

## Here's Your Grocery List of 16 Items for a Winter Power Outage

One of the most fundamental preps for any sort of emergency or disaster preparedness is having [stockpiled supplies](#) and a sizable supply of food on hand. Chances are you won't be able to dash down to your local corner store or grocery if you need something for the duration of the event, and even if you can make it down there, there is no guarantee they will have a product or even be open! If you want to ensure that you & your loved ones know exactly where your next meal will come from, you had better have it on hand. But padding your pantry in case of an extended power outage requires a smart approach. If your usual utilities are offline, this can greatly complicate meal prep. Under the circumstances, nothing will be guaranteed. But it is possible to plan around this contingency with [smart selections](#). In this article we will tell what to stock up on & why in order to be prepared for the next big power outage.

### How Long Does Canned Food Last? Survival Tip

**How Long Can Your Food Last?:** Having long-lasting food makes your life easy when it comes to stockpiling and rotating emergency supplies, but how long that food lasts depends entirely on what it is, how it is preserved, and the conditions in that it is stored. **Many fresh fruits or veggies will usually go bad within a few days. Modern factory-produced packaged goods can last months. Canned or pouched items can last a year or longer.**

Things get more complicated if you take steps of your own to further preserve your food. Freezing, for instance, can greatly increase storage life, so long as you have power and can keep it cold! For the purposes of this article, we are going to focus on foods that do not require refrigeration, freezing, or any other special storage and have a reasonably long shelf life just as they are. More on that in a moment.

**Always Get Non-Perishable Foods for Power Outage Prep:** This should go without saying, but in a simple power outage or any other sort of emergency situation that might knock out electricity, water and gas you want foods that are stable at room temperature and don't require much, if any, prep or cooking. Any food that requires cool temperatures is a no-go since you will be without a fridge or freezer, or rather since they will be without power to operate. This means no fresh or frozen meats, whole dairy products, or anything else that might spoil quickly. The same goes for any food that needs to be cooked (as opposed to just heated for good taste) since you won't have an oven, stovetop or even a microwave to work with.



It is true you might have a generator, grill, or some other method for heating & cooking your food. One that is reliable and one that you are familiar with operating. Even so, these things all require additional infrastructure and supplies to fuel them. If you can manage it, great, you have more options. But it is still best to not bet the farm on them: non-perishable, ready-to-eat options are always going to be the best and most reliable choice for feeding your family.

**How Much Food Do You Need for a Power Outage?** As much as you can afford to get, store and manage! But in seriousness, you should not fall into the trap of thinking you need only a weekend's worth of food. If the power is out for days, weeks, or even longer you want to be able to maintain some sense of normalcy and routine, and the certainty of having wholesome food that is ready to eat on demand will be a comfort. Keep in mind that severe disasters, terror attacks, or even simple accidents could knock out power in some regions for many weeks or months on end. You might not need much if any, food for a short outage caused by a passing thunderstorm, but an EMP or major earthquake could leave entire areas without electricity for the foreseeable future. Plan accordingly!

### Power Outage Foods Requiring No Refrigeration and No Cooking:

**1. Canned Veggies:** There are dozens of kinds of canned vegetables out there, and they make a great accompaniment to any meal or can be eaten on their own. Again, a can opener is all you need to enjoy these, and they store for years.

They are a great source of nutrition, vitamins, and minerals. Look for low-sodium options if you are watching your salt intake. But overall, an excellent foodstuff to have on hand in even if they don't measure up to fresh versions.

**2. Canned Fruit:** Just like veggies, canned fruit comes in a wide variety and can be used as part of a complete meal or as a standalone snack. A great source of natural sugars, vitamins, and minerals. The biggest downside to canned fruit is the sugar content which might not be desirable if you are diabetic or pre-diabetic, but it will keep energy levels up. But for most people, in moderation, this is not an issue.

**3. Chicken:** A high protein, low carb meat that can last for a year or more without refrigeration if it is canned or pouched. Super adaptable to various meal options and takes seasoning wonderfully. Consider a low-sodium option since it can make you very thirsty!

**4. Tuna:** Canned or pouched tuna is a great accompaniment to chicken as a primary protein in your survival stash. As the main course in a meal, or as part of a salad, tuna is very high in protein and low in carbs and fat. Like chicken above, lasts at least a year stored in a room-temperature pantry out of direct sunlight

**5. Spam:** Admit that you knew it was going to appear here at some point. Love it or hate it, Spam is a beloved American icon that has been around for generations. Protein-packed and surprisingly clean ingredients make this a great option for impromptu sandwiches. Pop open a can (no can opener necessary!) and enjoy as-is. Stores for at least a year without refrigeration so long as it isn't opened.

**6. Instant Mashed Potatoes:** Carbs provide lots of energy, and one of the best carbs for long storage (if not taste) is found in the form of instant mashed potatoes. A little water and you have a filling side dish or, with the addition of some chicken or tuna, a meal all its own. These will last for years unopened in your cupboard. Just be sure to keep them away from all sources of moisture, and consider keeping them in an airtight container if you live in a humid environment or your house is damp.

**7. Peanut Butter:** A classic standby that needs no introduction. Very high in calories and fat, but also packed with protein. Totally shelf-stable for a very, very long time. If you avoid eating directly from the jar (and thereby contaminating it with bacteria) it can go right back in the pantry once you are done with it. Great for a quick snack or to add some protein to other foods. This is one item where you want the kind made with preservatives; avoid the all-natural type since they don't last as long when opened.

**8. Honey:** Another prepping staple, and with good reason. A natural sweetener that also has antibacterial properties, honey will keep indefinitely if stored properly. A great way to add some sweetness and calories to otherwise bland foods, or used it as a wholesome, energy-boosting supplement. Keep in mind that honey might crystallize over time, but it is still entirely edible and safe. It is possible to de-crystallize it if you want by soaking the container in warm water, but not necessary.

**9. Crackers:** Don't forget the humble cracker on your shopping list. Crackers come in an endless variety of flavors and styles, and all can work fine for extended power outages. Saltines, townhouse, or graham crackers, whichever you prefer is fine. Note that plainer, simpler crackers last the longest without going stale and can be used as dippers, crumbled toppings, or just eaten plain as a snack. Consider getting a brand that has individually wrapped sleeves to help keep them from going stale.

**10. Dry Cereal:** No need for milk with this one; dry cereal is great all on its own as a bulk foodstuff that is cheap and will keep you alive. Crammed with carbs and sugar for a quick energy kick, it can also help tide you over until your next meal and is a good option for pacifying kids. Choose wisely and get a type that will store well and not go stale too quickly, which again usually means plainer fare compared to super sugary abominations. Plain Cheerios are a great choice.

**11. Instant Oatmeal Mix:** Instant oatmeal pouches can be prepared and eaten cold with nothing more than water by letting them soak a little while, & are actually pretty good that way. Of course, you can also make them hot according to package directions if able, but that isn't necessary. These are very lightweight and take up very little space, so feel free to stock up. A good source of carbs and some fiber along with minerals, these are a good option for the money.

**12. Powdered Drink Mix:** All kinds of powdered drink mixes, from Tang to Kool-Aid, and even sports drinks are great to have on hand. They add calories in the form of sugars, and the variety can help when food boredom sets in.

**13. Powdered Milk:** A must for adding some bulk and extra calories to cereals or oatmeal. Not as good as fresh, whole milk, but a reliable alternative for our purposes. Just add water and stir.

**14. Nuts:** One of the best all-natural and long-lasting survival foods, nuts are very calorie and nutrient dense. They will last a long time if stored in a cool, dry place, making them ideal for prepping. Packed with protein, healthy fats, vitamins, and minerals, they make a great snack or can be added to meals.

**15. Instant Coffee / Tea:** Don't underestimate the value of getting a caffeine kick when you need it. For keeping tempers under control or just a boost of energy, either can be made pretty good cold with water alone.

**16. Canned Beans:** A classic staple food, packed with protein and minerals, and highly filling. There are many kinds of beans with various add-ins and seasonings to suit any taste and many ways to use them with other foods. Canned beans last for a very long time and are pretty good even when cold. An acquired taste, perhaps, but totally edible! And, compared to dry beans which require lengthy and laborious soaking and then boiling.

**Winter Storm Prep vs. Summer Storm Prep:** When it comes to grocery buying for power outage prep, there is not much difference between what you should buy for a winter storm vs. a summer storm. In both cases, you want non-perishable food items that do not require cooking or refrigeration and that will last a long time without going bad. The main difference is in the type of weather you are likely to experience during each. For example, in winter you might have to contend with the very real possibility [your home could reach freezing temps](#) if you lose power and utilities. That might imperil your food supply by causing cans or pouches to freeze and burst. Similarly, during warmer seasons the interior of your home might be subjected to high temps that could cause foods to spoil a little quicker. This is less of an issue with items on our list, but it is something to keep in mind for long-term scenarios.