



A Question of Taste

By Hilary Keating Callaghan

These foods spell security

It acts as a hedge against inflation. It provides a source of security in the event of political upheaval, labor unrest, crop failure, or natural disasters. Its stockpiling is recommended by Howard Ratk, author of "How to Prosper During the Coming Bad Years." What is it? Dehydrated foods.

Dehydrated foods are nothing new but they have generated tremendous interest in the past few years. During troubled economic times, many people turn to food as a source of security. Putting foods by to tide them over the bad times becomes important and canning, freezing, and storage-drying foods all enjoy a resurgence in popularity.

Dehydrated foods offer a distinct advantage over these methods of preservation — greatly extended shelf life which surpasses even that of commercially canned or frozen foods. Bonnie and Chuck Cameron, local distributors of the NEST line of dehydrated foods (Nutritional Emergency Storage Today), explained the method used by their company to achieve this longer shelf life. Once the moisture has been removed from the food, it is placed in cans and the oxygen is removed and replaced with nitrogen. The result is a line of products with nutritive storage lives ranging from one year to "indefinitely," with most in the four- to seven-year range. After this time, nutrients begin to diminish but the food is still safe to eat. Storage life before spoilage is generally listed as "15 years, plus."

THE THEORY IS that if some catastrophe interrupted our food supply, anyone with a good cache of dehydrated foods would be set for the duration. Mormons have an actual doctrine of preparedness which recommends that a two-year supply of food be kept on hand at all times.

One could not only subsist but could enjoy a remarkably varied diet due to the addition of new product lines in response to consumer demands. Dehydrated foods now range from fruits and vegetables to peanut butter, cheddar cheese, milk, eggs, grains, and seeds for sprouting. Even entrees such as stew and stroganoff are available. These contain no meat, however, since it responds poorly to dehydration. TVP (texturized vegetable protein) replaces the meat — probably not to the satisfaction of a real meat-eater, but welcome in an emergency.

A more cheerful rationale than disaster-insurance for purchasing dehydrated foods is as a compact, lightweight food supply for camping. An advantage for campers is ease of preparation — just add water and stir (oil is used for butter or peanut butter).

If cold water has been added, the food must be allowed to sit for about three hours before serving. Heating will speed the process. A portable, compact water purifier is even available so that water from streams or rivers may be safely used, eliminating the need to transport bulky bottles of purified water.

AS IMPORTANT as convenience is good nutrition. Although vitamins A and C are sacrificed in processing, most other nutrients are retained. New Life parent company of NEST foods claims that their dehydrated foods have "Higher long-term nutritive values than any other type food."

Organically grown fruits and vegetables are harvested at their peak and processed immediately, offering greater nutrition than those picked prematurely and gassed on the way to the market. A further bonus is that the use of preservatives is kept to a minimum.

Bonnie Cameron fixed some mashed potatoes, peas, and applesauce for me to sample. All three looked and tasted remarkably fresh. Bonnie says that she uses the NEST products daily for her family and even serves them to company and has found that all have met with a high degree of acceptance.

The Camerons hold regular "tasting parties" for anyone interested in purchasing NEST foods. This would probably be worthwhile for anyone interested, since only case orders are accepted.

PROPHETS OF DOOM, campers, anyone who cannot get to the grocery store regularly due to old age, infirmity, or inclement weather, financial wizards determined to beat inflation — in short, anyone interested in dehydrated foods can obtain further information by calling Chuck or Bonnie Cameron at 626-7941.

For anyone who comes away with case-loads of dehydrated food and then wonders what can be done with it, Bonnie Cameron has shared some of her favorite recipes. Perhaps all of us should take more than a passing interest.

If, as has been predicted, spiraling energy costs will make frozen foods an anachronism in the next 20 years, dehydrated foods may become more than just a curiosity. They may be the wave of our future.

The word "dehydrated" has been substituted for "NEST" in the following recipes. CHRISTMAS FRUIT BREAD

Dissolve 2 tsp. active dehydrated yeast in ¼ cup warm water.
In large bowl mix:

¾ cup dehydrated milk powder
1 cup cold pressed safflower oil
2 tsp. salt
¾ cup turbinado sugar
Pour 2 cups hot water over this mixture and beat
Add:
4 cups unbleached flour
4 eggs and the yeast mixture
1 cup wheat germ
Approx. 4 cups flour, depending on size of eggs and moisture content of flour

Beat well after each addition. Let dough rest 10 minutes covered, then knead till elastic. Soften 1 can dehydrated fruit blend in about 1 cup boiling water. (Approximately 5 minutes) Roll out 1 lb. of the dough and spread with melted butter. Spread fruit blend over the buttered dough. Sprinkle with 1 cup chopped nuts and ½ cup brown sugar. Roll as for jelly roll and place in large 1½ lb. brea pan. Bake 50 minutes in medium oven.

HOLIDAY EGG NOG
3 cup water in blender, start blender and add:
¾ cup dehydrated milk powder
3 eggs
¼ cup vanilla yogurt super ease hi-protein food
¼ tsp. vanilla
¼ tsp. nutmeg

HOT CHEESE BALLS
¾ cup dehydrated cheddar cheese powder
¼ cup oil
1 cup unbleached flour
3 eggs
¼ tsp. dry mustard
¼ tsp. paprika

Roll into tiny balls and bake 10 minutes at 350 degrees. These freeze well.

HAWAIIAN FRUIT AND GRAIN CEREAL

6 tbsp. dehydrated rolled oats
¼ cup dehydrated apple slices
add water to cover and soak overnight in the morning, add:

¾ cup dehydrated cross cut celery
12 cashews or almonds
2 tbsp. dehydrated raisins
2 tsp. honey
1 ½ tbsp. yogurt, or enough to make a smooth mixture

Mix all together. Makes 2 servings. For extra nutrition super ease protein may be added.

THE ULTIMATE OATMEAL COOKIE
2 cups dehydrated rolled oats
¼ cup dehydrated milk powder
¼ cup dehydrated fruit blend
¼ cup wheat germ
¼ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. cloves
1 tsp. cinnamon
¼ cup coconut
¼ cup chopped nuts
Mix well, then add:
¼ cup oil
¼ cup honey
2 eggs, beaten

Drop on greased cookie sheet and bake at 300 degrees for 20 minutes.

SPROUTED WHEAT SNACK CRACKERS

Soak 1 cup dehydrated whole wheat overnight in warm water. In the morning, drain, rinse well, and cover to sprout. Rinse sprouts 3 times a day. After sprouting for 2 days, place in blender:

1 cup boiling water
1 tsp. sea salt
2 tsp. cold pressed oil
2 cups sprouted wheat
Blend
In a bowl mix:
¼ cup dehydrated corn meal
¼ cup sesame seeds
1 cup whole wheat flour (grind dehydrated wheat in blender)

Pour liquid from blender into dry ingredients. Spoon onto greased cookie sheet in 2 to 3 inch rounds. Dip tsp. in oil and press flat. Bake at 350 degrees for 14 minutes; turn crackers and bake an additional 10 minutes.

ORANGES ALASKA

8 navel oranges
3 egg whites
6 tbsp. sugar
orange segments, chopped
¼ cup crushed pineapple
1 pint vanilla ice cream

Cut slices off navel ends of well-shaped oranges. Scoop out pulp, chop and chill. Place shells in freezer for at least 6 hours. They will then remain cold during preparation. Beat the egg whites until stiff; gradually add the sugar, continuing to beat until all sugar is absorbed and the meringue stands in peaks. Place a layer of chilled orange segments and crushed pineapple in the bottom of the shell. Top with a layer of the ice cream. Repeat if there is room. Seal with a large scoop of meringue. Place under broiler until lightly browned. Serve at once, on a bed of lemon leaves if available. Serves 8.

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