FOOD CHECKLIST

From the Be Ready 3 days to two weeks: food you'd actually eat, that needs no fridge and no cooking.

▶ Read the full guide: The 3-Day Emergency Pantry →

■ Buy what you eat, eat what you buy ■ Plan to eat it cold ■ A tin opener that doesn't plug in

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"My emergency food is just our normal food, with a bit more of it. Oldest at the front, newest at the back, and a tin opener that doesn't need plugging in. Janet once asked why we had four tins of rice pudding. On day two of the last power cut, she stopped asking."

— Calm Clarissa, UK Prepper Hub

THE BE READY 3 DAYS: NO COOKING

The government's Be Ready list asks for 3 days of food that doesn't need a fridge or cooking, and that you'd normally eat. Roughly, for each adult:

- [ ] **3 or 4 tins of protein**
  Tuna, salmon, mackerel, chicken, ham, or beans and chickpeas. Tuna in brine or spring water: oil is greasy eaten cold.
- [ ] **3 or 4 tins of soup or ready meals**
  Soup, ravioli, chilli, curry, all-day breakfast. Tinned food is already cooked, so it's safe straight from the tin.
- [ ] **2 or 3 tins of vegetables**
  Sweetcorn, peas, carrots, new potatoes.
- [ ] **Crackers, crispbreads, oatcakes or wraps**
  Bread goes mouldy in days. These don't.
- [ ] **A spread**
  Peanut butter, jam, honey or Marmite. No honey for babies under one.
- [ ] **Manual tin opener** See our pick →
  Two is better: one in the kitchen drawer and one with the emergency food.

Printed copy? Missing pages? Scan for the full guide and checklist.

THE 3 DAYS: MILK, SNACKS AND TREATS

- [ ] **UHT milk and long-life juice**
  UHT keeps for months unopened, but needs a fridge once it's open, so small cartons are best.
- [ ] **Cereal and cereal bars**
  Cereal works dry as a snack, or with UHT milk.
- [ ] **Dried fruit and nuts**
  On the Be Ready list for a reason: lots of energy, and they keep for months.
- [ ] **Tinned fruit, rice pudding and custard**
  Fruit in juice rather than syrup if anyone's diabetic.
- [ ] **Treats**
  Chocolate and biscuits. Day two of a cold power cut is no time to run out.
- [ ] **Squash or cordial**
  Makes stored water much nicer to drink.

Food is only half of it. You need 3 litres of drinking water each, every day. **Get my Water Checklist →**

BUILDING TO TWO WEEKS

> *Add a few extra tins of what you already eat to each weekly shop. In a month or two, you'll have a fortnight without ever spending much at once.*

- [ ] **More of the 3-day food**
  Same rule: only what your household already eats.
- [ ] **Variety: 10 to 14 different meals**
  The main complaint after a week isn't hunger, it's eating the same four meals.
- [ ] **Salt, pepper, sauce sachets and dried herbs**
  They take up almost no room and stop it all tasting the same.
- [ ] **Tea bags, instant coffee and hot chocolate**
  For when you can boil water.
- [ ] **Comfort food**
  Something each person really looks forward to, especially children and anyone who's struggling.
- [ ] **Storage boxes with lids** Read our review →
  For dry goods kept under the bed, in a wardrobe or in a dry garage, safe from damp and mice.

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IF YOU CAN COOK: DRY GOODS

Only worth storing once you have a safe way to cook them, and enough water to cook with.

- [ ] **Pasta and white rice**
- [ ] **Porridge oats**
  Can also be eaten soaked overnight in cold milk.
- [ ] **Couscous and instant mash**
  Just add boiling water.
- [ ] **Red lentils**
  Cook quickly, with no soaking.
- [ ] **Stock cubes, gravy granules, cooking oil and sugar**
- [ ] **Powdered milk**
  Needs safe water to make up.
- [ ] **Camping gas stove and spare cartridges** Read our review →
  Use it on top of your hob with a window open, never in a closed room, and have a carbon monoxide alarm in the house.
- [ ] **Portable carbon monoxide alarm** Read our review →
  Runs on AA batteries. Stand it in the room where the stove is in use.
- [ ] **Matches and a lighter**

EASIER: RATION PACKS AND SELF-HEATING MEALS

Useful, not essential. Handy for the grab bag, the car, or someone who can't or won't cook. Buy one, try it, then decide.

- [ ] **24 hour ration packs** Read our review →
  UK-made, army-style: a full day's food in one pack, ready to eat. Check the best-before date on the pack.
- [ ] **Self-heating meals** Read our review →
  A hot meal with no stove at all. Good in the car and the grab bag.

BABIES, SPECIAL DIETS AND PETS

Store what they already eat. Don't assume anyone will get used to emergency food.

- [ ] **Ready-made baby formula**
  Easier and safer than powder when the power's off, because powder has to be made with water at 70°C or hotter. Check the dates.
- [ ] **Baby food pouches and jars they already eat**
  Shorter dates than adult food, so check them more often.
- [ ] **Gluten-free**
  Rice cakes instead of crackers. Most tinned fish and meat is naturally gluten-free; check soups and ready meals.
- [ ] **Vegetarian and vegan**
  Beans, chickpeas and lentil soup for protein. Check ready meals and puddings for milk.
- [ ] **Diabetic**
  Fruit in juice, plenty of protein, and some fast-acting sugar for hypos.
- [ ] **Pet food, and their water**
  At least 3 days, two weeks if you can. Dry food keeps longer than wet.

Printed copy? Missing pages? Scan for the full guide and checklist.

WHEN THE POWER GOES: EAT IN THIS ORDER

- [ ] Keep the fridge and freezer doors shut
- [ ] Fridge: about 4 hours cold if it stays closed
- [ ] Freezer: about 48 hours if full, 24 if half full
- [ ] Eat from the fridge first: milk, cheese, cooked meats, leftovers
- [ ] Then the freezer: thawed food cooked and eaten within 24 hours, never refrozen raw
- [ ] Then the cupboard
- [ ] If in doubt, throw it out

KEEP IT FRESH

- [ ] New shopping to the back, oldest to the front
- [ ] Cook from the front in normal meals, and replace it on the next shop
- [ ] When the clocks change: check the dates, and use anything close this week
- [ ] Kept cool, dry and dark: not the loft, not by the boiler
- [ ] Bin any tin that's bulging, leaking, badly dented or rusty
- [ ] Tin openers still in the drawer and with the food



Prepared, Not Panicked

A checklist tells you what. The book tells you why, how, and in what order, which is where most people come unstuck. 261 full-colour pages for £4.99, as a PDF. I approve, and I don't approve of much.

See the book →

Missing Something?

Using a printed copy? Point your phone camera at the code for anything you still need and it'll open our review or pick on ukprepperhub.co.uk.

Our emergency kit list

Storage boxes with lids

Camping gas stove and spare cartridges

Portable carbon monoxide alarm

24 hour ration packs

Self-heating meals

My Other Checklists

Each of these goes further on one subject. Scan to download, all free.

Water Checklist
From 3 days to a two-week supply

Power Cut Checklist
Light, power, warmth and food when the lights go out

Household Emergency Plan
Free and fillable: your people, numbers and plan

All of Clarissa's checklists
ukprepperhub.co.uk/checklists

Printed copy? Missing pages? Scan for the full guide and checklist.