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Week 34 of 52: Essential Legumes

Posted By [Tess Pennington](#)

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Ideally, in and extended emergency, many of us would prefer to be living in a self-reliant environment where we have access to fresh foods and meats. However, since we are preppers, we are making preparations to have back ups for our back ups. If, for some reason, our homesteading environment isn't thriving, we will need to fall upon on our food pantry. Therefore, we want to have a well-rounded pantry to meet all of our dietary needs.

Last week, we discussed [essential fats and oils](#) ^[1] to store in our deep larder. Another layer we need to focus on for our long-term dietary needs is a protein source capable of being stored long-term for shtf emergencies. Legumes are the most versatile option for storable proteins. Best of all, they are low cost and have the capacity to last a decade if properly stored. So, why do we need protein in our regular diets?

In general, it's recommended that 10–35% of your daily calories come from protein. When [beans are accompanied with a grain](#) ^[2] source such as rice or quinoa, it becomes a complete protein. Having protein in your diet not only provides energy, but also creates a special form of nitrogen that the body cannot get from carbohydrates or lipids. In the case of starvation, the body may actually "eat itself" (called wasting) to acquire the necessary amino acids, or borrow the amino acids from the immune system or body functions to meet its protein needs. Beans, peas and lentils are the richest source of vegetable protein, as well as a good source of fiber, calcium, and iron. Aside from using legumes in the usual manner, legumes can also be ground into an [alternative flour](#) ^[3] source, [sprouted](#) ^[4] for a fresh vegetable source, or made into spreads such as hummus. To learn more about why having a protein in your shtf diet is essential, [click here](#) ^[5].

Like most of our preparedness foods, beans should be stored in the absence of [the enemies](#) ^[6]: oxygen, moisture, insects and sunlight. Beans in their original plastic packaging have roughly about 13 servings and a shelf life of 1 year or more. However re-packaging the dry goods in heavy duty Mylar and/or plastic containers can prolong legumes for up to 10 years or longer! Ensure that you have proper storage conditions or else your hard work could be all for nothing. Beans that are improperly stored could lead to rancidity of bean oils, color fade and an overall "off" flavor taste. To make the most of your legume storage, consider these 5 tips:

1. When storing larger amounts of food, plastic containers, #10 cans, or Mylar-type bags are best for [long-term food storage](#) ^[7].
2. If you are using one of the above long-term storage containers, you can keep the beans in their original packaging, or remove the plastic wrapping and pour the contents into a long-term container and properly seal.
3. Oxygen absorbers should be used to remove oxygen from the packages to extend shelf life and minimize off-flavors caused by oxidation.
4. For smaller quantities of storing beans, consider using canning jars. Ensure that the jars are stored in a dark place.
5. Like most stored foods, colder storage temperatures will increase shelf life. 40-75 degrees Fahrenheit is the ideal temperature range for keeping your long-term food storage safe.

Lentils have the highest nutrition value of legumes next to soybeans, so keep this in mind when purchasing for long-term storage. Further, consider the cooking time that legumes require. Larger beans take more time cooking and may require more of your fuel source to cook them. If this is an issue, purchase smaller legumes such as lentils and split peas. They

cook faster, thus decreasing your fuel usage. Soaking beans for 6-12 hours can also reduce the cooking time by about one half, saves vitamins, minerals and proteins which can be lost during hours of cooking.

Those of you planning on putting away bulk quantities of beans may want to consider finding a super store or larger scale grocery store near you. These stores typically carry the 25 lb. bags of beans. Further, the Latter Day Saints have food storage warehouses that usually carry legumes and an assortment of other food related items. Check online to see if one of these LDS warehouses are near you. By far, the larger quantity bags will be a better investment compared to purchasing mass amounts of the smaller bags. If you want to purchase these items online, doing a simple search for "buy legumes in bulk" will connect you many online companies that can take your order.

Preps to Buy:

[In Quantity]

- Lima Beans, Dry
- Soy Beans, Dry
- Split Peas, Dry
- Lentils, Dry
- Dry Soup Mix, Dry
- Chickpeas, Dry
- Black beans, Dry
- Navy Beans, Dry
- Sprouts

Action Items:

1. Get smart about survival and research the importance of having certain food sources in your diet.
2. Use the Ready Nutrition [Food Storage Calculator](#) ^[8] to find out how much protein you need to add to your storage supply.
3. Bear in mind, daily caloric intakes are different with each person, so research how many calories you need to stay at your optimum health.
4. Those with special needs (such as pregnant women) are advised to get more protein sources, so keep this in mind when purchasing.
5. Learn how to package and store your bulk foods for [long-term storage](#) ^[7].
6. Store your purchased products in a suitable environment where it is not exposed to natural elements. Click here to learn about your [food's worst enemies](#) ^[6].

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URLs in this post:

[1] essential fats and oils: http://readynutrition.com/resources/week-33-of-52-essential-fats-and-oils_03022012/

[2] beans are accompanied with a grain: http://readynutrition.com/resources/rice-and-beans-arent-so-boring-after-all_15062011/

[3] alternative flour: http://readynutrition.com/resources/alternate-flour-sources_15022009/

[4] sprouted: http://readynutrition.com/resources/simply-sprouting_16042010/

[5] click here: http://readynutrition.com/resources/the-4-things-you-must-eat-to-avoid-malnutrition_20102011/

[6] the enemies: http://readynutrition.com/resources/meet-your-emergency-foods-worst-enemies_06042011/

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

[8] Food Storage Calculator:

<http://readynutrition.com/resources/category/preparedness/calculators/>

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