

Community Food Projects during a major Disaster

BETTER TIMES Emergency Notes

Community Kitchen. If food or fuel become scarce, establish a community kitchen in a place convenient for those in need of assistance (schools or churches come to mind immediately, but you can also feed 200-300 people out of a home). Organize cooking and serving teams. Invite people to bring food, cook it together and serve it cafeteria style so that all are fed. (This is a soup kitchen where some or all of the guests bring the food.) Arrange for meals to be delivered to those unable to come to the kitchen. (If fuel is scarce, this may be the most practical way to distribute food.) Generators could be used to power freezers to keep food frozen. Community bread ovens can be built from materials available in most communities, as well as solar cookers, outdoor wood stoves made from barrels, and non-electric hotpots (explained in the BETTER TIMES Emergency Notes on Food Preparation).

Community Food Processing. Governments or non-profit agencies may distribute emergency supplies in a food scarcity emergency. If the disaster is prolonged, it is likely that those distributions will be primary agriculture products (whole wheat, corn, soybeans, dried beans, rice, powdered milk, etc. Tasty and nutritious meals can be cooked from these foods, but many people do not have the knowledge or the equipment for home processing of these ingredients. The basic technology required is a way to grind the products. If manufactured grain grinders are not available, grinders can be improvised from steel water pipes.. Soy milk, tofu, tempeh, and other products can be made, and vegetable oils extracted from corn, soybeans, sunflower seeds, and other oil crops. If the weather is not cold, and a generator is available, making ice would be very useful. (Fill containers like cottage cheese tubs or casserole pans with water, freeze, chop up into smaller bits.) It may also be necessary to organize water fetching and purification teams, and a community food processing effort can do this too.

Urban Agriculture & Community Food Production. About 10% of the world's food is grown within cities. If a disruption of the regular food production and distribution system is prolonged, it will be necessary to increase this production considerably. Even if the problem happens during the winter, in many areas this can begin immediately in greenhouses and cold frames. Indoor greenhouses, with lights powered by car or marine batteries that are recharged by automobile alternators can be improvised, and seeds started for spring gardens (heat is also an issue here). Seeds can be sprouted. Depending on local resources, other options include fishing (ocean, rivers, creeks, ponds, lakes), hunting, or foraging (very slim pickings in most areas during winter). Even densely populated cities have lots of space for community gardens. Possibilities include street medians, lawns, vacant lots, golf courses, and container gardening on roofs, porches, sidewalks, even streets. Compost heaps can be started immediately, both to help resolve the garbage situation, and to make fertilizer for gardening.

Rural-urban partnerships. Many cities are surrounded by farming areas, but there are many potential disasters that could wreak havoc with normal systems of food production & distribution. If the present food system fails, it will be necessary to weave new direct relationships between rural farmers and urban consumers. Farmers will need assistance with planting, harvest, and transportation; new direct market relationships with urban consumers would help with these essential activities. In the old days, cattle and pigs were driven to market on the hoof; this may happen again if the transportation system is compromised by instability and disaster.

Networking ideas. Work with other agencies or organizations, such as community gardening organizations, neighborhood associations, university extension departments, and food banks to help ensure that nobody is left out in the cold without food.

5 USEFUL EMERGENCY FOOD IDEAS: SOURDOUGH, PICKLED EGGS, GLUTEN, BULGAR, ORAL REHYDRATION

Easiest sourdough bread: Make bread as usual, add an extra cup of flour (you will have to adjust the amount of liquid and other ingredients accordingly). After the second rising, pinch off about one cup of the dough, and put in a covered non-metal container in a warm place. When you bake the next day, instead of adding yeast, add the dough you saved from yesterday's baking. This will take a little longer to rise, but it works. (Many cookbooks have other sour dough recipes.)

How to pickle eggs. Eggs will keep for several days without refrigeration. But you can pickle them for longer-term preservation.

1. Use quart mason jars. Boil the jars for 10 minutes and then keep them covered with hot water until they are used.
2. Hard boil the eggs and peel them. Take the mason jars out of the water and put the boiled/peeled eggs in them. You can add hot peppers and fresh garlic for flavor and color, also carrots, spices, herbs (cumin, dill, oregano, whatever you like). Anything added contributes flavor and is itself pickled.
3. Add 2 cups vinegar. Add water to fill to about ½ inch below the rim. Wipe the rims of the jars and put on a new lid and then screw on the ring finger tight. Note: lids should not be reused, but the rings can be used over and over again.
4. Put water in a deep pot (deep enough so the water comes up to the rims of the jars, look around for a boiling water canner). Place the jars in the pot so they do not touch each other (make sure they are up off the bottom of the kettle, some kettles have racks for this purpose, or you could put a towel in the bottom of the pot. Bring the water to a rapid boil, and keep the water boiling rapidly for 20 minutes. (This is called "processing time" and it starts when the water starts to rapidly boil, NOT when you turn on the heat). Use tongs to put the jars in the water and take them out. If you don't have tongs and can't improvise any, let the water cool naturally. Do not reduce processing time.
5. After the 20 minutes are up, turn off the heat and remove the jars from the water. Place them on a rack and allow them to cool naturally. Don't try to hasten the process by putting them in cold water. As the jars cool, the center of the lids will depress

slightly. This is a sign that a proper seal has been made. If the center of the lids doesn't depress, bring the water back to a boil and process for 20 minutes again. Once the jars are completely cool, store them in a cool dark place. You can remove the rings or leave them on. If you don't need them, might as well leave them on, that way they won't get lost and you'll always know where to find some. Let the jars sit for a couple of weeks before using them. Once opened, use within a few days, or keep refrigerated.

Gluten can be made from whole wheat kernels. Despite the name, gluten is a very useful and nutritious food product that you can make without using fancy equipment.. It can be cooked in a variety of ways. 1. Mix six cups flour with water until it is the consistency of bread dough. If you don't have flour, grind whole wheat to make flour. Let this dough sit for 20 minutes. 2. In a sink, basin, or bucket, place a bowl, on top of that put a pie plate, and on top of that put a colander (pasta strainer). The bowl should be larger than the pie plate. 3. Take a handful of the dough, and run or pour cold water over it while you kneading it (if you are pouring water from a pitcher, you'll need an extra set of hands). Keep doing this with handfuls of dough. The water running off will be milky white with starch and have flecks of bran. The bran settles in the pie pan (dry it and save it, it has a lot of uses), and the white water in the bowl should be saved and used to thicken sauces, gravies, or soups. Keep kneading and rinsing until the water runs clear. What's left after the water rinsing is wheat gluten. Form into small loaves and steam for about 30 minutes or bake in an oven. Slice into strips and marinate for 10-12 hours. Use beef or chicken bouillon, add hot peppers, the "Scarborough Faire" spices (parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme), soy or teriyaki sauce, hot chili sauce, sesame oil, garlic, whatever you have handy and tastes good and familiar. Then bake it or crumble it and fry in hot oil. If you don't marinate it before baking, you'll want a good amount of sauce in the recipe. It's taste is very bland, so it needs a liberal spicing, or a flavorful sauce or gravy. Sprinkle the bran on breakfast cereals (including oatmeal and creme of wheat), and add it to baked products or casseroles. Be creative with seasonings. The recipes below have ideas..

Chickless Caciatory: Add poultry seasonings, powdered chicken bouillon, cumin, thyme, rosemary, garlic, savory and salt to the freshly made gluten and bake in a loaf pan at 300 degrees for 45 minutes. In a fry pan, saute onions, bell peppers and mushrooms, celery (whatever you have, if you are using dehydrated, re-hydrate in hot water before sauteing). Slice the gluten in 2 inch diameter pieces, and put in the pan. Slowly cook on both sides until it cooked all the way through. Cover with spaghetti sauce and let simmer for about 20 min. Serve over pasta or rice.**Vegetable "liver" and onions:** After making the gluten, flavor with soy sauce, garlic, onion powder and salt and bake at 300 degrees for 45 minutes.. Put some oil in a pan and saute onions (cut in strips) and mushrooms. Remove the mushrooms and onions, slice the gluten in patties and slowly brown on both sides. Add a mushroom gravy (cornstarch variety is best) and simmer for about 45 minutes or until most of the gravy is absorbed by the gluten, turning often to avoid burning. Serve with the cooked onions and mushrooms. **Scallops gluten:** Season gluten with lemon thyme, pepper, garlic, cumin. Heat a deep fryer (hot enough for french fries). A deep fryer can simply be a heavy pot (such as a pressure cooker or Dutch oven) with oil in it. French fries are a perfect side dish. Form the gluten into balls, and deep fry. Serve with tarter sauce. **Meatless Loaf:** Make gluten, grind it, mix with chili powder, bouillon, garlic, onion powder, and a handful of oatmeal or cooked bulgar. Form into a loaf and put in a loaf pan. Cover with tomato sauce. Bake at 300 degrees for 45 minutes. **Chicken Fried Steakless Cutlets:** Make a Meatless Loaf, don't cover with tomato sauce before baking. Let cool, slice, dip in milk and seasoned flour (do this 2 or 3 times, add black and/or red pepper and salt to the flour). Put some oil in a skillet. Fry with medium heat until brown on both sides. Make a white cream sauce flavored with some spices or herbs, or a brown gravy, or mushroom gravy, and serve with mashed potatoes.

Bulgur wheat: In an emergency, authorities may distribute bags of grain. One way to prepare whole wheat grains is to process it as "bulgar wheat". Bring to a boil one part rinsed whole wheat kernels plus two parts water, then simmer until the berries are tender (about one hour). Spread the berries on a cookie sheet and bake in a 225° F oven, stirring occasionally, until dry (about one hour), or dry in the sun. Grind in a blender, or grain grinder, or crush with a rolling pin, to the consistency of cracked wheat. **To make the bulgar wheat pilaf:** saute onions and garlic and bulgar wheat in oil. Add 2 parts broth, stock, water with bouillon, to one part bulgar wheat, plus dried herbs such as sage, thyme, rosemary, basil, oregano, parsley. Cooked or stir-fried vegetables and/or chunks of mat can also be added. Be liberal with the seasonings. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, simmer until liquid is absorbed. Cream of Bulgar: Grind dehydrated bulgar to the consistency of flour, cook and use like Cream of Wheat.

Oral rehydration solution: In the event of severe diarrhea and dysentery, or loss of fluids due to excessive heat, make and administer an oral rehydration solution (common store names for oral rehydration solutions are Gatorade and Pedialyte). Give the dehydrated person sips of this drink every five minutes, until he or she begins to urinate normally. Keep giving the drink often in small sips, even if the person vomits. Not all of the drink will be vomited. Combine ½ tsp salt and 8 heaping tsp (or 2 handfuls) of powdered cereal and dissolve in 1 liter of boiled and cooled water. Powdered rice is best, but corn meal or wheat flour or cooked and mashed potatoes can also be used. Boil this mixture for 5 to 7 minutes to form a watery porridge. Cool quickly and give to the sick person. When using, make it frequently, especially in warm weather. Without refrigeration, it can spoil in a few hours. Another recipe for an oral rehydration drink is: one-half level teaspoon of salt, 8 level teaspoons of sugar, mixed with one liter of water. A half cup of fruit juice should also be added if available.

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