5 Rationing Strategies You Must Know

If you're old enough or if you're a student of history, you may know about wartime rations.

Or, if you've lived under totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe or China, you are aware of the fact that people can survive (and even thrive, as population actually grew during those times) on diets consisting of as little as 300 grams of rice/bread per day, and an egg and/or a little bit of bacon/meat a couple times a week. Nowadays, **approximately 40% of US adults are obese** and food is plenty, not to mention dirt cheap, hence rationing strategies as a topic of conversation may sound surreal even among preppers.

Now, I know what you're thinking: I'm a survivalist and I'm always prepared for the worst; and it's true that generally speaking, preppers in the US are already stockpiling nonperishable foods, guns, ammo and similar stuff, even if there's nothing horrific at the horizon. But sometimes things just go wrong, and you know that old saying: man plans and God laughs.

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The topic of today's article is rationing strategies, as in who will get most food when SHTF, provided you have limited

resources and no prospects for the situation to improve in the near future. What would you do with a limited food supply in an emergency, when you don’t know for how long you’ll have to lay low and chew the fat, together with your family and/or friends? Obviously, in such a scenario, food rationing is a nondebatable topic, but how would you implement your plan? Who you’d have to prioritize? Does everyone get an equal share? These are important questions if you come to think about it, and they’ll sooner or later present you with an ethical dilemma: when the survival of the “tribe” is at stake, who eats first and who eats last?

To begin with, you should know that the current **“US diet” consists of approximately 2500 calories per day**, give or take, which is a lot compared to the rest of the world. By the way, that’s why Americans are among the fattest people on Earth: we eat way too much and often the wrong things. However, in an emergency, one’s nutritional intake may very well be cut in half, or even worse, and that’s on top of the increased psychological stress and physical workload. What does that mean?

Well, you’ll be hungry, scared and tired, which further translates into anxiety, depression, apathy, and if the situation keeps going, your body will begin to fail, tearing through body fat first and then through the muscle. The thing about low calorie diets is that they can keep you alive for a long time, but you’ll have to deal with a lot of bad effects on your state of mind and overall health. With these things established, let’s see the basics of food rationing in emergencies.

Considering a 2000 calorie a day diet, which is what you should be eating normally, a reduced diet would consist in 1500 calories, while the lower limit would be 1200 calories. Depending on how much supplies you do have and knowing that you will not be capable of getting more food, you should start from here, i.e. **gather all your food supplies**, create an

inventory of sorts, then group foods into categories, in order to determine which ones would have to be eaten first (the perishable stuff, obviously).

WHAT 1500 CALORIES LOOKS LIKE

342 CALORIES
Carbs 46g, Protein 21g
Fat 8g, Fiber 3g

BREAKFAST
4 Protein Packed Pancakes + ½ cup sliced strawberries and bananas

198 CALORIES
Carbs 23g, Protein 8g
Fat 9g, Fiber 2g

MIDMORNING SNACK
¾ cup whole milk yogurt + ¼ cup blueberries + 2 tablespoons granola

333 CALORIES
Carbs 30g, Protein 25g
Fat 14g, Fiber 4g

LUNCH
Waldorf Chicken Wrap

172 CALORIES
Carbs 23g, Protein 7g
Fat 7g, Fiber 8g

MID-AFTERNOON SNACK
¼ cup hummus + 8 baby carrots + 5 whole grain crackers

453 CALORIES
Carbs 48g, Protein 27g
Fat 17g, Fiber 9g

DINNER
Black bean + spinach quesadilla topped with ¼ cup guacamole + ¼ cup 2% Greek yogurt

For example, you could use categories like vegetables and fruits, which are highly perishable, followed by dairy products and meats, cured/canned/dried goods, pasta and grains, cooking/baking supplies and so forth and so on, you got the idea. In the next step, you'll have to determine (as in count) how much food you have, which may be a pain in the ass, but the easiest way would be to weight the food and have a general idea about how to convert X amount of Y food into Z calories.

It would be great to have prior knowledge (as in a chart with various foods' nutritional value) about these things, such as how many calories are provided by a can of tuna fish for example.

After you've determined **how big your food stockpile** is, the next logical step is to consider how many people are you rationing for; thus you'll be able to get the general idea about how long your food supply would last. Obviously, the smaller the portions, the lesser calories, the longer your food supply will last. As a general rule of thumb, adult males require more calories than females, 1700 calories for a male daily vs 1300 calories for a woman.

Age is also a factor when determining one's daily caloric intake, as elderly people require less food generally speaking compared to younger people. For example, an elderly male requires only 1400 calories per day, while an elderly female can do with 1100 calories. Obviously, these are calorie intake guidelines for the average person, which are not set in stone and can be tampered with in a really bad situation. Just imagine that someone would have to hunt all day, or chop wood or whatever strenuous physical activity; it's obvious that the respective person will have to eat more compared to, let's say, a sedentary member of the group. There's also the issue of people's different metabolic rates, and so forth and so on, hence rations should be adjusted according to one's gender, age, overall health, and physical activity status.

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Based on all these "stats", you'll get the general idea of how many calories each person needs on a given day, and then you'll have to determine how to deliver the respective calorie ratio based on your food stockpile. Since there are hundreds and hundreds of foods that can be stored, it's almost impossible to make a comprehensive list here, but here are some basic guidelines:

- a cup of white rice has 686 calories
- a cup of oats has 147 calories
- a cup of cooked spaghetti has 221 calories (2 oz dry)
- an egg has ~100 calories (it's size dependent)
- 100 grams of ground beef will provide 164 calories
- pork has 250 calories if fresh and 541 if cured
- chicken meat has 200 calories per 100 grams
- 3.5 oz of corn have 354 calories
- 17 oz of baked potatoes have 255 calories etc.

Here's a comprehensive food nutrition chart, just take a look and you'll see what's up with almost every imaginable food's caloric content. Considering the fact that carb-rich (as in calorie-rich) foods are cheap and easy to store for a long time, it's very probable you'll have to eat a lot of those, so keep that in mind while reading the chart above. Speaking of low calorie diets, even in an emergency, less than 1000 calories a day is very dangerous for one's health, and a long-time caloric intake of fewer than 1200 calories/day would be very hard to implement, as the "subjects" would face having difficulties in focusing on topics or making decisions, and they'd be feeling sad, lonely, numb, not to mention drained both mentally and physically.

But **I saved the best part for last**: most people tend to believe that even in desperate survival scenarios, the right thing to do is to equally share what food is left among the

people in the group. As I already told you, people are far from being equal in this regard, as different folks burn different amounts of calories. If you make equal rations for all the people in the group, smaller people who eventually do less work will get more food than necessary, while bigger/more active people will not get enough food, and that's not good.

And there's always the ethical (and sometimes emotional) point of view: in a normal situation, a parent would go to sleep hungry so his/her children could have enough food to eat, but in a survival situation, children and other members of the group (sick people, elderly, women etc) would be relying on others to work and keep them safe, hence it would be a terrible idea (as in suicidal) to keep the latter malnourished.

Let me know your thoughts in the comment section.

Do you recognize this Tree?
(All Parts are edible)

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