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Week 36: SHTF Sugars

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I might get a lot of flack for posting this, but before the haters get all up in arms, be honest with yourself, do you honestly want to sit out TEOTWAWKI without sugar or honey?

I realize there is a long list of diseases attributed to refined sugar in our diet. According to the American College of Sports Medicine a mere 5 to 6 percent of your daily calories should come from sugars. But, have you ever considered that there may be more than one reason for storing these sweet supplies for a long-term emergency? Some uses include:

- Curing/Food Preservation
- Alcohol
- Medicinal Use
- Bartering

We are all a bit particular when it comes to our favorite sweeteners. Good thing there are so many options! That being said, this article's sweetener list is meant to be a general overview of some of the more popular storage choices. If there is a sweetener that you prefer, by all means purchase some for your preparedness pantry. Since we are stocking up for long-term preparedness, I will be discussing the sweeteners that have the longest shelf lives. The four most popular long-term sugars to store are:

- **Honey** - Sugar lasts forever if stored properly. Many honey harvesters say that when honey crystallizes, it can be re-heated and used just like fresh honey. Because of honey's low water content, microorganisms do not like the environment. *Uses include: curing, baking, medicinal, wine (mead).*
- **White Sugar** - Like salt, sugar is also prone to absorbing moisture, but this problem can be eradicated by adding some rice granules into the storage container. Sugar lasts forever if stored properly. *Uses include: sweetener for beverages, baked goods, preservative, curing agent, making alcohol, gardening, insecticide.*
- **Maple Syrup** - Maple syrup is another consideration for your food storage. Because of it's high sugar level (which is antibacterial), it lasts practically forever. The higher the quality and sugar level, the longer it lasts. *Uses include: Baking, medicinal, food preservation, curing agent.*
- **Molasses** - This product is a by-product of the refining process of sugar cane into table sugar and it actually possesses health promoting properties. Molasses can last up to two years unopened. *Uses include: Baking, preservative, food preservation, curing agent, soil amendment.*

Although many of the above listed items [can last a lifetime](#) ^[1], if you are planning for extended or long-term emergencies, it is advised that you educate yourself on some other sugar options. The following list are some sugar sources that you can grow or raise yourself in a homesteading environment:

- **Sugar beets** - Learning how to extract the sugar from beets can be tricky. During wartime, many people used [ordinary red garden beets](#) ^[2] to make sugar. To learn more about this process click here: [Making sugar from sugar beets](#) ^[3]. Please note that getting sugar from beets will require a lot of fuel, so prepare accordingly.
- **Sugar cane** - This is a region-specific plant and one that thrives in tropical-like weather conditions. However, the entire plant can be used. The tops and remaining pulp can be eaten or fed to livestock.

- **Bees/honey** - There are also many books on beekeeping that can be quite useful. Sometimes it is difficult to keep the bee colony thriving, so find a person in your area that is willing to share his or her experience.
- **Sugar maple trees** - The sap from the sugar maple tree will produce maple syrup. There are many how-to articles and videos on the Internet that can take you step-by-step through the process. Please note, on average you will need 400-500 gallons of sap to make 10 gallons of maple syrup.
- **Stevia** - A fairly easy to grow herb that is good for sweetening drinks, simple syrups and making jams. Here's a trick to keep your stevia producing its sweet leaves: when you see the plant trying to flower, cut the tops off.
- **Sorghum** - Sorghum is a grain cultivated for it's sweetness. Amish folk love this grain and use as a syrup. It is also a popular grain to grow in impoverished regions of the world, and remains a principal source of energy, protein, vitamins and minerals. Grain sorghum has been utilized by the ethanol industry for quite some time because it yields approximately the same amount of ethanol per bushel as corn. *Take note: Some species of sorghum can contain levels of hydrogen cyanide, hordenine and nitrates lethal to grazing animals in the early stages of the plant's growth.*

Have you noticed the price of sugar increasing? In all honesty, the price of everything is going up! Sugar in many parts of the region has gone up 22% in the past 12 months, so stocking up on it now would be a good investment for the future. Hard assets such as sugar, wheat, beans, and food preservation tools are an investment one could make that will have a reliable return on investment, as well as securing one's future. Further, these types of investments could make lofty sums in a [bartering situation](#) ^[4].

The following is a general list of long-term sugars that can be stored:

Preps to Buy:

[In Quantity]

Honey
 Sugar
 Brown Sugar
 Molasses
 Corn Syrup
 Jams
 Fruit drink – powdered
 Flavored Gelatin

Action Items:

1. Get smart about survival and research the importance of having certain food sources in your diet.
2. Further, research how versatile this food source can be for your food pantry and for your overall survival.
3. Use the Ready Nutrition [Food Storage Calculator](#) ^[5] to find out how many sugar items you need to add to your storage supply.
4. Bear in mind, daily caloric intakes are different with each person, so research how many calories you need to stay at your optimum health.
5. Those with special needs (such as pregnant women) are advised to get more nutrition and calories daily, so keep this in mind when purchasing.
6. Learn how to package and store your bulk foods for [long-term storage](#) ^[6].
7. 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](#) ^[7].

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URLs in this post:

[1] can last a lifetime: http://readynutrition.com/resources/11-emergency-food-items-that-can-last-a-lifetime_09032011/

[2] ordinary red garden beets: <http://www.sucrose.com/lbeet.html>

[3] Making sugar from sugar beets: http://www.ehow.com/how_2177131_sugar-beets.html

[4] bartering situation: http://readynutrition.com/resources/the-barter-boom_01122009/

[5] Food Storage Calculator:

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

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

[7] food's worst enemies: http://readynutrition.com/resources/meet-your-emergency-foods-worst-enemies_06042011/

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