

## What's the Shelf Life?



One of the biggest problems I had when getting started in storing my food was finding the shelf life of each of my food items. The last thing I wanted was to have an economic collapse and be left with 2 years of nutritionally stripped food. And if you don't know when you rotate your food storage items that's exactly what's going to happen. So how about a nice comprehensive list of shelf life numbers? Keep in mind these numbers are only accurate if you store your food properly. By properly I mean they must be sealed in an oxygen-free container at a temperature of 70°F. If you store your food in a cooler temperature it will last longer.

### Soft Grains

Barley, Oat Groats, Rolled Oats and Quinoa Rye

What makes these grains "soft" is their soft outer shells. Because the outer shell is softer, the seeds inside aren't protected as well as the hard grains. If stored properly, their shelf life will be about 8 years.

### Hard Grains

Buckwheat, Corn, Dry Flax, Kamut, Millet, Durum Wheat, Hard Red Wheat, Hard White Wheat, Special Bake Wheat, Spelt & Triticale

The Hard Grains all store for a considerable amount of time because of their sturdy outer shells – nature's Ziploc. Without this outer shell the seeds wouldn't last long. Hard Grains can be stored for 20-25 years.

### Beans

Adzuki, Blackeye, Black Turtle, Garbanzo, Great Northern, Kidney, Lentils, Lima, Mung, Pink, Pinto, Small Red & Soy

Throughout a beans' shelf life they lose their oils, resist water absorption and won't swell. In a worst case scenario you may have to grind your beans to use them. To prolong the life of your beans you can store them in nitrogen or in cooler temperatures. Beans will store for about 8-10 years.

## Dehydrated Vegetables

Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrots, Celery, Onions, Peppers, Potatoes, Corn

Your dehydrated veggies should last for about 8-10 years. Most brands of #10 cans will have the shelf life printed on the label.

## Dehydrated Dairy Products

Cheese Powder, Cocoa Powder, Powdered Eggs, Butter/Margarine Powder, Powdered Milk, Morning Moo & Whey Powder

Other than Morning Moo brand, you will be able to store your dehydrated dairy products for up to 10 years. Morning Moo products should be rotated every 5 years.

## Flour & Other Crack/Ground Seed Products

Because flours are wheat seeds stripped from their outer shells and ground, the shelf life is considerably less. Your flours should last approximately 5 years. Recommendation: Keep your grains whole and grind them as needed. They will last 5 times as long.

*TIP: Granola doesn't last as long as other grains. You must rotate your granola ever 9 months.*

## Freeze Dried Food

Most freeze dried food will last 25-30 years.

*TIP: If freeze dried food is a part of your food storage plan, be sure to have additional water to reconstitute this food. If you don't have this additional water, you will literally die from dehydration in the case of an emergency as your body attempts to break down the food.*

## Pasta

Macaroni, Noodles, Ribbons, Spaghetti

If kept dry your pasta will store longer than your flour. Typically you can store pasta noodles for 10-15 years.

## Dehydrated Fruit

Apple Chips, Bananas, Pineapple, Strawberries

Your dehydrated fruit should be good for approximately 10-15 years. Once again, most brands label the shelf life of all of their dehydrated products on the #10 cans.

## Honey, Salt and Sugars

If 100% pure and stored free of moisture and in a cool place your honey, salt and sugars will keep indefinitely. Make sure that your honey is 100% pure for your storage. Just as an FYI, pure honey will crystallize when stored for a long time. Simple put the container holding the honey in a pot on a low boil for several minutes to liquify it.

## **Brown & White Rice**

Brown and White Rice are very different and have pros and cons to each. Brown rice holds essential fatty acids and thus will only store for about 6-8 months. White rice has been stripped of its outer shell and the fatty acids. Because of this it will last much longer but isn't nearly as good for you. The shelf life for white rice is around 8-10 years.

## **Total Vegetable Protein**

TVP made from soy beans has a very long storage life. TVP can be stored for 15-20 years.

## **Yeast**

Yeast is a living organism. Because of this, it doesn't have a very long storage life. In sealed metal foil containers, it will last about 2 years. If you refrigerate it however, it will last up to 5.

Finally, I've attached links to the following stores/brands of food storage with their corresponding shelf life materials:

Shelf Reliance / THRIVE  
Mountain House  
Augasan Farms  
Emergency Essentials

Hopefully this clarified things for a lot of you. Please feel free to share any shelf life information that you feel should be added or changed. The shelf life debate is continually changing so I will do my best to provide you the best numbers possible. Happy prepping!

**Soft Grains** 8 Years

**Hard Grains** 20-25 Years

**Beans** 8-10 Years

**Dehydrated Vegetables** 8-10 Years

**Dehydrated Dairy Products** 5-10 Years

**Flours** 5 Years

**Freeze Dried Food** 25-30 Years

**Granola** 9 Months

**Pasta** 10-15 Years

**Dehydrated Fruit** 10-15 Years

**Honey, Salt and Sugars** Indefinitely

**Brown Rice** 6-8 Months

**White Rice** 8-10 Years

**TVP** 15-20 Years

**Yeast** 2 Years if Kept in 70°F. 5 Years if Refrigerated

## About the Author: Jessica



I'm an LDS prepper from Lehi, UT. I believe that emergency preparation is vital for everyone and that you don't need to be a survival specialist to get the best emergency preparation for you and your family. I want to take the complexity out of prepping to help those around me get involved.