

Food Storage. We'll talk about how to incorporate your food storage into your favorite recipes and we'll show you some delicious meals that your family will actually eat. Stay tuned.

Rebecca: Welcome to Living Essentials. I'm Rebecca Cressman and today we're cooking with food storage. Joining me today is Lisa Harkness and Leslie Probert. They are authors and lecturers on emergency preparedness and food storage. Welcome. First of all Lisa, why should we learn to cook with our food storage?

Lisa: Well, we store a year's supply of food in the event of a natural or economic emergency and in those types of emergencies it would be a great comfort to already know how to use your food storage. It would help to relieve a lot of stress. So learning to cook with your food storage now is a really important part of being prepared.

What about the health benefits Leslie?

Leslie: In addressing the health concerns of our day, these foods are at the top of the list of foods recommended for us to eat. These high-fiber foods will be upsetting to the digestive system if you suddenly begin to eat them, so it's important to start incorporating them into your diet now.

Rebecca: Now today we're going to take a look at a lot of recipes that are very tasty and good for our families. First of all, where did you come up with these recipes? I'm assuming that you've taste-tested all of them for us. Where did you come up with these recipes?

Leslie: We started by looking at our own recipes for soups and stews and casseroles and then with a little creativity and practice we learned to substitute stored foods for any fresh foods in the recipe. There are some emergencies when you would not be able to find fresh foods and if you're depending on cheese, sour cream, or ham hock to get your basic food storage to taste good you're in trouble.

Rebecca: Speaking of that, we had a show on cheese making and had a lot of people interested that were so excited, they went out and made the cheese. We're going to make some recipes today too to get people engaged and interested. But Lisa, how long should we store our food storage?

Lisa: Well that depends on the particular type of food, but there's one thing to keep in mind. Food storage will not last forever. It represents a financial investment when you have all this food stored, so you don't want to let it sit too long. You actually are going to have to get into it and use it, which is called rotating, using it and replenishing it.

Rebecca: All right, tell us about rotation.

Leslie: Well, we wanted to find a whole month's worth of bean recipes and good tasting, a month's worth of canned meat recipes and we were able to be successful with that. Once you have a pool of good-tasting recipes, if you will eat food storage meals two days out of the week you can have a whole year's supply rotated in just three and a half years.

Rebecca: That's a wonderful idea.

Leslie: That's well within, or close to the shelf-life of most foods and your food storage will be fresher and you'll know how to use what you've stored.

Rebecca: Some of us have learned that when we buy our food storage which if they're in cans or in bottles, it's really essential for us to date when we purchase them. What type of information is important Lisa in that dating?

Lisa: This is really important and it's real simple. All you need to do is keep a permanent marker in the same place where you store your food and then every time you bring home a new package of food or a can of food, just date it. That lets you know which foods you need to get through first and which foods you need to rotate through first.

Rebecca: Talking about serving food to our families, I'm not sure if I said to my family, "Kids, it's food storage night!" They'd be excited necessarily to join us for dinner on that one. How should we best introduce food storage, if we do it twice a week we understand we can now rotate throughout a whole year but how should we bring it in to our regular family planning and meals.

Leslie: Well actually, if you're eating rice, oatmeal, refried beans, burritos, macaroni, you're already eating food storage, so it's important to try some recipes, decide which ones you like. If you have a family, let it be a family decision. Decide how often you would have that recipe in a month and then you can plan to acquire the things needed in that recipe. Work for a whole months worth of recipes and then you multiply those by twelve to plan for a whole year. Planning this way you don't waste any food and you enjoy rotating what you've stored. Don't be surprised if some of your food storage recipes actually become your family favorites.

Rebecca: That's great to know. One of the things I always think about before I make dinner at home is how much time this dinner will take. What have you thought about in these recipes you're introducing us today, how complex are they?

Lisa: Not very complex at all, in fact most food storage recipes are really easy to assemble, there's no dicing, no chopping, no sautéing, you just assemble them together and the most recipes take anywhere from 20 to 45 minutes to cook which is really the same amount of time we plan on when we cook a normal type of meal.

Rebecca: Wonderful, well we've got some great things on the table today. We're going to introduce Mexicali bean casserole. . .

>>Mexicali Bean and Rice Salad.

Rebecca: All right, introduce it to us.

Leslie: So, we start with six cups of cooked and cooled rice and we're going to add one and three quarters cups each of pinto beans, kidney beans, and black beans.

Rebecca: Now these could be out of the canned beans that we store in the food storage, is that right? Or where else would we?

Leslie: You can store canned beans in your food storage. These are already soaked and cooked and so you would store 2 and a half times the dried amount of beans if you're storing canned beans.

Rebecca: If you're storing dried beans should you have reconstituted them the night before or added water to them?

Leslie: Yes. Dried beans need to be sorted. You're looking for rocks, you'll need to rinse them, and they need to be soaked in three times the water to soften them before they're cooked. So you can soak them overnight, in the morning you bring them to a boil, add a little oil to the pan to avoid having them foam and bubble over and then you'll lower the heat to let them simmer covered for about 1 to 1 and a half hours. You can do a quick soak with beans. Again, you would sort them, rinse them, and soak them in 3 times the water, you will bring the water to a boil for two minutes, let them stand for an hour to soften, and then cook them for an hour to an hour and a half. Once you get beans cooked,

you drain them. This reduces problems with gas. If you throw away the soaking and cooking liquid and then you can put them in the fridge so that they're all ready for a meal at night. Beans that are soaked quickly are not as soft and they will also produce the most gas.

Rebecca: All right, well we want to avoid that. Let's go back to our recipe though with this mexicali. We've introduced the beans and the rice and what would be next?

Leslie: Okay. We are going to add a can of corn.

Rebecca: All of this would be in your food storage?

Leslie: This is made with only stored food. We have a can of diced green chilies.

Rebecca: That would definitely be a part of my long-term food storage plans, green chilies.

Leslie: And here we will be adding a quarter of a cup of dried green pepper and I've already hydrated some green and red pepper here. That needs to be hydrated in twice the water for about 30 minutes and then you drain the water and add it to the salad. So that's all set to go, that's been hydrated and all ready to add.

Rebecca: Also on the green chilies, be careful as you purchase the cans because they do come in mild, medium, and depending on each of your children you may want to get the appropriate seasoning there, but already it's smelling terrific and it's taken us about a minute so far to put those together.

Leslie: Now I have a dressing here made with olive oil, cider vinegar, a little bit of cumin, and chili powder, and some garlic salt and hot pepper sauce. And I will just pour this over.

Rebecca: We'll have that recipe available for those too on our website. I smell that as you're mixing it together, it smells wonderful.

Leslie: Toss this all together.

Rebecca: It's a little sweet, that cider-vinegar really helps.

Leslie: So this makes a very colorful dish.

Rebecca: I also want to hold up these freeze-dried green peppers because they really show nicely. They're very lightweight, they're almost like paper when you pick them up, this small bowl we have here with the green pepper.

Leslie: Now you can serve this salad immediately, or you can chill it.

Rebecca: So by mixing all the ingredients together with a little bit of the cider-vinegar and cumin salad dressing, you've got your salad right there.

Leslie: Yes, all set to go.

Rebecca: And this serving size here is for a family maybe of eight?

Leslie: Yes, 6-8 people.

Rebecca: Wonderful. Oh this is wonderful. Thank you so much. This has a little hint of flavoring from the green chilies and great vinegar. All right, let's move on to our next recipe.

Rebecca: All right we're back, now we're going to take a look at how to make fettuccine carbonara, however you pronounce it. Let's go.

Lisa: This will be a family favorite; it's so quick and easy. You start with enough pasta, cooked pasta for about 4-6 people, and you make the sauce by

Rebecca: This is from food storage.

Lisa: That's right, just out of your food storage. Then, water, a cup of water, to which you add a half a cup of white sauce mix and you just kind of whisk that together.

Rebecca: Is there a recipe then for the white-sauce mix?

Lisa: There is, it's real easy. All it is is equal parts white flour, instant dry milk, and powdered butter. You add a little chicken bouillon, the granules, and a little salt, and this is a great thing to have on hand because it makes a great base for any white sauce or any creamy soup base. I even use it as a substitute for cream of mushroom or cream of chicken soup in casseroles.

Rebecca: Wonderful. We'll have that recipe on our web site as well, that's for the white sauce.

Lisa: That's right, so then you add a half a cup of parmesan cheese and you just whisk that around until it's smooth, get it to a boil and it'll thicken it up and you'll pour it over your pasta, toss it, and then once you've done that, you want to add about a half a bottle of bacon.

Rebecca: Do you store bacon bits in those small containers like that or do you have a larger container?

Lisa: No just like this. And in fact most recipes that we've found really only take about a half a bottle of this. This will store for three years, packaged this way, it's quite inexpensive, it's cheaper than most canned meats, and you can store it just like this and you can also store a bacon flavored TVP if you like that flavor. But if you don't, this is the real stuff.

Rebecca: That's what adds that strong flavor. Now this is out of food storage as well, parmesan cheese you store in there as well?

Lisa: That's right, so you'll just kind of put some on a plate like this and we'll let you try it Rebecca.

Rebecca: That looks great.

Lisa: It's not very much but this would only take about 10 minutes to prepare at most. It's just making the pasta, waiting a minute or two for the sauce to boil, and there you have it, it's done. Teenagers actually like to do this or make this after school, it's really easy.

Rebecca: Oh this is very, very good. The bacon adds a nice flavor. How long does pasta store?

Lisa: At least 8 years.

Rebecca: I know I've had to change mine from the original plastic containers into other Ziploc bags because the plastic wrapping just broke, so what do you store your pasta in?

Lisa: I just have a number of tin cans.

Rebecca: All right, well thank you for this and we'll move on to our next recipe.

Rebecca: All right, now we're going to look at a recipe that uses some of the alternative grains like barley. This is called beef barley stew.

Leslie: And we're going to begin with a can of roast-beef chunks. I used to think that this would be too expensive to put in food storage, until I discovered that a 12 ounce can of beef, chicken, or turkey chunks would make a fabulous recipe that feeds 4-6 people. On sale, one of these cans is about 2.50 dollars or less, so that's the cost really of a pound of good, quality hamburger.

Rebecca: Wonderful, and these store for a long time.

Leslie: Yes they do. And all except for tuna, you want to use tuna within two years, but all the other canned meats store very well.

Rebecca: Wonderful.

Leslie: So we'll add this to the recipe. Now you can substitute canned meats pound for pound for any part of the dried beans that you store. So, we're going to add to 7 cups of water some dried carrots, we've got some dried minced onions.

Rebecca: These look freeze-dried, are they?

Leslie: Nope they're all dried. And notice that you don't hydrate these ahead of time. That was some dried celery. We've got some dried green pepper. You put them in the recipe with the hydrating liquid and they'll hydrate and cook it the same time, so that saves a lot of time.

Rebecca: Now in front of the pot right now, we do have some cans here to show. Oh pardon me, right over here, we have mixed peppers, and this is a nice size can. This will last you six months of rotation, or four months depending on how much you like mixed peppers.

Leslie: Could last up to a year even, but when you're buying dried, particularly green peppers and celery, it's good to ask for that size, 2 1/2 can because it doesn't get too old by the time you use it. You use only about a tablespoon or two in any recipe.

Rebecca: And this is a 4 ounce can. Great, wonderful. So a lot of our kind of added taste vegetables, things that just add seasoning, we get the smaller can rather than the larger one.

Leslie: Yes, we find these add important flavor to food storage recipes. So I'm going to add some dried red and green peppers.

Rebecca: By the way, as you keep moving on with the recipe, where would I find these by the way?

Leslie: You can of course dry any of your dried vegetables if you have the inclination and the time. Or you can purchase them from a food-storage supplier place in your area or over the internet.

Rebecca: Wonderful. Thank you.

Leslie: So I'm going to add some beef bouillon here. And I will bring this all to a boil for, oh I've got some spices here, some basil, some green pepper and a bay leaf.

Rebecca: And what about barley, would that go in?

Leslie: I'll bring this to a boil, and then I will add the barley.

Rebecca: Now is the barley different from beans in that it does not need to be reconstituted?

Leslie: Does not need to be reconstituted. It cooks in about 45 minutes. It's a really great-grain to have.

Rebecca: Kind of like long-grain rice that needs a little bit longer cooking, but you don't have to reconstitute.

Leslie: The most common barley that you will find is pearled barley. It has the hull milled away and it tastes great in soups and stews. It's highly nutritious and adds some important variety to food storage mixes.

Rebecca: Now you've boiled it first, the vegetables and the meat?

Leslie: I'll just bring this to a boil, then I'll add the barley, then I'll cover this dish, so we'll just add this, and I'll cover this dish and simmer it for 45 minutes to get the barley to be tender.

Rebecca: And once the barley expands with the 7 cups of water you have in here, I'm imagining you have a pretty healthy serving. How many people can actually?

Leslie: This will serve 6-8 people. So you have a sample there.

Rebecca: This is really pretty, very colorful, the carrots reconstituted nicely, and it seems extraordinarily healthy. Tell us about why this would be a nice meal to be able to serve either in an emergency situation or at home?

Leslie: Well the variety of vegetables in that dish makes it very nutritious. Of course the barley is nutritious and meat makes it taste great.

Rebecca: I have to tell you this tastes so much better than what you would get in a canned prepared soup from the store. This is really something your kids will eat, it's very flavorful.

Leslie: Canned meats are a comfort food. Most of us really love meat and so we think it's important to store canned meats in food storage.

Rebecca: Wonderful example of the different type of grains that we can use in our recipes. Thank you.

Rebecca: This is another great way to incorporate lentils in our recipes. This is bean and lentil rice pilaf.

Lisa: That's right. This is really quick to make and it's got a little bit of a kick to it so it's a fun dish. You start with some water to which you add.

Rebecca: And how much water was that?

Lisa: It was about 2 and a quarter cup. You add a quarter cup of dried lentils, about 2 tablespoons of olive oil, 2 teaspoons of chicken bouillon and some minced onion.

Rebecca: And we talked in our last recipe how long barley stores. How long do lentils store?

Lisa: You can say about 8 years or so too, about the same.

Rebecca: Wonderful, so all of these items from your food storage mixed together in the water.

Lisa: That's right. So once you have this, then you're going to want to simmer it, boil it, and then simmer it for 15 minutes covered. After that's done then you want to add the rest of the ingredients which is a can of kidney beans, a can of corn.

Rebecca: These are the small cans.

Lisa: Yes, this is the regular 15 ounce size and then a cup of long-grain rice and then a cup of salsa.

Rebecca: And all of these are from food storage, I imagine if you wanted to use dehydrated corn you could use that as well.

Lisa: You could, you'd need to hydrate it beforehand.

Lisa: You stir this all together, bring it to a boil and then cover it and simmer it for another 20-25 minutes, and this is the finished product.

Rebecca: How much salsa did you add?

Lisa: 1 cup of salsa.

Lisa: So let's get some out here for you to taste.

Rebecca: Do you have any hints, for those of us who might not have had experience cooking lentils and rice together, is there some tips?

>>Well lentils, like split-peas and barley take about 45 minutes to cook. Both lentils and rice adapt really well to all types of seasonings and flavorings and they do really well in one-pot meals, kind of like this one that we've just done. They're really good for those.

Rebecca: This is really very flavorful. Just taking a bite of it is wonderful, sweet, and the salsa does add that nice kick. Have to make sure we keep salsa in our food storage.

Lisa: Exactly.

Rebecca: Is that homemade by the way or did you buy that?

Lisa: Nope, it's just bottled, just from the store.

Rebecca: Wonderful, thank you so much for that, let's go on to another one.

Rebecca: Let's talk about food storage and wheat.

Lisa: Well the main way that you're going to use your wheat is by grinding it into flour. And once it's in flour you can use it in the same normal ways that you're used to cooking with flour anyway like making bread, cookies, muffins, and pancakes. Now this loaf right here was made from 100 percent whole, hard, white wheat. And the advantage of a white wheat would be it produces a lighter-colored product. You can see it's lighter.

Rebecca: Well, it's risen very nicely too. I have a hard time getting my whole wheat bread stand up and be counted.

Lisa: This is the hard, white, wheat, so its flour that's been ground from the hard white wheat. And what you notice it does, like I said it makes a lighter colored product, but it also has a lighter taste and a lighter texture too.

Rebecca: And where can we find that type of wheat?

Lisa: Just about any food-storage supplier, some grocery stores even have it in bags. This recipe is awesome because it's really, really quick. Some people think that cooking or making bread takes too long. Well there are recipes out nowadays that actually the bread rises right in the pan, you just turn on the oven and you cook it, there's no punching down and waiting for it to rise the second time. This is a real fast, easy way to make bread.

Rebecca: On Sundays I'd like to have that recipe as well. This is looking very good and I'm surprised that it's all made out of 100 percent wheat.

Lisa: Yeah, these are cookies made with 100 percent whole wheat. In order to get wheat into your diet this is a great place to start. Cookies actually made with 100 percent whole wheat I've had some people say that they're much more flavorful, tasty, than cookies made with just white flour.

Rebecca: We'll go ahead and try that. Oh, these are wonderful. They have a nice, rich buttery taste as well.

Lisa: Yeah, these also have powdered eggs in them and you can't probably even taste the powdered eggs.

Rebecca: Do you use powdered butter in this recipe?

Lisa: No, shortening.

Rebecca: Shortening, which is easier to store, that's right in food storage. We have some emails that came in. We've got Kara who has written us and let's take a look at this. She says, "Please get the word out about soft white wheat. It's easy to use, perfect for food storage, and tastier than white flour. What needs to be taught is how and where to substitute it in regular recipes for white flour. I know my family has been going nuts over it and it's just a simple thing to incorporate in your everyday cooking."

Leslie: Well soft, white wheat is actually not a good option for long-term food storage. While soft white wheat is very delicious, people also love the flavor of hard white wheat and hard red wheat. Soft wheat has a shelf-life of about 8 years in comparison of 20 plus

years for hard red and hard white wheat. Soft wheat is usually used in biscuits, pastries, and quick breads because it doesn't really have enough gluten to make good, regular bread.

Rebecca: So if your family is hooked on it though you can have a mix of both soft white and the hard white in your food storage.

Leslie: Yes, I suppose you could.

Rebecca: As long as you're aware of the rotation of it. We also have another email from Marga, she's from Utah. "I have a lactose intolerance and am very interested in finding out adequate sources of complete protein and calcium including the nutrients necessary for calcium absorption that I can include in my basic food storage instead of powdered milk. Also there are people I know who are allergic to wheat and corn. In my experience, wheat is the grain usually focused on in food storage. What are some food storage recipes using grains other than wheat?" Lots of questions there, Leslie.

Leslie: Okay let me talk about the lactose intolerance first. There is a country-cream brand of powdered soy milk alternative that has been enriched with calcium and other important minerals, so that is a great substitute.

Rebecca: And you can use that in all your recipes then, the soy?

Leslie: You can, and you can store it like powdered milk. You could also store a good calcium supplement. When it comes to allergies to wheat, there are a variety of lesser-known grains that are available at food-storage supply places. So this gives you lots of other options besides storing wheat.

Rebecca: Can you give me one or two of those alternative grains?

Leslie: Yes, there's camoot, there's quinoa.

Rebecca: All right, quinoa, I've heard a little bit about that. We'll have more of this information on our website as well.

Rebecca: Let's talk about some of the alternative ways to cook. For example, if you don't have access to a stove, Lisa.

Lisa: Yeah, we're going to show you two ways today. One uses charcoal and one uses propane. They're both very good fuels to store because both of them store indefinitely. There's no rotating that you have to do. However, there are some safety precautions that you have to take into mind. Before you store any fuel at all, you're going to have to check with your insurance policy and your city or homeowners association or whatever that is to make sure you stick by all the guidelines and rules when it comes to storing fuel. Now the Kingsford charcoal company assures us that storing charcoal in a garage is safe, but they do recommend that you put it in a waterproof container so it's kept away from moisture. Propane however must never ever be stored inside. The propane canisters are actually designed to leak and it doesn't evaporate into the air, it pools onto the ground. So if it's stored in the garage and it pools onto the ground, just the switch of a car engine is enough to ignite that propane and you'd have a big problem.

Rebecca: Okay, so outside of the house.

Lisa: Outside always. You always use propane and store propane outside. Now there is in some locations, you can store those little 1 pound canisters and you have to check with your location, but it is okay in some to store two of those 1 pounds inside a garage.

Rebecca: Wonderful. We can check with our local city officials for that. We also have something interesting here and it's called an apple-box reflector oven.

Leslie: You can bake anything you would bake in a regular oven using the same time and the same temperature in this simple apple-box reflector oven.

Rebecca: It's an apple-box lid that you've covered with tinfoil.

Leslie: This is a simple apple-box. We've filled the holes for the handles of the box with cardboard and then every bit of the inside must be covered with foil. Anything that is flammable will ignite and for convenience sake we have covered the outside of the box as well.

Rebecca: I notice you also cut a window in which I think my kids would absolutely love when we bring this. You bring this to girls camp, but camping or whatever emergency situation, you cut a rectangle about 5 inches by 10 and but what is it that's heat-resistant that we could look for, it looks like plastic.

Leslie: This is a double layer of oven bag, like you cook a turkey or a chicken.

Rebecca: An oven bag that's see-through, wonderful.

Leslie: The foil is stuck with foil tape which you can get at a hardware store which is heat resistant so it will last for a very long time.

Rebecca: Different than duct tape, foil tape that is heat resistant.

Leslie: Now this oven uses charcoal to cook and so you will need to ignite the charcoal and to do that you need a charcoal chimney starter. The best ones have these holes at the side. They will draw air up inside efficiently to light the charcoal well and by having this, then you don't have to store charcoal lighter fluid which is highly flammable and dangerous.

Rebecca: So this is a cylinder that keeps all of the charcoal closer together so it heats more quickly. We use that with our Dutch oven cooking as well.

Leslie: Yes it's just great. There's a rack about here inside that holds the charcoal and so you can wad up 2 pieces of newspaper and put them in underneath and light those and then you let the charcoal heat until the top charcoal have a light spot on them just the size of a dime, that's all.

Rebecca: So they don't have to be completely grey.

Leslie: No, you'll spend the charcoal on the bottom quite a bit if you wait for the top ones to be completely white. So here in our oven we're going to pour this charcoal out once it's heated. Let me explain to you how this is set up. These are empty pop cans and they're filled with rocks so they won't tip over and the oven rack is made with an oblong cookie cooling rack. This allows you to cook with a variety of pan sizes in this oven.

This can handle the temperatures that are reached with an oven, so a rectangular cookie rack setting on four different set of pop cans for support.

So once the charcoal is heated, you pour it out.

Rebecca: And if you're out on the ground and you spread out another piece of tinfoil to be able to hold the charcoal, or?

Leslie: This is heavy-duty foil that is on the ground, to reflect the heat that is inside. You do need to operate this chimney charcoal-starter on foil as well or it will permanently blacken a driveway. I did have that happen. So once it's heated, you distribute this charcoal evenly in the oven. You can regulate the temperature of this oven because each charcoal is 35 degrees.

Rebecca: So 10 of them is 350 degrees?

Leslie: Yes.

Rebecca: We have just a couple of minutes but once you have your heated charcoal on your ground foil?

Leslie: You put this on, you'll put whatever you're going to bake in here, in the oven, and you'll put the box over and let it rest on a one inch rock. That allows enough oxygen inside for the charcoal.

Rebecca: Tip the box back just a teeny bit, a one inch drop. We have just one more minute, and you've got something else to show us.

Lisa: This is called a hay box; it's cooking with retentive heat. You can do it either in a cardboard box filled with paper shreds or even in a cooler that's lined with wool blankets. And we've got something in here. The method of cooking with it is very easy. You just get a pot of food boiling, good and boiling with the lid on and then you leave it in this cooler or in your box 4 times the normal amount of time that you would normally take to cook a dish, so if your pot of beans takes an hour. Actually you leave it in for four hours.

Rebecca: Insulate the heat of the pot that was boiling.

Lisa: That's right, and you can see here we've got some split-pea stew, and it's been cooking for about four hours or so. There is a really important safety concern when cooking this way. You need to make sure that you have enough insulation in your box or your cooler that can maintain safe cooking temperature throughout the entire cooking time.

Rebecca: All right we have just about 30 seconds to talk about the other box you have next to us.

Lisa: Well this is the same thing, so you can either do it this way, this is probably the least expensive way because it's just paper shreds and a box you can get a dumpster,. And then there's this way which is a cooler, everyone's got a cooler and some wool blankets, and you can just make a well for the blankets, put your food in, cover it up, and then you wait four times the amount of time you would normally wait.

Rebecca: And we're going to have more information on these alternative ways of cooking on our website. So thank you Lisa and Leslie for joining us today. And thank you for watching. Be sure to join us next time on Living Essentials.

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