

FREE GUIDE • FOOD

Emergency Food Buyer's Checklist

Read the label, do the math for your family, and compare buckets fairly before you buy.

Hey, I'm Randall. I'm a former Marine Combat Engineer, and my wife, Robbie, is a registered nurse. Emergency food is sold by servings, and servings are the least useful number on the label. Take this sheet shopping. Pencil is fine.

Affiliate Disclosure

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Step 1: Our Family's Daily Calories

Use the free 30-Day Food Storage Calculator on our site. Enter the adults and children in your house; it uses 2,000 calories a day per adult (the FDA's general guide) and a 1,400-calorie planning figure per child. Your family's real needs may be higher or lower. Write the number here.

People In Our House:

Our Family's Daily Calories (from The Calculator):

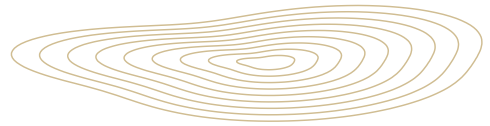
Step 2: Read the Label the Right Way

- ☐ Total servings in the bucket
- ☐ Calories per serving or pouch
- ☐ Protein per serving
- ☐ Prep: just add hot water, or cook on a stove
- ☐ Water it takes to prepare
- ☐ Allergens and special-diet labels
- ☐ Shelf-life claim and the storage it depends on

Step 3: The Math for Our Family

- **Calories in the bucket** = the total calories on the label or maker's page (or, for each food, calories per serving x servings, added up).
- **Days it feeds our family** = calories in the bucket / our family's daily calories.
- **Cost per 1,000 calories** = the price you are quoted / (calories in the bucket / 1,000). Use it to compare two buckets fairly.





STEP 4

Side-by-Side Scorecard

Fill one row per bucket or kit. The lowest cost per 1,000 calories is not automatically the winner: check prep, water, allergens and taste too.

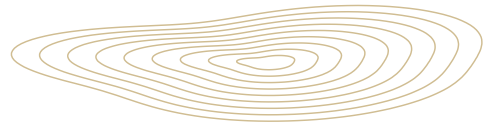
Bucket Or Kit:	Calories In Bucket:	Days For Our Family:	Water To Prepare:	Hot Water Or Stove?:	Cost Per 1,000 Cal:

Bucket Or Kit:	Allergens OK? (Y/N):	Tasted A Pouch? (Y/N):	Where We Will Store It:

Honest Downsides to Look For

- **Small servings:** two buckets with the same serving count can be far apart in calories.
- **Low calories per day:** some one-month kits run below what most adults need. Plan snacks and staples alongside.
- **Water:** just-add-water meals take water. Add it to your water total.
- **Cooking:** some kits need a pot on a stove. Camp stoves and charcoal grills are for outdoor use only.
- **Shelf life is a claim:** it depends on storage. Keep buckets cool, dry and off the floor; follow the maker's label.
- **Taste:** food nobody will eat is not food storage. Buy one pouch first.





NEXT STEPS

Our Picks, Through the Same Checklist

- **A first-72-hours layer:** Mountain House Essential Assortment Bucket. 12 pouches, 22 servings, gluten-free, about 5,420 calories by the maker's labels (under 3 days for one adult at 2,000 a day). About 17 cups of water to prepare every meal in it.
- **A month of backup, one person:** ReadyWise 1 Month Emergency Food Supply (2 buckets). 326 servings in 41 pouches, about 62,540 calories by the maker's count. Most pouches just add water; the pancake mix needs cooking.
- **A month of backup, stove needed:** Augason Farms 30-Day Emergency Food Supply Kit. About 1,290 calories a day, below most adults' needs; plan snacks.

Each pick is explained, with its honest downsides, on the website version of this checklist. This PDF has no store links and no prices.

Read more on our site • The picks, with the tradeoffs:

[Emergency Food Buyer's Checklist: Our Picks](#)

Read more on our site • Your family's calorie target:

[30-Day Food Storage Calculator](#)

Read more on our site • The first three days:

[72-Hour Emergency Food Supply for a Family](#)

Sources

Daily calorie targets: our 30-Day Food Storage Calculator (adults: the FDA's 2,000-calorie general guide; children: a 1,400-calorie planning figure, inside the 1,000-2,200 range Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025, Table A2-2, gives for ages 2 to 11).

Product details: each maker's own pages, as cited in our 72-Hour Emergency Food Supply guide.

