

How To Store Flour, Sugar And Rice For Survival

In addition to your garden, if you have sugar, salt, and rice, plus some chickens and a milk cow (a few beef cows or canned meats would really put you up there), you have everything that you need to survive.



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The thing about sugar, salt, and rice is that you can't really produce them yourself without a lot of acreages, ideal conditions, and a ton of work, so you need to stockpile them.

Fortunately, all three of them are relatively cheap, especially if you buy in bulk. The problem is how to store flour, sugar, and rice for the long-term. All three of these items are sensitive to moisture and well-loved by critters of all sorts, so it's imperative that you keep them sealed in a manner that won't allow them to be eaten or ruined by moisture.

This point was driven home to me just the other day when I

opened a new bag of flour to make biscuits. It hadn't been on the shelf for more than a few months, yet when I dumped it into the bowl, I noticed little black bugs in it. Now I'm not a picky eater by any means, but I draw the line at bug biscuits. I guess I've just never been that hungry.

And if I have my say, I never will be. I learned my lesson – now all of my flour, even the smaller bags, go straight into a plastic container. That's not the only way to store any of these items though. As a matter of fact, I've discovered a few pretty nifty tricks that I'm going to share with you!

Check flour, sugar, and rice before you store it

This is a big deal. I say so because I've bought both buggy rice and flour in the past, and ended up having to throw away most of the stuff in the cabinet because they infested all of my dry goods that were either boxed or open.

It would have REALLY upset me if I'd been pouring it into my storage bin with other flour or rice because then I would have lost all of it. Since those two incidents, I've been really careful about checking for bugs before I even put it in my cabinets. This is a concern for beans and pasta too, so take a look at them all before you toss them on the shelves.

You can check the rice and beans at the store before you buy it – just look for the bugs at the bottom of the bag. Flour, sugar, and pasta aren't so easy. Pasta gets kind of a whitish, dry, brittle appearance when it's buggy so that my help you avoid buying buggy noodles.

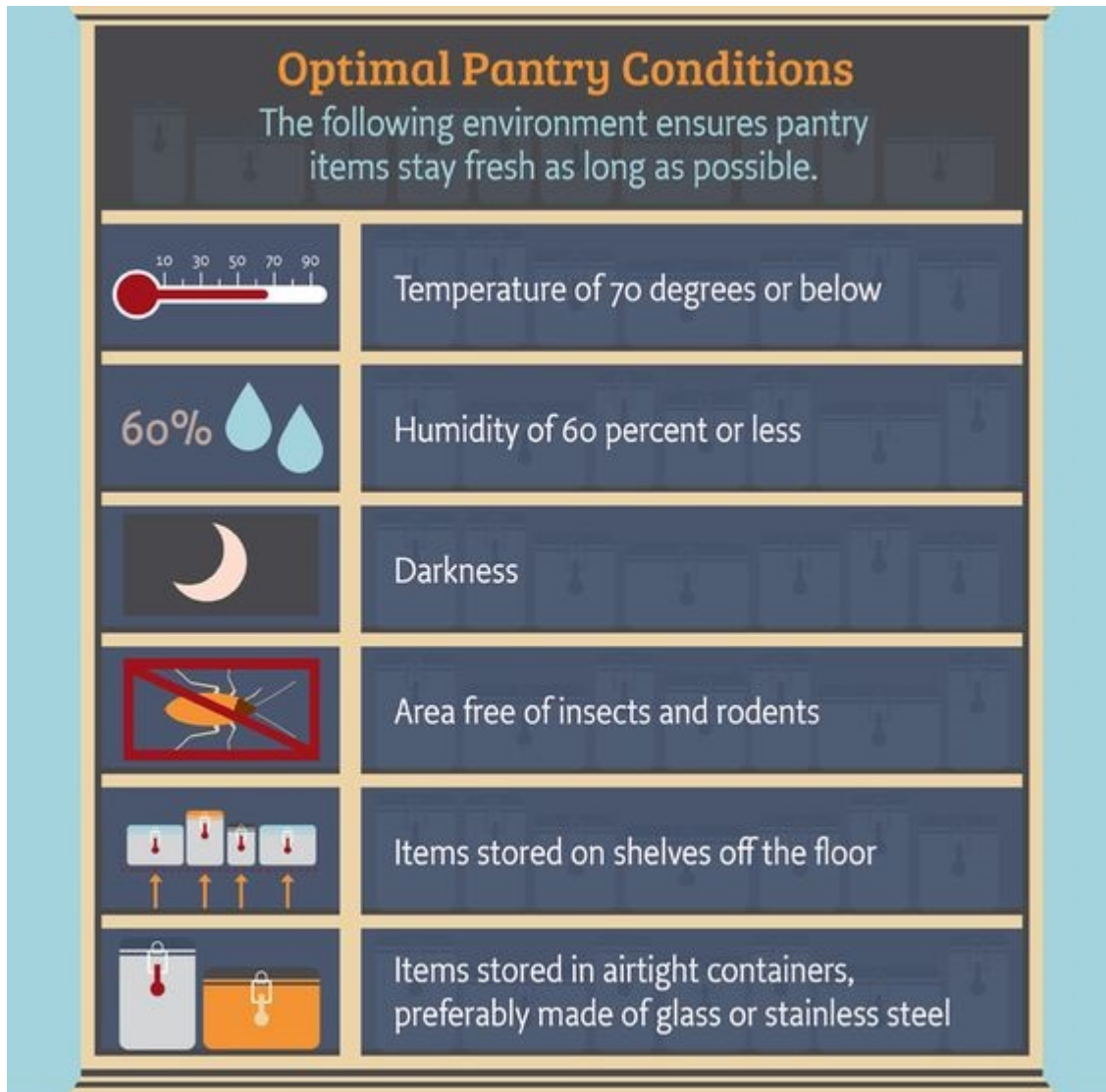
If you're going to pour a bag of dry goods into a larger container, I'd highly suggest pouring it into a big bowl and checking it before just tossing it in with the rest of your batch.

Store flour, sugar, and rice in plastic buckets

5-gallon buckets rock – that's just all there is to it. When it comes to a great [survival item](#), they rank right up there with duct tape as far as I'm concerned, at least when we're talking about non-portable items. The great thing about 5-gallon buckets is that you can get them for free from local restaurants and bakeries.

If they happen to smell like pickles or whatever else was stored in them, scrub them good with some soapy bleach water and rinse well. If they still smell a bit weird, put a box of baking soda or some charcoal in it, put the lid on, and let it sit overnight. It'll smell fine the next day.

When you're getting your buckets, make sure they're food-grade and make sure that they have a rubber seal around the inside of the lid. Most do, but check to make sure before you store your dried goods in them. If you have trouble getting the lids off, you can actually buy a tool specifically designed to help you with that.



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You can also buy gamma lids, which seal, and then part of the lid screws on and off so that you don't have to struggle with removing the whole lid. They're a little pricey but if you get your bucket for free, then it may be worth it to you.

Dry-Can Flour, Rice, and Sugar

This is a good method if you want to store your dry goods in smaller containers that you'll use quickly. I wrote an article about safe [dry-canning](#) a while back that gives you specific instructions on how to do it.

Vacuum Packing

I think that vacuum packing is a great idea but, after having been raised in WV where the mice have no shame and in Florida where they're actually armed, I'm not a huge fan of using vacuum packing as the only method of storage. We've written an article that gives you some great ideas to [keep the mice away here](#).

Don't get me wrong – it's a great way to extend shelf-life but if you're going to vacuum seal your dried goods, throw them in a 5-gallon bucket to keep the critters from eating through the plastic. Then you'd have the best of both worlds – small, lightweight, portable portions stored securely in one larger space that nothing will chew through.

Mylar Bags

I know that Mylar bags seem to be the direction that everybody is heading and I can't deny that they're a great way to store food, but the cost of them is prohibitive for me. However, if you don't mind paying a bit more, then, by all means, jump on it. They're certainly more secure than just vacuum sealing. As a matter of fact, they can preserve food for up to 15 years, so that's a definite check in the bonus column. Again, I'd use the buckets to store the bags.

Barrels and Drums

Since I'm typically the "if it's free, it's for me" type of girl, I didn't realize until recently that there was such a great selection of food-grade barrels and drums that came in sizes other than 5 gallons and 55 gallons. I don't mean to sound out of the loop, but it just never occurred to me to check it out until I was looking for smaller [rain barrels](#).

It turns out that you can buy them in just about any size in between, and they're made for both food AND water, so you have

a wide array of fairly affordable options that suit your needs no matter how much space you have or food you want to store.

Shelf Life of Flour, Sugar, and Rice

This is probably something that you haven't given a lot of thought to, but the shelf life is pretty important when you're talking about long-term storage. As always, practice the FIFO (First-in, first-out) method of stockpiling.

That aside, sugar and white rice (along with several other great foods discussed [here](#)) have a shelf life of literally forever as far as anyone knows, but flour and brown rice are only good for about 15 months. After that, both will start to go rancid. Though both may last longer, especially if stored in airtight containers in cool, dark environments, you'll know if either has gone bad because they'll smell sour.

This lends credence to the ideas of canning, or to vacuum sealing, then storing in buckets because both canning a vacuum sealing keeps out the air that facilitates spoilage.

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Did I miss anything, or do you have any questions? Let me know in the comments section below!

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