



BUILD A *One-Week* EMERGENCY PANTRY



Hello! AND WELCOME TO THE STOCKED! THREE-DAY PANTRY CHALLENGE.

I'm Rachael, and I often refer to myself as an unintentional homesteader.

My husband, Bo, and I own and operate [Half Moon Ridge](#), a beautiful 20-acre homestead in very rural southwest Texas. But before moving here in 2017, I was a suburbanite through and through. I was born and raised in the suburbs of northern California. Bo and I made our home and raised our family in the suburbs of north Texas. I was addicted to Target, Kohl's, chain restaurants and giant supermarkets that sold not only groceries, but clothing, furniture, gourmet foods and maintained extensive wine lists. I was accustomed to being able to run out to any store and grab whatever I wanted at just about any time, day or night. And I truly thought I'd live my entire life in the suburbs. (You can read more about our roundabout way of becoming homesteaders [here](#)).

But I have a confession to make.

I wasn't very skilled or prepared when we lived in the suburbs.

In fact, being able to run out and buy anything whenever I wanted it, probably led to that lack of preparedness.

Sure, we had a lot of stuff in our house, including food and supplies. But there was no rhyme or reason to our stock. I hadn't really thought about what I should have on hand if an emergency happened. What if one of us lost our job? (One of us did.) What if someone became seriously sick or injured? (Thankfully, that hasn't happened.) What if there was a global pandemic? (Sound familiar?) What if there was a massive state-wide freeze that crippled our power grid? (There was.)

Those are uncomfortable positions to contemplate. When emergency situations pop up, they cause you to realize that maybe you aren't as prepared as you thought. You don't feel confident and secure in your ability to provide for your family. You don't have the things on hand that you need. And you're not sure when the crisis will end so you can get back to business as usual.

Maybe you can relate?

Fortunately, living way out in the middle of nowhere has taught me a couple things about being prepared. And, I can teach you, too. Over the next three days, I'll help you build a one-week emergency stockpile to help you prepare for the most pressing crisis situations. I'll also set you up with the foundation to begin developing a more extensive stockpile for longer-term situations.

I probably won't even turn you into a homesteader or prepper in the process. Just someone who's prepared.

If this sounds good to you, then let's get started!

Hugs,
Rachael -the unintentional homesteader



What's coming up?

Day 1:

- Understand your why
- Create your list

Day 2:

- Find and organize your space

Day 3

- Go shopping
- Organize your stock

Day 1

Welcome to Day 1 of the three-day pantry challenge. Today, I'll help you accomplish two things. First, I'll help you to understand your "why". That is, your reason for building your stockpile.

Second, I'll help you to create your list, which will be developed, in part, based on your why.

What's your why?

For many of us, our main "why" is our family and being secure in our ability to provide for them in any situation. That's a given. But it's not quite what I'm talking about here. If you don't have an idea of the kind of situations you're planning for, you could easily get bogged down in preparing for all kinds of contingencies that might not be very likely to happen. I'm not saying you shouldn't be prepared for as many situations as you think are important. But for now, it's about getting started.

Prepping for different types of emergencies

At Half Moon Ridge, we occasionally refer to COVID and the massive freeze in Texas that brought our power grid to its knees during one of the coldest spells in state's recorded history as catalysts for preparedness. And they are, but the fact is, we'll face all kinds of unexpected events in our lives that are much more likely to happen and that we should be prepared for.

Job losses and unexpected illnesses and injuries

For most of us, our emergencies are likely to be centered around job losses or unexpected illnesses or injuries. In these situations, we'll most likely still have heat, air conditioning and running water. We'll be able to maintain and use refrigerated food. We'll be able to cook food in our oven or microwave, on our stovetop or on the grill. Our biggest concerns might be around our ability to get to the store or conserving money for a short period of time while we get our bearings and establish our footing. These are probably the most common types of events to prepare for.

As you build out your one-week stockpile for events like these, focus on foods and supplies that will best serve you in these kinds of situations. Of course, you can't really stockpile perishable foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables or milk. But you can stock foods with a shorter shelf life. For example, if your family enjoys cereal and pasta, you can stock up on those things for use in emergency situations. (But, be sure to see our section on rotating your stock).

Weather-related events

Many of us live in areas around the country (and world) where weather events and natural disasters such as fires, tornadoes, hurricanes and electrical storms can wreak havoc on our power and water supply. For people who live in these areas, it's not uncommon to experience weather- or disaster-related power and water outages.

In these instances, you may want to focus on more shelf-stable foods and foods that don't require refrigeration or complex cooking, such as canned foods, dried beans, food packaged in Mylar bags and food that is ready to eat right out of its packaging.

Although not included on our starter checklist included with this challenge, if you live in an area where power outages are a concern, you may want to consider a propane-fueled camp stove for cooking (don't use these in your home) or even a generator to power some of your home's appliances.

While you may not be able to prepare for all contingencies right out of the gate, you may be able to minimize losses while providing for your family through periods of extended power or water outages.

Are there other situations to prepare for?

Absolutely. Many people prepare for more extreme events such as government collapse, economic collapse, supply chain interruptions, civil unrest, biological and chemical warfare, and infrastructure attacks or failures such as electromagnetic pulse (EMP) strikes which have the potential to ruin power grids and destroy all electronics. Depending on where in the world you live, these types of events may be more likely to happen or may even be happening currently. You may decide that you should prepare for these types of situations, but the scope of this challenge is to help you prepare for more common emergency situations.

Exercise #1: UNDERSTANDING YOUR WHY

Spend a few minutes thinking about and jotting down the situation(s) you want to prepare for. Of course, you can stock for any of the situations mentioned above or you might have an entirely different reason in mind. But your reasons will help you develop your list. And if cost or speed in developing this stock is important, you might want to prioritize your reasons and use this three-day challenge to stock for the one that you consider to be most important.

1. What situation(s) am I stocking for?

2. If I'm stocking for more than one situation, which is the most important?

3. Is managing the cost of developing this stock important? If so, how much can I spend initially and how much extra can I spend weekly?

4. Is developing this stock quickly important? If so, how quickly do I need to do it?

Developing your list

Using your answers to the questions above and the following checklist, think about the items you'll need to help develop your one-week stock.

As you review the following suggestions, think about the people in your household that you need to provide for and determine how much food and other supplies you'll need to get the household through a week.

This one-week stock is meant to be a foundational tool. I consider it to be the food/supply version of Dave Ramsey's \$1,000 emergency fund. This stock won't solve long-term issues, but it will help you get through the trickiest, most critical times when you possibly can't get to the store, when money is at its tightest or when things simply aren't available to purchase (think toilet paper and hand sanitizer during the first weeks COVID).

Note: *this checklist isn't meant to be comprehensive but will serve as a good foundation as you get started on your journey to a well-stocked home. Be sure to include any additional specific items that your family needs.*

Variety doesn't have to be the spice of life... **WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR INITIAL STOCKPILE**

I'm an advocate of stocking what your family enjoys and uses. And as you get further into developing your stock, you'll probably have all kinds of items that your family uses and a variety of options for meals. But if you're in a hurry to get this seven-day stock built, or if money is a consideration, remember, the main purpose of this exercise is only to make sure your family is provided for. Therefore, you don't have to initially stock variety for your meals. For example, if your family eats oatmeal, maybe a container of quick oats and some honey is all you need to stock for one week of breakfasts. If your family eats canned soup, maybe a variety of canned soups and crackers (along with some dried fruit) is enough to get you through your first week of lunches. Now, at the end of a week, your family may hate oatmeal and canned soup, but this is something to consider if stocking as quickly and cost-effectively as possible are very important to you.

Food and Water

- One to two gallons of water per person per day (for drinking, cooking, and cleaning)
- Non-perishable and shelf-stable foods for breakfast, lunch and dinner and snacks/treats. Consider canned foods, shelf-stable packaged/prepared foods, dried food such as beans and rice, cereal and pasta, for each person in your household.
- Cooking oils, seasonings, condiments, sweeteners and staples such as flour and oats
- Multi-vitamins and supplements
- Foods for special needs such as baby food or food for those with special dietary needs
- Pet food

Household Supplies **CLEANING AND PAPER GOODS**

- Toilet paper
- Paper towels
- Paper plates
- Plastic utensils
- Plastic wrap
- Aluminum foil
- Quart and gallon freezer bags
- Parchment paper
- Dish soap
- Manual can opener/bottle opener
- Cleaning supplies
- Laundry supplies
- Antibacterial wipes
- Trash bags

Personal Hygiene SUPPLIES

- Toothpaste
- Shampoo/conditioner
- Bodywash/soap
- Deodorant
- Shaving supplies
- Lotions
- Feminine products such as tampons or pads
- Hand sanitizer, wipes
- Specialized products as needed such as baby supplies including diapers, wipes, ointments, baby wash

Tools, Equipment AND OTHER SUPPLIES

- Solar chargers for electronic devices
- Lighter, matches
- Candles
- Flashlights
- Batteries
- Gloves
- Utility knife
- Basic tool box including: wrench, pliers, bolt cutters, screw driver, crowbar, saws

First Aid SUPPLIES

- Pain reliever such as aspirin or ibuprofen
- 91% rubbing alcohol
- Antibiotic cream
- Anti-itch ointment
- Nyquil or Zzzquil
- Multi-vitamins and supplements
- Children's versions of medications, if needed
- Bandages
- Sterile pads
- Medical tape
- Thermometer
- Tweezers
- Eye drops
- N-95 masks
- Disposable plastic/nitrile gloves
- Prescription medications for all family members
- Extra glasses/contact lenses (and contact lens solution)
- Hearing aids/batteries
- Supplies that accompany certain conditions, such as syringes for insulin-dependent diabetics
- First aid book
- Medications and supplies for pets

Non-Perishable / Shelf-Stable Foods

When it comes to building your food stock, knowing where to start can sometimes be daunting, so we've put together a list of more than 75 shelf-stable foods and ingredients to consider. Although many items on this list will last months or even years when stored unopened in your pantry, be sure to research how long the foods you purchase for your stock will last. For example, canned and dried foods will last the longest, while nuts should be rotated monthly, and some foods will require refrigeration after opening.

If there are foods on this list that you haven't previously used or cooked with, consider trying them out before adding them to your stock.

- Applesauce
- Baking cocoa
- Baking powder
- Baking soda
- Beans, dried
- Beef jerky
- Bouillon
- Broth (chicken, beef, vegetable)
- Canned foods:
 - Beans
 - Fish (such as tuna, salmon, sardines, anchovies, herring, etc.)
 - Fruits (in heavy or light syrup or water)
 - Meals (such as ravioli, spaghetti, etc.)
 - Meats (such as chicken, Spam, Vienna sausage, etc.)
 - Soups/stews/chili (both cream-and broth-based)
 - Vegetables
- Cereal, packaged/breakfast
- Chia seeds
- Chili powder
- Chocolate chips
- Coffee, freeze dried, instant
- Cooking spray
- Cornmeal/corn starch
- Crackers
- Creamer, powdered, non-dairy
- Drink mix, powdered, fortified
- Eggs, powdered
- Flax seeds
- Flour, all-purpose, white, wheat, rye
- Fruits, dried
- Garlic powder
- Gelatin, flavored/unflavored
- Ghee
- Granola or protein bars
- Honey
- Jam/jelly
- Ketchup (consider individual packets)

- Lemon juice
- Maple syrup
- Mayonnaise (consider individual packets)
- Milk, evaporated
- Milk, powdered/dried
- Milk, sweetened, condensed
- Molasses
- Multi-vitamins/supplements
- Mustard (consider individual packets)
- Nuts
- Oats, rolled, quick, oatmeal
- Oils, avocado, coconut, olive
- Olives
- Onion, powder, salt, freeze-dried/dehydrated
- Pancake/waffle mix
- Parmesan cheese
- Pasta/pizza sauce
- Pasta/egg noodles
- Peanut butter
- Pepper, black, red, cayenne
- Pickles/relish
- Popcorn kernels
- Potatoes, flakes, instant
- Pudding mixes, instant
- Ramen noodles
- Rice, brown, white
- Rice cakes
- Salad dressing mixes
- Salsa/hot sauce
- Salt, garlic
- Salt, table, iodized, pickling, Himalayan pink
- Seasoning mixes
- Shortening/lard
- Soup mixes, dried
- Spice rubs
- Spices, assorted
- Sugar, white, brown, confectioners
- Tea
- Vanilla extract
- Velveeta cheese
- Vinegar, white, apple cider
- Yeast

Exercise #2: CREATING YOUR LIST

Note: You may want to finish reading through Day 1 (page 15) before starting this exercise.

1. List the people and pets in your household that you'll need to stock for:

2. List each person's food and supplies likes and dislikes and whether or not they have any special needs. Don't forget food allergies/other dietary considerations, prescription drugs and any special supplies they might need.

Person #1

Person #2

Person #3

| | <i>Person #1</i> | <i>Person #2</i> | <i>Person #3</i> |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| FAVORITE MEALS | | | |
| FOOD LIKES | | | |
| FOOD DISLIKES | | | |
| FOOD ALLERGIES | | | |
| PRESCRIPTIONS AND REQUIRED MEDICATION | | | |
| OTHER SPECIAL SUPPLIES OR INFORMATION | | | |

3. Use this table for meal planning as you begin to organize your list and figure what supplies and how much you'll need for each person or pet in your household.

| | <i>Person #1</i> | <i>Person #2</i> | <i>Person #3</i> |
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| BREAKFAST ITEMS X 7 | | | |
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| LUNCH ITEMS X 7 | | | |
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| DINNER ITEMS X 7 | | | |
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| COMFORT FOOD/BEVERAGE ITEMS X 7 | | | |
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List considerations

As you're developing your list but before you go shopping, take a look around your home and garage. Even if there doesn't seem to be much rhyme or reason to what we have, many of us actually have a lot of stuff in our home. Are there items on your list that you can pull from your regular inventory of goods to add to your stockpile?

I'm not suggesting that you pull groceries and supplies from the mouths of your family, but if you've got duplicates or extras of things, why not put them aside for your stockpile?

Start with the tools and supplies portion of your list. You definitely don't need to duplicate non-consumables, so if you already have a well-stocked toolbox, utility knife, or flashlights, put those aside for your stockpile and cross them off your list. (However, if you regularly use these items outside your home, you may want to purchase duplicates so you have a set that is meant exclusively for your stockpile and used only during your identified emergency situation(s).)

Next take a look at first aid portion of your list. I don't know about you, but I usually have a couple boxes of Band-aids or a few bottles of aspirin or Tylenol or an extra bottle of rubbing alcohol. If you find items that you can transfer to your one-week stock, put them aside and cross them off your list.

Now, take a look at the items on your personal hygiene supplies, household supplies and paper and cleaning goods portion of your list. What I like about this portion of the list is that since you're only building a stockpile for a week to start with, you could technically pull a bit from your main supply to meet your needs for a week. Of course, a bigger supply for a longer term is always better. But if budget is a concern and you're initially only stocking a one-week supply, go ahead and grab what you need.

For example, we do about two loads of laundry a week, so we could put aside two scoops or pods of laundry detergent and our one-week emergency stock of laundry detergent would be filled.

If you can swing full packages of items, I'll always recommend that approach, but if you're trying to get started as cost-effectively as possible, go ahead and try this route.

Finally, take a look at your cupboards and pantry. Could you do the same thing for your food supply? Do you have extras of canned food or pasta that you could transfer to you stockpile? If so, go ahead and pull a few items from your pantry and cross them off your list.

Before you go shopping...

Let me take a minute to explain why I've chosen these suggested items and categories and why I think they're helpful as the foundation to your stockpile. Of course, you can stock whatever you like. The goal is simply to get started!

Water

As you're preparing your stockpile, you may be tempted to skip on the water supply. But in periods of water shortages, you will need as much as two gallons per person per day for drinking, washing, cleaning and cooking. Children, nursing moms and people who are sick may require even more water. And if it's really hot, everyone will require more water than usual.

You can stock cases/bottles of commercially bottled water or you can store tap water in food-grade water storage containers. Be sure to store your water in a cool, dark place and cycle it out every six months.

Food

When you're first building your stockpile, I recommend a one-week stock of shelf-stable food and supplies that your family regularly eats and uses.

You'll want to consider special food needs. Do you have a baby in the house? Does someone have food allergies? Be sure you're accounting for those needs.

If you have pets in your home, don't forget about their food and supplies.

Once you've got your basic one-week supply of the most essential supplies in place, then you should start augmenting. I recommend filling out all of your categories beyond the basics on this checklist and eventually expanding your stock to last for two months.

Household Supplies, Cleaning Supplies & Paper Goods

This one can be a little bit tricky.

Some of the items on my list might be things that you prefer not to use, such as disposable paper products. I get it. And you should be as environmentally responsible as possible. But remember, this is about getting through an emergency period. If you don't have running water for a period of time, you'll probably be grateful for your stash of disposable plates, bowls and utensils.

When it comes to cleaning supplies, stock what you normally use. You'll be glad to have a stash of familiar supplies on hand. But if it seems too costly to have a duplicate stock of your regular cleaning supplies on hand, you can clean just about anything with unscented bleach, vinegar and baking soda.



Personal Hygiene

Similar to cleaning supplies, when it comes to personal hygiene items, stock what your family normally uses. You can normally find good deals on hygiene supplies at big box stores such as Walmart. But the best deals I've ever found have been at CVS and Walgreens. They have weekly sales on most toiletries. And you can find coupons in their weekly circulars that will help you to stock up quickly and inexpensively.

First Aid

First aid is another category that can be tricky. I personally stock far more than I've included on this checklist. And you may find that you want or need more for your family, too. But the goal is to have the basics on hand for the most common situations. Whatever you choose to stock, be sure you include basic supplies for your family.

If anyone in your family requires prescription medications, be sure to talk to your doctor about how you can have an emergency supply of medications on hand. Your doctor may be willing to work with you and may be able to suggest alternatives that may work in an emergency.

If anyone in your family wears contact lenses or glasses, uses hearing aids, or has a health condition that requires special supplies (such as syringes for insulin-dependent diabetics), make sure you have extras on hand (including batteries for hearing aids and contact lens solution).

Don't forget about medications your pets may need.

Tools, equipment and other supplies

Like many of the other categories, you may find that you want to stock more than what's listed here. I do. But at a minimum, you'll want to be sure you have lighters, matches, candles, flashlights, batteries, gloves, a utility knife and a basic tool box on hand.

And make sure you include a solar charger for your electronic devices. Check them periodically to make sure they're retaining their charges. (There's nothing worse than going to grab a device like this and finding out it's lost its charge!) And if you've got electronics-dependent family members, you may have to limit their use of gadgets in times of power shortages to ensure your devices are ready and charged for emergencies.



Day 2

Welcome to Day 2 of the three-day pantry challenge. First of all, congratulations on making it through day 1. **You did a lot of work!**

- **You defined your reasons for creating your stock**
- **You scoured your house and garage to determine if you have items that can be used in your stock**
- **You made your shopping list**

GREAT JOB!

Now, for day two, spend some time identifying and organizing your space for your new stock.

You might be wondering why you can't go shopping now since you've just spent so much time creating your list. But here's the deal, if you don't have a space ready for your stock when you bring it home from the store, there's a really good chance that you'll just mix it in with your other pantry items and all your hard work will be for naught. So, spend some time identifying and organizing your space!

It's possible you're blessed with a huge pantry with extra, empty shelves, or an empty cabinet or other readily-available storage space for your stock. And, if so, congratulations! This exercise will probably be pretty easy for you. But a lot of us (myself included!) have to be creative in how and where we store our stockpile.

Storing your stockpile

I recommend keeping your stock in a dedicated cabinet, closet or shelf. In fact, I like my stock in a completely different place from my regular kitchen items. This separation helps ensure that family members aren't tempted to pilfer from the emergency supply out of convenience.

So, take a look around and determine a good spot for your stock.

If you have an empty shelf in your pantry or an empty cabinet in your kitchen, use that area. Just be sure that your family knows not to touch anything on that shelf or in that cabinet.

If there's not enough room in your pantry or your kitchen, or you simply don't want your stock mixed with your day-to-day supplies, it's time to take a look elsewhere in your house.

Some places to consider:

MUDROOM
LAUNDRY ROOM
COAT CLOSET

LINEN CLOSET
WALK-IN CLOSET
EXTRA BEDROOM

UNDER BEDS
UNDER-STAIR
STORAGE

BUILT-INS
STORAGE FURNITURE
STORAGE TUBS

To the extent you can keep your stock together, I think you should. But I'm a fan of being as creative as you need to be to find places for your stockpile. I think it's perfectly fine, for example, to store food items in one place and personal hygiene supplies in another place. The only areas I really don't like for storage are places outside your home, like the garage (due to lack of climate control). But if you can fit your stock anywhere else, I say go for it.

Once you've identified your spot, make sure it's cleared out and ready for your stock. Take a look at the list you've prepared. Will your anticipated stock fit in the space you've identified? Do you need anything like shelves or containers? If so, consider adding those items to your list.

You don't have to finish out your storage space

If budget is a consideration, you don't have to completely build out a place to store your stockpile. If an empty closet or under the bed is all you can swing, that's perfectly fine. You don't have to fit it out with shelving or other organization supplies right away or ever!

Although I think it's helpful to organize your stock so you know what you have and can easily find what you're looking for, the main purpose of this exercise is only to make sure your family is provided for.

Exercise #3: **STORING YOUR STOCKPILE**

1. Identify area to store your stockpile (pantry, extra closet, storage tubs, etc.).

2. Will your stock fit in the area you've identified? If not, will you need multiple spots?

3. Do you need to add any storage/organizational supplies to your shopping list? If so, what else do you need?

Day 3

Welcome to Day 3 of the three-day pantry challenge. First of all, congratulations on making it through the first two days. **You did a lot of work!**

So far, you have:

- **Defined your reasons for creating your stock**
- **Scoured your house and garage to see if you already have items that can be used in your stock**
- **Created your shopping list**
- **Identified your area for your stock**
- **Prepared your area for the arrival on your stock**

And you're now in the home stretch. Today is all about shopping!

Before you head to the store or begin ordering, take one final look at your list.

Are you planning to purchase everything today?

If not, spend some time thinking about your budget, both for today and ongoing. Also, think about what you'll purchase today and what you'll need to purchase over time.

Exercise #4: **EVALUATING YOUR LIST AND SHOPPING**

1. Are you planning to purchase everything on your list today?

2. If not, what is your budget for today's shopping trip? And how much of your shopping budget can you dedicate each week or month to building your stock?

3. If you're not purchasing everything on your list today, how long will it take you to build your one-week stock?

4. Consider revising and breaking down your list to determine what you will purchase today versus what you will purchase on subsequent shopping trips.

HAPPY SHOPPING!



Your stock is underway. Now what?

Whether you've completely built out your one-week emergency stock, or you're planning to take more time to build it out, congratulations! You've done a lot of great work over the past few days. And if you're not finished just yet, you've developed a roadmap to get it done.

As you continue on, here are some important considerations you might want to keep in mind.

Don't use your stockpile for non-emergency situations

You've just spent a lot of time developing your stock for specific emergency situations. Don't defeat its purpose by pulling items from it simply because you've run out of something. If you run out of something in your regular household supply, add it to your shopping list and grab more next time you go to the store.

Inventory your stock

Some people consider this overkill, but I like to keep a digital and printed inventory of my stock. Mostly I do this because I preserve food through canning and freeze-drying. My inventory helps me keep track of when I prepared certain foods. But it also helps me keep track of what I have and when I should consider restocking certain items. You might find this is helpful for you, too, especially as you increase your stock for longer periods.

Rotate your stock

Even shelf-stable and non-perishable food has an eventual expiration date. Be sure to rotate your stock and periodically swap it out with new, fresh supplies. (For additional information on shelf-stable food safety, you can visit the [USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service website](#)).

Food

If you're stocking food that your family regularly eats anyhow, it shouldn't be too much of a hassle to do this. For example, if your family eats cereal and cereal is also part of your stockpile, every month or so you may want to replace the cereal in your stockpile with newly-purchased cereal and add the cereal from your stockpile to your pantry for regular use.

Water

Regardless of how you're storing water, you'll want to replace it every six months. If stored in a cool, dark place, your water is still drinkable at six months. However, if you're not comfortable drinking it, use it in your garden, for cleaning, or for car washing, as a few examples.

Increase your stock

The purpose of this challenge is to quickly develop a one-week emergency stock to see your family through an immediate crisis or unexpected situation. But ideally, you'll want to strive for an eventual stock that will last your family for two to three months or even longer.

Just like with this one-week pantry, you can build your longer-term stock all at once or over time. But most of us will likely build our stock slowly. Start by adding a few stockpile items to your grocery list every week. You can select items that seem important to stock right away or you can round out your supply by stocking up on sale items. Either approach is fine. And you'll probably find that your approach changes from week to week.

Final thoughts

Don't stop! Continue to stock and prepare for your family. The next time an emergency or an unexpected situation strikes, you'll be confident in your ability to weather the storm and provide for your loved ones. And those are the best feelings in the world.

If you need more help or want to take a more in-depth dive into preparedness and stocking, we've totally got you covered. Consider signing up for our four-week course: **Stocked! A Blueprint for a Well-Prepared Home and Life**.

To learn more about **Stocked! A Blueprint for a Well-Prepared Home and Life** or to join our wait list to be notified of our next enrollment period, [click here](#).



Five-Day
**MEAL PLAN AND
RECIPES**



HALF MOON RIDGE

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.



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| <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.



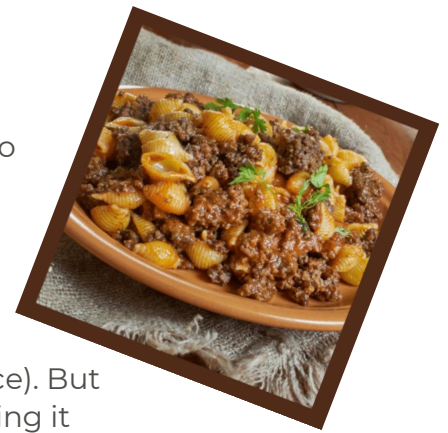
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| • 4 c old-fashioned oats | • 2 tbsp cinnamon |
| • 1 tsp baking powder | • ¼ tsp salt |
| • ¼ c chia seeds | • ¼ c coconut oil, melted |
| • 1 tsp vanilla extract | • ¼ c honey |
| • 3 c water, milk or prepared powdered milk | • 3 c fresh or frozen 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 ½ 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!