

# Storing Food Without Refrigeration

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# Contents

Dedication	ix
Introduction to the Third Edition	xi
Introduction	xiii
Buying Food	1
General Food Buying Tips	2
Meat and Seafood	7
Buying Canned Meat and Seafood	8
Canning Your Own Meat	10
Canned Meat and Seafood Meal Ideas	6
Ham	12
Chicken or Turkey	12
Tuna and Salmon	13
Crab	13
Shrimp	13
Corned Beef	14
Roast Beef	14
Clams	15
Oysters	15
Cooking with Canned Meats and Seafood	16
Vacuum-Sealed Refrigerated/Frozen Meats and Seafood	17

## Storing Food without Refrigeration

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Shelf-Stable Meats	20
Freeze-Dried Meats	22
Fresh Fish and Seafood	24
Produce	26
Buying Fruits and Vegetables	27
To Wash, or Not to Wash?	28
Storage Basics	30
Fruits and Veggies: Shortest to Longest-Lasting	31
Storage Specifics for Various Vegetables and Fruits	37
Stretch Your Stock of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables	53
Canning Your Own Fruits and Vegetables	55
Pickling Vegetables	55
Kimchi	57
Grow Your Own	58
Dehydrated Vegetables	62
Dried Fruit	65
Herbs & Spices	66
Milk	68
Boxed Milk of All Types	69
Cream	75
Butter or Margarine	79
Storing Butter at Room Temperature	80
Canned Butter	81
Butter Bell	81
Brining Butter	83
Substitutes for Butter	84
Cheese	86
Powdered Cream, Sour Cream, Cheese and Butter	90
Eggs	92
Unrefrigerated Eggs	93
Powdered Eggs	95

Condiments	97
Common Condiments	97
The Clean Spoon Rule	98
Horseradish and Wasabi	99
Maple Syrup	99
Mayonnaise and Miracle Whip	99
Bottled Salad Dressings	101
Miscellaneous	102
Coffee	102
Canned Foods	102
Juice	103
Bouillon and Stock	103
Tofu	104
Leftovers	104
Cooler	107
Setting Up a Cooler for Food	108
What to Look For in Buying a Cooler for Food	111
What Size Cooler to Store Food?	113
Putting It All Together	114
Sample Four-Day Meal Plan	114
Final Thoughts	113
Thank You So Much!	114
Appendix A: Instant-Read Thermometer Temps	120
Appendix B: Recipes	122
Basic Vinaigrette	122
Greek Dressing	124
Olive Garden Copycat Dressing	126
The Boat Galley Salad	128
Three Bean Salad	131
Healthier Zucchini, Carrot, or Sweet Potato Bread	133
Yogurt	135
Tasty Tuna Burgers	140

## **Storing Food without Refrigeration**

---

Tuna and Sweet Potato Patties	141
Chicken or Beef Enchiladas	142
Chicken or Shrimp Paella	143
Couscous Chicken	145
Chicken and Apricots	146
Roast Beef Chili	148
Pineapple Beef, Chicken, or Turkey	150
Goulash or Spanish Rice	152
Jambalaya	153
Pasta with Ham in Butter Sauce	155
Rice or Pasta Salad with Ham	156
Crab, Meat, Seafood, or Fish Cakes	157
New England Clam Chowder	160
Linguine and Clam Sauce	162
Ricotta Cheese	163
Chocolate-Oatmeal No Bake Cookies	165
John Herlig's Pickled Vegetables	167
Kimchi	169
Appendix C: Equivalent Measurement Chart	172
About Carolyn Shearlock	174

# Dedication

To everyone who has ever asked me a question about how to store food and create great meals without refrigeration, and particularly to those who asked me to put all the info together in one place.

To my husband Dave, who said “Sure!” to all my hare-brained travel ideas and who unwittingly became the crash test dummy as I explored various ways to store food without refrigeration.

To everyone else who has ever thought “Do I really need refrigeration?”

Special thanks to Pamela Douglas Webster, John Herlig, and Todd Morgan, who read an early draft and gave me valuable suggestions.

# Introduction to the Third Edition

When I wrote *Storing Food without Refrigeration* in early 2017, I knew that people wanted to learn techniques to store food without refrigeration—those articles were some of the most-read on my website, The Boat Galley.

I never dreamed of the response I'd get: boaters, campers, and more wanted to learn everyday techniques for living without refrigeration—or for expanding their options if they had only a tiny refrigerator. They wanted to know about foods they could buy at local stores and ways to store them that made sense for everyday meals. They didn't want “hardship” meals, but a way of life that was sustainable for weeks or months.

The second edition was almost two-thirds longer than the first edition in response to questions and comments I received. In particular, over fifty photos of products and storage solutions were added, more vegetables and products were discussed, a recipes section was created in the appendices, and many procedures were explained in greater detail.

Now, in the third edition, I've continued to add material based on reader questions and comments. Here, I've detailed storing over 25 more fruits and vegetables, added 17 more recipes, and generally added information throughout. It's another 30% longer than the second edition!

Enjoy your (great) meals!

# Introduction

YIKES! No refrigeration? Seriously?!

Many of us have memories of some long-ago trip—camping, canoeing, backpacking, or boating—where we didn't have access to a refrigerator and maybe not even a cooler. We ate freeze-dried, just-add-boiling-water food in a bag. It provided sustenance but not much else.

Good news! You can make a wide variety of great meals without refrigeration. Food that tastes great, has texture, and has no blobs, and you don't have to rely totally on canned food, either.

With the techniques in this book, you can have meat and seafood; fresh fruits and vegetables; milk and eggs; cheese, sour cream, and yogurt; and all the normal condiments without a refrigerator or cooler. If you do have a small refrigerator available—say in a boat or small RV—these techniques will help you make the most of the limited space by only using it for high-priority items.

You'll learn:

- Ways to store fresh food without refrigeration
- Great alternative products
- Which foods do not need to be refrigerated



## Storing Food without Refrigeration

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- Ways to make sour cream, yogurt, and ricotta cheese from shelf-stable ingredients
- Techniques for cooking with canned meats to preserve flavor and texture
- How to set up a cooler to store food, if you're lucky enough to have one available

You'll also find over sixty main dish ideas, and the final chapter provides a four-day sample meal plan.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Carolyn".

# Buying Food

“If I don’t have refrigeration, where do I buy my food?”

Many people think that if they don’t have refrigeration, they can’t have fresh food. They can’t have milk or eggs, and no fresh vegetables. They envision shopping almost exclusively in the canned foods aisle or in a specialty outdoors store.

You can buy all the food you need in a regular supermarket, in pretty much all of the aisles: produce; dairy; meat, either for the same day or longer if you have a cooler; and yes, some canned foods, too. If you have access to a farmer’s market or produce stand, so much the better. Most of the things that I buy online or in specialty stores are either treats or backups to have on hand, not my core foods.

I asked a few friends who cruise without refrigeration to read an early draft of this book, and one of the comments I got back was that they didn’t recall seeing many of the products I discuss in the grocery stores where they shopped. I’ll admit, some take a bit of searching or asking at the customer service counter, but I’ve been able to buy almost everything I describe as “usually available in supermarkets” even at tiny grocery stores in towns with less than 2,000 people. Occasionally, however, even the large stores in a particular area won’t carry an item. Shopping is part of the adventure!

## Storing Food without Refrigeration

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In the sections that follow, I've tried to say what aisle I most often find things in if they're a little less common. I've also tried to give alternatives and good backups to keep on hand; some of these are more typically online purchases.

I also discuss brands of certain products that I like. No, I'm not being compensated by any of these companies. They are simply products that my husband and I like much better than other brands we've tried. Some taste better, some have longer shelf life, some have less sodium. I am certain that there are other good brands available; I know that I have not tried every brand of every item. So don't feel that you can't try other brands, but my suggestion with any new food—even the ones I like, as your tastes may be different—is to try one of an item before stocking up.

In the Resources section at the end of this book there is a complete list of products that I buy online. These products are also in the text; the Resources section is just a handy compilation. I don't receive compensation for purchases from any of these recommendations.

### ***General Food Buying Tips***

#### *How long to plan and buy for?*

When you are just starting to travel or live without refrigeration, it's easiest to create a meal plan and then build a shopping list from that. I suggest starting with maybe three days, then lengthening to a week once you get comfortable.

For trips longer than that, I don't bother with meal plans. Instead, I buy "for the pantry" and then decide each day what we'll have. This is particularly true on longer trips in remote areas where we may go up to a month between grocery stores.

To stock the pantry, I'll start by thinking about how often we use various foods and how much we eat at a time. So, if we basically alternate eggs and cereal for breakfast, and I'm

stocking up for the next two weeks:

- Eggs = 2 each for my husband and I for 7 days =  $(2*2*7)$   
= 28 just for breakfasts
- Cereal = 2 people for each of 7 days = 14 servings
- Boxed milk = the same 14 servings, in individual boxes for each day

Now, of course, if I think we'll have another dish that uses eggs, such as egg salad sandwiches for a lunch, or a quiche for dinner, I'll have to add that to the number needed. And the same for extra oatmeal if we want to make chocolate-oatmeal cookies.

When it comes to dinners, I may know that we tend to have ham twice a week, roast beef once, clams once, and so on. So for that two-week time period, I'd want 4 cans of ham, and two each of roast beef and clams. And right on down the line for everything else we typically eat – making one-week meal plans on your first trips gives you a good feel for how much of what you eat.

Other things, such as vegetable oil, I don't really think of in terms of "servings" but in terms of how long a container typically lasts and how much I already have on hand. Will I need more before I go shopping again? If so – or I'd be running close – it goes on the list.

If you'd like a spreadsheet to help you calculate this, I've created one that you can have for free. Be sure to read the included instruction sheet and modify it for the foods you want to have on your trip. Grab a copy at <https://products.theboatgalley.com/products/provisioning-spreadsheet> -- it will be emailed to you immediately.

### *Don't Expect to Change Your Preferences*

Having no refrigeration doesn't mean that you have to make drastic changes in how you eat – and you shouldn't try to. For