BUILDING UP FOOD SUPPLIES

How much food belongs in a ten-day supply, how to build it up step by step and keep it rotating without waste – and how to eat well without electricity.

Last updated: 05/11/2026

A food supply is not a bunker full of emergency rations – it is a slightly fuller cupboard of things you eat anyway. It helps during a power cut, in severe weather, when someone suddenly falls ill or when the shelves in the shop stay empty for a while. The goal: ten days of meals – **without a fridge** and ideally **without much cooking**.

AT A GLANCE

- **Ten days is the goal, three days a good start.** The BBK (Germany's Federal Office of Civil Protection) recommends being able to look after yourself for ten days if possible; even a three-day supply helps a lot, and you can build on it step by step.
- **About 14.5 kg of food per person for ten days** makes an example supply of roughly 2,200 kcal a day – spread across cereals, vegetables, fruit, dairy, protein and fat. The supplies calculator works it out for your household.
- **Start small:** add one or two extra items every time you shop. It's easier on your wallet, and not everything reaches its date at the same time.
- **Eat what you store, store what you eat.** New items go to the back, older ones get used first – so the supply stays fresh and

nothing ends up in the bin.

- **Without electricity:** most of your supply should taste fine cold. Camping stoves with gas cartridges and barbecues belong outdoors only – indoors there is a risk of deadly carbon monoxide poisoning.

START SMALL

Nobody has to fill a trolley with ten days of food on a Saturday. Pick one of these small tasks each day – none takes longer than ten minutes, and most cost nothing:

- **See what's already there:** go through your cupboards, cellar and pantry and jot down roughly what you have – pasta, rice, tins, jars. You can enter it in your supplies and see what's missing. There is often more than you think.
- **Buy one extra thing:** next time you shop, pick up one or two extra packs of pasta or a tin of beans. Add it to your shopping list straight away.
- **Rearrange one shelf:** sort one shelf by the rule "old at the front, new at the back". Whatever runs out first goes in front.
- **Check your tin opener:** do you have one that works without electricity? One also belongs in your emergency bag.
- **Try a meal without the stove:** eat cold tonight – bread, bean salad from a tin, nuts, fruit from a jar. You'll find out what you like and what's missing.
- **Sort out the cooking question:** how would you heat something up without electricity? A gas hob, a tea-light warmer, a stove for

outdoors? What is safe is explained below and in the Power cut guide.

- **Set a check date:** once a year, on a fixed date, go through your supply – for example on Germany's nationwide warning day in September. Put it in your calendar.

UNDERSTANDING

Why a supply helps

A supply can help in many situations: a sudden power cut, extreme weather, sudden illness, or when the supermarket shelves stay empty (BBK). Usually it is not about a huge disaster but about a few days when shopping is difficult or impossible.

The order matters: a person can survive for perhaps three weeks without food, but only about four days without fluids. So drinking water comes first – how much you need and how to store it is in the Drinking water guide. This guide is about food.

What makes good food for your supply

The BBK lists four points that help when putting your supply together:

1. **Long-lasting:** food that doesn't need refrigeration won't spoil during a power cut.
2. **Ready to eat:** food that doesn't need cooking can be eaten even when the stove no longer works.
3. **Short cooking time:** food that cooks with little energy makes the fuel for a camping stove or barbecue last longer.

4. **Suitable:** who is the supply for? Are there allergies or eating habits? Do children or pets need to be fed too?

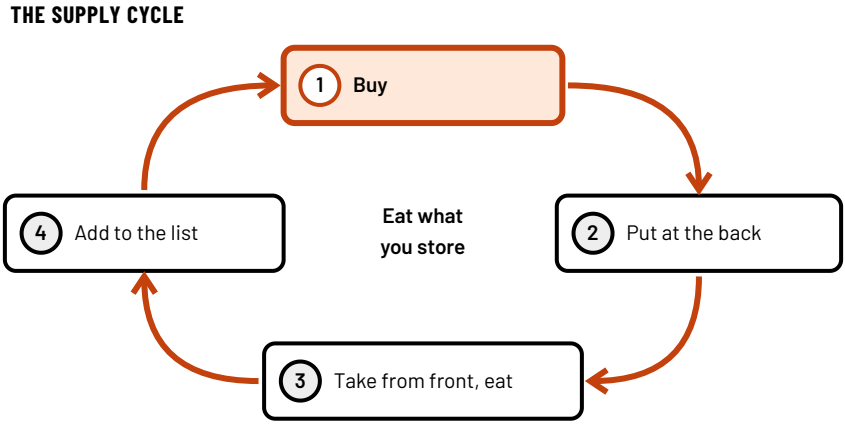
There is a fifth point that Germany's Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (BLE) stresses: a supply only makes sense if it is used regularly. So store what you like to eat. Unfamiliar special food often sits there until it has expired.

Two ways: set up once or keep it rotating

The BBK describes two ways to manage a supply:

- **One-off supply:** you set up the supply once and leave it. Then you need to check the dates regularly – for example once a year on a fixed date – and replace anything that has expired or been used in good time.
- **Rotating supply:** you use the supplies in everyday life, preferring whatever expires first. What you use, you buy again on your next shopping trip.

For most households, rotating is easier: the supply stays fresh, nothing gets thrown away, and you don't have to remember a special shelf. Your supply is then simply a bit more of what's in the cupboard anyway.



The oldest gets eaten first – nothing expires

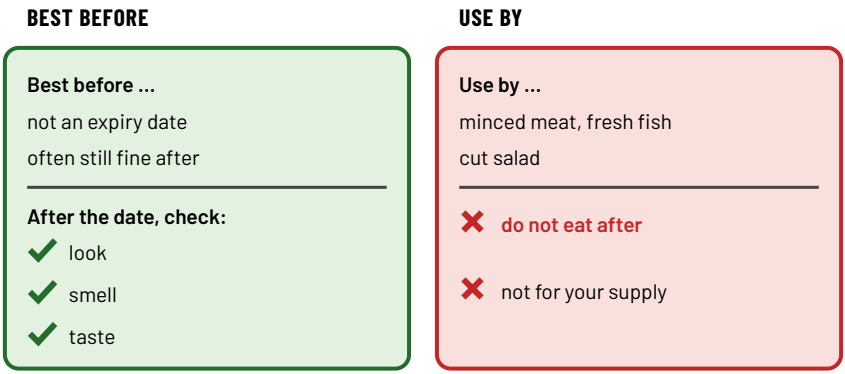
The supply cycle in four steps: 1. buy, 2. put it at the back, 3. take from the front and eat, 4. write what you used on the shopping list – then buy again.

Best-before date and use-by date

Packaged food carries one of two dates – and they mean different things (Verbraucherzentrale, Germany's consumer advice centres):

- **"Best before …":** up to this date the manufacturer guarantees that the **unopened** food keeps its properties, such as smell, taste and nutritional value, if stored correctly. A best-before date is **not an expiry date**. Much food is still fine afterwards. Use your senses: look, smell, taste. Mould, an unpleasant smell, a sour taste or a tingling on the tongue are signs it has to go. Once opened, the best-before date no longer applies.
- **"Use by …":** this appears on highly perishable food such as minced meat, fresh fish, cut salad or cut fruit. After this date it may no longer be sold, and the Verbraucherzentrale advises against eating it. Such food is not suitable for your supply anyway.

Some foods don't need a best-before date at all, for example sugar, salt and vinegar. If something has no date, write the **purchase date** on it (BLE).



Two dates compared: best before means look, smell and taste after the date – often still fine. Use by appears on minced meat and fresh fish and means do not eat after the date.

What harms your supplies

Long-life food keeps for a long time – but only if it is stored properly. The four enemies are **heat, moisture, light and pests**:

- **Heat:** tins, dry goods and cooking oil are best stored at no more than 20 °C (BLE). Next to the cooker, dishwasher or window, temperature and humidity fluctuate (Verbraucherzentrale).
- **Moisture:** tins must be kept dry so they don't rust or get damaged (Verbraucherzentrale). According to the BLE, "dry" means no more than 70 % relative humidity.
- **Light:** cooking oil, preserves in jars and dried fruit should be kept in the dark (BLE).

- **Pests** such as mites, flour beetles, larder beetles, ants, flies, cockroaches, rats and mice can sometimes even get through packaging. The longer something sits, the greater the risk of infestation (BLE).

Here, too, rotation helps: what gets used regularly doesn't sit long enough to spoil.

Sources for this section: BBK guide (11/2025), BBK "Stocking up food and drink", BLE Ernährungsvorsorge ("General recommendations", "Looking after your food supply", "How food can be stored", "Pests"), Verbraucherzentrale "Best-before is not the same as use-by" (10/2025), "Tinned food" (12/2025), "Dry foods" (12/2025).

PREPARING

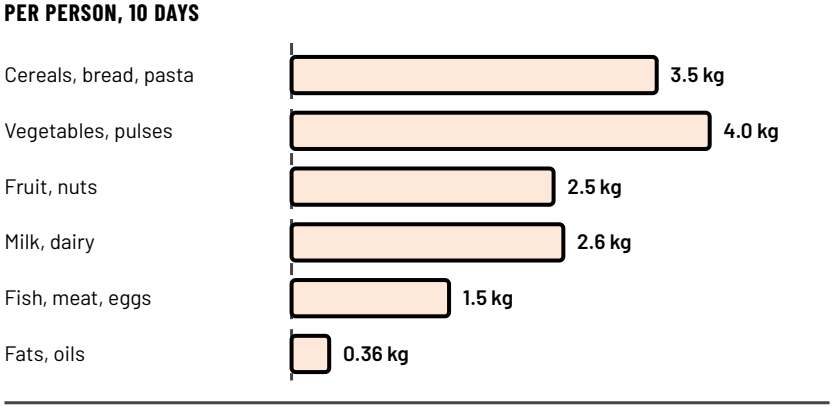
How much? Quantities for ten days

In its guide, the BBK published an example supply for **one adult for ten days**. It corresponds to about **2,200 kcal a day** and so generally covers total energy needs. The Bereitsein supplies calculator is based on these figures:

GROUP	AMOUNT PER PERSON, 10 DAYS	EXAMPLES
Cereals, bread, potatoes, pasta, rice	3.5 kg	Crispbread, rusks, pasta, rice, oats, instant mashed potato

GROUP	AMOUNT PER PERSON, 10 DAYS	EXAMPLES
Vegetables, pulses	4.0 kg	Peas, beans, lentils, sweetcorn, red cabbage in tins or jars
Fruit, nuts	2.5 kg	Tinned fruit, dried fruit, nuts
Milk, dairy products	2.6 kg	UHT milk, milk powder, hard cheese
Fish, meat, eggs	1.5 kg	Tuna, tinned meat, whole egg powder
Fats, oils	0.36 kg	Rapeseed oil, olive oil

That adds up to about **14.5 kg per person**. Drinks come on top: 20 litres per person for ten days, see Drinking water.



Bars show the example supply per person for ten days: vegetables and pulses 4.0 kg, cereals, bread and pasta 3.5 kg, milk and dairy 2.6 kg, fruit and nuts 2.5 kg, fish, meat and eggs 1.5 kg, fats and oils 0.36 kg; together about 2,200 kcal a day.

Here is what that looks like for different periods and households (simply scaled):

GROUP	1 PERSON, 3 DAYS	1 PERSON, 10 DAYS	2 PEOPLE, 10 DAYS
Cereals, bread, pasta, rice	approx. 1.1 kg	3.5 kg	7.0 kg
Vegetables, pulses	1.2 kg	4.0 kg	8.0 kg
Fruit, nuts	approx. 0.8 kg	2.5 kg	5.0 kg

GROUP	1 PERSON, 3 DAYS	1 PERSON, 10 DAYS	2 PEOPLE, 10 DAYS
Milk, dairy products	approx. 0.8 kg	2.6 kg	5.2 kg
Fish, meat, eggs	approx. 0.5 kg	1.5 kg	3.0 kg
Fats, oils	approx. 0.1 kg	0.36 kg	approx. 0.7 kg

A few notes:

- **These are examples, not rules.** The BLE's current example table is split slightly differently – about 3.3 kg of cereals and potatoes, 2.5 kg of dairy and 1.2 kg of eggs, meat and fish, plus fresh fruit and onions. Both come to about 2,200 kcal a day. A few hundred grams either way don't matter; what matters is that you eat the food.
- **Vegetables and pulses in tins or jars are already cooked.** Dried products such as lentils need extra water and energy (BBK).
- **Fruit** is best stored tinned or in jars; as fresh fruit, only use varieties that keep (BBK).
- **Fresh eggs** only keep for a limited time, whereas whole egg powder keeps for several years (BBK).
- **Age, activity and dietary needs** change what you need (BLE). The supplies calculator roughly counts children aged 4 to 12 as three quarters and toddlers as half of an adult's amount; babies need their own food.

Add “other foods” to taste, which the BLE lists explicitly: sugar, sweetener, honey, jam, chocolate, iodised salt, ready meals (for example ravioli, dried tortellini, instant soups), dried potato products, flour, instant stock, cocoa powder, hard biscuits and pretzel sticks. Coffee and tea are in the table too. Familiar food and something comforting belong in good supplies – especially in a stressful situation.

Vegetarian: the BLE has its own vegetarian table. Instead of meat, sausage and fish it lists, for example, tofu, vegetarian burgers and spreads, and eggs; chickpeas, lentils or lupins also work as pulses. You can switch the supplies calculator to “vegetarian”.

Building up gradually

The BBK advises: **always pick up something extra every time you shop** – for example one or two more packs of pasta. That way your supply grows almost by itself, without spending a lot of money at once. In the long run a supply can even save money, because you can make use of special offers (BLE).

A good approach is to think in stages, as the BBK checklist does: first three days, then five, then seven, then ten. Every stage is already a gain.



A staircase with four steps: 3 days, 5 days, 7 days, 10 days. Below it: one or two extra items every time you shop.

This is how building up can look:

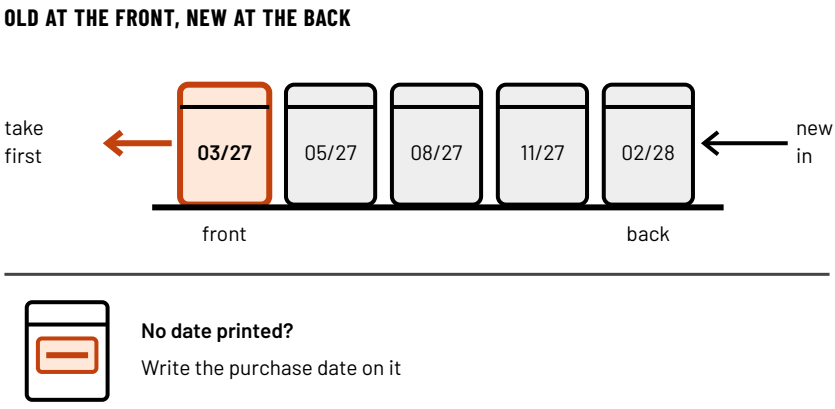
1. **Week 1 – the basics:** pasta, rice, oats, crispbread or rusks. You'll definitely eat them, and they keep for a long time.
2. **Week 2 – vegetables and pulses:** beans, peas, lentils, sweetcorn, red cabbage in tins or jars. They are already cooked and can be eaten cold.
3. **Week 3 – protein and dairy:** tuna, tinned meat or fish, chickpeas, UHT milk or milk powder.
4. **Week 4 – fruit, fat and other foods:** tinned fruit, dried fruit, nuts, a bottle of oil, honey, chocolate, instant soups.

Then use the supplies calculator to see what's still missing and fill the gaps. Only buy amounts that match your needs – long storage times increase the risk of pests (BLE).

Rotation in everyday life

To keep your supply fresh, all you need are a few fixed habits (BLE):

1. **Put new items at the back or bottom**, use older ones first. On the shelf that means: **old at the front, new at the back.**
2. **Keep a stock list:** it saves rummaging through cupboards and freezers. Add new items, cross out what you've used. You can do this on paper or in the app's supplies, which can also remind you of approaching dates.
3. **Check best-before dates regularly** and use food in good time. Whatever runs out soon goes on this week's menu.
4. **No date? Note the purchase date.** Label home-made preserves or frozen food with contents, amount and date.
5. **Replace what you use straight away:** whatever you take from the supply goes straight onto the shopping list.



A shelf with five tins sorted by date: take the oldest tin at the front first, put new ones in at the back. If no date is printed, write the purchase date on it.

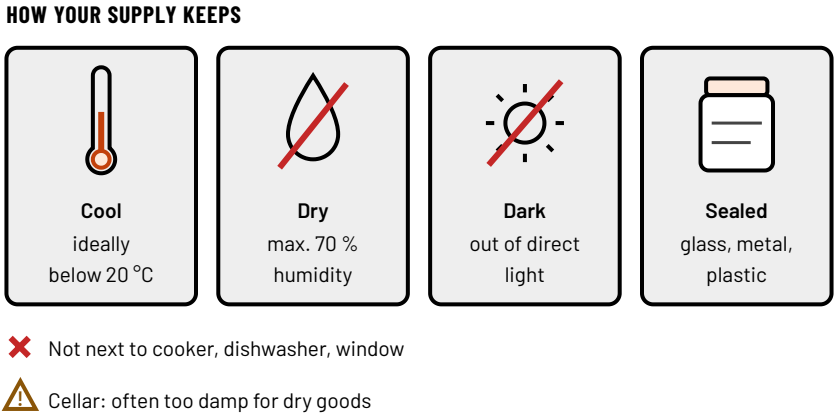
A practical tip: write the date in big letters with a thick marker on the top of tins and packs. Then you can see it when you open the cupboard door, without turning every tin over.

Storing it properly

The best place is a food cupboard or pantry: dark, ventilated, 15 to 20 °C and no more than 70 % humidity (BLE). Dry goods don't belong next to the cooker, dishwasher or window, where temperature and humidity fluctuate, or next to strong-smelling things such as spices, coffee or detergent (Verbraucherzentrale).

A cellar, at 4 to 12 °C and 85 to 90 % humidity, is ideal for potatoes, apples and root vegetables – but often too damp for dry goods (BLE). Unopened tins can be kept at cellar temperature below 19 °C, but must be stored **dry** so the tins don't rust or get damaged (Verbraucherzentrale).

Containers: dry goods such as flour, rice, pasta, semolina and flakes are best transferred into tightly closing tins or screw-top jars. Containers made of glass, metal or plastic with a tight lid protect against pests (BLE, Verbraucherzentrale).



Four rules for storage: cool, ideally below 20 degrees; dry, no more than 70 percent humidity; dark, out of direct light; tightly sealed in glass, metal or plastic. Not next to the cooker, dishwasher or window.

How long does what keep? The BLE gives these guide values for good storage – the printed best-before date applies as well:

FOOD	STORAGE	GUIDE VALUE
Tinned vegetables	dry, airy, ideally below 20 °C	1–2 years
Tinned fruit, jam	dry, airy, ideally below 20 °C	1 year
Tinned fish and meat	dry, airy, ideally below 20 °C	several years
Pasta, rice, semolina, flakes	dry, tightly sealed	1 year

FOOD	STORAGE	GUIDE VALUE
Dried potato products	dry, ideally below 20 °C	1–2 years
Dried fruit, dried vegetables	dark, airy, in jars or tins	1 year
Crispbread, rusks	dry	1 year
Cooking oil, unopened	dark, up to 20 °C	6–12 months
Cooking oil, opened	dark, up to 20 °C	4–8 weeks
Sugar, salt, tea	dry	almost unlimited

The Verbraucherzentrale adds: undamaged, unopened tins are often still edible **years after the best-before date**. White rice and dried pasta (except wholegrain, egg and vegetable pasta) often keep for several years beyond the best-before date. Dried pulses keep for about one to two years. Oats, quinoa, millet and amaranth, on the other hand, go rancid more quickly because of their fat content – so rotate these fairly fast. **Hard cheese** is in the example table but belongs in the fridge (BLE); eat it early in a power cut.

Against pests (BLE):

- Only buy undamaged packs and check new supplies for infestation.

- Keep the storage area clean and tidy, ventilate well, take rubbish out of the house quickly.
- Fly screens on windows keep insects out.
- Check stored food regularly. Webs, contamination or clumping are signs of infestation – don't eat such products (Verbraucherzentrale).
- Leave chemical pest control indoors to professionals.

Preparing to cook without electricity

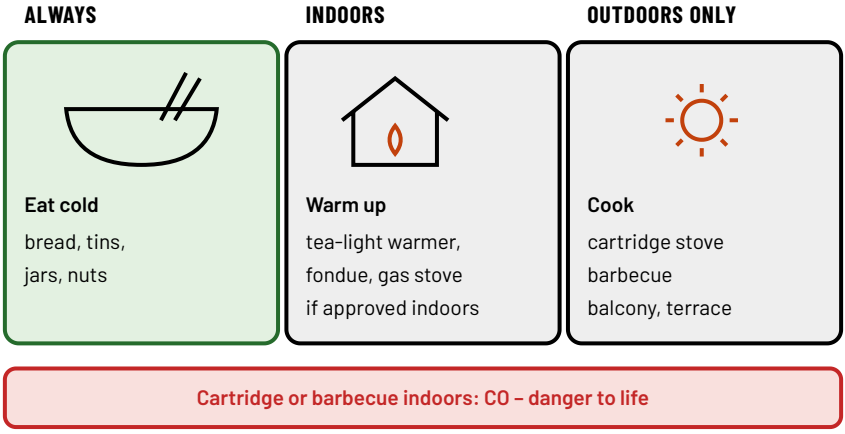
In a power cut, electric cookers, ovens and kettles don't work. A gas hob can often still be used (BBK). So the best preparation is a supply that **also tastes fine cold** for the most part (BBK, BLE). For hot meals there are three levels:

1. **Warming up indoors:** a tea-light warmer can heat food, such as an instant soup. A fondue set with fuel paste can bring small amounts to the boil. A gas stove may only be used indoors if it is **approved for indoor use** (BBK).
2. **Cooking outdoors:** use camping stoves with gas cartridges and gas or charcoal barbecues **outdoors only** (BBK) – ideally on a balcony or terrace, not in the flat. Only use appliances you are familiar with (Verbraucherzentrale Niedersachsen).
3. **Fuel to match:** gas cartridges, methylated spirits, wood, briquettes or charcoal – depending on the appliance (Verbraucherzentrale Niedersachsen).

Important: if there isn't enough oxygen during combustion, **carbon monoxide** is produced. Carbon monoxide poisoning is life-threatening. The BBK recommends tested and approved **carbon monoxide alarms**.

Everything else about light, warmth and power is covered in detail in the Power cut guide.

Saving fuel: foods with short cooking times such as cereal flakes, couscous, bulgur or split pulses, and one-pot dishes, need little energy (Verbraucherzentrale Niedersachsen). Cook with a lid and only put as much water in the pot as you need (Verbraucherzentrale NRW).



Three levels without electricity: eating cold always works, for example bread, tins and jars. Warm up indoors only with a tea-light warmer, fondue set or a gas stove approved for indoor use. Camping stoves with cartridges and barbecues outdoors only, on a balcony or terrace. Below, the warning: a cartridge stove or barbecue indoors means danger to life from carbon monoxide.

Fridge and freezer

Don't rely on the freezer for your supply: if the power goes, it will eventually thaw. That is why the BLE deliberately leaves frozen food out of its example supply. What's in the fridge and freezer is still a good start for the first days – as long as you keep the doors closed. How long

the appliances stay cold and what you can do beforehand (ice packs, thermometer) is in the Power cut guide.

Variations for your household

Flat or house

- **Small flat:** think about which rooms you have available for storage (BLE) – a food cupboard, a spare cupboard shelf, a shelf in the storeroom. A supply doesn't have to be in one place. What matters is dry, dark and not too warm.
- **No balcony:** without outdoor space you can only warm food indoors with approved appliances. Then your supply should rely even more on food that tastes good cold.
- **House with a cellar:** good for potatoes, apples, tins in crates – but only if the cellar is dry. Keep dry goods one floor up. In flood-prone areas, don't put anything important on the cellar floor, see Flooding.
- **Garage:** the BLE mentions a shelf in the garage as a possible storage place. Make sure it doesn't get too hot there in summer or damp in winter.

With children and babies

- **Children:** store mainly what they know and like – eating habits and preferences should explicitly be taken into account when putting a supply together (BLE). Something sweet or a favourite snack helps.
- **Babies** need their own food (BBK). Plant drinks such as oat, almond, soy or rice drinks are **no substitute** for infant formula,

and bottle feeds should not be made at home from animal milk (Verbraucherzentrale).

- **Prepare baby milk fresh:** always make up bottle feeds fresh before feeding and throw away leftovers immediately. The water is boiled and cooled to 30 to 40 °C (Verbraucherzentrale). So you need water and a way to heat it. Which water is suitable for infant formula is in the Drinking water guide.
- For babies, the supplies calculator adds baby food, water, nappies and bottles to the equipment list. More in the Children guide.

With pets

- Plan food for the whole period – the BLE mentions a supply of **tinned pet food**, the BBK checklist a **food supply for pets**. Use the food your animal knows and rotate it the same way as your own.
- Remember **water** for your animals (BBK) – see Drinking water.
- For **assistance animals**, enough animal food and water belong in the supply (BBK).
- Medicines, cat litter and a carrier are on the supplies calculator's equipment list. More in the Care and pets guide.

With care needs, special diets or allergies

- **Think of special diets:** the BBK explicitly mentions food for people with diabetes, people with allergies and babies. The BLE reminds you to consider dietary needs. If someone needs a special diet, build up a specific supply of it – it may not be available in the shops during a crisis.

- **Allergies:** if there are allergies in the household, your supply must suit them (BBK).
- **Medicines:** anyone who needs medicines regularly should have a supply for **at least ten days** – keeping an eye on shelf life and storage (BBK).
- **Care at home:** personal alarm services, home care and meals on wheels may be limited during a longer power cut, see Power cut and Care and pets. A small supply of food that needs no cooking and is easy to eat helps a lot then.

Sources for this section: BBK guide (11/2025), BBK "Stocking up food and drink", BBK guide English edition (12/2018), BLE Ernährungsvorsorge (example table, vegetarian table, other foods, general recommendations, storage, looking after your supply, pests), Verbraucherzentrale (tinned food 12/2025, dry foods 12/2025, baby food 8/2024), Verbraucherzentrale Niedersachsen (8/2026), Verbraucherzentrale NRW.

IN AN EMERGENCY

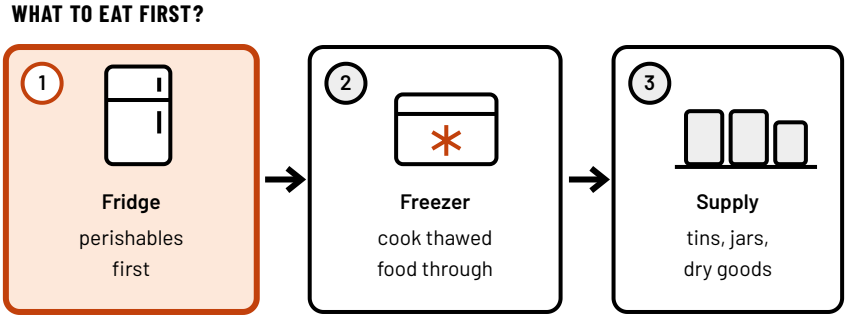
The right order for eating

If the cooling fails, eat the chilled food before your long-life supply (BLE). That way you use what would otherwise spoil and save your supply for later:

1. **The fridge first:** perishable food such as dairy products, meat, fish, egg dishes and ready-made salads – quickly, while the fridge is still below 7 °C (Verbraucherzentrale Niedersachsen).

2. **Then the freezer:** with the door closed, a well-filled freezer often holds its temperature for up to 48 hours. Use thawed food soon, cook raw animal products thoroughly (Verbraucherzentrale Niedersachsen).
3. **Your supply last:** tins, jars and dry goods keep even without electricity.

Open the fridge and freezer as rarely as possible – ideally decide beforehand what you want to take out.



Keep the doors shut – open as rarely as possible

Order of eating without electricity: 1. fridge, perishables first, 2. freezer, cook thawed food through, 3. supply of tins, jars and dry goods. Keep the doors closed.

A day without the stove

Without electricity, cold dishes are the basis. Combine dairy, cooked food and tins with fruit, vegetables, bread, nuts or flakes – that makes salads, muesli, wraps or sandwiches (Verbraucherzentrale Niedersachsen). An example day from your supply:

- **Breakfast:** oats with UHT milk and dried fruit.

- **Lunch:** crispbread or wholegrain bread with tuna or a spread, with gherkins or beetroot from a jar.
- **Dinner:** salad of tinned beans, sweetcorn and chickpeas, dressed with oil and salt.
- **In between:** nuts, fruit from a jar, rusks, a piece of chocolate.

A DAY WITHOUT THE STOVE

Breakfast	Oats, UHT milk, dried fruit
Lunch	Crispbread, tuna, beetroot
Dinner	Tinned bean salad, oil
In between	Nuts, fruit from a jar, rusks

✔ All eaten cold – saves fuel

Example day without cooking: breakfast oats with UHT milk and dried fruit, lunch crispbread with tuna and vegetables from a jar, dinner bean salad from a tin with oil, in between nuts, fruit from a jar and rusks.

Feel free to try a day like this in everyday life. Then you know what's missing – and the children already know it.

Heating food safely – step by step

1. **Check what works:** does the gas hob still work? Then it's the simplest solution (BBK).
2. **Indoors, only approved appliances:** a tea-light warmer for heating up, a fondue set with fuel paste for small amounts, a gas stove only if it is approved for indoor use (BBK).

3. **Cook outdoors:** set up camping stoves with cartridges or barbecues outdoors only – on a balcony or terrace, not in the flat, cellar or garage (BBK, Verbraucherzentrale Niedersachsen).
4. **Cook economically:** lid on, only as much water as needed, short cooking times, one pot for everything (Verbraucherzentrale NRW, Verbraucherzentrale Niedersachsen).
5. **Ration your fuel:** count how many cartridges or how much charcoal you have and plan hot meals accordingly. Eating cold saves fuel for hot water.
6. **Switch off heat sources** that run on electricity (cooker, oven) so nothing catches fire when the power comes back (Verbraucherzentrale Niedersachsen).

More about carbon monoxide, light and warmth is in the Power cut guide.

Making your supply last

- **Opened food first:** eat opened tins straight away or put the rest into a lidded container suitable for food – glass, stainless steel or plastic (Verbraucherzentrale).
- **If in doubt, don't eat it:** never eat from blown tins – with the base or lid bulging outwards (BLE). Throw away tins that are badly dented, bulging or swollen (Verbraucherzentrale). Remove anything mouldy from the supply immediately. Throw away anything that looks, smells or tastes unusual. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) likewise advise throwing away bulging, open or damaged tins.
- **Hygiene when eating:** without running water, disposable crockery, wet wipes and kitchen roll help. More in the Hygiene

guide.

- **Think of your neighbours:** who has no supply, who can't go shopping? The BBK considers it sensible to buy things together with others and share them – see Neighbourhood.

In emergency mode you'll find the most important steps under Emergency.

Sources for this section: BBK guide (11/2025), BLE Ernährungsvorsorge ("Looking after your food supply"), Verbraucherzentrale Niedersachsen (8/2026), Verbraucherzentrale "Tinned food" (12/2025), Verbraucherzentrale NRW, CDC "Keep Food Safe After a Disaster or Emergency" (11/2025).

AFTERWARDS

Checking chilled and frozen food

When the power is back, first look at what's in the fridge and freezer:

- According to Germany's Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR), frozen food that warmed from -18 °C to no more than -12 °C is still considered safe (Verbraucherzentrale Niedersachsen).
- Use thawed cooked dishes and raw plant foods soon. Cook raw animal products thoroughly after thawing – this also applies to frozen vegetables, berries and sprouts. Throw away thawed ice cream.
- **If in doubt, throw it out:** when you can no longer tell the temperature or how long it lasted, or when appearance, smell or taste are unusual.

More in the Power cut guide.

Restocking

1. **Use up opened food**, leftovers from the fridge first.
2. **Write down what's been used:** everything that was missing or ran out goes on the shopping list.
3. **Restock gradually** – just like building up: a few items each time you shop.
4. **Put them at the back**, write the date on them, enter them in your supplies.
5. **Replace fuel:** empty cartridges, fuel paste, tea lights.

Learning from it

After a few days, sit down briefly with everyone in the household: what tasted good, what did nobody want to eat? Was the tin opener missing? Did cooking without electricity work? What should have lasted longer? Improving one thing is enough – for example storing more of what everyone liked and dropping what nobody did.

Sources for this section: Verbraucherzentrale Niedersachsen (8/2026), BLE Ernährungsvorsorge ("Looking after your food supply").

COMMON MISTAKES

- **Buying everything at once:** expensive, and then everything expires at the same time. Better one or two extra items each time you shop.
- **Storing things nobody eats:** your supply should consist of what you like to eat.

- **Only food that needs cooking:** without electricity you need food that also works cold.
- **Forgetting the supply:** without rotation or a fixed check date, everything quietly expires.
- **Confusing best-before and use-by:** much food is still fine after the best-before date – not after the use-by date.
- **Open packs in the cupboard:** pests get in easily. Transfer dry goods into tightly closing containers.
- **Dry goods in a damp cellar or next to the cooker:** moisture and heat spoil them.
- **Relying on the freezer:** without electricity it thaws.
- **Forgetting the tin opener:** without a manual opener the tin stays shut.
- **Camping stove or barbecue indoors:** carbon monoxide is life-threatening – outdoors only.
- **Opening and eating blown tins:** a bulging lid or base means: throw it away.
- **Forgetting the baby, pet or special diet:** infant formula, pet food and diet foods may not be available everywhere in a crisis.

CHECKLIST

- [ ] Food for at least 3 days, goal 10 days
- [ ] Cereals, bread, pasta, rice: 3.5 kg per person
- [ ] Vegetables, pulses: 4.0 kg per person
- [ ] Fruit, nuts: 2.5 kg per person
- [ ] Milk, dairy products: 2.6 kg per person

- [ ] Fish, meat, eggs or vegetarian alternatives: 1.5 kg per person
- [ ] Fats, oils: 0.36 kg per person
- [ ] Other foods to taste: sugar, salt, honey, coffee, tea, chocolate
- [ ] Most of the supply can be eaten cold
- [ ] Drinking water: 2 litres per person per day (see Drinking water guide)
- [ ] Manual tin opener
- [ ] Shelf sorted: old at the front, new at the back
- [ ] Date clearly visible on every pack, purchase date if none is printed
- [ ] Stock list on paper or in the app's supplies
- [ ] Storage place cool, dry, dark; dry goods in tight containers
- [ ] A way to cook without electricity (cartridge stoves and barbecues outdoors only)
- [ ] Fuel: cartridges, fuel paste or tea lights
- [ ] Carbon monoxide alarm
- [ ] Infant formula if there is a baby in the household
- [ ] Food and water for pets
- [ ] Diet or allergy-friendly food as needed
- [ ] Medicines for at least 10 days
- [ ] Yearly check date (for example Germany's warning day in September)

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All links checked on 5 November 2026.

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