Three-Month PANTRY PLAN

A three-month supply sounds huge until you break it down. Here's the secret: most families eat the same 14 or so meals over and over. Store what you already cook, and three months is just those meals, repeated about seven times.

1 COUNT YOUR MOUTHS

Fill in how many people eat each meal. Three months is about 90 days.

BREAKFASTS

_____ people × 90 = _____

LUNCHES

_____ people × 90 = _____

DINNERS

_____ people × 90 = _____

2 PICK YOUR 14 CORE MEALS

Make each one about 6 or 7 times in 3 months (14 × 6.5 ≈ 90 dinners). Stuck? Borrow from these:

Chili & cornbread · Spaghetti & meat sauce · Chicken & rice casserole · Taco or burrito bowls · Potato soup · Beef stew · Chicken noodle soup · Sloppy joes · Red beans & rice · Tuna noodle casserole · Shepherd's pie · Breakfast for dinner · Mac & cheese with ham · Pancakes & sausage

#	Core meal	Main shelf-stable ingredients	Times in 3 months
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			

MAMA TIP Only store what your family already eats. A bucket of wheat nobody knows how to cook isn't a plan. A shelf of your own spaghetti night is.

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Three-Month PANTRY PLAN

3 MULTIPLY YOUR INGREDIENTS

For each ingredient, write how much one meal uses, multiply by how many times you'll make it, then subtract what you have.

Ingredient	Used in meal #	Amount per meal	× Times	= Total needed	Have now	Need to buy
Rice (example)	3, 9	*2 cups*	× 13	*26 cups (about 11 lb)*	*5 lb*	*6 lb*

BREAKFAST & LUNCH Keep these simple and repeat them more often: oatmeal, pancakes, powdered eggs, PB&J, soup and crackers. Count them the same way.

DON'T FORGET Water for cooking (rice, pasta, freeze-dried meals), salt, spices, oil and the condiments that make food taste like home.

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Three-Month PANTRY PLAN

4 MAKE A SHOPPING PLAN

Spread the buying over three months so it doesn't wreck the grocery budget. Buy a little extra of your core-meal ingredients every trip.

MONTH 1

Dates: _____

Budget: _____

TO BUY

MONTH 2

Dates: _____

Budget: _____

TO BUY

MONTH 3

Dates: _____

Budget: _____

TO BUY

MAMA TIP Watch for case-lot sales and buy your cheapest staples then. Proteins and fats cost the most, so give them their own month if you need to. Slow and steady still gets you there.

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Food Storage INVENTORY

FOOD STORAGE SHELF

If you can't find it, you don't really have it. Give each shelf, bin or closet its own sheet, write down what goes in, and cross it off as you use it. Check the **Rotate?** box on anything you should use in the next few months.

Storage area: _____ Bin / shelf #: _____ Last updated: _____

Item	Size	Qty	Date stored	Best by	Location	Rotate?
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						☐
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MAMA TIP Write the *best by* date big and bold on the front of each can, jar or bag too. Future you, standing in a dark pantry with a flashlight, will thank you.

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Food Storage INVENTORY

FOOD STORAGE SHELF

Storage area: _____ Bin / shelf #: _____ Page: _____

Item	Size	Qty	Date stored	Best by	Location	Rotate?
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KEEP IT SIMPLE Group like with like (grains, proteins, fruit, ready meals) and newest to the back. Update this sheet when you shop and when you cook, and it stays honest.

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Mylar & Oxygen ABSORBER CHART

Oxygen, light and moisture are the three big enemies of stored food. The right bag, the right size oxygen absorber, and a good seal keep them out. Tape this chart up by your packaging station.

OXYGEN ABSORBER SIZING

Bag size	Dense foods powders, rice, flour, sugar, beans	Everyday foods meals, veggies, cooked meat, eggs	Airy foods marshmallows, candy, fruit slices, pasta
Pint or quart	100 cc	100 cc	100 cc size up for a full quart
Half gallon	200 cc	200–300 cc	300 cc
Gallon	300 cc	300–500 cc	500 cc
5-gallon bucket liner	2,000 cc	2,000 cc	2,000 cc + a little extra
Short-term treat bag clear-window gift bags	50 cc is plenty for food that will be eaten soon		

These are starting points. Airy foods leave more air in the bag, so size up; dense foods need less. When in doubt, go one size bigger. You can't use too much.

MYLAR THICKNESS GUIDE

Thickness	Best for
3–4 mil	Gifts, snacks and short-term storage you'll eat soon.
5 mil	Most long-term freeze-dried food. My favorite is the resealable kind.
7 mil	Pointy foods that could poke holes: pasta, meat chunks, broken crackers.

*For long-term storage, choose **opaque** bags, 5 to 7 mil.*

SEALING STEP BY STEP

1. **Crunch test.** Thickest pieces snap or crumble and feel dry and room temp.
2. **Work warm and fast.** Have bags open before you vent the machine.
3. **Fill,** leaving 2–3 in at the top for sealing.
4. **Add the absorber last,** right before sealing. Keep the rest in a sealed jar.
5. **Wipe the top edge clean,** lay it flat, smooth wrinkles, seal. (Twice never hurts.)
6. **Check & tug.** Flat, even, no gaps. If it peels, seal again.
7. **Label** what, date, how to rehydrate, servings.
8. **Watch it a day.** Most bags pull in a bit as the absorber works.

SKIP THE CLEAR WINDOW Clear-window bags are adorable for gifts, but light breaks food down. Use them only for food that will be eaten soon, never for long-term storage.

SEALER SWEET SPOT Start the dial at your bag's mil number (5 mil = 5). Melting? Turn it down. Peeling? Turn it up. Then mark the spot with tape.

MAMA TIP Oxygen absorbers absorb *oxygen*, not air. Air is mostly nitrogen, so a bag that doesn't suck in tight hasn't failed. And desiccant packs (moisture) are not a substitute for an oxygen absorber.

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CONTENTS _____

DATE _____ USE BY _____

LOCATION _____

_____

CONTENTS _____

DATE _____ USE BY _____

LOCATION _____

_____

CONTENTS _____

DATE _____ USE BY _____

LOCATION _____

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DATE _____ USE BY _____

LOCATION _____

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CONTENTS _____

DATE _____ USE BY _____

LOCATION _____

_____

Grains & Rice

DATE _____ USE BY _____

LOCATION _____

_____

Beans & Legumes

DATE _____ USE BY _____

LOCATION _____

_____

Pasta

DATE _____ USE BY _____

LOCATION _____

_____

Proteins

DATE _____ USE BY _____

LOCATION _____

_____

Fruit

DATE _____ USE BY _____

LOCATION _____

_____

Vegetables

DATE _____ USE BY _____

LOCATION _____

_____

Baking

DATE _____ USE BY _____

LOCATION _____

_____

Fats & Oils

DATE _____ USE BY _____

LOCATION _____

_____

Freeze-Dried Meals

DATE _____ USE BY _____

LOCATION _____

_____

Snacks & Treats

DATE _____ USE BY _____

LOCATION _____

_____

First In, First Out
ROTATION TRACKER

FOOD STORAGE SHELF

Food storage is only a blessing if it gets eaten. This page keeps the oldest food moving to the table before it loses quality. Glance at it when you meal plan, and write each item in the month you want to use it up.

1 STORE IT
New food goes in the *back* (or bottom) with the date written big.

2 USE IT
Cook from the *front*. Oldest first: first in, first out.

3 PLAN IT
Each month, jot what's getting close below, and build meals around it.

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

MAMA TIP Pick one "pantry night" a week and cook only from this list. Call it "mystery bin dinner" and watch the kids get curious instead of picky.

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Use It Up
THIS MONTH'S LIST

Pull this page out on the first of the month. List what needs to be eaten soon, where it lives, and an idea for using it. Check it off when it's gone, then restock and write the new item on your inventory.

Month: _____ Year: _____

Use this month	Location	Best by	Meal idea	Used	Restock?
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GOOD TO KNOW "Best by" is about quality, not safety, for most shelf-stable food. Toss any can that is bulging, leaking, deeply dented on a seam, or spurts when opened, and any food that smells or looks off.

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Food Storage SHOPPING BUCKET LIST

Building food storage is a lot like filling buckets, a little in each one at a time. At the start of each month, jot what you need in each bucket, set a budget, and check it off when it's home on the shelf.

Month: _____ Year: _____ Budget: _____

Bucket	What I need this month	Cost	Got it
Grains & Legumes *wheat, rice, oats, lentils, dry beans*			☐
Pasta *spaghetti, penne, bow tie, egg noodles*			☐
Proteins *canned tuna, salmon, chicken, corned beef, peanut butter*			☐
Fruit *canned peaches, pears, applesauce, freeze-dried fruit*			☐
Vegetables *canned corn, green beans, carrots, tomatoes*			☐
Fats & Oils *olive oil, coconut oil, shortening, ghee*			☐
Baking Needs *flour, sugar, baking powder, yeast, spices*			☐
Comfort & Treats *cocoa, coffee, candy, popcorn, ramen, pecans*			☐
Paper Products *toilet paper, paper towels, plates, foil*			☐
Pharmacy *vitamins, supplements, OTC meds, first aid*			☐
Miscellaneous *batteries, vinegar, bleach, matches, lids*			☐

MAMA TIP Pick one "bucket of the month" to splurge on and keep the others small. Proteins in January, fats in February… by the end of the year every bucket is fuller.

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Bucket SHOPPING IDEAS

Not sure what goes in each bucket? Here are ideas to get you started. Check off what you already have, circle what to add next, and leave the rest. Store what your family actually eats.

STAPLES

- [ ] White rice
- [ ] Rolled or quick oats
- [ ] Dry beans & lentils
- [ ] Wheat or flour
- [ ] Pasta, several shapes
- [ ] Cornmeal or masa
- [ ] Instant potatoes
- [ ] Crackers

PROTEINS

- [ ] Canned chicken & tuna
- [ ] Canned salmon or sardines
- [ ] Freeze-dried or canned beef
- [ ] Peanut butter
- [ ] Powdered eggs
- [ ] Powdered or shelf-stable milk
- [ ] Canned chili & stew
- [ ] TVP or dry beans

FATS & OILS

- [ ] Olive oil
- [ ] Vegetable or canola oil
- [ ] Coconut oil
- [ ] Shortening
- [ ] Ghee or canned butter
- [ ] Mayonnaise (rotate)
- [ ] Nuts & seeds
- [ ] Powdered butter

BAKING

- [ ] Flour & sugar
- [ ] Brown & powdered sugar
- [ ] Baking powder & soda
- [ ] Yeast
- [ ] Salt (lots!)
- [ ] Vanilla & spices
- [ ] Honey or syrup
- [ ] Cocoa powder

COMFORT

- [ ] Coffee, tea, cocoa
- [ ] Hard candy & chocolate
- [ ] Popcorn kernels
- [ ] Drink mixes
- [ ] Freeze-dried treats
- [ ] Condiments & sauces
- [ ] Bouillon
- [ ] Pudding & cake mixes

NON-FOOD

- [ ] Toilet paper
- [ ] Paper plates & foil
- [ ] Dish & laundry soap
- [ ] Unscented bleach
- [ ] Batteries
- [ ] Matches & lighters
- [ ] Trash bags
- [ ] Feminine & baby items

MY OWN MUST-HAVES

GOOD TO KNOW Fats, nuts, whole-wheat flour and brown rice go rancid faster than white rice and beans. Buy them in smaller amounts and rotate them often.

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Emergency WATER STORAGE

You can live weeks without food but only days without water. Plan on **1 gallon per person per day** for drinking and cooking. Three days is the minimum; two weeks is better. Do the math for your family, then build up a little at a time.

MY WATER MATH

FAMILY

_____ people × 1 gallon × _____ days = _____ gallons

PETS

_____ lb of pet × 1 oz × _____ days ÷ 128 = _____ gallons

EXTRA

hot weather, nursing moms, sick family, hygiene: + _____ gallons

MY GOAL

_____ gallons total

QUICK CHART

People	3 days	2 weeks	30 days
1	3 gal	14 gal	30 gal
2	6 gal	28 gal	60 gal
3	9 gal	42 gal	90 gal
4	12 gal	56 gal	120 gal
5	15 gal	70 gal	150 gal
6	18 gal	84 gal	180 gal
7	21 gal	98 gal	210 gal
8	24 gal	112 gal	240 gal

STORAGE OPTIONS

Container	Holds	Good to know
Store-bought bottled water	16 oz–1 gal	Easiest start. Keep it sealed and use by the date on the package.
2-liter soda bottles	about ½ gal	Wash, sanitize and fill. Skip milk and juice jugs: they leak and hold onto residue.
5–7 gallon jugs	5–7 gal	Food-grade, with a spigot. A 5-gallon jug weighs about 42 lb full.
55-gallon drum	55 gal	Food-grade (usually blue). Needs a pump. Over 450 lb full, so fill it where it will live.
Bathtub water bladder	up to ~100 gal	Fill when a storm is coming. Short-term only.

HIDDEN WATER ALREADY IN YOUR HOME

- ☐ Water heater: turn off its power or gas first, then drain from the valve at the bottom
- ☐ Water in your pipes: open the highest faucet, then catch water from the lowest one
- ☐ Ice cubes and frozen water bottles
- ☐ Liquid in canned fruits and vegetables
- ☐ Don't drink: toilet tank or bowl, waterbed, pool or radiator water

WHERE TO KEEP IT Somewhere cool and dark, away from gasoline, paint and chemicals. Set containers on a pallet or board, not right on concrete.

MAMA TIP Tuck a few bottles in the freezer. They help keep food cold in an outage, and they're drinking water once they melt.

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Safe to Drink
WATER PURIFICATION

If your stored water runs out, or you're not sure it's safe, here's how to make water safe to drink, following the EPA's emergency guidance. Bottled water is always the first choice when you have it.

BOILING (BEST)

1. Let cloudy water settle, then filter it through a clean cloth, paper towel or coffee filter.
2. Bring to a **rolling boil for 1 minute** (3 minutes above 5,000 feet).
3. Let it cool, then store in clean, covered containers.
4. Flat taste? Pour it back and forth between clean containers.

UNSCENTED BLEACH

Water	6% bleach	8.25% bleach
1 quart / liter	2 drops	2 drops
1 gallon	8 drops	6 drops
2 gallons	16 drops (¼ tsp)	12 drops (⅛ tsp)
4 gallons	⅓ tsp	¼ tsp
8 gallons	⅔ tsp	½ tsp

1. Use **regular, unscented** chlorine bleach, less than a year old.
2. Cloudy, colored or very cold water? **Double** the bleach.
3. Stir and wait **30 minutes**. It should smell slightly of chlorine. If not, repeat and wait 15 more minutes.

READ THE LABEL Check the bleach's percentage before you measure. Never use scented, color-safe or splash-less bleach, and don't mix bleach with anything else.

ROTATION LOG

Swap stored tap water about every 6 months. A good habit: when the clocks change.

Container	Where it's stored	Filled on	Treated?	Replace by	Done
			☐		☐
			☐		☐
			☐		☐
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