

- Ready Nutrition - <http://readynutrition.com> -

Food Storage Demystified

Posted By [Tess Pennington](#)

On January 10, 2012 @ 10:34 am

Category: Preparedness, Reserve Supplies, Storage

[ReadyNutrition.com](#)



Storing food for long-term emergencies is not without it's challenges. Many preppers who are beginning this task want to ensure they are packaging foods correctly.

I can honestly say, the more you do it, the easier it gets. At first, it can be intimidating, but once you understand the ins and outs of the process, it becomes second nature. Listed, are 8 common food storage questions asked by beginning preppers. Perhaps these questions can help you.

1. Food Storage and Oxygen Absorbers: What size of oxygen absorbers should I use in a 1 gallon bag? 5 gallon bags?

Answer:

Here's a handy oxygen absorber cheat sheet to go by when packaging food for long-term:

- 20 cc – 20cc and 30cc are 'preferred' sizes for 2oz and 4oz beef jerky packages.
- 50 cc – Good for containers of a quart size or smaller. Perfect for 6"x6" mylar bags.
- 100 cc – Suggest using 3 of these in a #10 can or equivalent size container.
- 200 cc- Use with medium sized bag when not vacuuming .
- 300 cc- Use one for a #10 can or equivalent size and for 1-gallon bags. You can also use a number of these in a larger container, depending on residual air volume.
- 500 cc – An appropriate size when using three per 5 gallon bucket.
- 100 cc – Medium to large canning jars will use.
- 1500 cc – 5-6 gallon containers.

2. Re-packaging Food: Do you have to re-package food items in mylar bags or can you just throw them in a 5-gallon storage bucket with some oxygen absorbers?

Answer:

You do not have to re-package food items or use mylar bags if you are putting them in a food grade bucket. However, the mylar bags add an additional layer of protection from outside elements and reduces the oxidation process. If you choose to not use a mylar bag, then place your oxygen absorbers on top of the pre-packaged food and seal up the bucket. The food will still be good for long term as long as the elements or insects do not get into the bucket. To learn more about long term food storage, [click here](#) ^[1].

3. Oxygen absorbers and desiccants: What's the difference?

Answer:

Oxygen absorbers are used to prolong the shelf life of stored food. They absorb the oxygen from the container, and by doing so, inhibits the growth of aerobic pathogens and molds. Oxygen absorbers begin working the moment they are exposed to oxygen. Therefore, it is

best to work as efficiently as possible. Oxygen absorbers are not edible, not toxic and does not effect the smell and taste of the product.

Desiccant packets, on the other hand, moderate the moisture level when placed in a food container. They do not absorb the moisture. Please note that desiccant is not edible. If the packet somehow breaks open and spills onto the stored food, the entire contents of the container must be thrown away.

Note: There are certain food items that desiccant should not be added to. Specifically, flour, sugar and salt. These items need a certain amount of moisture to stay activated, and if desiccant is added to it, they will turn into a hard brick.

4. Flour vs. wheat storage: Which is better to store for long-term?

Answer:

When wheat is grounded in to flour, it has a shelf life of 6 months to 2 years. Wheat berries, on the other hand, can be stored indefinitely. There versatility is also what makes them so appealing. Wheat berries can be used for [bread baking](#) ^[2], [sprouting](#) ^[3], to make hot cereal, or steamed and dried to make into bulgur wheat, making alcohol, and of course can be planted for [a wheat crop](#) ^[4]. Ensure that you properly store wheat berries to protect it from natural elements and insects. To learn about other emergency food items that last indefinitely, [click here](#) ^[5].

The only additional accessory you will need is a grain grinder to grind the wheat into flour. If you are preparing for long term emergencies, a grinder would be an important tool to have around.

5. Are there any wheat free options for long-term food storage?

Answer:

Since [wheat allergies](#) ^[6] are one of the top 10 allergies in the United States, many will need to find alternatives for their food storage endeavors. There are many gluten-free alternatives that you can store for your long-term food supply. Some alternatives to wheat to consider are:

Arrowroot Flour- This type of flour is ground from the root of the Arrowroot plant. It is tasteless and ideal to use as a thickener.

Brown Rice Flour – Brown rice flour has a higher nutritional base compared to white rice flour. It is much heavier in comparison to white rice flour. And is suggested not to buy this in bulk as it is better used when it is fresh.

Buckwheat Flour – According to [Dr. Weil](#) ^[7], “Buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum*) looks like a grain and tastes like a grain but isn’t one. Instead, it is a relative of rhubarb, and because it is gluten free, it is an ideal food for those allergic to the gluten in wheat and other true grains.”

Corn Flour – Corn is ground into a very fine powder. It has a bland taste and is therefore good to use for multiple recipes.

Corn Meal – Cornmeal is much heavier and courser than corn flour.

Nut Meals – Such as almonds, hazelnuts or walnuts can provide rich flavor as well as a good flour substitute for cookies and cakes. Their shelf life is brief and should be stored correctly. Most nut meals require a bonding agent such as eggs. Note: chestnut flour has a longer shelf life.

Potato Flour – potato flour is not potato starch flour. It does have a stronger flavor compared to other wheat alternatives. Due to the heaviness, a little can go a long way. The shelf life for this type of flour is not very long, so long term storage could be a problem.

Potato Starch Powder – This has a lighter potato flavor which is hardly detectable in recipes. This type of flour keeps very well.

Quinoa Flour – “The Mother Seed” as the Incas call this has a large variety of vitamins and is high in protein. Quinoa flour is not readily available in many stores, so locating this could pose a problem.

Soy Flour – This flour is a fine powder ground from soy beans. It adds a pleasant texture to

different recipes and is also high in protein and a good vitamin source.

Tapioca Flour – Tapioca flour adds chewiness to baking and is a good thickening agency. It also stores well.

White Rice Flour – this type flour does not have a high nutritional value. The taste is bland and ideal for recipes that require light texture. The shelf life is adequate as long as it is stored properly.

Keep in mind that the consistency and taste of these flours will be different compared to wheat. Also, more of the alternative flours will need to be added to recipes. Try substituting 1 cup wheat flour with one of the following:

Barley 1-1/4 cups

Oat 1-1/3 cups

Rice 3/4 cup

Soy 1-1/3 cups

Corn 1 cup

Potato 3/4 cup

Rye 1-1/3 cups

Tapioca 1 cup

6. Why is everyone telling me that I need to store all this wheat?

Answer:

Wheat is one of those healthy, multipurpose preps that can help sustain us during long term emergencies. It can be used as a breakfast cereal, ground into flour, used to make bread, added to soups, cooked and added to salads or sprouted for a healthy snack and even sweetened for desserts. To see some recipes on incorporating wheat berries into your diet, do a simple search online for "wheat berry recipes."

They are also a true whole grain. A cup of cooked wheat berries has about 300 calories and is packed with fiber, protein and iron. Tasty sprouts are loaded with vitamin E, a cell-protecting antioxidant, and magnesium, which is good for healthy bones and muscles. In an extended emergency, having a diet that is calorie and vitamin rich will help you withstand the increased physical demands of surviving a long term disaster, as well as keep you healthy.

7. Are there alternatives to using oxygen absorbers?

Answer:

Using diatomaceous earth when prepping and sealing food containers will keep the bugs off your food. They are organic and are safe to use on food. Use 1 cup to each 25 pounds of food. Some have had success with repelling bugs by using bay leaves. They add a few bay leaves to their food stuffs before sealing the food. Also, a lot of people who can dip their finished cans in wax to seal the edges to prevent bugs from getting in.

8. How do you keep bugs from getting into your food supply?

Answer:

I have found that using a multi-barrier approach to storing food helps a lot with this. I have also heard of people freezing their flour for 3 days to kill off any bugs that may already be in the flour. Some people have even cooked the flour at a very low setting on their oven for the same reason.

If you want to learn more about your foods worst enemies, [click here](#) ^[8].

A little foresight can go along way in terms of food storage. Understanding the different methods, tools and uses for your emergency food supply will help you get the most out of your food investment.

URL to article: http://readynutrition.com/resources/food-storage-demystified_10012012/

URLs in this post:

[1] click here: http://readynutrition.com/resources/are-you-ready-series-best-practices-for-long-term-food-storage_03042011/

[2] bread baking: http://readynutrition.com/resources/amazing-whole-wheat-bread-recipe_11052011/

[3] sprouting: http://readynutrition.com/resources/simply-sprouting_16042010/

[4] a wheat crop: http://readynutrition.com/resources/survival-gardens-25-seeds-you-need_05112009/

[5] click here: http://readynutrition.com/resources/11-emergency-food-items-that-can-last-a-lifetime_09032011/

[6] wheat allergies: http://readynutrition.com/resources/prepping-with-wheat-allergies_07112009/

[7] Dr. Weil: <http://www.drweil.com/drw/u/id/QAA70306>

[8] click here: http://readynutrition.com/resources/meet-your-emergency-foods-worst-enemies_06042011/

Copyright © 2010 Ready Nutrition. All rights reserved.