01 - Food Storage & Rations

SHTF Food Rations — Core Survival Diet

Beans, Rice, and Fat — the minimum viable food supply for short to medium term rationing.

Overview

This page covers the minimum viable food supply for short to medium term survival rationing using three core ingredients: white rice, dried beans, and cooking fat (ideally tallow). Together these three items provide a nutritionally defensible diet that keeps the body functional under rationing conditions.

Rice and beans form a complementary protein pair — meaning together they cover all essential amino acids comparable to eating meat. Fat is required separately because both rice and beans are nearly fat-free, and the body requires dietary fat for hormone production, absorbing fat-soluble vitamins, and maintaining brain and nerve function.

This ration is a survival baseline, not a comfortable long-term diet. It is designed to be paired with a home garden for vitamins and variety, and stored multivitamins and salt as additional insurance.

Why These Three Ingredients

White Rice

White rice is the primary calorie source in this plan. It is shelf stable for 25+ years when stored in sealed airtight containers with oxygen absorbers, kept in a cool dark place. It cooks with water

only, expands to roughly double its dry volume when cooked, and provides fast-absorbing carbohydrate energy that the brain and muscles run on directly.

Dried Beans

Dried beans provide the protein and fiber that rice alone cannot. They store for 10+ years under proper conditions, though very old beans may take longer to soften. Beans triple in volume when cooked from dry. Combined with rice they form a complete protein, making meat optional rather than required.

Any variety works: pinto, black, navy, kidney, or lentils. Lentils cook faster than whole beans and require no soaking, which saves fuel.

Cooking Fat (Tallow Recommended)

Fat is the most commonly overlooked survival nutrient. Without it the body cannot absorb vitamins A, D, E, or K regardless of how much food you eat, and hormone production degrades over weeks. Rendered beef tallow is the recommended choice because it is solid at room temperature, requires no refrigeration, and stores for 1 to 2 years sealed at room temperature — essentially indefinitely frozen.

Alternatives include coconut oil, ghee (clarified butter), or any cooking oil. Olive oil works but degrades faster once opened.

Daily Ration Per Person

This is a rationing diet, not full maintenance calories. Expect reduced energy, especially for adults doing physical work. Children may find this closer to adequate depending on age.

Item	Amount (Dry)	Calories	Protein	Fat
White Rice	1 cup / ~180g	~650 cal	~13g	~1g
Dried Beans	1/2 cup / ~90g	~300 cal	~19g	~1g
Tallow / Cooking Fat	1 tablespoon	~115 cal	0g	~13g
Total Per Person / Day	—	**~1,065 cal**	**~32g**	**~15g**

> **Note:** To push closer to maintenance for active adults, increase to 1.5 cups rice, 3/4 cup beans, and 2 tablespoons fat per day. This brings the total to approximately 1,700 calories per person.

> **Note:** Dry ingredients expand significantly when cooked. Half a cup of dry beans becomes a generous bowl. One cup of dry rice becomes two cups cooked. The portions are more filling than the dry measurements suggest.

2-Week Supply — Family of 4

To calculate a 1-month supply, double all quantities. For 3 months, multiply by 6.

Rice

Duration	1 Person	Family of 4
2 Weeks	~7 lbs	~28 lbs
1 Month	~14 lbs	~56 lbs
3 Months	~42 lbs	~168 lbs

Dried Beans

Duration	1 Person	Family of 4
2 Weeks	~3.5 lbs	~14 lbs
1 Month	~7 lbs	~28 lbs
3 Months	~21 lbs	~84 lbs

Cooking Fat (Tallow)

Duration	1 Person	Family of 4
2 Weeks	~1 cup / ~0.5 lbs	~4 cups / ~2 lbs
1 Month	~2 cups / ~1 lb	~8 cups / ~4 lbs

Duration	1 Person	Family of 4
3 Months	~6 cups / ~3 lbs	~24 cups / ~12 lbs

> **Shopping note:** Rice is typically sold in 10 lb, 20 lb, and 50 lb bags. Beans in 1 lb, 5 lb, and 25 lb bags. Tallow in 1 lb or 2 lb tubs. Plan purchases around these sizes to minimize waste.

Scaling Up or Down

Everything scales linearly with the number of people and the number of days.

Formula:

- Rice: `1 cup × people × days`
- Beans: `0.5 cup × people × days`
- Fat: `1 tablespoon × people × days`

Example: 3 people for 30 days = 1 cup × 3 × 30 = 90 cups dry rice = roughly 18 lbs.

Pre-Calculated 2-Week Totals by Household Size

People	Rice	Beans	Tallow
1	~7 lbs	~3.5 lbs	~1 cup / ~0.5 lbs
2	~14 lbs	~7 lbs	~2 cups / ~1 lb
4 (family)	~28 lbs	~14 lbs	~4 cups / ~2 lbs
6	~42 lbs	~21 lbs	~6 cups / ~3 lbs
8	~56 lbs	~28 lbs	~8 cups / ~4 lbs

Storage Notes

- **White rice** stores 25+ years in sealed mylar bags or airtight buckets with oxygen absorbers, kept cool and dark.
- **Dried beans** store 10+ years under the same conditions. Very old beans remain edible but may require longer soaking and cooking times.
- **Tallow** stores 1 to 2 years sealed at room temperature, indefinitely frozen. Keep the container clean and dry — rancidity comes from moisture and impurities, not the fat itself.
- Store everything in a cool, dark, dry location away from temperature swings. A closet, pantry shelf, or under-bed storage works. Avoid garages with extreme temperature swings.
- Label everything with the purchase or pack date and rotate stock on a first-in-first-out basis.

What This Plan Does Not Cover

This ration keeps the body alive and functional. It does not cover everything needed for long-term health. Address the following separately:

- **Vitamins A and C** — Covered by a home garden with kale, tomatoes, and green onions. Vitamin C deficiency (scurvy) begins showing symptoms after approximately 4 to 8 weeks without it.
- **Vitamin B12** — Only found in animal products. A 2-week window is within safe limits as the body stores it, but longer-term planning should account for this.
- **Salt** — Necessary for cooking, preservation, and body function. Stock at least 5 to 10 lbs per household. Iodized salt also prevents iodine deficiency.
- **Multivitamins** — A 3 to 6 month supply per person is cheap insurance against nutritional gaps.
- **Water** — Plan for at least 1 gallon per person per day for drinking and cooking. Beans require significant water to cook.
- **Fuel for cooking** — Rice and beans both require boiling. A propane camp stove with extra canisters, a rocket stove, or wood fire capability should be part of the plan.

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