

\$2,400 will Feed a Family of Four for a Year At Captain Dave's Survival Shop

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How Can I Afford All This?

The truth is, not many of us can afford to go out and spend thousands of dollars on survival equipment. Forget about the fully-stocked hideaway and the loaded four-wheel drive you need to get there, how can you afford a good solid stash of food?



But even if you had all the money necessary, you can't buy everything you need, learn everything you'll have to know and prepare for "the big one" in a day, a week, or even a year. Preparedness is a lifetime journey, and your mental attitude is a key component. The best approach is to start small and build your resources. As time passes, re-evaluate and add to your plan, your stash, your skills and abilities. (See [chapter 4](#) for more information)

Buying Smart

After shelter, food and transportation are frequently the largest expense a family faces. Buying a few extra months of food can be a burden. But by shopping wisely and adding to your food stash over time, you can make this less expensive.

OK, the following may not be news to you, so if you feel you're doing a pretty good job of buying groceries inexpensively, feel free to skip it. But I figure everyone may gain a kernel of knowledge, so it's your call:

One of the best resources for large quantities of food is warehouse club stores, such as Sam's, and food co-ops. You can also purchase grain and other supplies from farm supply stores and wholesalers. This may take some searching out, but can be worth while if you want to buy bushels of grain to preserve yourself.

Warehouse Club

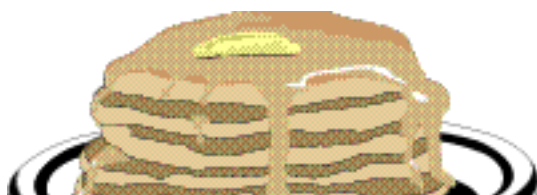
In Captain Dave's experience, warehouse club stores generally offer large sizes of items that can be used for survival. While it is sometimes possible to get better buys on some items when they go on sale at the grocery store, you have to shop carefully and watch the circulars to catch them. At the warehouse club, prices are constant and sizes large.

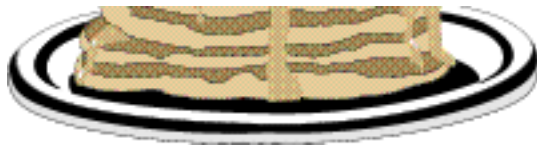
In addition to the survival-related foods you can acquire here, you may save enough money by buying at the club stores to afford some of those 45-pound kegs of red winter wheat you've been admiring in the catalog. Just be careful and don't buy so much it spoils, or your savings will evaporate.

Some purchases Captain Dave has made for his stash include:



- 25- and 50-pound bags of rice. A staple in many countries, it could be yours during the bad times. Rice is one of the few foods that no one has allergies to, plus it is an excellent source of nutrients. And let's face it, most of us don't live where we can grow rice. Check out the [Food Storage FAQ](#) for information on how to preserve rice.
- 25-pound bags of flour. Although grains are better to store than flour, this is fine if you do a lot of baking already. You can bake your way through the bag and always have some ready in an emergency.





- 5-pound bags of complete pancake mix. These are great because all the ingredients are ready to go, just add water (Make sure you get complete, you don't want the kind where you have to add eggs.) Muffins and other mixes are also available, but it's a lot easier to cook pancakes over an open fire or camp stove than muffins!
- Number 10 cans of powdered potato flakes. OK, so they don't taste as good as the real thing, but they store a lot longer and whip up fast. And if you want, you can still pick up the 50 pound bag of potatoes. I've seen these for \$5 at flea markets and such. But the powdered stuff won't grow eyes.
- 5-pound bags of elbow macaroni and spiral noodles. These are a staple around here, so we always keep a couple bags on hand. Much cheaper buying them in bulk than the tiny boxes on grocery store shelves.
- 5-pound canisters of peanut butter. A favorite for kids and adults, plus you don't need refrigeration. Don't keep 'em forever or they could go rancid, but a good product to rotate in your every-day pantry. Add some crackers to your stash, too.



- Number 10 cans of canned vegetables or beans. I really don't look forward to the day I have to sit down and eat nothing but canned peas or corn or whatever. But they are generally much cheaper than the small grocery-store cans, which would barely make a meal for one person. They won't keep as long as freeze-dried veggies packed in nitrogen, but they're good for feeding yourself and the hungry neighbors. To ensure rotation, use these for summer picnics or donate them to the homeless shelter every year or so.
- Number 10 cans of chili. We all know beans are a good source of protein,

and a hot bowl of chili, which usually combines meat and beans, will keep you working for many hours.

- Six-packs of canned goods, including pasta, vegetables, meats. You may grimace to think you'll be living on canned Beefaroni or Spam, but there just aren't that many canned meats, and they're a heck of a lot cheaper than MRE's. Some of the pasta-products come in larger cans, too.
- Large boxes of powdered milk (makes 20-quarts). These' won't last too long (see the [Food Storage FAQ](#) section on powdered milk), but if you are buying powdered milk, you can realize substantial savings over grocery store prices. A good item to keep in your spare refrigerator.
- 120 13-gallon trash bags. I could probably come up with a whole web page dedicated to 1001 uses for plastic bags. But you'll just have to use your imagination. From storing water to lining your emergency potty, you'll need them.
- Pouch noodles. I swear ten years ago these were available only in backpacking stores, but now Lipton and others make them for the time-challenged family. Just add water, boil and voila: pasta Alfredo, shells in creamy garlic sauce or garden rotini. These are small sizes and this is one product where you can definitely get a better buy during a sale at the grocery store.
- Pouch and box drinks. These are great for bug-out packs and survival stashes that could be subject to freezing and thawing. My experience has shown the pouches will freeze and thaw throughout a winter stored in the car, but try it yourself in the freeezer before you take my word on it. Every brand could be different.
- For those with a large freezer or a large family, 5-pound blocks of cheese, 10-pound packages of frozen hamburgers and large quantities of frozen vegetables are often good buys. If the you-know-what hits the fan, you'll just have to eat alot of hamburgers for the first day or two.
- Paper products, cleaning supplies, candy and personal care products are also available in large quantities at reasonable prices.

OK, so what's the down side, you ask? Usually, warehouse stores offer one brand, so you may not get the exact product you want.

Canned Foods

Let me digress a moment for a comment about canned goods. Traditional canned goods aren't the best for survival because they lose their food value over time. But Captain Dave thinks they have a lot going for them nonetheless. They are cheaper and easier to obtain than specialty foods such as MRE's or freeze-dried foods. They also can be heated in their cans. Remove the lid (You didn't forget to pack a couple of can openers, did you?) and plop them carefully on the burner or stove, and the can becomes an instant pan. Also, you can drink the juice off vegetables to preserve your water reserves (as long as it isn't too salty). Plus, you can get a wide variety of foods, and cans are a lot tougher than glass.

So let's say you get an inside scoop that North Korea is going to invade South Korea in the next two days and you are worried about the use of nuclear weapons in such a scenario. You decide to high tail it off to your shelter before it's too late. Do you call the 800 number and order a dozen cases of MREs and wait for the UPS man to show, or do you hightail it to the store and clean all the canned goods off the shelf? If you have a survival stash which already includes survival-type foods, these canned goods will be a nice addition and provide some much needed variety. Don't forget canned fruits and vegetables.

Discount Groceries

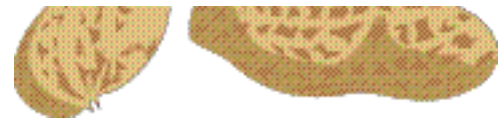
Somewhere between the traditional supermarket and the Warehouse club lie discount grocers. This could be the "Super Kmart" that carries groceries as well as just about anything else you need. There are also Food4Less and similar stores that are a bit like warehouse clubs, only they don't carry anything except food. Becoming a careful consumer and a survival-shopper may require visit to all three types of stores over time.

Food Co-ops and Farmers Markets

Food co-ops can be found in the yellow pages. While some require you to work, most allow you to purchase as non-working members at a slightly higher price than the participants. Others require that you order in advance so you can share in their volume purchasing

Food co-ops often make large purchases of fresh vegetables, nuts, grains and similar supplies. Many times, these are organically-grown, so you are benefitting health-wise as well as financially.





Some farmers markets are seasonal, usually around only during the growing season or only on Saturdays, but others are permanent. If you put up canned goods, there's nowhere better to make large purchases of fresh fruit and vegetables. Whether you're looking for tomatoes or peaches, this is the next best thing to growing your own.

Chapter 8 has not yet been completed. Please check back in a month.

| [Top](#) | [Home](#) | [Survival Guide Table of Contents](#) | [Chapter 6](#)