

What You Need To Know About Pet Food For Survival

Cats and dogs are often counted as one of the family. That means you need to [prepare for your pets](#) as well as everyone else. They'll need to eat, even after the SHTF and you can't run to the store and simply buy another 50-pound sack.

Since the fats in dry kibble quickly turn rancid, it's not ideal for long-term storage. Canned food lasts longer, but it sure takes up a lot of space. And it's more expensive.

What's a loving pet owner to do? After all, vets would have you believe that you're limited to commercial food if you want to keep your pet in good health. But if you can't store up enough food to last for years on end.

Don't get discouraged. With a little planning and work, you can store or raise what you need to keep your pet healthy and happy even after a crisis. Before we get to the details, let's take a look at the very profitable pet food industry, and the actual nutritional needs for most cats and dogs.

A Quick History of Feeding Pets

Contrary to what many vets proclaim, your pet does not need pet food to thrive. Before the pet food industry exploded in popularity, people kept their animals alive just fine.

Back then, dogs were typically given bones, scraps that the family could afford to spare, and occasionally bread that had been soaked in milk. They also ate whatever else they scrounged. Their meals rarely consisted of exactly the same thing, and this variety helped them achieve a balanced diet that worked.

Cats hunted for birds and mice. They chased and ate

butterflies and other insects. They were given extra milk from the milk pail, and perhaps some other scraps as they became available.

If pets truly needed commercially prepared food to survive, there wouldn't be any pets around today. They simply wouldn't have survived all of those years before it was invented.

But, the pet food industry doesn't want you to know this. They are very profitable, and make lots of money by people believing the lies they've spread. Examining the brief history of the industry will help pet owners feel more confident in their ability to use common sense to feed their animals.

The first commercially available pet food was inspired by [hardtack crackers](#). It was a meat, grain, and vegetable based cracker for dogs. It was easily portable, and contained nutrients that dogs needed.

A couple of decades later, canned dog food made an appearance. Horse meat was the main ingredient. In the 1930s, cat food also appeared on the shelves.

Dry kibble came after the canned variety. The tin rationing in the United States during World War II played a role in its invention. Another factor was the perfecting of the extruding process that was being used for cereal at the time.

Once dry pet food was available, the manufacturers dove into marketing. They created jingles, told everyone that table scraps would hurt their animals, and got veterinarians onboard. The public responded favorably, and started turning to commercial food as the main diet of their pets.

Nutritional Needs of Dogs

Since dogs don't need commercial food, what do they need? As scavengers, dogs eat a variety of foods. They are opportunistic carnivores, preferring meat when it's available.

But, they'll also eat grains and vegetables. Actually, there's not much a dog won't eat.

But, just because a dog can eat something doesn't mean that it should. Many table foods are bad for pets. Chocolate is a common example. Onions and garlic (in excess) are others.

Video first seen on [Veterinary Secrets](#).

Three Simple Recipes for Dogs

[Cooking for your pup](#) isn't complicated. Here are three different recipes you can whip up for your dog. You can mix and match ingredients, using what you have on hand and in your [food storage](#).

The Piles of Three

You'll need:

- Cooked or Raw Meat (rabbit, chicken, ground beef, lamb, tuna, etc.)
- Cooked Carbs (white rice, oats, quinoa, potatoes)
- Cooked or Raw Veggies (green beans, peas, carrots)

The recipe is simple. You mix one part of meat, one part of carbs, and one part of vegetable. Then feed your dog in appropriate sized portions for the breed and size.

Doggy Stew

This stew has to cook for quite a while to get the nutrients out of the bones and make them safe for your dog. It may not be appropriate for all SHTF scenarios, but if you're cooking on a woodstove, or have another solid supply of heat, then it's a great way to feed your dog from scraps! You'll need:

- Meat scraps
- A couple of potatoes or sweet potatoes cut into chunks
- Green beans

- Water

Throw your meat scraps and bones into a large pot. Cover with water and simmer for several hours, until you can crush the bones easily between your fingers. Now, add the potatoes and green beans and let cook until those are soft. Mash the stew into appropriate sized pieces for your dog, and let cool before feeding.

Leave It Raw

Many dog owners are embracing the raw food diet. This actually would work quite well in a SHTF scenario, as long as you are raising meat for your family. You'll need a combination of:

- Raw, meaty bones (rabbit, chicken backs and feet, meaty bones from cows, etc.)
- Whole prey
- Organ meat

Your dog will figure out how to eat it Just make sure that organ meat doesn't make up a large portion of this diet.

Nutritional Needs of Cats

[Cats and dogs are different](#) in many ways, including their nutritional needs. While dogs are natural scavengers, cats in the wild typically hunt for their meals. They are obligate carnivores, which means they **need** animal-based protein.

Organ meat is an important piece of a cat's diet. They need the taurine these parts provide.

But, you don't want to feed your cat exclusively organ meat, or any other one type of food. As you're preparing food for your cat, strive for approximately 80% meat, 10% organs, and 10% edible bones to mimic the food they'd hunt on their own.

Video first seen on [Real Pet Tips](#).

Three Simple Recipes for Cats

If your cat is used to being outdoors and mousing, that's a great way to provide a large chunk of its diet. Eating the organs, bones, and meat of the prey will help meet your cat's nutritional needs. If that's not possible during a crisis situation, you'll need to prepare food.

A good quality meat grinder that can handle bones will make preparing this food easier for you and your cat. This is especially important if your cat isn't used to chewing on large chunks of meat or small, raw bones. As they adjust to the diet, you can slowly transition to larger chunks.

It's important to note that as a hunter species instead of a scavenger one, cats prefer warm or room temperature food. Many cats won't touch cold food. To warm your homemade food, place it in a resalable container and submerge it in warm water for thirty minutes before feeding.

You'll notice that meat is the star of all these recipes. Cats need meat. If you give your cat other foodstuff, that's fine for a treat. Cats even eat grass occasionally! But the bulk of what they eat should be meat.

Canned Fish & Liver Meal

Canned fish makes a simple base for your cat's diet. Look for a variety that includes the bones and skin, which will provide the calcium and fat your feline needs. Canned salmon, sardines, and mackerel often meet this requirement. The liver is added for the taurine, and is an important addition. You'll need:

- A can of fish (undrained)
- A tablespoon of ground chicken liver

Mix the ingredients together and mash the large chunks before feeding.

Raw Chicken, Liver, & Heart

This recipe can make use of the liver and heart of any animals you are butchering, and some cooked chicken. You'll need:

- 2 pounds of bone-in raw chicken thigh
- 3 ounces raw chicken liver
- 6 ounces raw chicken heart

Grind all the ingredients in a heavy duty meat grinder and feed.

Rabbit Feed

Rabbit is an ideal meat for your cats. It's a great proportion of muscle meat, organs, and edible bone. You'll need:

- One rabbit (organs and bone included)
- Grind the rabbit. Feed in appropriate sized portions.

Transitioning Feed

If your animals are currently on a commercially prepared diet, you're going to want to stockpile a bit. That way you can slowly transition to this new way of eating over the course of a month. Your animal's system will adapt better when you go this route as opposed to a cold turkey switch.

Cats are especially prone to turning their nose up at unfamiliar food. You might consider feeding your cat one of the above recipes for one meal a week now. That way when a crisis arises, the new food won't be completely new.

Long-Term Feeding Tips

When you're preparing for your pet, you're going to want to make some long-term plans. Most pets will be a part of your family for many years, so think beyond a year or two.

If you have the space and ability, [raising your own rabbits](#) or [chickens](#) will help feed your pets along with the rest of your

family. You can also let your animals hunt, keeping the rodent population down around your homestead.

By [canning your own meat](#) now, you'll be able to build a stockpile of meat. This can be used as a supplement to your pet's diet when necessary.

If you have a dog, as you build your food storage, throw in extra rice and vegetables. Stored properly, dry rice and canned or [dehydrated vegetables](#) will last a long time.

Don't Forget the Water!

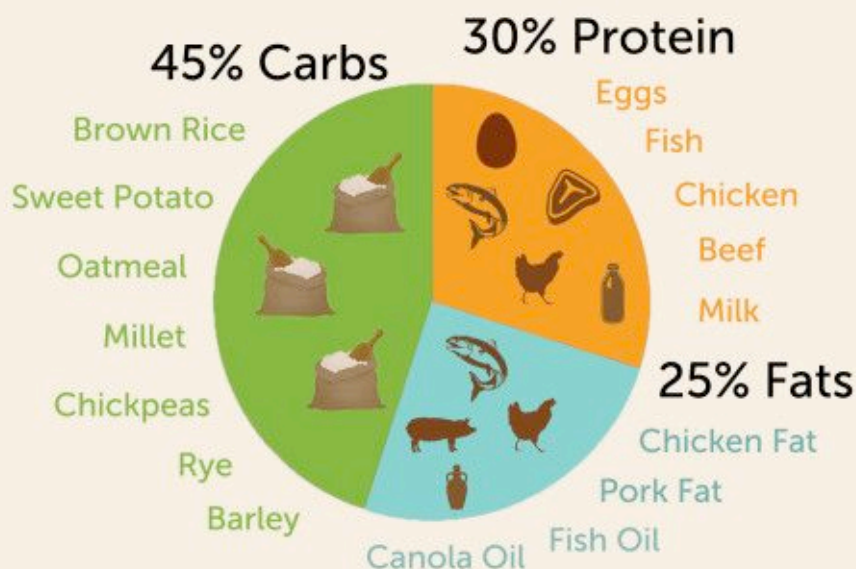
Just like you need plenty of water for survival, your pets do too. It's essential that you have a [water supply](#) on hand that'll meet the needs of everyone in the household and all your animals.

Do you have a backup water plan? Do you have a way to filter water? Start making plans now before it's too late.

HOMEMADE DOG FOOD

Nutrition Guide

Core Nutrients



Supplements

Essential



Vitamins

Whole food preparation
Made for pets



Bone Meal

Calcium + Phosphorous

Health Boosters



Kelp



Steamed Veggies

Probiotics + Enzymes



Fish Oil



Calorie Requirements

Weight in lbs	Calories/Day	Weight in lbs	Calories/Day
5	185-235	30	700-900
10	305-390	40	860-1100
15	415-530	50	1020-1300
20	515-650	65	1240-1600
25	600-780	80	1450-1870



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Do You Make Your Own Pet Food?

By thinking outside of kibble, you can make a viable long-term feeding plan for all the pets in your life.

Do you make your own pet food? What are your solutions for long-term feeding? I'd love for you to share additional tips and tricks in the comments section below.



Survival Things That **The Pioneers
Took With Them When They
Traveled For Months**

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*This article has been written by **Lisa Tanner** for [Survivopedia](#).*