

Utilizing Sam's Club:

How to Bolster Your Emergency Food Stores

While this report is specifically focused on using Sam's Club to shore up your food stores, I could just as easily have substituted COSTCO instead. So, don't worry too much about which warehouse club to use. For the purposes of preparing for longer term scenarios the two clubs are essentially the same, in my opinion.

If you have never stepped foot inside a warehouse retailer such as Sam's Club, you may be in for a treat. You see, even if your goal is not to prepare for long-term disaster scenarios you may still find far better deals on groceries (frozen foods, fresh fruits, and many canned goods) as well as an assortment of sundries (such as toilet paper, garbage bags, etc) than you will at your local grocery stores.

As an example, the money I save on purchasing butter alone (over a year's time) at my local Sam's Club as opposed to my local grocery store pays for the membership fee alone. And, considering the many dozens of other foods and supplies that I can purchase at Sam's Club... the cost-savings add up quickly. Of course, there are instances where the cost-savings are not that dramatic or even seemingly not present when shopping at a warehouse club but, for the most part, shopping at my local Sam's Club is well worth the time and money.

With respect to your emergency preparations, in particular, warehouse clubs are your best bet for a local bulk purchasing store. That's not to say that you cannot occasionally find better deals online or from sales and clearance deals elsewhere. All strategies to get more "bang for the buck" should be examined. The point is

simply that Sam's Club (and COSTCO) makes it more convenient and consistent. My advice: Get a warehouse club membership and start using it!

Generally, the advice I give people when they ask what foods to store is simple: store what you eat! That is, there's no reason to purchase a case of Vienna sausage if neither you nor your family ever eat it because it will just go to waste and take up valuable pantry space. On the other hand, if you go through several cans of corn a month then it's obvious you should include plenty of cans of corn. This sounds obvious but you would be surprised at what people will do.

With respect to food purchases at Sam's Club my advice is still by and large the same. However, you should be aware that the recommendations given below are based upon the LDS Church's Food Storage recommendations. **Additionally, these numbers are calculated for a family of four (all are assumed to be adults to ease the math) in order to cover a three month period.** Of course, this is just a place to start. You could just as easily build toward a six month supply of stored foods as well; adjust the numbers as you see fit.

Since the report [A Mad Dash Through Walmart](#) did most of the explaining as to "why" you should have most of these food stores, this report will be a brief summary of what you can also purchase at Sam's Club because most of the items discussed here were already detailed in the other reports; if they weren't detailed then there will definitely be comments included.

As with the other reports there are a few other points to consider:

- o Although I would expect that most of these items are available at nearly any Sam's club **there is no guarantee that they will be available at your local**

Sam's Club stores because of seasonal or geographic concerns, or for some other reason I'm unaware of.

- o Also, **please do not expect that any of these items will be readily available in a disaster scenario...** others may have already beaten you to them! Work to acquire your supplies NOW.

You can also use the Excel-based [reThinkIt! Preparedness Tools](#) to calculate most of the numbers below and even track your stores.

Please recognize that the items listed below are in alphabetical order and not at all in order of importance. Also understand that all LDS Church recommendations are given under the "How Much?" column (listed in pounds) with suggested purchases to accommodate their recommendation in parenthesis, you'll see what I mean.

Let's get started...

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LDS Church Recommendations

| DESCRIPTION | EXAMPLES | HOW MUCH? |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Baking Powder | Arm & Hammer | 1 lb (1 x 60 oz box) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Baking powder has many uses besides cooking; it can't hurt to store more than one box so long as you pack it well to reduce moisture exposure. | | |
| Baking Soda | Arm & Hammer | 1 lb (1 x 13.5 lb bag) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Baking soda has many uses besides cooking too, although a 13 lb bag is a bit excessive. I would suggest you purchase smaller boxes at your local Walmart instead. | | |
| Brown Sugar | N/A | 3 lbs (1 x 7 lb bag) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Only purchase if you expect to have the ability to bake sweets. | | |
| Canned Corn | Del Monte | 30 lbs (4 cases) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Assorted vegetables are important to a rounded diet | | |
| Canned Green Beans | Del Monte | 30 lbs (3 cases) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Assorted vegetables are important to a rounded diet | | |
| Canned Peas | N/A | 30 lbs (3-4 cases) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Assorted vegetables are important to a rounded diet | | |
| Canned Tomatoes | Diced Tomatoes and Tomato Sauce | 20 lbs (3-4 cases) |
| <i>Comments:</i> May want to vary between diced tomatoes and tomato sauce depending on your typical usage. | | |
| Dried Beans | Pinto Beans | 30 lbs (1 x 50 lb bag) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Pinto beans are a start but you really want to have a variety of stored beans for greater protein sources. | | |
| Dried Fruits | Dates, Prunes, Raisings, Mangos, etc | Several packages |
| <i>Comments:</i> The LDS suggestions are for dried foods like banana chips and apple slices; regardless, besides canned fruits, this is the closest you'll get to storage of fruits. | | |
| Dry Milk | Member's Mark Dry Milk Powder | 60 lbs (2 x 22 qt box) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Dry milk is the closest substitute to regular milk; ensure you have enough if your family uses milk regularly. | | |
| Dry Soup Mix | Bouillon Cubes (Beef, Chicken) | 5 lbs (2-3 x 32 oz jars) |

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| <i>Comments:</i> Bouillon cubes are easy to add to most meals that require seasonings. | | |
| Evaporated Milk | Carnation | 12 lbs (2 x 8/12 oz cans) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Only purchase evaporated milk if you regularly use it in recipes. | | |
| Flour, White | Gold Medal All-Purpose | 25 lbs (3 x 10 lb bags) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Store un-used flour in an air-tight container such as 5 gallon buckets. | | |
| Fruit Drink Mix | Country Time Lemonade Mix | 6 lbs (1 x 82.5 oz can) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Our taste buds are accustomed to sweet stimulants (children especially), so stock up on any flavored mix. | | |
| Honey | Clever Country | 3 lbs (1 x 5 lb jar) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Honey has many uses besides as a sweetener. Since it stores indefinitely I would stock more than just 3 lbs. | | |
| Jam & Jelly | Welch's | 3 lbs (2 x 2/32 oz jars) |
| <i>Comments:</i> More sweets are welcome to increase variety for children, especially. | | |
| Maple Syrup | Uncle Luke's | 1 lb (1 x 32 oz jar) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Maple syrup was substituted for molasses. | | |
| Mayonnaise | Hellmann's | 2 lbs (2 x 1 gal jars) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Mayo may be difficult to keep fresh without refrigeration | | |
| Oats | Quaker Oats | 25 lbs (3 x 2/5 lb cans) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Makes for great breakfast meals and can be used for other baking purposes. | | |
| Pasta and Sauces | Wheat Spaghetti Noodles Egg Noodles Kraft Macaroni & Cheese Bertolli Pasta Sauce Bertolli Alfredo Sauce | 25 lbs (2 x 4/13.25 oz wheat noodles, 2 x 5 lb bag egg noodles, 2 x 12/7.25 oz macaroni & cheese) & sauces |
| <i>Comments:</i> Mix and match as you prefer. You will also want ample pasta sauces too (I would suggest roughly 1-2 jars of sauce for each pound of pasta, excluding macaroni & cheese) | | |
| Peanut Butter | Jif Creamy or Extra Crunchy | 4 lbs (2 x 40 oz jars) |
| <i>Comments:</i> A very useful source of calories and protein and goes great with jams and crackers. | | |
| Potatoes | Idahoan Mashed Potatoes | 40 lbs (several 5 lb bags) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Dehydrated potatoes are the most likely way to store potatoes for the long term. | | |

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| Rice | Basmati, Jasmine | 50 lbs or more (2 x 25 lb bags) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Rice can be used as fillers in many meals, which adds calories and some nutrients; I would stock much more than the LDS recommendations state. | | |
| Salad Dressing | Hidden Valley | 1 lb (2 x 40 oz bottles) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Dressing may be difficult to keep fresh without refrigeration. | | |
| Salt | Morton Iodized Table Salt | 5 lbs (2 x 4 lb box) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Salt is cheap and necessary to life; it's ok to have plenty more than what is recommended. | | |
| Seasonings | Pepper, Garlic, Salt, Onion Salt, Cumin, Chili Powder, Lemon Pepper, etc | 1 jar of each |
| <i>Comments:</i> You chose which seasonings you use. | | |
| Shortening | Crisco All-Vegetable Oil | 4 lbs (1 x 6 lb can) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Only purchase if you already use shortening in your cooking. | | |
| Sugar, Granulated | C&H Granulated Sugar | 40 lbs (1 x 50 lb bag) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Sugar is used in many baking recipes and for drink flavorings; have plenty on hand. | | |
| Vegetable Oil or Olive Oil | Crisco Vegetable Oil or Bertolli Extra Virgin Olive Oil | 2 lbs (2 x 1.25 gal jug) |
| <i>Comments:</i> I prefer to store olive oil (can be purchased in 3 gal jugs) and will store for long periods of time if stored in the refrigerator. | | |
| White Vinegar | N/A | 1/2 lb (1 gal jug) |
| <i>Comments:</i> Vinegar can be used for more than cooking, so it's ok to store more than 1 jug. | | |
| Yeast, Dry | Fleischmann's | 1/2 lb (2 x 16 oz bags) |
| <i>Comments:</i> While one bag would be sufficient, it is sold as a pack. Store in an air-tight container or, better yet, in your freezer to preserve freshness. | | |

LDS Church Recommendations NOT Found

The following items are included in the LDS Church's recommendations but will probably not be found at a local warehouse club. However, several items may be available online... I will point them out. In addition, any items marked with an asterisk (*) may be found at a local LDS Home Storage Center, which is often made available to non-members as well. Take advantage of their kindness!

- **Wheat*** (150 lbs) – this grain is a staple for long term food storage because of its wide array of uses and long term storability. Unfortunately, this staple food is not available at local Sam's Club retailers; they are, however, available for purchase online in 45 lb pails as well as a local LDS Home Storage Center. Regardless, you will need a grain grinder to make proper use of wheat, so be sure to get one and learn to use it. The [Country Living Grain Mill](#) is the “Cadillac” of grain mills but others [grain mills](#) should suffice for limited purposes.
- **Cornmeal** (25 lbs) – is a coarse flour made from corn. It can be used to make many foods, including tortillas, cornbread, breading for fried foods and even chips. This item can be purchased online in 38 lb pails. Alternatively, if you have a grain grinder, you may be able to substitute most any ground grain for cornmeal.
- **Lima Beans** (5 lbs), **Soy Beans** (10 lbs), **Split Peas** (5 lbs), **Lentils** (5 lbs) – there are an assortment of other dried legumes that are suggested. Unfortunately, you will need to purchase them online or, better yet, purchase alternative dried beans at a local LDS Home Storage Center. In fact, you should be able to purchase not only pinto beans, but black beans, white beans, and refried beans at a Home Storage Center too.

- **Carrots*** (30 lbs) – dehydrated carrots can be purchased online in a 14 lb carrot and celery mixed pail or at a LDS Home Storage Center. Sadly, adding carrots to your food storage is expensive but may be well-worth the expense if your family eats carrots regularly.
- **Onions*** (5 lbs) – you can purchase #10 cans of dehydrated onions online or at a LDS Home Storage Center as well.
- **Other Dairy** (13 lbs) – refers to dairy products such as powdered butter, cheese, buttermilk and sour cream; yes, they all exist in dehydrated form and can be found online. I would suggest that you focus on more butter and cheese than is recommended because these can be depleted fast.
- **Flavored Gelatin** (1 lb) – is used to make certain desserts. If you're not a baker then you might skip this.
- **Applesauce** (40 lbs) – small packages of applesauce can be purchased at local Sam's Clubs, but not nearly in the quantities recommended. This is another expensive item to include in your preparations but you can find it online if you so desire.
- **Fruit Mixture** (35 lbs) and **Fruit Juices** (40 lbs) – I would personally only stock fruit juices in powdered form to save space; however, you can choose to stock many juices in liquid form but I don't recommend it.

Other Food Stores to Include

I hardly believe the basic LDS recommendations are complete. Of course, their considerations are for foods that will last for many years with little problem.

Although the following items are not specifically included in the LDS Church's basic recommendations, I would encourage you to include them in your preparations but **ONLY** if you will eat them on a regular basis:

| DESCRIPTION | EXAMPLES | HOW MUCH? |
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| Breakfast Foods | Cereals, Bisquick, Pancake Mix | several boxes of cereal; 1-2 large bags each of bisquick and pancake mix |
| <i>Comments:</i> These foods should store well for up to a year or more and are welcomed as familiar foods to eat for most families. | | |
| Canned Beans | Baked Beans, Black Beans, Chili | 1 or more cases of each |
| <i>Comments:</i> In most cases, dried beans can be purchased for far less expense; however, canned beans can be used to supplement dried beans in many cases. | | |
| Canned Fruits | Mandarin Oranges, Pineapple, Peaches, Mixed Fruits, Pears, etc | 2 or more cases of each |
| <i>Comments:</i> Unfortunately, fruits are more difficult to include in long term food stores; consider adding more canned fruits if you'll use them. | | |
| Canned Meats | Tuna Fish, Salmon, Chicken Breast, Vienna Sausage, etc | 2-3+ cases of meats you eat |
| <i>Comments:</i> Canned meats should store for years and are a viable option for those families who do not actively hunt or who do not have another ability to obtain fresh meat. | | |
| Canned Soups | Chicken Noodle, Tomato Soup, Vegetable Medley, etc | 2+ cases of each |
| <i>Comments:</i> Ready-to-eat meals are always welcome and will store for years. | | |
| Coffee | Folgers | 1-2 cans or more |
| <i>Comments:</i> If you drink coffee then be sure to store up a supply; otherwise, ignore it. | | |
| Condiments | Tomato Ketchup, Mustard, etc | 1-2 jars of each |

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| <i>Comments:</i> Condiments make some meals more palatable, especially for children. | | |
| Side Dishes (Noodles, Potato) | Knorr Noodle Sides | 1-2 10/pkg noodles, several or more boxes of potato sides |
| <i>Comments:</i> Ready-to-eat side dishes are easy to prepare and familiar to most families. | | |
| Snack Foods | Peanuts, Mixed Nuts, Trail Mix, Granola Bars, Saltine Crackers, etc | 1-2 or more packages/boxes of each |
| <i>Comments:</i> A few snack food options will become treats if not readily available. | | |
| Sweets | Gum, Chocolates, Beef Jerky, etc | 2 or more packages of each |
| <i>Comments:</i> I recommend you keep at least a few packages of each sweets that your family enjoys to keep their spirits up as well as a sense of normalcy. | | |