

The Family Larder

with Karen Geiser
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Keeping a family larder is a wise practice in today's world. Growing your own, purchasing from local farms or simply stocking up at the grocery store can all be good sources for setting aside food. Here are helpful ideas as you create your food storage plan so that you are prepared for future circumstances. You can use this worksheet to start noting amounts that you plan to put away for your family this season or start a notebook to document goals each year.

Keys to making a family larder:

- 1. Calculate your family food needs – don't overdo it but don't skimp either**
- 2. Have proper storage places – canning shelves, freezers, root cellar, air tight bins, etc.**
- 3. Choose appropriate food preservation methods**

Food Preservation Options:

Canning – Foods that do well canned include tomato products (sauce, salsa, ketchup, juice), many fruits, pickles, beets and more. Low acid items like green beans and meats require a pressure canner for a safe product.

Freezing – Foods that lend well to freezing include many veggies (beans, peas, corn, broccoli, peppers), berries, meats, broth, butter and more.

Dehydrating – Items that dehydrate well are herbs, fruits like apples and pears, leeks, tomatoes and beef jerky.

Root Cellar – Root crops like potatoes, carrots, beets and turnips store well in the cool, moist environment of a root cellar.

Fermentation – Sauerkraut is the most common but you can also ferment pickles, beets, cauliflower, beans and more for a very nutritious food storage item.

Dry Storage – Produce like onions, garlic, butternut squash and sweet potatoes as well as grains, dry beans, rice and salt need a cool, dry place safe from rodents and insects.

Cold Framing – Plan your garden so you have a steady supply of produce all summer and then plant greens like spinach, kale and chard under protection for the cold months.

Family Medicine Chest – Keep a stock of herbal medicines like tinctures, tea and salve on hand as well as other supplements or prescriptions you use.

Resources for details on food preservation methods:

The Ball Blue Book – canning, freezing, dehydrating information

Fermented Vegetables by Kirsten and Christopher Shockey

The Art of Fermentation by Sandor Katz

Root Cellaring by Mike and Nancy Bubel

Four Season Harvest by Eliot Coleman (includes root cellar details)

Year Round Gardener by Niki Jabbour

Heal Local by Dawn Combs

and many more titles and videos from the Mother Earth News library.