

The 12 Days of Prepping Christmas

Ah, Christmastime; a favorite for many. Christmas traditions abound, including the singing of Christmas Carols. While a few souls out there hate them, they are outnumbered by those who can't wait for their favorite radio station to start playing them. My wife has been listening to carols since October, and she knows the words to all of them.

Another major Christmas tradition is the giving of gifts. We all love giving and especially receiving gifts from family and friends. But as preppers, we tend to measure some of those gifts in their utility in a post-disaster situation. I mean, no matter how pretty a tie my daughter gives me, I really can't see much of a way to use it to help me survive, right?

So just for fun, I've decided to put Christmas caroling and Christmas gifts together, coming up with what seems to me like a good wish list for a Prepper's 12 Days of Christmas. I'm counting down to one rather than making you read things over and over again.

12 – On the Twelfth Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave Me 12 Buckets of Freeze-Dried Food

Granted, I don't buy much commercially package freeze-dried food, other than a few unique things, but the food is about as central to prepping as you can get. Not that I have anything against the commercial stuff; I do my own. We all seem to start by buying food, and it seems that no matter how many other projects we complete, we're still buying food. If someone gave me food as a gift, I imagine that they would buy it rather than fill five-gallon buckets themselves.

The nice thing about this gift is that there's no risk of the recipient saying, "Thanks, but I've already got one." There's no such thing as having too much food stockpiled. As long as it is properly stored, it will be helpful for nothing else than to eat in retirement.

11 – On the Eleventh Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me, 11 Rain Barrels

What's that; eleven sounds a bit excessive to you? I realized something this last year that I've tried to ignore before; that is, it doesn't rain all year long. So whatever rainfall we get, I need to capture as much as I can to last through the dry months. Those 11 rain barrels only represent 550 gallons of water, which is nowhere near enough for my wife and me to survive. Still, it is probably about as many as it can put in my yard without it looking so ridiculous as to attract the city's attention.

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Of course, that's not my only water storage. My stealth water tank is an above-ground swimming pool. My wife and I don't use it, but the grandkids do when they come, so it just looks like we're good grandparents, doing something special for our grandkids, and they get to play in the rainwater.

10 – On the Tenth Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me, 10 Cases of Toilet Paper

Now come on, does anyone see a problem with this? You can't have forgotten the toilet paper shortage of 2020 already.

While leaves and other things might work, they're not as good as TP. So if you want to stock up on something besides food and water, I'd say this is a good one to have.

I thought my ex-wife was a bit obsessive about this one before 2020. We had six months of food in our stockpile, and according to my calculations, we had two years of TP. That's assuming that all of our kids and their families came back to live with us during the apocalypse. She was probably laughing every time she went to the store, seeing those other people rush to get the six-packs that came in overnight while she was sitting on the biggest TP stockpile in the state.

9 – On the Ninth Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me, 9 Cans of Ammo

Speaking of runs on things causing shortages, when will ammunition sales ever get back to normal? Paying \$30 to \$50 a box for ammo is a bit excessive. That's if you can find it. We had ammo shortages pretty much through Obama's presidency, and now it looks like the same thing will happen through the Biden presidency. Amazingly, there weren't any ammo shortages while Trump was in office. Wonder what that means?

Considering the high cost of ammo and its rarity, this is probably the most expensive gift on this list; save the one I saved for the number one slot. But then, it might even give that one a run for its money.

8 – On the Eighth Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me, 8 Raised

Garden Beds

Now that's a practical gift. You know that building garden beds and filling them with good garden soil is a lot of work if you're gardening. So this gift would qualify as a labor of love. It's also one that you might want to drop some hints about, talking about where you might want to expand your garden, should you decide to do so. That way, the beds won't end up in the wrong place.

I think that building and, even worse, filling garden beds is what keeps a lot of people out of gardening. While building raised beds is unnecessary, they've been touted so much in the prepping community that we all expect to use them. I'd recommend it, but if you can't, plant anyway. Anything you grow is better than nothing.

7 – On the Seventh Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me, 7 Rabbits Breeding

Rabbits are the second most popular form of home-grown animal protein. Bunnies breed rapidly and are easy to care for. Seven rabbits would be enough to start a rabbit farm, let alone keeping your family in meat. Best of all, they aren't all that hard to take care of, don't require a lot of space, and will eat pretty much anything left over from your garden.

I like the idea of allowing rabbits to free-range in the backyard. But if that's the way they're going to be raised, you've got to fence in your garden and make sure that the perimeter fence doesn't have anywhere they can squeeze through. Rabbits are rodents, and as such, can get through tiny areas. They need to be captured every night and placed in their cage for protection.

6 – On the Sixth Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me, 6 Hens a Layin’

I would have gone for more hens to get more eggs, but it turns out that a lot of municipalities limit the number of chickens one may have to six. But those six chickens will give you an average of four eggs per day, so that’s not all that bad.

One of the great things about raising chickens, besides the better eggs, is that chickens will eat anything, including leftover chicken, literally. While it’s a good idea to have some chicken feed as part of their diet, providing them your leftovers, as well as clippings from your garden, will significantly reduce your cost of raising them. If your garden is fenced to keep them out, let them loose in the yard, and they’ll keep the bug population down, too, as an added benefit.

5 – On the Fifth Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me, 5 New Guns

Before you say it, I know that there are some out there who will say, “Only five?” But let’s be honest. Those people probably already have quite a collection anyway. Last I checked, you can only shoot one at a time, regardless of what they do in Hollywood. Trying to shoot two at once means you’ll miss with both.

But if there’s one thing that many of us would love to have, it’s another gun... or five. This is probably another one where dropping a few hints would help them buy the right thing.

4 – On the Fourth Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me, 4 Fire- starters

The old formula was to carry two primary and two secondary means of starting a fire. While I've never had to go to my secondary methods, other than when I wanted to, I can't fault this formula. The need to start a fire is so critical that we need to be sure that we can, no matter what.

When it comes to fire starters, I'm a firm believer in applying the KISS principle. The only ones I'm interested in are simple to use. Save that fancy stuff for showing off or just in case you get caught in a survival situation without a survival kit. Of course, that means you've already failed the first question on that real-life test, but even so, KISS.

As part of that KISS principle, I spend the money to buy fire starters that I know will work, like a stormproof lighter rather than a disposable one. I use the Blastmatch instead of a Ferro Rod. While some would say they're essentially the same, that's like saying that a Volkswagen Bug and a Suburban are the same. One is a whole lot more capable than the other.

3 – On the Third Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me, 3 Water Purifiers

Clean water is one of our more critical survival necessities. That's why we should make sure that we have more than one primary means of purifying water, as well as several secondary ones. We're probably going to go through a whole lot more water than most people expect to, as the "one gallon per person, per day" figure is just for drinking and cooking. It doesn't consider bathing, washing clothes, and cleaning our

homes. While those water uses don't require purified water, they still need water.

Another big concern is that I see many people buying cartridge water purification systems without buying enough replacement cartridges. I'm not sure how many cartridges would be enough, but I'd take my expected, clean water needs for a year and double it as a starting point. After that, you might need to develop something else, like boiling water, to keep going.

2 – On the Second Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me, 2 Bug Out Bags

Yes, you read that right, two bug-out bags. If my true love gave me one, I'd expect them to prepare one for themselves too, hence two bags. While theirs might not have to have everything mine does, it should still have enough for them to survive on their own, as well as food, clothing, and shelter for them.

While I get the idea of a minimalist bag, trying to save weight, that can be taken too far. When people backpack, they carry tents, sleeping bags, and food for the entire trip. If they can bring all that, including a week's worth of food and clothing, I don't see why we can't as well.

1 – On the First Day of Christmas, My True Love Gave to Me a Getaway Cabin in the Woods

I'd have to say that this is the ultimate gift for a prepper. I mean, who doesn't want a cabin in the woods that they can use as a survival retreat? The only thing that could make this gift better is if they fully stocked it with food and other

survival supplies.

While I'd love to have that cabin in the woods, I doubt it will ever happen. Such things are expensive; beyond what my budget can manage. The only way I could do that was to sell my home and buy the cabin, making that my home. But while I can work from anywhere, my wife cannot. So we did the next best thing and moved to a small rural town, where I believe our chances of surviving while bugging in are better.

What do You Think?

So, what do you think of my Prepper's 12 Days of Christmas? Did I miss anything important? Is there anything on there you wouldn't want to receive? What would your list be, keeping in mind that the quantities have to make sense as well as the items? Give it a shot; maybe you can come up with a better list.



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