



Depression Era Recipes

Twenty-Six Depression Era Recipes To Help Feed Your Family During Hard Times.

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Feed Your Family On The Cheap.

Most people who are preparing for a future economic collapse or SHTF event realize that life as it is today could be radically altered. One of the main things that will change radically if the world experiences another severe economic collapse due to an EMP event or another extended grid-down situation will be diet and cooking methods.

Many preppers are looking to the tried and true recipes of the Great Depression period which began in August 1929 and lingered through approximately 1941 in the United States and Europe. It was the worst recession of the Western industrialized world. It truly altered the way of life for many families. Vegetable gardens were nurtured, clothing was patched and repaired for longer wear, and several generations of families often lived together out of necessity.

Feeding a family following another severe economic collapse, extended grid-down situation, or other SHTF event will be similar to feeding a family during the Great Depression. Some of the lessons surrounding food that were learned back then include:

- Growing your own food
- Sharing and bartering food with neighbors
- Making the best you can from what you do have
- Being thrifty, re-using, and recycling as much as possible
- Foraging, hunting, and preserving food will once again become central to meal planning

Shopping in the Depression Era

Shopping in the Depression Era was much different than it is today, especially for lower income and middle class families. Following an EMP or other SHTF event, shipping, trucking, and commercial food manufacturing will again be at a standstill. We may once again have to shop like our ancestors did during the Depression Era.

Preppers will need to buy now and properly store large quantities of things such as beans, rice, flour, sugar, cornmeal, potatoes, and sea salt. Growing your own herbs for seasoning and vegetables to eat will be crucial. Eggs will soon be at a premium, or only available through bartering, if at all. The same will be true for raw milk, cream, butter as well as bacon or pork, and beef. You will need to raise your own chickens, dairy cow, pigs, and beef cows or trade something valuable that you have plenty of to get what you want from someone who does have it.

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For those who raise or grow their own food, it will be important to learn how to build a root cellar to extend the life of your harvest for leaner times that may come. Without electricity, storing of dairy and other perishable items will need to be done in something like a zeer pot "fridge" in hot weather.

Bread & Breakfasts

Breakfasts during the Great Depression Era varied widely according to socio-economic status of the household and what was available at the time. It usually included some kind of dried or baked fruit if fruit was plentiful for the family, a creamy grits cereal or farina cereal, some type of bread and tea or coffee. Milk and eggs were expensive so unless the family raised their own cow or chickens, many meals didn't include them during the Great Depression.

1. Milk Toast

- 1 pint of scalded milk
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 tbsps. Butter
- 4 tbsps. Cold water
- 2 ½ tbsps. Bread flour
- 6 slices dry toast

Put flour into skillet, add water and stir on low heat until creamy. Add paste to milk stir continually until thick. Cover and cook additional twenty minutes. Sprinkle salt into mixture. Add butter in small pieces. Dip slice of toast in sauce, remove when soft. Pour leftover sauce onto toast to serve.

1. Cornbread in milk

- 4 cups water
- 1 cup cornmeal (yellow)
- ¼ cup flour
- 1 tsp salt
- ¼ cup canola oil
- 1 Tbsp. sugar

Mix cornmeal, flour, salt, and sugar into a large bowl. Add 4 cups boiling water. Mix thoroughly. Batter should be the consistency of pancake batter. Heat canola or other cooking oil in pan. Add batter to your pan and fry, flip occasionally, until both sides are golden in color. Tear or cut into pieces in bowl, add milk to suit your taste.

1. Hot milk and rice

- ¼ to ½ bowl of cooked rice
- Milk
- Dab of butter
- Sugar or honey to sweeten

Mix ingredients and enjoy.

1. Cornmeal mush with milk

- ½ cup cornmeal
- 1 cup water or bone broth
- Leftover bacon grease

Mix cornmeal with bone broth or water and allow to sit overnight. Form into loaf pan. Keep in refrigerator. Slice and fry in bacon grease. You could also mix ½ cornmeal and ½ boiling water, let cool and form into a patty and then fry in grease (no overnight soak required). Pour milk over cornmeal.

1. Sugar bread

- 1-2 tbsps. Sugar
- Butter
- Homemade bread

Spread butter on bread and sprinkle with sugar. This was definitely a treat only if things were going well and sugar was plentiful.

1. Sugar Cookies and Coffee

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- 3 eggs (beaten)
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 cups flour (for texture)
- Pinch of salt

Beat eggs and sugar and then mix in the flour well. Roll cookies and score with a knife. Bake in oven at about 300 degrees until golden.

1. Oatmeal Pancakes

- 2 cups oatmeal
- 1 tbsp. melted fat
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp salt
- 1 egg beat in 1 cup of milk

Mix above ingredients and add 1 cup sifted flour and 1 tsp baking powder. Beat well. Cook on hot griddle.

1. Spider Corn Bread

- 2 cups sour milk
- 1- $\frac{1}{2}$ cups corn meal
- 1 tsp. soda
- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon salt

Combine all dry ingredients first, then pour in milk and well beaten eggs. Add butter to cast iron pan to grease pan. Once pan is hot, pour in the mixture. Cook in hot oven for twenty minutes. Serves six.

1. Potato Pancakes

- 2 cups hot water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of milk
- 2 cups of flour
- 1 egg
- 2 cups chopped potato
- 1 tsp salt
- 5 tsp. of baking powder

Clean potatoes with the skins on and parboil (pre-cook) them for 8-12 minutes. Skin potatoes and then grate or chop in food processor. In the Depression Era it was also common to use leftover mashed potatoes instead. Mix milk, potatoes, salt, and eggs, together. Sift baking powder with flour into wet mixture. Continue blending until smooth. Use hot water to thin batter if needed. Drop onto greased hot griddle, flip as needed.

1. Fifty-Fifty Biscuits

- 2 cups corn meal (can use rice flour, fine ground peanuts, or ground soy beans)
- 4 tablespoons shortening
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 cups flour
- 1 to ½ cups liquid

Sift flour, cornmeal, salt, and baking powder, twice. Use cold shortening and use a knife to integrate it into the mixture, finish by rubbing it in with your hands. Quickly mix using cold liquid (milk or water) and form into a soft dough. Lightly flour a wooden board and roll dough into a ½ inch thick sheet. Use a tin can to cut dough into round pieces. Sprinkle a shallow pan with flour and place rounds slightly apart from each other. Bake 10-15 minutes until golden.

1. Split Pea Pancakes

- 1/3 cup flour
- 2 cups split peas
- 2 egg whites
- 1 cup milk
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 2 egg yolks
- 1/8 tsp cayenne
- 2 tbsps. pork drippings
- 1 tsp salt

Soak peas overnight, cook till tender. Chop using food processor and mix all ingredients in. Bake on greased hot griddle.

1. Fresh Bread

- 4 cups flour
- 2 cups warm water
- 2 tbsps. yeast

Using large bowl, pour in flour and create a well in the center. Add yeast and dissolve with warm water. Mix together and form a ball. Use towel to cover. Let rise to double its size (30 minutes). Punch dough down and cut into two pieces and roll each piece into a loaf. Let rise a second time until it reaches top of pan. Uncover bread, slit tops, bake in oven on 300 degrees. Rub hot bread with water and wrap in a lightweight towel to make crust softer.

1. Hard Tack

- 1 cup water
- 6 cups flour
- 4 tsp salt (optional)
- 2 tbsps. cold butter or shortening (optional)

Pour water into a large bowl and gradually add the flour. Stir continually. Stop adding flour when it becomes too thick to continue stirring. Knead and fold dough. Roll to a ½ thick sheet. Use a knife to

slice the dough in squares approximately 3 inches by 3 inches. Lay on ungreased baking sheet. Use a toothpick or skewer to poke 4 holes in 4 rows for each square. Bake for 1 hour in oven at 375 degrees but flip the crackers over after 30 minutes.

Soups & Stews

1. Cream Soup/White Sauce

- 2 tbsps. Butter or lard
- 3 tbsps. Flour
- 2 cups milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt

Melt butter over low heat. Add salt and flour. Stir continually until frothy and smooth. Cook 3 minutes, prevent browning by stirring often. Add milk slowly. Boost heat slightly and stir until mixture thickens and is smooth and boiling. Eat like soup or pour over toast, eggs, noodles, or whatever is on hand.

1. Bean Soup

- 1 quart of water
- 1 cup beans
- 1 tbsps. onion juice
- 2 tsps. salt
- 1-2 large onions sliced or chunked
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp mustard
- 2 tbsps. flour mixed with 2 tbsps. cold water

Soak beans in water overnight to soften. Pour ingredients into large pot and cook slowly with onion and pork. Add water as needed.

1. Vegetable Soup

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cabbage
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup carrots
- 1 cup potatoes
- $\frac{1}{3}$ tsp pepper
- 1 tbsp. minced onion
- 4 tbsp. fat
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 tsp salt
- 2 tbsps. chopped parsley
- 4 peppercorns
- 4 cloves
- 1 cup of tomato juice/pulp
- 1 quart of water

Heat onion, peppercorns, pepper, salt, and bay leaf in tomato juice for twenty minutes. Strain. Add additional ingredients to tomato mixture and cook 1 hour. Garnish with parsley before serving.

1. Potato and Cheese Soup

- 1 cup milk
- 1/8 tsp cayenne
- 2 tsps. onion juice
- 1 ½ tsps. salt
- 2 cups diced potatoes
- 2 cups of water that potatoes were cooked in
- 2 tbsps. fine chopped parsley
- 3 tbsps. flour
- ¼ cup grated cheese
- 2 tbsps. fat

Cook diced potatoes in 2 cups of water until tender. Push potatoes and 2 cups water through strainer. Add dry ingredients to melted fat, gradually add onion juice and milk. Sprinkle on grated cheese and garnish with parsley just before serving.

Dinners & Desserts

1. Beef Stew

- ¾ to 1-pound meat from shin, knuckles, neck, or cross ribs
- ¾ cup carrots
- 1 onion
- 1 cup potatoes
- ½ cup turnips
- ¼ tsp pepper
- 1 tsp salt
- 1-quart water
- ½ cup flour

Dice meat in small sections. Soak half of it in water for 60 minutes. Heat water and meat to boiling gradually. Salt and pepper remaining meat to season. Dip in flour and brown with onion in about 3 tablespoons of fat. Combine mixture with meat. Continue to cook, about 60 minutes, until tender. Add vegetables and ½ cup cold water. Cook until veggies are tender.

1. Pepper and Eggs

- 3 large peppers
- 1 tbsp. vegetable oil or lard
- 4 Eggs

Clean the peppers, remove the seeds, and slice them. Put vegetable oil or lard in pan and heat. Place sliced peppers in pan and sprinkle with salt. Crack eggs into bowl and whisk with fork. Once the peppers soften, pour egg mixture into pan and blend everything together.

1. Bean Sausage

- 1 cup soaked lentils, dried peas, lima beans, or beans
- 1 egg

- ½ cup dried breadcrumbs
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp sage
- ¼ cup fat

Cook beans until soft. Thoroughly mix ingredients together and then form like a sausage. Cover in flour and fry using fat.

1. Poor man's Meal

- 3 Potatoes
- 1 Onion
- 4 Hot Dogs
- 4 tbsps. Tomato sauce

Peel and cube the potatoes. Put potatoes into a skillet and slice onions into pan. Add about 1-3 tbsps. vegetable oil or lard. Let potato and onion cook and slice hot dogs. Add sauce to potatoes followed by hot dogs. Add ½ cup water, continue cooking until potatoes are soft.

1. Dumplings

- 2 cups flour
- 4 tsp. baking powder
- 2 tbsp. fat drippings
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 cup milk, meat stock or water

Sift salt together with flour and baking powder. Then cut with fat. Slowly add milk or water to create a soft dough. Roll out and put on the pre-greased pan. Drop directly into stew or soup, cover, and cook 30 minutes.

1. Beans & Ham Hocks

- 4 or 5 smoked ham hocks
- 1 lb. dry pinto beans
- 1 chopped yellow onion
- Bay leaf
- 2 ½ tsp. Black pepper
- Salt to taste

Rinse beans and add to large pot with onion, pepper, bay leaf and ham hocks. Add water to cover everything and bring to a boil. Simmer covered for 2-3 hours. Stir frequently, add water if needed to cover. Continue cooking until beans are tender and sauce thickens. Serve warm with cornbread

1. Hobo Tin Foil Dinners

It was not uncommon in the Depression Era for families to make a meal out of whatever types of vegetables were in season or available that day.

- Potatoes
- Squash
- Peppers

- Corn
- Onion
- Butter

Cut vegetables into large pieces, add butter and salt and pepper to taste. Wrap in tin foil, and cook in the oven or even in the coals of an open fire.

1. Eggless chocolate cake

- 3 tbsp. unsweetened cocoa
- 1 ½ cups flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tsp white vinegar
- 1 cup water
- 5 tbsp. vegetable oil

Mix cocoa, baking soda, and flour in 8" square greased baking pan. Create a large depression in the dry ingredients and pour vegetable oil into it. Create two smaller wells, pour vanilla into one and vinegar in the other. Add water to the entire pan. Stir until blended and smooth. Bake 35 minutes in 350-degree oven.

1. Baked Apples Without Sugar

- 1 tbsp. honey
- 1 tbsp. corn syrup
- Chopped dates
- Raisins
- Marmalade
- popcorn

Fill pan with ¼ inch of water to prevent burning. Core apples and fill with syrup and chopped date/marmalade mixture or popcorn/corn syrup mixture. Bake ½ hour until tender. Serve with additional syrup as a sauce.

Today we are lucky enough to have some modern conveniences available to us that make securing food and cooking meals much easier than they were in the Depression Era. Most preppers have come to the realization however that following an EMP or SHTF event that would create an extended grid down situation, we may very well have to revert to some of the methods used by our ancestors to feed their families.

If you have already started storing bulk dry goods, growing your own vegetables, and raising your own livestock when such an event occurs, you will be miles ahead of many people. Tuck these recipes away or even try some of them this week so that you can be confident in your ability to cook in a way that will sustain your family and boost morale during tough times.

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