stable meal, substitute with chopped canned ham) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 small onion, diced | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 cloves of garlic, minced (or 1 tsp minced garlic) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 (15 oz) can diced tomatoes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 tsp chili powder |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 tbsp lemon juice | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 handful of chopped spinach or kale (optional) |

1. Serves a lot.
2. Rinse beans and drain. any debris from beans. Set aside seasoning packet.
3. Place beans in a large pot of cool water. Soak overnight/eight hours. After soaking, drain water.
4. Add water and broth to a large pot. If using a ham hock, add it to the water now. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for one hour. (If using canned ham or leftover sausage or ham, it does not need to be pre-cooked.)
5. Add onion, garlic and drained beans. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer until beans are tender (1 – 2 hours).
6. Stir in tomatoes, chili powder, and lemon juice. Simmer uncovered for an additional 30 minutes (or until thickened).
7. Stir in the seasoning packet, spinach or kale, and salt/pepper to taste. Cook until spinach/kale is tender. If not using spinach or kale, simmer for one minute more.

Note: If you anticipate having lots of leftovers with this meal, you might consider adding the spinach or kale to individual servings rather than adding to the larger pot. I find that greens added to hot dishes can get a bit slimy if the meal is not eaten immediately.

Desserts

Even though we're not including desserts in the meal plan, we wanted to include recipes for a few easy-to-make treats. We hope you enjoy them as much as we do.

No-Bake Cookies

With chocolate, peanut butter and oatmeal, these no-bake cookies are delicious.



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| • 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ c sugar | • $\frac{1}{2}$ c milk |
| • $\frac{1}{2}$ c butter | • 4 tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder |
| • $\frac{1}{2}$ c crunchy peanut butter | • 3 c quick oats |
| • 1 tsp vanilla | |

1. In a medium saucepan, combine sugar, milk, butter, and cocoa. Bring to a full-rolling boil.
2. Once mixture reaches a full-boil, cook for 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes.
3. Remove from heat and stir in peanut butter, oats, and vanilla.
4. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto waxed paper. Let cool until hardened. Makes 36 cookies.

S'mores Bars

S'mores without a campfire? With only four ingredients, these no-bake bars are super easy to make.

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| • $\frac{1}{4}$ c cubed butter | • 1 package (12 oz) graham cracker cereal |
| • 1 package (10 oz) large marshmallows | • $\frac{1}{3}$ c milk chocolate chips, melted |

1. In a large saucepan, melt butter over medium heat.
2. Add marshmallows; stir until melted. Remove from heat.
3. Stir in cereal until coated.
4. Using a buttered spatula, press cereal mixture into greased 9x13 baking dish.
5. Drizzle with melted chocolate.
6. Cool completely before cutting. Store in an airtight container.

Make it peanutty! Add $\frac{1}{4}$ c peanut butter and a handful of chopped peanuts at the same time you add the cereal.

Cherry Dump Cake

Who doesn't love cobblers? And dump cakes are an incredibly easy way to make cobbler-like dessert with just a few ingredients.

- 2 (21 oz) cans cherry pie filling
- ½ c butter
- 1 (18.25 oz) package yellow cake mix
- Chopped walnuts or pecans (optional)



1. Preheat oven to 375*
2. Empty cherry pie filling into 9x13 baking dish.
3. Sprinkle dry cake mix on top of cherries. Press down firmly.
4. Cut butter into slices and place on top of cake mix.
5. Bake at 375* for 45 minutes.
6. Sprinkle nuts on top.

Note: You can make dump cakes using a variety of fillings. Try apple, peach, blueberry, pumpkin or lemon. To elevate this dish, top with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

In closing...

We hope this starter meal plan and these recipes have jump started your pantry planning. And we hope these ideas will help you plan even more easy-to-make meals and treats for your family from your food storage. Happy stocking!