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Week 33 of 52: Essential Fats and Oils

Posted By [Tess Pennington](#)

On February 3, 2012 @ 4:09 pm

Category: 52 Weeks to Preparedness

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More or less, we live a very blissful reality where strenuous physical activity is not required. Due to this sedentary lifestyle, obesity has become a major health factor in our country. As a result, the government and multiple health organizations have advocated restricting fats in your diet. As much as we would like to eliminate these fats, in a SHTF reality, this food source will actually serve a purpose in our survival. So, why are fats so important in your diet? How can our survival be dependent on our fat intake?

Bear in mind, a 2,000 calorie per day diet equals 67 grams fat and 75 grams protein per day. No matter how afraid we are of fats, having substantial fat sources in our storage is vital. Here's why:

1. Fats are an essential component in any diet for proper vitamin absorption. Specifically, Vitamins A, D, E, and K are fat-soluble, meaning they can only be digested, absorbed, and transported in conjunction with fats.
2. Fats also plays a vital role in maintaining healthy skin and hair, insulating body organs against shock, maintaining body temperature, and promoting healthy cell function.
3. They also serve as energy stores for the body.
4. Fats are also sources of essential fatty acids, which are an important dietary requirement and also serves as a useful buffer towards a host of diseases. ([Source](#) ^[1])
5. The USDA suggests that about 30-35% of your daily calorie intake should come from fat.
6. Fats are one of the [4 Things You Must Eat To Avoid Malnutrition](#) ^[2].

We need to be smart about our survival. In the article, [Vitamins, Minerals, and Surviving](#) ^[3], the author wrote about a man who died in a survival situation living primarily on small game:

I remember one old grizzled survival instructor who commented about the victim, "He starved to death on a full stomach."

The instructor went on to say that the man might have survived, if he had the guts, if he had only known more about nutrition, "A rabbit is a lean critter. Not much fat on 'em and a man in a survival situation needs fat and oils. See, that man was only eating the lean flesh of the animal. He discarded the other parts that may have kept him alive. If he had eaten the contents of the rabbit's stomach, which contains essentially green leafy grasses, (vitamins B, C, E), the rabbits eyes (which contain salt), along with the liver, heart, and kidneys (which contain vitamin A), as well as other vitamins, he might have made it. I suspect he just plain didn't know about it. Or, he didn't like the idea of eating a critter's innards. Keep in mind, in a prolong survival situation protein along won't keep you alive"

Best Types of Fats to Store

- **Infant formula** – The oil content in this food source makes it a viable choice for a shtf fat source. An unopened can of powdered infant formula has a shelf life of 12 months. Once a can of formula has been opened, it should be used within a month and then discarded.
- **Ensure** - This supplement drink has 6 grams of fat, which provides your body with 9 percent of the recommended daily intake. The powdered version of Ensure will last

longer than the pre-made drink. Plan on a can of powdered Ensure to last the same as a can of infant formula, which is roughly about 12 months.

- **Oil** – The plant based oils are best to store in your emergency supplies. A light colored oil, such as vegetable or olive oil can last up to a year, if stored properly. Once it's opened, the oil could turn within a matter of weeks or months depending on how it was processed and the storage environment.
- **Peanut butter** – Any type of butter made from nuts is a healthy source of fat and if stored properly can last up to 12 months.
- **Nuts and seeds** – Because of the high oil content in nuts and seeds their shelf life is usually affected. Nuts and seeds typically last about 12 months.
- **Crisco** – With a shelf life that ranges from 2-8 years, this fat source is the longest lasting. That being said, it is probably the most unhealthiest of the choices.
- **Mayonnaise** – Mayonnaise has a relatively short shelf life of 6 months. Therefore, if you plan to stock up on this, ensure that it is frequently rotated in your food supply.
- **Salad dressing** – Salad dressing lasts anywhere from 9-12 months.
- **Canned meats** – Some canned meats, such as spam, fish and canned ham can also provide an adequate source of fat for your survival diet. Due to the high salt content of some of these canned meats, they have a relatively long shelf life of anywhere between 2-5 years.
- **Chocolate** – Although chocolate is considered a high-calorie, high-fat food, it does provide some health benefits as well. Most of the studies done used no more than 100 grams, or about 3.5 ounces, of dark chocolate a day to get the benefits. Studies have shown that dark chocolate lowers blood pressure and cholesterol levels as well as provides more antioxidants than blueberries. A chocolate has a shelf life of 12 months, however, if the chocolate is repackaged in Mylar or stored in a plastic container, it could last much longer.

Storing fats are good for short-term emergencies, however if you are planning for extended or long-term emergencies, it is advised to get your fat sources by natural means. The following list are fat sources that one can get living in a homesteading environment and most importantly, your health will be far better off:

- **Whole Milk** – Milk from animals can provide essential fat to our diets, and can also be used for cooking, making cheeses and other dishes.
- **Eggs** – Eggs have 5 grams of fat per egg. I am including this in the list as I believe that fresh eggs would provide an adequate amount of calories, protein and fat if consumed on a regular basis.
- **Fatty fish** – If you have a water source on your property, consider stocking it with a fish source. Many homesteaders have found great success in stocking their ponds with : Tilapia, Channel and Blue Catfish, Hybrid Stripers, Largemouth Bass, Trout, Bluegill, and Freshwater Shrimp. Other sources of fatty fish are: salmon, tuna, mackerel, herring, trout, and sardines. Ensure that you have fishing gear to get those fish with.
- **Fresh animal fats from animals.** Livestock, wild animals can be used as a source of fat. These natural fats can be rendered for other uses or preserved through canning to have a natural source of fat on hand.
- **Nut trees** – Look for the dwarf variety of nut trees (and fruit trees). Dwarf trees bear their fruit earlier than the standard varieties, and can produce higher yields in a shorter period of time. They have also been known to be more adaptable. Mother Earth News has a great article if you are interesting in learning more.
- **Fruit trees** – Specifically avocado and olive trees provide a substantial amount of healthy fats for the body. Obviously, the following examples are region specific and prefer a Mediterranean-like climate, however check with the USDA zoning map to see if you can plant them in your area. Living in the coastal South, I have seen many gardeners who have grown avocado trees.

To learn more about these different sources of fat, [click here](#) ^[4].

In an amazing homesteading reference, [The Encyclopedia of Country Living](#) ^[5] by Carla Emry, she indicates that fat can also be used as a preservation method:

“The fat seals the air out... After slaughtering a hog, the fat was rendered into lard. Those cuts of the hog that were not cured for smoking, or made into sausage, like the shoulder,

were fried. While still hot, these slices of pork steak were preserved through the winter by larding . In a large crock, layer on layer of the fried steaks was covered with hot lard. This meat was then used through the winter by scraping the lard off each layer. The amount necessary for a meal was removed and reheated. The used lard was reused in pies or other baking or cooking and ultimately for soap."

To conclude, in a SHTF reality our diets will be very different from how they are today. Our activity levels will be centered around physical activities to promote our survival and as a result, our diets should reflect those changes. Continuing to have fat in the diet can help physiologically, as well as psychologically. Ensure that you have incorporated enough fats into your survival supplies.

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URL to article: http://readynutrition.com/resources/week-33-of-52-essential-fats-and-oils_03022012/

URLs in this post:

[1] Source: <http://www.wellness.com/blogs/syidshahid/1055/why-do-we-need-fats-in-a-balanced-diet/syed-shahid-md>

[2] 4 Things You Must Eat To Avoid Malnutrition: http://readynutrition.com/resources/the-4-things-you-must-eat-to-avoid-malnutrition_20102011/

[3] Vitamins, Minerals, and Surviving: http://readynutrition.com/resources/vitamins-minerals-and-survival_14042010/

[4] click here: http://readynutrition.com/resources/survival-food-fat-sources-for-a-shtf-diet_03022012/

[5] The Encyclopedia of Country Living: <http://www.amazon.com/Encyclopedia-Country-Living-Carla-Emery/dp/1570615535>

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