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Bug out Bag
A mini survival kit, a bug out bag contains everything you need to survive for 72 hours on the road.

Packed and ready to go, the ultimate goal of bugging out is to leave a dangerous area as fast and as stealthily as possible. Packed with the right stuff your complete bug out bag will make any time on the road a breeze, and if you grab the right items - it can last you a lot longer than just three days!

Find a sturdy and strong backpack that has lots of pockets. You don't want to advertise to the world you have a survival kit on your back, but you also need it to be efficient to use, and comfortable if you are in for a long hike. Check out your options in the local army supply store, or also in the hiking sections of department stores. Think strong and durable, and don't pick one that's fluorescent orange, or in typical army camouflage print.

There are four key areas you need to consider as you start building your bug out bag.

- Shelter
- Fire
- Food
- Water

Shelter
Without it you are going to be exposed to the elements, and risk hypothermia, heatstroke or simply exposure - and with all the risk of death. A small hiking tent will do you well here, compact and easy to carry, it offers much more protection than a simple tarp strung between two trees. With a bedroll and a hiking sleeping bag, you will be bugging out in luxury - comfortable in any weather as the world descends into disaster.
Fire
After shelter, fire is the most important element. This gets broken down into three main parts.

- Getting a flame
- Starting a fire
- Keeping the fire going.

You need all three of these to be covered to successfully master fire.

You need at least three different methods for getting a flame. Waterproof matches are good, but they run out. Gas station cigarette lighters will last a lot longer, but eventually these too are a finite resource. A flint steel and striker is your best long term option, lasting a very long time and generating sparks even in wet weather. Do yourself a favor and buy two.

Starting a fire in dry conditions is easy. In the rain, you are going to have a bit more trouble. WetFire tinder will catch a flame and burn in any conditions, and you can also coat cotton balls in Vaseline to use as a DIY fire starter. The downside is that both of these are going to run out eventually, so always try to make use of any dry materials in your environment before using your fire-starter. Underneath logs you can find dry grasses and bark, birch bark contains a sap which is very flammable and is a great natural fire starter.

To keep a fire going you need big logs. An axe might be a good addition to your bug out bag, or purchase a survival hand saw if weight is an issue. Essentially it's just a piece of chainsaw blade with handles so you can operate it manually. This saw lets you tackle any size log and easily saw through it. With one of these in your kit you will never go short of firewood.
Food
To keep up your energy while you evacuate you need to have calories. Despite the appeal of dehydrated foods and MREs, they take up too much space and are quite heavy for the benefit they give. Pack instead high calorie protein and energy bars, simple to eat without any preparation - you will get to your big out location faster if you aren’t stopping to cook.

Over the long term you will need ways to replenish your food supply. Snare wire is a good addition to your pack, which you can set before you go to bed and maybe catch fresh meat while you’re resting. A small hand-reel or fishing line takes up little space, and is another easy way to catch fresh fish and have a change from energy bars if you need longer than 72 hours to evacuate.

You should also learn any native edibles in your area, or buy a small field guide for identifying which plants and fruits are safe to eat. The best survivalists are opportunistic, eating whenever an opportunity presents itself. With the right guide and a good attitude, you won’t go hungry during an emergency.

Water
With an average person going through a gallon of water a day, this adds up to quite a lot of weight in your bug out bag. You should have at least one gallon of water in a durable and shock proof container, with methods for collecting more. Plastic sheeting over tree branches collects condensation which can be drunk, as well as knowing any sources of water in your local area.

Are there streams or a river that you can use to have an additional supply? What about if it rains, can you collect the water that falls?

You also need a filtration system and a means of boiling any water you collect. A steel canteen is ideal, once it has been at a rolling boil for 15 minutes simply let it cool down and you are good to drink the water. Add in a handful of pine needles for a great cup of tea!
Everything else
After covering these four key areas, you now have the option of adding in a variety of different pieces of gear, that will make your bug out experience one to enjoy - not a mindless flee of panic.

Clothing is important, you must have seasonal appropriate clothing for at least three days. This includes changes of underwear, at least 3 pairs of socks and durable and rugged outer gear that will keep you dry and warm in any condition. Pack wet-weather gear as well, nothing is quite as miserable as being wet and cold while you are stuck out in the wilderness in the rain. Have a decent pair of hiking boots that are sturdy and waterproof, and that have been adequately "broken-in" (you don't want blisters as you are evacuating!)

During the night it can get quite nerve wracking if you can't see what's going on, so have at least two high powered LED torches that can light up whatever you need to see. A sturdy flashlight can also act as a makeshift club, and don't forget additional batteries!

A sealed waterproof bag for your important documents. All of your identification like passports, drivers license and social security cards should be together in here, as well as any copies of legal documents that you may need at a later date to prove home or car ownership. Back everything up on an encrypted USB and store this with you in a waterproof case. A good supply of cash to pay for any incidental expenses on the road is handy, as well as a map of the area between you and your bug out location. You can't rely on your phones GPS once the battery dies, make sure you also have a compass. A hand cranked portable radio goes in line with this, and can keep you sane with either music or the latest news and information following a disaster. A solar charger for your phone is handy if the grid goes down, as well as the adapters to connect it to a car or the wall socket should an opportunity present itself.

If you regularly take any prescription medicine pack plenty in your bug out bag. Medicine may be very difficult to find in the aftermath of a crisis so we recommend having at minimum a month's worth - three months worth would be ideal, and at least a year's worth stored in your bug out location.

A good multi-purpose tool has a wide variety of uses and is great in your bug out kit. Put together a small first aid kit so you can perform and simple first aid as needed on the
road, and have soap and hygiene products to ensure you can keep your hands clean. You don't want to get sick in a crisis.

Last but not least, a recent photo of you and your family members. You want all of their faces to be clearly recognizable for easy identification, but it's also a great keepsake when everything else has turned to chaos.

**Self defense**
Unfortunately past crises have seen significant increases in violent crimes as survivors get more and more desperate. You need to ensure you know what to do in a situation where your life is in danger, and have an adequate way to protect yourself. This could be pepper spray, a taser or a firearm, it’s a personal choice I leave up to you. Just ensure you have any permits necessary for your weapons, and you are trained and comfortable in using them.

**The perfect 30 day food plan**
In a crisis you need food and water to survive. It’s absolutely essential. Plan to have a minimum of 30 days food on hand, and when a disaster hits you can worry about more important things - like getting home to your family safely, or simply staying put and avoiding any confrontations in the high-stress shopping malls as people panic because they have no food.

**Water**
Plan to have a minimum of a gallon of water a day, per person. 5 gallons is better, it means you now have enough to wash and bathe. For a typical family of four you will need **600 gallons for 30 days**. A scary fact is that, right now - the average person currently uses between 80-100 gallons of water a day. You’re going to need to rethink your water usage in a disaster to ensure you don’t run out. The easiest way to keep track is to fill a 5 gallon water tank per person per day. Drink what you need during the day, and then use any that’s left for a quick clean and shower in the evening. Don’t ever use more than this, and try to use less - it means your 30 day supply will last even longer.
Food
As follows are a simple set of common items you can buy from any grocery store, in preparation for a disaster.

This will feed an average family of four for thirty days, but feel free to adjust for your own requirements, after all - you're the one who knows your own family the best.

When you head out to buy all this, go to a larger chain store like Costco. Because most products here come in large containers, nobody is going to look at you twice when you start piling up your trolley. It might be a different story at your local corner store when you empty out half of their products!

Rice is your first item. Find a large 50lb bag of rice. Brown rice is healthier for you but white rice keeps longer, so choose whichever you prefer. This bag will contain about 500 servings, and it's a great simple addition to bulk up your emergency dinners, and help you feel full because it's a carbohydrate. Kept cool and dry, rice can last for years.

Dry beans is your next buy. Grab a large bag, it should contain 120+ servings. If there's a smaller bag you can buy, purchase this also and do some practice cooking with beans now so you can get your recipe's mastered (before you realize you have no idea how to cook with beans in a crisis).

Wheat flour is great, buy a 5 pound bag and a smaller bag to practice your cooking again. Wheat flour can be used to make hundreds of different types of food, from savory pasta to biscuits and desserts. It can even thicken soups!

Canned goods are great because they last a long time, and are easy to store. Get a range of fruits and vegetables so there is something for everyone in your family to eat. Canned meat has many options but tuna and chicken are much tastier than spam. Aim to have a can of meat per person, per day. Hint: tuna mixes in very well with the rice. Purchase 40-50 cans of vegetables, and the same again for canned fruits.

For some variety add pasta as another carbohydrate source, because it lasts a very long time in storage. 5-10 jars of pasta sauce will be the perfect emergency meals, just make sure you check expiry dates before you buy, they should be good for a couple of years at least. Pasta is easy to make and will bring some much needed taste to your emergency dinners.

Oatmeal is an old fashioned alternative but it makes for a great breakfast - especially if you have honey to mix in. A typical container has 30 servings, so for a family of four you will need four of
these bags at a minimum to keep you happy for your daily dose of fiber at breakfast. Buy a massive
tub of honey because it never goes bad if it’s kept dry and cool. It adds much needed flavor to your
breakfast and can also be used as an alternative for sugar. Salt is another item that never goes bad,
and is great at enhancing the flavors in your emergency cooking adventures. A big bag of salt will
easily last your family a month. For a snack, nothing beats peanut butter, another super food
because of a high fat and protein content, and it also stores a very long time.

Have enough multivitamins for your entire family. Living of canned vegetables and fruit, rice and beans will not give you all the nutrients you need to stay healthy in a disaster. The pills will augment the food, and keep your body in good shape until the crisis is over. If you have kids, get them a multivitamin designed for them that is easy to swallow.

Lastly, get some comfort food. It will help normalize the situation, and keep your family happy. Candy, Jell-o, any treats your kids are especially fond of should be stored in your 30 day emergency supply. If a disaster strikes it will be extremely stressful, and comfort food is the best way to bring some sense of normalcy back.

At Costco, this month worth of supplies comes to around $600. It's not cheap stocking up on emergency food, but you'll be glad you filled your pantry now - before the shopping malls are emptied in the days (or even hours) following a disaster.

**How store and ration food and water**

The best place for your food and water storage is somewhere in your house that is cool and dry, and out of the reach of direct sunlight. For this reason, a basement or a cellar is usually the best place in your house to use as your main supply room.

Don’t ever store fuel products in the same room as your food and water supplies. The fumes from the fuel can contaminate your food and water (yes, even through the containers), because the hydrocarbon molecules easily pass through solid plastic. Over the long term this will contaminate every food or water item you have, and make you very sick if you ingest it.

**Store your fuel in the garage, and your food in the basement. Easy.**
**Water**

Water needs to be stored in food grade plastic containers. If you keep it out of direct sunlight water will have an almost indefinite shelf life. It is rather heavy (at 8.5lbs per gallon), so your best way to store is in large 50 gallon water barrels. Have smaller 5 and 1 gallon bottles you can fill as required.

**Food**

When storing bulk food, you need to prepare it first. Get yourself a set of 5-6 gallon buckets, all the same size because it adds to the conformity and makes it easier to stack and store. Always use food grade buckets only, and give them a thorough cleaning before you put them to use.

Packing your long term bulk food items is simple.

1. Put a Mylar bag inside the bucket
2. Fill the Mylar bag with the wheat/rice/beans you plan to store
3. Place an oxygen absorber inside with the food product
4. Push as much excess air out of the Mylar bag as possible
5. Seal the Mylar bag with either a proper heat sealer, or an iron can also work.
6. Put the lid of the bucket on
7. Label the bucket with contents, pack date and expiry (from the initial packaging)
8. Store it away!

For your canned produce, it can be much more difficult to store as the cans are smaller. When they are stacked on top of each other it’s quite hard to really know what’s in there at the back of the cupboard, or even if they have expired or not. You need to implement the first-in, first-out system, using the oldest cans first, and replacing these with the newer cans you buy as necessary. Make an inventory list that shows you exactly when everything is expiring, so you never waste money on one of your stores turning bad.

If there is enough space in the room install shelving. Aim for the free standing shelves, like you see at the supermarket as opposed to wall shelving. It’s easier to move around should you need to at a later date, and can be set off the walls so you can easily get to older items at the back.
Storage if you don't have a basement

Unfortunately many of us don't have all the space in the world for storing out food and water supplies. If you have a big house, you are all set. But what about if you live in an apartment or a condo, or a one-bedroom granny flat? Your normal living conditions are cramped enough, where can you fit all of your supplies?

Luckily with a bit of creativity you can find many areas for emergency storage.

Underneath any stairs in your home you may find wasted space. Building a set of shelves underneath will give you room to stock and store food supplies, or you could simply rest a board on top of your large buckets of bulk food to hold smaller cans and jars.

In your laundry there will be a space above your washing machine and dryer. It's not ideal because of the humidity, but a cupboard installed above them will give you more space for cleaning products, equipment and gear that isn't sensitive to moisture.

In your closet you can normally find space to stack a row of cans, because many closets are too wide already and leave lots of dead space in the back. A thin set of shelves can maximize this space while leaving you plenty of space for your clothes. Cover the shelf up with a sheet of plywood and you have a semi-secret stash that may not be found if your house is raided. In the same closet there will also be wasted space in the shelf above where you store your clothes. Typically too high to use for everyday items, it is a great place to fill with your food supply.

Shoe organizers that are designed to hang over the backs of doors do very well in holding bottled water or cans of food, and can be easily found in many home department stores. In a similar fashion bring your sofa 3 inches forward (creating a gap between the sofa and the wall) and use this space to store food and water. Throw a rug over the back of your sofa and no-one will ever even notice.

Do a spring clean and clear out any random items that are wasting space in your kitchen cupboards. More than likely there are dishes, cups and saucers you never use, taking up valuable space that could be for a better purpose. Box it up and sell it off at a garage sale to raise funds for your supplies, or simply go down and donate it to goodwill. This should open up a large amount of space for you to use.

On top of your refrigerator is another good storage spot, or buy some furniture that allows you to hide items in plain sight. Coffee tables with storage drawers are a great way to keep
your home organized, and keep visitors none the wiser. Likewise, existing shelves can also be turned into storage. Simply bring the books already on them forward to the edge of the shelf, and if they are deep enough you should be able to store a row of cans behind the books.

Underneath your furniture is a great place to store large quantities of items. Purchase a bed that sits on a frame so you have space underneath, and make use of it to hide away canned goods, small drums of water, and anything else that can fit. There is usually also wasted space underneath your sofa. Despite being shallow, it's possible to keep many items tucked away under here.

Empty suitcases should be stuffed full of food and packaged goods, chances are you only use your suitcase once or twice a year anyway. Pack any items in large bags before organizing in your suitcase, so when you do need it all you have to do is remove the one large bag (instead of having to deal with a mountain of ramen on your floor). The same option also works for your bathtub. Most people only ever use the shower and the tub is wasted space. Put any large buckets of bulk food store you have left over in your bathtub, (properly sealed bulk items won't be affected by humidity). Buy a nice shower curtain and draw it closed. No-one will ever notice what's in the tub, and if you do feel the need for a bath all you have to do is shift the buckets.

If you have a garage install a shelf that runs around the upper perimeter of the walls. It won't take away any of the space you need for parking your car, but provides a ton of area to store appliances you rarely use, off season clothes, as well as any other supplies that don't fit anywhere else.

### Rationing

Critical in an emergency is your ability to ration your food and water supplies. Unfortunately panic and stress caused by a disaster causes many people to lose their wits - tearing through their supplies much faster than necessary. This is fine if you can replenish your stores, but what happens if you can't? Rationing your food will enable your supply to last that much longer, and may just save your life.

First you need to set up a leader. Choose the most logical person to take charge of the entire food supply, so they can allocate food accordingly. No one should ever eat when they are “feeling hungry”. The stress of the situation will make many people over-eat (i.e. comfort eating) and your supplies will disappear faster than you thought imaginable.
Pool all of your food in a central location and make an inventory. If you have a running inventory already from your preparations this is even better. This step is to determine how much of every item you have, and how long you are planning for it to last. The result will tell you specific quantities of every item, i.e. 2 cups of rice a day from a bag containing 100 cups will last 50 days.

Think about any items that may spoil, and if so consume these first. You don't have food to waste. In a disaster this could be dairy products or meat that is now getting warmer without the power to run your refrigerator.

Plan your ration sizes and stick to them. In a disaster it pays to think about the worst case scenario, just in case things don't get better. The human body functions better on a low intake of calories than it does on none, and set up eating times so that everyone gets used to the habit and routine of the meals. This helps psychologically, and is great at keeping people calm. Stick to your rations.

Finally, try to find any means you can of increasing your food supply. Rationing will keep you alive, but it's better to have plenty of food. If you can hunt or fish use this as fresh sources of protein, and there are many edible plants in the environment that you can use to beef up your rations. The more you can eat, the better your chance for survival.

**Weapons you need to defend your family from invaders**

In a defensive scenario there are a range of different weapons you can use to keep your family safe.

The first is your own brain. Figure out as much information you can about the situation. Sit silently and try to determine how many intruders are in your home, and if possible get your family to a safe room. In a disaster most people are only looking for supplies, and will happily raid your larder and leave you and your family in peace. Use your brain and avoid a confrontation that could lead to injury or death. In most situations this will suffice, but if you need to take a more aggressive approach, read on.
Firearms are the best offensive weapon. Many states require a license, and all it takes is a little time and some paperwork to get yourself armed and ready. The biggest hurdle is actually being ready to shoot. If it comes down to it, are you ready to pull the trigger to keep your family safe? Make sure you have adequate training in the use of all firearms in your home. Brandishing a gun is one thing, but using it effectively is what makes it a great defensive weapon.

You really have three options for a firearm. Shotguns are great for close combat, packing a very high density firing power in a short range. It's almost impossible to miss. Pistols are easily concealed in a bedside drawer, but have less power and need to be aimed more accurately. A rifle significantly increases your range, but is most effective if the invaders are more than 100 yards away. Choose the firearms that you prefer, and are comfortable using. Remember, it's a hard decision to pull the trigger. If you brandish a gun in front of someone who intends you harm, be sure you are prepared to use it. Never point a gun at someone unless you intend to use it.

For a less lethal option a taser is an effective defensive tool. Capable of incapacitating an intruder with a range of 10-15 feet, this is a good close combat weapon that allows you to subdue an unfriendly person without killing them. Just be sure you have a plan when the shocks stop, because they are going to be very unhappy with you when they come to. In a similar note pepper spray can take an attacker down without killing them, giving you time to either escape or restrain them so they cannot harm you and your family.

A flashlight seems an unlikely weapon, but if you have one bright enough it can momentarily blind and disorientate an intruder. Some come with flashing (strobe) effects for this exact purpose. A bright flash in their eyes may give you a couple of seconds to step to the side and avoid a gunshot, or to get close (not recommended) and tackle them to the ground. If it's heavy enough use it like a club and smash it as hard as you can into their head before they know what has happened.

Finally, the best offense is a good defense. Reinforced doors and windows make it very difficult for an intruder to gain entry, and floodlights and an alarm system will alert everyone in the neighborhood what's going on. For criminals looking to keep a low profile they will scatter like cockroaches. In this same line of thinking a guard dog is a fantastic deterrent. With better hearing than humans they will warn you should anything amiss start to happen - and a giant growling barking dog is a great way to convince an intruder the house down the street is an easier target.
The less optimal weapons
A knife is quite lethal, but its downside is that it needs to be used in close quarters. If you are facing an invader with superior fighting skills to yourself, you may have just handed them a weapon once you're overpowered and they take it from you. Similarly, I rate golf clubs, baseball bats and machete's all in this category. They need you to be too close to be effective, and you risk simply escalating a situation, instead of ending it. The same goes for nunchucks, whilst Bruce Lee made them look cool, you're not going to have had the training for them to be effective at all.

Crossbows are often talked about as a great survival weapon, because of the never-ending supply of ammo - so long as you can retrieve the bolts. The downside is that they take AGES to load. If you miss your shot, you are now screwed and have a very angry invader coming at you while you don't have a loaded weapon. Not ideal.

Finally, anything explosive. Grenades or rocket launchers are going to do more damage to your home than they are worth, so don't waste your money. Whilst it may look cool in the movies when heroes blow up the bad guys car, in real life it simply creates a mess.

Top 10 items you MUST-HAVE to keep your family safe for 30 days
Following a disaster people will become bold, irrational and violent. Based purely on their need to keep their own family safe, you now become a target, especially if you have supplies they want or need.

Being prepared is what will keep your family safe, get the following ten things in order and you will be well on your way to keeping your family out of harm's way.

1. Weapons
Having firearms in your home is a great form of defense. It makes you less of a target if you can defend yourself, especially if you have had proper firearm and shooting training.

2. Home defenses
Your home should be easy to secure. Windows and need to be able to lock, and are solid enough to withstand attacks. The weakest houses on your block will fall. Install strong fences and gates, barred windows and create limited access points into your home. The more difficult for an intruder to get in, the better you can keep your family safe. Your home should also look like its occupied at all times,
with timers on certain lights to make it seem that your house is always full of activity. You want to deter any invaders to go look for an easier target.

3. **Your fitness and combat training**

If walking up a flight of stairs leaves you winded, you're going to need to improve your fitness before a disaster strikes. You can't keep your family safe if you are not capable of going out in search of food, warding off invaders or perhaps even fighting hand to hand. Get fit, and learn how to defend yourself, before it's too late.

4. **Locked doors that don't open for strangers**

In line with your home defenses, the best method of preventing an intruder is to make it a practice to always lock doors and windows. If a stranger comes to the door, don't let them in unless you are sure it is safe, or you have backup should they be unfriendly. Never keep spare keys in obvious places, this totally goes against the idea of securing your home.

5. **A disaster plan**

The best way to keep your family safe is to be organized. Have a plan together so that everyone knows their roles, and what to do in the event of an emergency. It will need to detail common rally points should you get separated, as well as what to do in certain situations. Planning will help you to identify when something bad begins to occur. Perhaps something you have talked about starts to really happen and you recognize the signs.

If nothing else this gives you a better awareness in your daily life. Always think through your escape plans wherever you are. If you're in a restaurant - is there a back door? Paying attention to your surroundings could save your life, or save your family from stumbling into a bad situation.

6. **Adequate supplies**

Your best bet for surviving a disaster is to hunker down. You don't want to be running missions to find more food and water, medical supplies, or spare batteries for the radio. Of course, sometimes you can't help it, but a good plan will mean that many items are already prepared.

Staying together is fundamental to survival, and if you have everything you need at home there's no need to risk your safety and venture out into the streets.
7. **OPSEC**

You should only ever bring your closest friends and family into your circle of influence. The more people know about your preparations, the bigger target that gets painted on your back. As soon as water is running low your neighbors will remember that giant underground water storage you built last year, or the thousands of tins of SPAM sitting in your spare room. Don't give out any information that could be used against you, you want to give the appearance you are a typical family. The same goes for social networks, don't advertise anything about your preparations, you never know who is reading it.

8. **Practice**

No plan will be effectively executed until it has been practiced. This lets you identify any faults in the plan, as well as drumming into everyone what needs to be done, and their responsibilities. This item is critical because if you don't know what to do - how can you do it?

9. **Guard dog**

Not necessarily an "item," a guard dog is a fantastic way to secure your family. A natural alarm system, they also deter invaders because they can be quite scary, and provide joy and happiness in even the most dire situations.

10. **A community**

The last and the most important. Acting as a "lone wolf" is irrational, and leaves you open to destruction from larger gangs. Get to know your neighbors because being part of a community gives you more hands, more guards for patrolling and more people to share a workload. You don't have to leave your family alone while you venture into the city, they are safe with close friends and family and protected while you are gone. This is the ultimate key to survival.

Follow the steps in this guide and you will be more prepared than 99% of people in the event of a disaster. Many of the items are simple logic, but others require time and planning. Start your journey today and look after your family if a disaster strikes.