Why Do Mormons Stockpile Food?

When apocalyptic fervor periodically whips up, [many people](#) point to the Mormons as those who are best prepared for a doomsday scenario. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) are widely known for keeping a large supply of food, water, and other emergency supplies in their homes.

I have always assumed that there is some eschatological dogma or special passage in the *Book of Mormon* that directs them to keep basic necessities on hand.

Turns out that there's not. Mormons store a good supply of food and water in their homes simply out of a desire to be prudent.

The 2007 LDS guide title [“All Is Safely Gathered In”](#) gives the following justification for food storage:

> *“We encourage Church members worldwide to prepare for adversity in life by having a basic supply of food and water and some money in savings.*
>
> *We ask that you be wise as you store food and water and build your savings. Do not go to extremes; it is not prudent, for example, to go into debt to establish your food storage all at once. With careful planning, you can, over time, establish a home storage supply and a financial reserve.”*

The guide then goes on to offer a few basic guidelines, such as:

- Starting with building a week-long supply of food, and then gradually increasing it until it's sufficient to last a household for three months or longer.

- Storing water in such a way that it doesn't become polluted.
- Building up one's savings by putting aside a little money each week.

As you might imagine, there is a whole culture of food storage among Mormons, consisting of plenty of [blogs](), social media sites, and publications offering tips on building up and maintaining supplies. There are also what's known as Mormon "Canneries", where anyone—including non-Mormons—can buy certain foods in bulk that have been processed to make for easy storage. (You can see if one is located near you [here]().)

FEMA [currently recommends]() that people keep a food supply in their homes that will last them two weeks in the event of a disaster. One [study]() has shown that the average household probably already has enough food for a month (on a purely caloric basis), *assuming no interruption in water supply or cooking energy.* (After looking at my own pantry, I think that number seems a bit high.)

But is it more prudent to adopt the Mormon model of keeping a longer-term supply of food and water in one's home should disaster strike?

Given the complexity of our food delivery system, it's difficult to envision a scenario where someone would need to keep a food supply in their home that could last more than a month. Of course, history is replete with examples of unanticipated, catastrophic disasters.

But if a catastrophic, systemic disaster of that scale were to happen, you're probably going to need a good supply of weapons if you actually want to hang on to your food.