

Essential items that you should cache today

Learning about caching survival items is highly recommended if your survival plan includes a long-distance bug out. A buried treasure containing everything necessary to your survival is a backup plan that will help you reach your safe haven when every other preparation fails.

If you get separated from your bug-out bag or if you're running low on supplies, you will have to find that proverbial x that marks the spot where you buried your survival cache. Once you have dug up your stash, you will have just enough to cover the remaining miles to reach your bug-out location. Not only will you get the needed supplies, but you will also obtain a morale boost to help you push forward.

However, if you didn't plan to cache any survival implements, you should reconsider your survival plan and do so while the world is still at peace. Taking the time to make such preparations will come in handy later on, no matter what you prepare for.

A cache is a collection of items (survival or otherwise) that you are hiding away for future use. This concept was first introduced in the 1980s, and survivalists back then were taught to use PVC tubing to store and hide items that would come in handy if the brown stuff hits the fan. Since back then, the popularity of geocaching has increased considerably, and there are even commercial caches being sold nowadays.



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The size of the cache and the number of stores you may need to depend on the type of items you're stashing inside. You probably don't want to build a time capsule just like the average Joe is putting together to remind his future self of a time long gone. Luckily, many of the high-priority survival items you may want to cache are not that large.

Here are a few necessary items you should consider caching:

1. Shelter

Shelter becomes one of your first survival and most basic needs if you find yourself in the wilderness without your survival bag, and it becomes a priority regardless of the season you are facing. Protection from the elements and staying warm are two of the things you need to consider when planning your cache.

For example, folks out there do not bother updating their bug-out bags, or they forget to do so. When disaster strikes, they will grab their bag and be out the door in minutes, and they won't look back or spend too much time thinking things through since getting out alive is the main priority.

Now, if the weather change or the cold weather becomes too much to bear, having a bivy, a pair of cold-weather gloves, and a layer of clothing appropriate for the season stashed somewhere will upturn their luck. An extra team or two of socks will also come in handy if you need warm and dry clothing.

As for shelter building, a tarp and some paracord will help you improvise a convenient shelter that will protect you from the elements. Add in one or two emergency blankets, and you will be able to insulate your shelter correctly, or you can use them to deflect heat from a campfire and keep yourself warm.

These items do not take a lot of space and will protect you when facing the rain, wind, or snow. Once you manage to cover your shelter needs, you can move to the following priorities.

2. Fire

Fire is your safety line in the wilderness, and not only is it a helpful tool, but it's also a morale booster, a lifesaver if you will. You will need fire to heat your shelter, to stay warm and dry, but also to purify your water and cook your meals.

The good news is that fire-making tools are small, lightweight and you can store in your cache multiple items to help you light a fire. One or two disposable Bic lighters, a fire piston or strike-anywhere matches, and some waterproof matches should all be considered for your cache. It's better to have multiple options to start a fire if one of the methods you intend to use unexpectedly fails.

It's also a good idea to pack any fuel of your choice in a sealed container or a vacuum-sealed bag. You can make your fuel, like cotton balls soaked in petroleum jelly, or you can buy some commercial items like the WetFire cubes. Whatever you pick, make sure your fuel is sealed in a waterproof container so it stays dry. It's also intelligent to seal your fire-making tools in plastic bags to prevent corrosion if your cache leaks or gets damaged.

3. Water

When planning to cache water, you must keep in mind that water is bulky and heavy, and you need a two-way approach to cover your water needs.

First of all, you can cache one or two bottles of water or water pouches since these are rated to last a few years, but you should also plan for alternatives. However, if you do so, make sure you bury your cache below the frost line to prevent the bottles or pouches from bursting.

Depending on how big your cache is or how many supplies you plan on preparing, you can cache enough water to hydrate yourself and cook a couple of meals.

And second, think about the means of procuring and purifying water in your environment once you consume all the water you've cached.

Chances are, you won't be able to cache enough water to cover your basic needs for more than 2 or 3 days, so plan for alternatives as well. Caching a small water filter, water purification tablets, and a collapsible container will provide you with everything you need to collect and purify water.

As for finding water sources in your environment, well...this is mostly a matter of mapping your area, and you might also need some experience in the field. For example, you can test your abilities to gather water using a tarp or an emergency blanket during a rainy day in your backyard. You can also improvise a vegetation still during camping trips and see how much water you can collect and how much time it takes to obtain a glass of water.

4. Food

Storing food in your cache is troublesome because you can't rotate the food items as you would at home. You need to be smart about this and pick only time-tested options because chances are your cache will stay buried for a long time.

I suggest going with freeze-dried food or dehydrated foods since these can last for a long time and do not require much to be prepared. All you need is some water to rehydrate the food items, and you will have a ready-to-eat meal.

Another option would be to store some MREs, but you have to keep in mind that the average shelf life of MREs is almost five years if stored at 75° F and nearly ten years in cooler conditions. Once again, regardless of what you pick, make sure you vacuum seal your food items to prevent spoilage and make a mess in your cache if the packaging gets damaged.

5. Tools and utensils

You have many options when it comes to stashing tools and utensils, and it all depends on how experienced you are at using various tools, improvising without them, or working with the bare minimum you've got.

A good knife is a critical item in a survival environment, and you should have one stashed in each cache.

You can also store lighting items such as flares, chem lights, or solar lanterns (there are a few collapsible types on the market), but also a hatchet and utensils to prepare and cook your meals. How about a fishing line and a few hooks?

If you plan on hunting, maybe some extra ammo or bolts for your crossbow should be stashed in your cache as well. A small multi-tool will come in handy when you least expect it, so perhaps throw one of these in one of your caches.

As mentioned before, there are many options for tools and utensils, and you should cache anything that you believe will help you survive. Any item you're comfortable using to its full extent regardless of the environment you find yourself in.

6. First aid

When it comes to first aid items, you have to consider the possibility that you might end up in bad shape if you get separated from your bug-out bag or if something unexpected happens and you're caught off guard.

In general, you should have a first aid kit stashed away in one of your caches, and you should also consider having some medicine packed as well since most of these will last for a long time in a cool and dry environment. Even so, it's better to do your homework and talk to your doctor if you take the specific medication to find out how long will those remain useful and effective. For example, some medications can become toxic or ineffective if stored improperly.

You can add more first aid items or customize your medical kit depending on your needs and experience. But the problem here is not how many items you store, but rather how good (or experienced) you are at using those items. It will do you no good having a first aid kit if you have no idea how to use the items in that kit or if you waste too much of them trying to do an excellent job at mending your wounds.

Caching problems

Once you make a list with all the items you need to cache and build a caching container (or buy one), it's time to find a home for your cache. There are many options here, but you can't go around digging holes and hope for the best.

If you own the land on which you plan to cache your survival supplies, nobody should bother you or complain about digging holes. Another alternative would be to cache your stuff on the property of someone you know and trust.

If these are not viable options, you can move to public land, but the trick here is to find locations that won't be disturbed or inspected by others. You can imagine that if your cache site looks like a burial site, someone might look into it if they suspect foul play.

And once you find that perfect place to bury your cache, you must make sure the area is not populated, and no traffic would prevent you from digging up the ground (for caching or retrieval). Chances are you are prohibited from digging on public land, and you want to stay away from prying eyes.

But Bob, how am I supposed to hide my cache if I'm prohibited from digging?

Well, put it this way, there's always a difference between what you're allowed to do and what you can do, and in the end, these are two different things. After all, you're the only one who's supposed to bury the cache and know about its whereabouts. It doesn't exist if they don't know about it.

And lastly, once you manage to bury the cache, mark its location on a map, take pictures of the surrounding area and easily identifiable landmarks in the vicinity. Figure out ways to help you return to your buried treasure, and keep in mind that geography, vegetation, and milestones can change over time. I advise you to visit the location of your caches at regular intervals to make sure your survival items are still there.

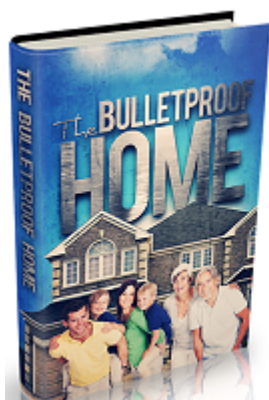
Concluding

Caching is life insurance you will undoubtedly need if your

bugging-out strategy doesn't go as planned. As preppers, we should always prepare for the unexpected, and caching is nothing more than a plan B or C to your main action plan.

Cover your basic survival needs when you plan your cache(s), and you will struggle less if something unexpected happens and you are separated from your bug-out bag. Once you manage to retrieve your stash, you will be grateful you spent time and resources on such a backup plan.

A well-thought cache is an excellent alternative to supplement your survival items and supplies. Like all your other supplies, you hope you'll never truly need them, but it's reassuring to know you have options when SHTF.



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