

How not to starve when the power goes out

Publisher's notes: *These tips are good for people who face any threat to being without power – which happens each winter in the Tahoe area.*

By NPR

Before you brave the rain, wind and inevitable lines at the already depleted grocery store today in the mid-Atlantic region, take a deep breath.

If you're a moderately good grocery shopper, you probably already have the food you need on hand to make it through the next few days if (when) we lose power due to Hurricane Sandy. (If not, best to find a shelter near you.) But you do need to take extra precautions that what you're preparing is safe.

Here are some tips we've picked up preparing for power outages over the years, and from around the web:

1. While you still have power, take stock of what you have in the freezer and the fridge. Use up leftovers and perishables like meat, eggs and dairy first, and decide which items you can't bear to lose, like those fancy frozen dumplings you've been saving, and cook them up for lunch or a snack right now. Blogger Jessica Berardi tells the *Washington Post* to fill up bags of water and stick them in the freezer to keep things extra cold or to double as ice packs once you have to move some items to a cooler.

2. Make a plan for using non-perishables like beans, tuna, pasta, cereal and canned fruit that leaves you with as few leftovers as possible – for example, one can of beans and a couple of cups of cooked rice will feed about three people for one meal.

3. Follow the comprehensive guidelines put out by [foodsafety.gov](https://www.foodsafety.gov) for keeping things cold and safe once the power goes out. Biggest point – keep the fridge and freezer closed as much as possible to preserve food as long as possible. And, the rule of when in doubt, throw it out, definitely applies here.

4. Gather disposable plates, plasticware, cups, aluminum foil pans and a cooler to make meal clean up easier. A big psychological boost for the storm-stressed cook can be not seeing those dirty dishes piled up in the sink.

5. Locate the matches and check that the propane tank is full on your gas grill. Obviously you can't cook outdoors during the storm, but it's possible that your power will be out long after the storm has passed, and you can use your grill to boil water and heat meals if you have an electric stove rendered useless by the power outage. Solar cooking might be an option once the sun comes out.

6. Make it fun for the family. School's closed. Send the kids on a treasure hunt through your cookbooks to track down recipes for what you can make from the items you've got. They might even try something new in the spirit of adventure.