Why Salt And Sugar Are Your Best Survival Allies

Sugar and salt are among the most common and widely used household substances in North America.

Both sugar and salt are with us since at least 8,000 BC, as according to researchers, the sugarcane plant was first domesticated by the good people in Southeast Asia 10,000 years ago.

People can live without sugar all their lives, except from Americans of course, but salt is another story altogether. While our bodies can manufacture their own sugar from various foods rich in carbohydrates, like fruits and cereal (fruits also contain sugars by the way), salt, formerly known as sodium chloride, is an essential mineral, which is readily available in nature in its natural crystalline form, also known as rock salt.

Unlike sugar, which is a highly refined/processed food, making for the ultimate soluble carbohydrate, and not very good for one’s health, salt is an essential mineral for both humans and animal life in general. While plant life and animal meat (including milk) contain sodium in various quantities (not so much for plant life), if you’re a vegetarian, you may require extra salt added to your diet, because the human body cannot produce sodium chloride on its own, and the plant-based sodium intake may not be enough for your body to function properly.

The Good News about Sugar and Salt

They’re both non perishable substances, provided they’re stored properly. The general rule of thumb is to store them in food grade buckets or mylar bags, as they’re both hygroscopic (they suck and keep inside moisture from the air), hence they should be kept away form both pests (sugar in this case) and moisture in long-term storage scenarios. And by long term, I mean literally centuries, if stored properly. But that’s another story altogether.

The question is why should you store sugar and salt for survival? And which is the best? And why?

To begin with, we need salt to literally survive. This may sound strange to you, considering the general wisdom of reducing one’s salt intake to less than 2000 mg per day. That’s because most of our (processed) food contains lots of salt by design, and an excess of salt can be detrimental for one’s health, long term speaking. Especially if we’re talking about highly refined table salt. However, things can change dramatically, especially in a SHTF scenario. It’s worth mentioning that raw/unrefined salt is the best for human consumption.

Besides being cheaper (theoretically), natural/unrefined salt comes with trace amounts of minerals, like copper, manganese etc.

Also, during the refining process, salt is treated with various toxic chemicals. You see where this is going: white salt is a no-no procedure. Natural salt is not white, due to the aforementioned trace minerals. Not even genuine/unprocessed sea-salt is perfectly white, so be advised the next time you go shopping for the stuff. Check out this excellent article on salt (1) for further reference.

Besides its vital importance for one's health and general well being (we'll get to that later in the show with more detail), salt comes handy in a multitude of survival scenarios.

There are Countless Survival Uses for Salt

Among the most important, we must emphasize food preservation. It's known from ancient times that salt dehydrates, and that comes handy in situations that require preserving food in a "primitive manner", i.e. sans electricity and other advents of our modern-day functioning society. Due to salt's osmotic pressure on microorganisms, which draws moisture from them (kills them basically), you can preserve fish and meats in a 20 percent salt solution, with no refrigeration required. You can also add salt to smoked/dried meats/fish, as it helps with the curing process, and also makes them tastier. And by the way, this trick keeps nasty bugs away.

We were talking about salt and health: the thing is, we lose salt on a daily basis via eliminating bodily fluids (perspiration, urination, defecation).

Chronic loss of salt in one's body triggers a condition called Hyponatremia, which is basically too less salt in the blood, or a low sodium concentration level in plasma, to be more pedantic. This condition can be triggered by consuming too much water, or sweating too much (or both), even if there's enough salt in one's diet. Athletes are regularly affected by

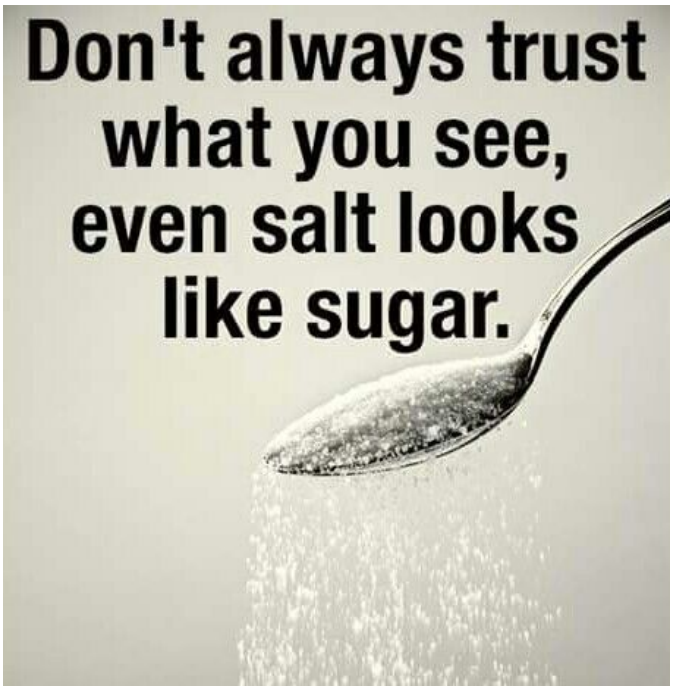
this problem, hence their preference for sports-beverages that contain electrolytes.

Point being, in a survival scenario, you may require extra salt to be added to your food, especially if you are sweating profusely, as in you’re engaging in strenuous physical activities regularly. Don’t eat too much salt either by the way, everything’s about balancing your diet. The general rule of thumb is the more you sweat, the more salt you’ll require. General sluggishness and muscle cramps, especially in your legs, are signs that you may be salt-deficient.

Treating Skin Wounds

Wound skin treatment is another problem that can be addressed using saline solution. The recipe is 10 grams of salt added to one liter of water, or 1/10 ratio salt/water. This improvised saline solution is excellent for flushing wounds of debris/bacteria by using a punctured water/soda bottle. Saline solution applied to a wound will destroy bacteria by due to dehydration via osmotic pressure. Do not apply salt directly to the wound, as it’s very painful. Even ivy poisoning can be ameliorated by flushing the affected areas with saline solution, as it reduces irritation and soothes pain.

Canker sores, sore throat and overall oral health can be improved by using the same saline solution. Rinse and gargle, repeat, and don’t swallow.



Salt is used since immemorial times as pest control. Ant infestation can be a problem in a survival situation, and you can spray a saline solution around food-items to keep nasty bugs away. Now, how much salt to store and how? 10 lbs of salt are enough to cure 200 lbs of meat. You do the math. You can store salt long term by using 5 gallon buckets lined with five gallon sized ziplock bags. Alternatively, you can use smaller 2 gallon buckets or even 2 liter soda bottles. Or even leave it in its original package and vacuum seal them in bags, then store them in a cool/dry place. Finally, you can pour salt into mylar bags, then store the bags in 5 gallon buckets. Whatever method works, and by the way, you can store sugar the same way.

Survival Use for Sugar

Since we're "on the meter", I'll give you the main reasons for storing sugar. First, you can use sugar (and salt) for creating an ad-hoc energy drink of sorts, which can come handy in stressful situations. Here's the recipe for a sugar/salt sports drink-electrolyte filled beverage:

- 6 level teaspoons of sugar

- 1/2 level teaspoon of salt
- dissolved in 4 measuring cups of purified water.

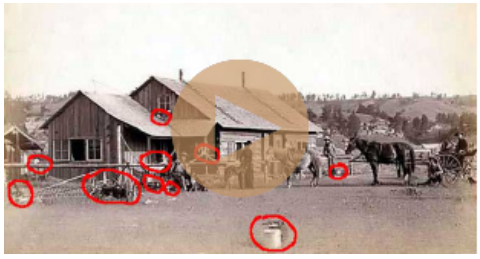
This beverage will give you a quick energy burst, that will boost both your morale and physical stamina, even if for a short period of time. Sugar is basically glucose and fructose, which are easy absorbed by your body.

Just like salt, sugar can be used as a food preservative, and it works the same, via its osmotic effect, which dehydrates bacteria, killing them, so they can't ruin your food. The best way to cure meats and the like is to use a combo of salt and sugar. However, many survivalists keep their perishable foods inside jars of sugar, thus making sure they'll last for a long time. Sugar mixed with baking soda makes for an effective cockroach killer. Moreover, sugar can be used to treat wounds and prevent infections, as it works in a similar fashion as salt, i.e. a sugar/water solution must be sprinkled on the wound, thus preventing bacterial infection and helping it to heal faster.

Keep in mind that sugar is mostly empty calories, hence it cannot be perceived as a survival food. White/highly processed sugar has an almost indefinite shelf life, but again, it's empty calories mostly. Brown sugar/molasses are way more healthier, yet harder to store long-time. Hence, you should opt for white sugar and a bit of molasses eventually for your survival stash.

Finally, when it comes to the "salt or sugar" for survival question, the answer is that both are important, yet salt has more survival uses compared to sugar, and it's also essential for one's general health and well being, hence you should store more salt and less sugar.

I hope the article helped. Let us know your thoughts in the dedicated comments section below.



Survival Skills We Lost To History

Watch Video

Resources:

(1) https://healthwyze.org/reports/115-the-truth-about-table-salt-and-the-chemical-industry