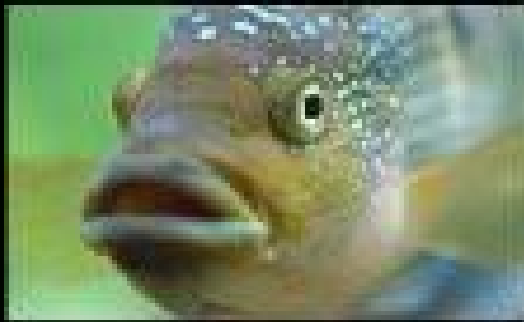


Survive and Thrive

100 TIPS

For Obtaining Food

After the Stores Close



C. Jeff Oakes

**Survive and Thrive:
100 Tips for Obtaining Food
After the Stores Close**

By C. Jeff Oakes

Dedicated to:

All who want to thrive after the collapse of the dollar

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[Foreword](#)

[Growing Food](#)

[Veggies](#)

[Rows, Hills, and Flat Planting](#)

[Starches](#)

[Greens](#)

[Tubers](#)

[Vines](#)

[Grains](#)

[Fruits](#)

[Vines](#)

[Trees](#)

[Bushes](#)

[Cacti](#)

[Growing Outdoors](#)

[Traditional Rows/Hills](#)

[Square Foot](#)

[Terrace](#)

[Climbing Plants](#)

[Indoors](#)

[Balconies](#)

[Greenhouses](#)

[How to Build](#)

[Maintaining Proper Temperatures](#)

[Maintaining Proper Moisture Levels](#)

[Seeds/Nuts](#)

[Hydroponics](#)

[Static](#)

[Flow](#)

[Foraging](#)

[Wild Berries](#)

[Tubers](#)

[Nuts](#)

[Leaves, Flowers, and Stems](#)

[Raising Animals](#)

[Livestock](#)

[Sheep/goats](#)

[Cattle](#)

[Horses](#)

[Pigs](#)

[Other](#)

[Poultry](#)

[Chickens](#)

[Ducks](#)

[Pigeons](#)

[Other](#)

[Fish](#)

[Catfish](#)

[Bream/Crappie](#)

[Carp](#)

[Gar](#)

[Saltwater](#)

[Shrimp](#)

[Crawfish](#)

[Pond](#)

[Pool](#)

[Tub/tank](#)

[Reptiles](#)

[Snakes](#)

[Alligator](#)

[Lizards](#)

[Turtles](#)

[Amphibians](#)

[House Pets](#)

[Hunting Animals](#)

[With a Gun](#)

[Shotgun](#)

[Rifle](#)

[BB/Pellet Gun](#)

[Trapping](#)

[Pit Trap](#)

[Snare](#)

[Cage](#)

[Snap](#)

[Box](#)

[Fishing](#)

[Rod and Reel](#)

[Cane Pole](#)

[Trot Line](#)

[Hoop Net](#)

[Trap](#)

[Cast Net](#)

[Homemade Hooks](#)

[By Hand](#)

[Snagging](#)

[Spearing](#)

[Bow Fishing](#)

[Using a Bow](#)

[Pro Bow](#)

[Homemade Bow](#)

[Spears and Blow Guns](#)

[Sling Shot](#)

[Knives](#)

[Snake Hunting](#)

[Conservation](#)

[Recycling](#)

[Bone to Broth](#)

[Spaghetti to Chili](#)

[Use Everything](#)

[Organs](#)

[Bones/Marrow](#)

[Canning and Storage](#)

[Dumpster Diving](#)

[Insects](#)
[Partial List](#)
[Preparation Tips](#)
[Steal vs. Share](#)
[Stealing](#)
[Sharing](#)
[Barter](#)
[Make Alcohol](#)
 [Beer](#)
 [Wine](#)
 [Hard Alcohol](#)
 [How to Build a Still](#)
[Stock up on Alcohol](#)
 [Cheap](#)
 [Premium](#)
 [High Proof](#)
[Stock up on Tobacco](#)
 [Cartons](#)
 [Pouch](#)
 [Chew/Dipping](#)
[Grow Tobacco](#)
[Grow Marijuana](#)
[Make Dope](#)
[Sex](#)
[Services](#)
 [Security](#)
 [Teaching](#)
 [Medical](#)
[Best Wishes](#)
[About the Author](#)
[More Books by C. Jeff Oakes](#)

Foreword

If you have read my previous book, *Survive and Thrive After the Collapse of the Dollar*, you're likely already preparing for that event by stocking up and making other preparations as necessary. If not, I recommend you read it so that you get a good overview of how to not only survive the impending collapse of the Dollar but also prepare to thrive through the ensuing period.

I am not going to make an argument in this book for the eventual collapse of the Dollar. If you want to understand the causes, see the previous book. This book focusses on the eventual closure of stores, food manufacturers, and other

such suppliers. Indeed, after the Dollar goes bust, without money many companies are simply going to fold and close shop. Transportation lines are likely to be interrupted—for how long is anyone's guess. Farmers will continue to farm, but without fuel to operate their equipment, how long will a modern-farmer be able to produce? In addition, without trucks to bring their produce to market, it will likely rot in the fields...much as it did in the Soviet Union.

In short, if you are going to survive and thrive after the collapse of the dollar, you are going to need to know how to obtain food should supplies be drastically hampered. More than likely, supplies will stop but if not, at least you will have been prepared. Better prepared and not need the preparation than the reverse, yes?

This book is divided into several sections, with each providing useful information to help you prepare for what is to come. In addition, even if you have not prepared and are caught unawares, you can use much of this information to obtain food for your family or yourself. Doing so will not be easy, but it will be vital. In addition, while this is not comprehensive, I do focus on the easier methods for obtaining food—things that virtually anyone can do with little instruction.

For instance, in section I, I discuss gardening. This section will help you figure out the best methods for growing your own food depending on where you live along with giving you tips for growing the “easy” stuff. I am less concerned with teaching you how to provide a balanced diet than I am of teaching you what foods can keep you alive.

Section II gets into foraging for wild plants that can provide sustenance. Of course, most of these plants are less tasty and you should have a good field guide so that you do not eat something poisonous, but should there be nothing else, there is always food in the woods. Just pretend you're a bear.

And naturally, if you come into competition with a bear while foraging, do not be afraid—be excited. That bear can provide months of food and you should learn how to take him out. For this reason, Section IV discusses hunting and fishing. While gathering is fine, hunting usually provides far more and why not learn to do them together?

Prior to this, Section III discusses how to raise animals. For instance, did you know that farming fish is really quite simple and that you can raise many animals right in an apartment for food? Perhaps not in today's law and rule mad society, but remember that once the dollar collapses, most laws if not all will disappear for a time. The only laws that will matter are the law of the jungle and the laws of supply and demand. Simple. You are going to do what you must do to survive regardless of former social mores and laws. Don't believe me? Do nothing now and find out later whether I am right or not. That is your choice.

After this, I discuss how to make food last and stretch. You need to know how to store meat and other things should refrigeration not be possible.

Then in Section VI I present an argument relating to stealing versus sharing. I have a strong opinion here that even after the dollar collapses, most people are going to want for society to continue in a semi-civilized way. Hence, although

there will be many who will simply come to steal what you have worked hard to provide for yours, there are going to be far more who will band together to prevent these. Our job at that time is going to know how best to continue providing so the choice then may be vastly different from what we claim we would do now. Circumstances change everything.

In the final section, a discussion of trade will ensue. This is because regardless of whether we have money or not, people are going to need or want certain products and services. The key to thriving after the collapse is knowing what to provide and having the means with which to do so. Hence, although the first six sections all deal with simple survival, the final section will prepare you to actually do well during that period.

I write this sequel to the previous book in the hopes that more people will begin to understand what is needed to prepare for the total destruction of our economy. At the time I write this, Congress has just announced that they will put off the “Fiscal Cliff” discussions until May. In addition, every time we turn on the news anymore it seems that some major company has bilked millions from the taxpayers and Washington does nothing more than give them a little hand-slap. It almost seems like the national Bleeders are bent on bringing a rapid destruction of the economy, though this seems foolish considering that most of them will have nothing of value with which to trade once money is gone. Their only skill-set is finding new ways to steal money and further tank the economy so when they accomplish that foolish goal, they will be as unemployed as the rest of us, yet far less marketable. Stupid, Stupid men and women.

But you will be ready. You will be prepared for the worst. You have read *Survive and Thrive After the Collapse of the Dollar: 102 Tips for Obtaining Food After the Stores Close*. You are the future of America. The Bleeders in DC are has-beens. And whatever you do, don't take pity on these guys—they aren't taking pity on you now. Give them what they deserve—nothing.

With that in mind, let's get ready to grow...food first, the next economy after.

Growing Food

There are going to be a couple of ways to get food from the ground after the collapse. One way would be to organize local farmers. Once the fuel supplies run out, most large farms will be unable to continue producing crops for all their equipment operates on either gas or diesel. In addition, once trucks stop rolling across the nation, their crops will not be able to reach market anyway. So if you live in an area where there are farms nearby, organize your neighbors and the farmers so that everyone wins. Remember, your farmers are the local experts and they should be treated as such. They have the knowledge, the land, and the seed for producing certain basic crops and the community should be able to expand the crops raised with little difficulty.

Of course, if you are unable to gain their cooperation (which is unlikely) or don't live close to a farming community, you will need to either have your own farm or some other means of providing. This section deals strictly with growing various kinds of

plants for sustaining life. I will discuss various kinds of crops, how much space should be used per person, how you can grow crops regardless of where you live, and more.

In this section, I will discuss growing Vegetables, Fruits, and Nuts as well as growing techniques like hydroponics, greenhouses, and growing in small spaces such as apartments and balconies.

Veggies

Although there are many different kinds of vegetables you can grow, I only focus on five basic types for these are the simplest and provide good nutrients. The idea is to keep it simple so that you can quickly adapt and provide food for yourself and your family.

Regardless of what you decide, you should begin now so that you can collect seeds for future use as well as gain experience before you need it. On the matter of seeds, most vegetation is pretty simple when it comes to preparing and storing seeds. Traditionally, farmers have kept 10% of the crop for seed use, but if you are only supplying your family, 5% should be more than enough. However, if you would like to use seed for trade and such save 10%. Seed does not take up much storage space and it will keep for years if stored properly.

On the matter of seed, I will tell you when discussing each crop how to collect the seeds, but the cleaning and storage are pretty standard.

To clean the seeds, just rinse them with cold water running your fingers though to remove any pulp from the vegetable or fruit. Then dry them. This is as simple as spreading the seeds out on the ground or concrete in the sun until completely dry. After this, store the seed in a cool, dark, dry place—preferably indoors in some kind of container that prevents moisture from getting to the seeds. Of course, let them cool to room temperature after having them in the sun for so long as the heat can cause condensation within most containers of a lower temperature. Seal the container and store it in a closet away from heat and light. This will keep the seeds for a long time and prevent premature growth (which will fairly ruin the seeds).

A final note on seed. Get some now and grow them so that you can grow the seeds from the crops you have grown. You want to know that the seeds are not hybrids. This is because certain companies like Monsanto today are hybridizing many crops and the seeds will not reproduce. Thus, you would need to keep buying seed from that company. But if that company is not around to keep providing seed, you will pretty much be screwed. Be sure that the seed you choose is not hybrid and just to be safe, grow a small plot just to convert back to seed. Then check that seed by planting another small crop from the sample. If these grow, the remaining seed is safe. Store it.

Rows, Hills, and Flat Planting

The first thing to discuss is the kind of planting you will do. Every outdoor garden is planted in much the same way but with minor differences.

The similarities are that the ground is fertilized and seed added. Then the plants must be watered, weeded, and eventually harvested.

The differences are in how much and in what arrangement the plants should be raised to allow for drainage so that root-rot does not set in.

For instance, some plants such as corn are planted in raised rows; others, such as squash is best planted in hills; and some crops such as carrots can be planted on flat soil.

The first thing to do is turn (or till) the soil until it is loose and easily worked. Basically, chop it up really good. You can use a plow to first turn it, then a disc to dice it up more. Each of these can be pulled behind a mule or horse, but you can also do this by hand if need be. It is not easy, but with a spade and a hoe, you can prepare your soil. If that is all you have, it will work—but it will take some time and a lot of effort.

To create hills is the easiest. All you do is pull the soil into a small mound about a foot across with a foot or two between. Smooth the top of the hill and scoop out the center with your hand, place a small handful of fertilizer in, and replace the soil. Smooth again and plant the seeds in the top, by poking a hole with your finger to the first knuckle. Drop the seeds in and cover by smoothing the top lightly with your hand. Water lightly then every few days depending on the amount of rainfall. Generally, most plants like this you will make 4 – 5 holes and drop two seeds within.

Flat is just that. Flat ground seeds are usually just spread out on the top of the tilled soil. For instance, carrot seed is very small so just toss it in such a way that it is spread and water lightly.

For rows, you simply run a string between two stakes however many feet apart that you want the row to be in length. Make the string about six to eight inches above the ground. Then from one side of the string, use the hoe to pull the soil into a long hill. Do the same from the other side and you have a raised row. Make it just less than a foot across at the base and only a few inches along the top ridge. Then move the stakes about two feet from the row and make another. Keep doing this until you have as many rows you need.

As for how to decide between rows, hills, or flat, just think in terms of the kind of growth. Tall with fruits on the stalk in some way would be fine for rows, spreading out vines are better in hills, and things that grow under the soil are fine for flat. Of course this is just a general rule and not always the case—but most of the time it applies. Not to worry though, as I discuss various plants, I will tell you the best way to plant. Let's get started.

As for how much to grow depends largely on how much you like a particular crop. Also, if you plant too much of something it is not too big a deal as you should preserve these through canning anyway and naturally you can always trade with other people as well (more on this in Section VII).

Another recommendation is that you pick up the seeds and check the back of the packs. There is usually a growing chart on each that tells you the best time of year to plant that particular crop for your region/location. Make yourself a growing chart and plan accordingly. Some crops can be planted in the spring; then once these are harvested another crop can be planted right after in the same location for a fall harvest. But this depends much on where you live.

Starches

The most common vegetation to grow and perhaps one of the easiest are starchy vegetables. These are things like corn, potatoes, and beans. I am not going to get into the specifics of the family and genus and such of these vegetables for all that is pointless when you are hungry.

The idea is familiarize you with each and how to grow them in as simple a way possible. I will not discuss varieties for each is fairly similar to the others and you can plant whatever you prefer.

Corn: Plant in rows with two seeds spaced about 4-6 inches apart. You will need about 3 to 4 ounces of seed for a 100 foot row and plant 30-40 feet per person for the year. Field corn is the easiest to grow.

Beans: Same as corn space-wise although you should not need as many plants. I suggest growing 4 or 5 varieties in the same space as corn. And peas are included. Some varieties will need to be held in place with poles while others grow in bushes. The seed pack you purchase should give you this information and naturally, if you are reading this pre-collapse, you can go online to get all kinds of useful info for growing great bean crops.

Potatoes and sweet potatoes are similar, though these grow underground. Rather than picking the harvest, potatoes are pulled from the ground for the potatoes are actually the roots more or less.

Peppers – These tend to grow better in hot, dry climates. There are a variety of peppers and all can be grown either in rows or hills.

Greens

By Greens, I am including every kind of vegetable whereby you eat either the foliage or the flowers. For instance, turnip and mustard greens involve eating the leaves. Broccoli and Cauliflower are the flowers of the plant, and lettuce and cabbage is something altogether different yet similar. These can be planted pretty much any way you want—flat ground, hills, or rows.

What is best is that these are usually pretty easy to grow and require less attention than most crops.

Tubers

These are the absolute easiest to plant and grow. Just toss the seed on the loose soil, water lightly, and watch the plants produce. You should weed these some, but if they grow dense enough, few weeds can make a stand so the task is generally quite easy. Here are some simple and popular Tubers.

Onions – Green onions are the easiest and these can simply be harvested by cutting the tops off at the base, leaving the onion below the surface to grow another crop. However, these split just like tulips and so every season should be dug up and separated. Then let them dry through the winter in a dark, cool, dry place and replant the following spring. You can get plenty of green onions for your family from a fairly small space-5 square feet will produce abundance. Leeks are similar, except that most people prefer to eat the white bulb part beneath the surface, so they will have to be replanted each time. Same with white and yellow onions.

Carrots, Turnips, Radishes, and Beets – All very simple to grow and again, no real need to actually “plant” the seeds. Spread them on loose soil, water, and wait. Five square feet per should be enough to feed your whole family unless it is very large.

Vines

By vine growing plants, I refer to things such as cucumbers, squash, and zucchini. Each of these is simple to grow and tend to yield good crop results. Five or six hills per person should suffice of each. Each is best planted in a hill.

Grains

Although grains are simple to both plant and grow, they are not always the best use of space if you are limited in this. For instance, on average 1000 square feet of space is needed per person to create a reasonable consumption rate of 60 pounds. However, if you plan on using grain to create ethanol for fuel, you would need much more room. In general, grain is not an efficient use of space. Of course, if you are going to have cattle and fowl to feed, this will be a must and I am guessing if that is the case, space is not much of a problem for you.

What follows are all the grains you may want to grow and for the most part, the method of growing are pretty much the same. All you need to do is spread the seed out over loose soil and lightly rake it in. Then water and watch. You may need to weed it some, but if you can spread out straw after planting this will reduce the potential for weeds and retain the seed in place should it rain (rain would wash the seed away—not good).

Wheat – Can be grown in two seasons. Winter wheat becomes green in the fall then goes dormant until spring, when a first harvest can occur.

Rye – Great for bread.

Oats – You know...oatmeal?

Spelt – Similar to wheat and can be used for pasta or bread.

Barley – Good in soups and as feed for animals. Delicious flavor and easy to grow.

Millet – Good for feed for animals although this is a staple food in many nations and does have a rich, nutty flavor. The best part is that it grows in poor soil so it can be grown virtually anywhere under any conditions.

Rice – Terrace farming is necessary for rice as it requires a great deal of water. In fact, part of the growing season the field should be and remain flooded. Hence, this will not be an easy plant to farm for most, but the plant does provide good yields so in some places people may prefer it over other grains.

This is only a partial list and I am not going to spend more time on these crops. The reason is that when the dollar collapses and most people simply want to feed their families, such crops as grains will become more like luxury crops rather than staples because of the large amount of space required and how tedious the process of harvest and milling it will be without modern machinery.

Fruits

Fruits are great because most provide high levels of essential vitamins such as C and A that people need to combat illnesses. However, there are numerous problems with growing certain kinds of fruits that will likely hinder many from doing so. Expect that fruits will become a luxury after collapse should the situation continue for some time. Hence, if you have fruit trees or can plant some now, you could find yourself in good shape in the future economy.

In general there are only three styles of plants that provide fruits and these I will discuss now.

Vines

Fruit-bearing vines are just that...vines that grow fruit. Grapes and watermelons fit into this category though grapes are perennials and watermelons are annuals.

In general, planting annuals is best in hills, though there are other ways as well.

Watermelon – These are hearty but require a good deal of water. Some recommend rows set apart by six feet, but I have found that if hills are used, these can be spaced about three feet from each other and all plants do well. I like to plant 8 seeds per hill in groups of two. Then once the seedlings begin to emerge and establish themselves, I carefully remove roughly half (the ones less hearty). Once established, there is little that needs to be done because even weeds will become choked by the vines. In a 20 x 20 space you can plant more melons than your family can eat in a season and of course, you can make jam, preserves, and great watermelon wine from the rinds.

Cantaloupe – These are grown much like watermelons except that slightly less space is needed between hills to produce good yields. I generally like 2-1/2 feet between hills and 10 seeds per. Again, a 20 x 20 space will do fine.

Grapes – Grow these along fences or similar structure. These are planted in the flat ground, though many find that raised rows help keep too much moisture from the roots, which can harm the plant. Of course, these are perennials so they will come back year after year. There is an art to growing good grapes so if these are a crop you want on your property, you should study up. Good grapes require considerable TLC, so these do not make good necessity crops...but of course, the wine is often worth the trouble.

Blackberries – Usually found growing wild, these make excellent garden crops. Especially if these are irrigated will they produce abundant fruits for the space used. Grow them in rows along fences or some other kind of support structure. Perennial.

Dewberries – These grow larger than Blackberries, are sweeter, and can be harvested earlier. Great if irrigating. Wonderful for jellies and preserves. Grow as you would blackberries.

Strawberries – Consider a vine, these are perhaps the most popular berry in the world. Grow these in hills or mounds and use plenty of straw around the plants to both keep in moisture and keep back weeds.

Trees

Fruit bearing trees are the most popular but unless you take the time to plant them now, they will likely be of little use to you when the dollar goes bust. Fruit trees take time to begin producing, sometimes years. For instance, the pineapple takes seven years to produce and when it does, it only produces one pineapple per plant per year for only ten years. On the plus side, these can be grown close together and even in pots indoors.

Apples – Famous after John Chapman (aka. Johnny Appleseed) spent the better part of his life traveling the country planting apple trees; this is one of the easiest and hardiest of all fruit trees to grow. Some kind of apple grows virtually anywhere. In fact, this is why Johnny Appleseed planted apples. He was actually an early land developer. He would enter such far-flung areas like the Ohio Territory and what is today Michigan and purchase land ahead of the settlers heading in that direction of the growing nation. He then planted these trees to raise the value of the properties he was selling because once people arrived, there would already be food producing trees in place. The reason he chose apples? They are easy to grow and hardy.

Oranges/Grapefruit/Lemons – A great source of the all-important vitamin C, citrus plants require TLC if they are to properly produce. For instance, they are very susceptible to frost damage so if there is danger of this prior to harvest of the fruit, the trees must be protected. One way to do this is to cover them with plastic, but some like to spray them with water the night before a hard freeze. This coats the fruit with a glaze of ice and prevents the temperature from dropping below freezing, 32 degrees F. As to the importance of this crop, it should be noted that a prime reason for scurvy on ships in the days of exploration (Columbus' time) was the lack of citrus fruits. Vitamin C is vital to survival so even if you have only few trees, they are worth the trouble.

Peaches/Nectarines – Also quite easy to grow, these fruits are delicious. However, they only do well in certain climates, mostly in the central states. These don't do well too far south without great care, nor too far north.

Plums – Plumbs as well, though there are a number of variety's that do very well along coastal regions.

Cherries – Grown primarily in the northern climates, these do not do well in the South.

Olives – Grown in more arid climates, olives are often considered a vegetable, but are in reality a fruit. Regardless, if you can grow these they are sure to be a luxury item as people who love olives are like people who like their smokes or alcohol. In addition, these can be pressed to make cooking oil of the highest quality and doing this is much easier than creating vegetable oil at home and far healthier than using pig lard. Also, the oil can be used in lamps for lighting. Very versatile fruit and if you can, you should plant some of these.

Pomegranates – Also fairly easy to grow, but only in warm climates. The juice is used in a number of health drinks today for the anti-oxidant properties so this is a

good fruit for helping contribute to better health during this time, especially for controlling the high stress levels that are sure to be a problem.

Persimmon – Also easy to grow in mostly warm climates. Makes good jellies.

Mulberry – These often grow “wild” across the south and are a prime cause of paint damage from birds. The berries are very acidic which makes this a good source of vitamin C. But these grow well in virtually any climate and the berries are delicious. The only drawback is getting to the fruit for these trees grow very tall, but produce very large yields and provide excellent shade. Just don’t park your car under them...at least until your car is no longer needed.

Dates – These grow well in arid climates and are a delicious source of many vitamins. The date palm can grow very tall, but collecting the fruit is as easy as climbing a ladder and cutting off the bunch.

Banana – Forget growing these in America. These only do really well in tropical climates. Of course, if you have a greenhouse, you may do well with a Banana tree, but for the time required to get reasonable yields from this tree, I would not bother. That said, given the immense popularity of this fruit and the necessity of the supply lines to get them to market in the U.S., if you can grow them they will make a fine luxury crop in the new economy.

Bushes

Tomato – Generally thought of as a vegetable, tomatoes are actually a fruit. No matter. The tomato is perhaps one of the simplest to grow and harvest and provides versatility unlike any other. I do not need to go into the many uses of tomatoes, so here are some growing tips. If planting outdoors, these can be placed in rows, hills, or even growing pots. They can be grown easily indoors, in greenhouses, or on balconies. Hence, this is one of the best.

However, the most common way to grow tomato plants today involves buying them as small plants then transplanting them. After the collapse of the dollar, you need to know how best to do this yourself. This is because this plant is rather fickle until it is established and planting seed directly into the ground can be a waste in a couple of ways. For instance, until established, this plant is easily killed by frost, yet if you can get it growing as soon as the season permits, it will yield fruit all year (until winter kills it). In addition, seedlings are easily killed by too much sun or too much water, so planting direct right away can result in much lost space because of lost seedlings.

Here is how you solve that problem. Get a tray with multiple seedling starter sections. Add soil and seeds, then start the seedlings indoors or in a greenhouse until these are a few inches in height. The initial plant will have two leaves, but when it develops a few more and these sort of wither at the base, the plants are ready to transplant. The best kind of tray to use is the kind with a clear cover so keep warmth and moisture in and just water the seeds initially just enough to moisten the dirt. You don't want them swimming.

Once transplanted outside, you may want to use a trellis or stake to keep them upright once they begin to get some height. Also, the way you make them keep producing well all season is to prune them back. Once you pick a fruit, cut that stem back to the first set of leaves. This will keep the plant producing well. In addition, if you want larger tomatoes, eliminate about a third to half of the small fruits as they appear early on. This will send nutrients to the remaining fruits and result in larger. If more smaller are what you want, leave them be. In addition, you can add fertilizer every week for improved yields. It doesn't take much.

Currant – This is a bush that is best grown in northern climates as the leaves are easily burned by strong direct sunlight. Clay-based soil seems best for this bush, but really it does fine in any kind of soil. Most species of currant yield a fruit that is suitable mostly for jams and jellies, though the White is good for food. In Australia, there is a species that grows more like a tree which the natives refer to as a Conkerberry. In this species, the fruit is poisonous until fully ripe. I mention this because this makes for a great tree to have around should you also want to collect sap for use as a poison in hunting with a blow gun or spear. I know it is not likely that many Americans will have to resort to this form of hunting, but one never knows.

Blueberry – Again, these are grown mostly in northern climates as they do not fare well in the south. A low-growing bush, these are often found in the wild as well as in gardens and the small blue fruits were once a delicacy among English

Royalty—look for this to again be a luxury item after the collapse. So if you have these bushes near your home, propagate them. They could come in handy.

Figs – Figs are not hugely popular as food, though they do make great jams, jellies, and of course, Newton's. One of the best things about the lowly fig however is how hardy it is. This bush will grow in virtually any soil as long as the climate is warm and it gets the water it needs. And one bush yields enormous crops if properly pruned every season. You prune this much as you would any fruit tree—simply lope off any limbs that cross or touch another every winter. If you add fertilizer, the figs produced can be the size of your fist.

Cacti

The cactus plant is not something many people in North America think of propagating, but there can be enormous benefits to doing so. For starters, these grow very well in extremely dry climates and in the case of most varieties the “leaves” can be broken open in an emergency to provide water. In addition, the Agave Cactus is used for making Tequila, which will be a great product for trade (more on this in Section VII). In many varieties, a fruit called the Prickly Pear is produced that there are numerous things which can be done with this. First, it can be eaten as is and is a tasty fruit. It can be made into jam or jelly. It can also be used to make a form of vodka. But a word of caution. They are not called “Prickly” pears for nothing. There are hundreds of tiny fibers all over the fruit that unless carefully cleaned will get stuck in your gums, tongue, and fingers. They are fairly harmless but are very irritating and take weeks to work their way out. Always use gloves when handling prickly pears and wash them thoroughly before eating. Even then, it is best to peel these with a sharp knife then rinse well again before eating. If you ever get these annoying fibers in your gums or mouth you will understand what I mean.

Growing Outdoors

If you are planning to grow things out of doors, there are some useful tips for planning and building a garden. These are considered now.

Bonus Tip

When planting any garden, there is always the danger that animals such as rabbits and deer will come and eat what you have planted. To keep these pests out of your garden is really very simple.

Every time you cut your hair, keep the clippings and spread these about

Traditional Rows/Hills

As already mentioned, the traditional way of growing crops in a field is to either create rows or hills, depending on the kind of crop. In most cases, either method is fine and really it is up to you which to use. If you are using an animal or tractor to till and plant, clearly the rows are a simpler method. If doing this by hand, many find that hills are preferred. Either way, the basics are the same.

Build up the place where you will plant by about six to eight inches. Smooth a flat surface across the top for placing the seed. If using a row, take the top of the handle of your hoe and run a trench through the top for spreading fertilizer. Do so by walking the row after creating the trench and just spreading the fertilizer within. It does not take much. Then cover it and smooth the top. Then make another trench with the hoe handle and drop the seed. Cover and water.

If using hills, just scoop some dirt out by hand, drop in some fertilizer, then cover and smooth again. Poke some holes with your finger and drop in some seed. Dust the top with your hand to lightly cover the seeds and water.

Basically, you want some dirt between the seeds and the fertilizer, especially if using Nitric Fertilizer like sold in stores today. If it touches the seeds, it can burn them and they will not produce. Animal manure on the other hand is completely safe for the seeds but it is still best to have it down where the roots will better absorb the nutrients.

Square Foot

Square Foot Gardening is a method made popular by Mel Bartholomew in his 1981 book by the same name. It is a method that is particularly useful to people who have limited space or other reasons for not planting a traditional garden. It uses simple tricks to keep out pests, like planting Marigolds so that pesticides are not needed.

In addition, the method of square foot gardening implements techniques for maximizing space such as growing cucumbers and squash on trellis' rather than along the ground. Planting some crops that grow primarily below ground in the same space as those that grow above is another trick. Use of compost and peat are ways of keeping down weeds and improving yields is another.

In addition, some have found that they can build a sectioned off box on a table and not have to bend down to tend their crops. This can be an especially useful technique if confined to growing crops in an apartment or balcony. Even in a greenhouse, such techniques can allow maximum use of space as the gardening space can be "stacked," that is, one set of low lying crops planted below and another in trays above, provided both can get ample light. If the greenhouse is set up right, it is doable. More on this shortly.

Terrace

Terrace gardening has been around for thousands of years and it is believed that the Hanging Gardens of Babylon were of this sort. Essentially all this involves is creating terraces or raised levels on a sloped area for the sake of planting. Terrace agriculture is a mainstay in mountainous regions worldwide and most have seen the raised flooded rice fields in Eastern Asian countries. All that is involved is building walls to retain the level surface created for planting along hillsides and mountain slopes. Hence, if you live in such an area where people traditionally do not plant, no worries...you can plant a garden.

Basically all you do is raise a section in keeping with the natural slope of the land, and then raise another, and another, and so on. But you aren't actually "raising" the section as much as simply creating a wall along a section that is all fairly of the same height anyway. The wall protects from erosion. Then you place another wall lower or higher depending on where you started and repeat the process until you have created numerous small, but flat surfaces on which to plant.

If you want to know more, just type in "terrace farming" into any search engine and you will find a plethora of information. After the terrace has been built, just farm the area like you would any other.

Climbing Plants

Climbing plants are perhaps the best for close-quarters planting because these can be grow in pots, in flower beds alongside the house, or anywhere really. All that is required is to build something for the vines to cling to and grow upward. Of course, if the fruits and vegetables grown are heavy, you will need to build some form of support for these.

For instance, suppose you want to raise watermelons using this form of planting, perhaps on your balcony. You will need some form of netting, a bag of some sort, or anything that can be hung from the support. I once knew a guy who used gym bags and such. It looked odd, but he had watermelons in his apartment. Of course, you want to also make sure that whatever the bag is going to hang from is sturdy enough to support the weight otherwise, it will bring down the entire crop.

Indoors

There are all sorts of ways to grow things indoors but the most important thing to remember is that all plants need sunlight. So if you live somewhere that is limited in light, you will need to provide light somehow. Of course, if you have electricity at this point, you can use a grow lamp. But more than likely, such services will soon disappear after the collapse and should this occur, you need to be able to provide light to your crops. If you must, place them by the window and don't close it except at night.

As mentioned earlier, you can build a square foot garden in your home using some lumber and plywood. Of course, you are going to want to paint it well and seal it or else water is going to seep out onto your floor.

In addition, just as you would grow houseplants in pots, you can grow crops in such as well. Say you want tomatoes. Plant these in large pots and enjoy these fruits all year. I even knew a girl years ago who kept an orange tree in her house. It had become dwarfed because the pot limited the root growth, but she tended it and fertilized it well so it did produce. Of course, one advantage to this was that she did not have to worry about frost killing her oranges.

The point is, if you get creative you can likely think of many ways to grow your own food in such a situation. Food can be grown anywhere there is soil, water, and light. Just remember that and you should do fine.

Balconies

As with indoors, balconies are limited in space but the advantage is that they are outside and afford the plants more light and natural moisture. I saw a picture from Russia back some years ago where people were growing stuff on their balconies and this is where I first got the idea.

In the picture, there were vines of some sort hanging from pots and down the sides. There are advantages and disadvantages to this. If these plant vines are hanging down past a neighbor's balcony, they will likely help themselves to the fruits of your labor. This could cause problems so you should be prepared to deal with this. Personally, I would just tell them what I am planning in advance and work out arrangements to share the crops with them. This will do a couple of things.

First, it will ensure that you get some of what you are growing without having troubles in the process and second, it will make for good relations with your neighbor for you will be helping him out at a time when things will be really bad. This could help foster good community relations which I believe are going to be vital when the dollar collapses. More on this in Section VI.

Of course, if you are planting on your balcony, you can expect some people to come and try to steal your produce and you may want to set up some kind of alert system. Remember too that if you plant many things in movable pots, these can be brought in every night and taken out during the day. This will help cut down on theft problems considerably.

Greenhouses

There are numerous advantages to building a greenhouse for growing crops. One of the best is that a greenhouse can be used year round in most climates for raising food for if built right, the temperature can remain fairly steady all year. Of course, in the most extreme cold regions, this will not be the case unless you set up something special.

For instance, I once saw an arboretum up north that had solar panels atop. I asked about this and was told that the solar panels ran fans during the summer to keep the temperature down and heaters during the winter to keep the temperature up. In this way, the arboretum kept a balmy, sub-tropical climate year round. The plants within were beautiful and lush...as if living in a rain forest.

The point is, if you build it right, your greenhouse need not be a seasonal food producer, but rather you can live as if in the tropics and eat all year. Then, if you couple this concept with other growing concepts, such as square foot gardening and hydroponics (to be discussed shortly), you can have an abundance of food.

In this section, I am going to give you some pointers for building greenhouses and keeping temperatures and moisture levels suitable for growing year round in most climates. If you live up north and want to have your greenhouse producing all the time, you will need to create some means for heating in the winter months. There are ways to cool in the summer in the south without electricity, but heating in the north can be tricky, though not impossible.

How to Build

There are a number of ways to build a greenhouse, from using lumber to pipe. In all cases, plastic of some sort is needed to both provide insulation/protection from the elements and allow the infusion of sunlight.

When I was young, my father built a greenhouse from two x fours and visqueen, which is plastic sheeting that comes in large rolls at any hardware store. However, after only two years, the plastic dry-rotted and had to be replaced. I mention this because this stuff is reasonably cheap to use and affords great flexibility when doing so, but it does not last. So you want to weight this when considering what to build your greenhouse with.

There is corrugated plastic that can be purchased at most hardware stores and this lasts. Of course, it is less flexible and must be used on more squared type structures. Still, it is durable so if you are planning on solar panels atop, this would be a good choice.

Some of the easiest ways to build is to connect several lengths of PVC pipe and bend them to form a half-circle shape like aircraft hangars used to be designed. Then the plastic is stretched over this and attached. If building like this, use nothing larger than ½" pipe as anything larger is not flexible enough.

Of course, the best thing to do would be to purchase a greenhouse kit. There are numerous kits on the market and they are generally very easy to assemble. The best part is that most come with the necessary parts to cool the unit.

For instance, at one end or both, it is best to have a fan to draw outside air into the greenhouse. This can cool it off in hot months so that the crops within do not burn up. In winter months, a nice trick to heating without electricity is to place dark-colored strips of plastic atop just enough that the dark collects the sunlight and heat without eliminating light getting through. This is not the best way, but it does work in any but the most extreme cold climates.

Maintaining Proper Temperatures

Perhaps the most difficult aspect to growing in a greenhouse is keeping the temperatures optimum. If you can get temps around the 80's, this is ideal. This is not too hot and not too cool for most plants and considering that you are likely going to have a variety, you want the temps in the mid-range for most.

The way to do this is to have the fans in both ends. Another tip is to locate the ends so that the greenhouse sides, which are going to catch the majority of the solar energy, are facing east and west. This will also make it possible for you to build terraces within for growing on two or more levels, depending on the height of the greenhouse. In so doing, light will be able to come into the sides of the unit as the sun passes on its regular course.

If you live far north and want to have a greenhouse keep a temperature year round without a heater, be sure to use either a kit made for such use or use double panels. This is actually fairly simple. If you build it from lumber, just place some plastic on the outside and on the inside. Now you have air as an insulator between the panels. Just be sure to seal it well with a silicone sealant or else the wind will get through and kill any heat you manage to develop during the day. Another trick is to build a small fire within but be sure to have ventilation. Also, you could spray water on it every night and the glaze of ice will add insulating properties. But remember that if you are able to keep the temp up within, the ice will likely melt the next day. If it does, you are doing a great job retaining necessary heat within.

Maintaining Proper Moisture Levels

Although you want some moisture within a greenhouse, you do not want too much. Too much will cause plant diseases and root rot. So what are some simple ways to keep the moisture levels down?

The first thing to do is to keep surfaces clean and dry. A sponge is good for this and for the ceiling you can use a long-handled sponge mop. If mold begins to grow, kill it with bleach and a scrubber. Mold can kill your plants and in some cases even you. In addition, mold further encourages increased condensation. So keep the place clean and dry.

Next, good ventilation is a must. So not only do your fans keep the temperature right, they are useful in keeping down condensation. If you notice too much humidity in the place, turn on the fans.

Finally, there are specialized heaters that you can get to place under the grow tables or on the floor that will keep the temperature levels such that you can reduce condensation and moisture content in the air.

Of course, not to be neglected in this is the fact that the plants are going to need to be watered. If you have a large greenhouse, you may want to put in a pipe irrigation system and get yourself a moisture meter. A moisture meter tells you the exact level of moisture near the roots and can help you know if the plants need to be watered. This is useful because often people enter a greenhouse and find that the humidity levels are too high and assume that the plants are getting enough water. This is not always the case. Sometimes the air can be moist and the plants still starving for water. It is best to be sure, but remember that meters require batteries so this is another area of attention you will want to plan for. Of course, another method is to stick your finger down into the soil and decide whether it is moist enough. This is an art and don't expect to get it right immediately. It could take some time, but you will learn in time.

Seeds/Nuts

I have already mentioned the need to keep seeds dry and dark in storage, but I cannot emphasize this enough. If your seeds begin to sprout because you have not kept them cool, dry, and dark, you could find yourself without food. Your seed will be your food source and you must pay special heed to caring for them.

Now on to nuts.

There are going to be a lot of nuts running around after the collapse and...oh, wrong kind of nuts.

I have already discussed planting fruits and vegetables but consider planting some nut trees.

Certain species grow wild all around the country, but you can grow them on your property as well. But to grow them properly requires some planning so the time to begin is now.

For instance, Pecans require about 20' between plants for optimal yields and take about seven years to begin producing. Hence, if we don't have seven years before collapse, these may do you little good. Still, if you plant these instead of that pretty maple, you may have a food source should you need it.

In addition, there are numerous health properties to nuts that cannot be understated. If you want to thrive after the collapse, you want to keep your health as good as possible. Also, nut trees attract all manner of wildlife that can be hunted for food.

For instance, every kind of nut tree will attract squirrels and rabbits. These can provide food on your table and are generally easy to catch or kill. Also, should meat be an issue, nuts provide ample protein in your diet.

In addition, if you live in an arid climate, nut trees such as almonds and pecans still grow well and will provide shade, which will help the grown retain moisture, which will make it easier to grow other crops. You can create a completely self-sustaining biosphere right outside your own home with a little planning.

Hydroponics

Indoors, outdoors, in a greenhouse, or on a balcony, you can grow anything using water alone.

In recent years the use of hydroponics has swelled in popularity. This is largely because of the simplicity of the technique and the ability to eliminate the use of soil. Of course, there are special requirements when growing plants using water such as having a means for them to stand upright and not fall into the water. But done right, this growing system can provide larger yields than traditional farming methods and is something to look into especially if space is limited such as in apartments.

Indeed, what most people do not know is that in reality, soil is not needed for plant growth. In the 18 century researchers had already gained the understanding that plants derive their nutrients from the water in soil and that the only purpose of soil is to act as a reservoir for these nutrients and an anchor to the plant. Hence, as long as the water is kept full of nourishment and there is a way to anchor the plant in place, soil is not needed.

There are a number of different methods of hydroponics and I am not listing them all here. I simply want to give you some basics that should you need to in a pinch use, you can.

The first thing to remember when growing plants in this way is to avoid distilled water, unless you plan on adding nutrients to the water—in which case, it will no longer be distilled. Just use water and you can even use water from a river or pond. In fact, water from a farm pond is great as it already contains tons of natural fertilizer, but it does smell bad. So you may prefer water pumped from the ground or whatever source you have. And of course, you are still going to add nutrients to the water, but in case you cannot, this should give you some idea of how to get around this problem.

Some advantages to using hydroponics after the collapse of the dollar are:

- ☐ No need for soil – facing facts, some people are going to be in cities where there will be a shortage of soil.
- ☐ Water is reused – water conservation is likely to also be an issue. With hydroponics, the water in the system is reused, reducing the water needed.
- ☐ Controlled plant nutrients – There is better control over the nutrients added and there is no loss through the soil. So less is needed. Considering that fertilizers will also be in short supply (if at all), this will be an issue (of course, don't forget that your waste can be used rather than flushing it—literally).
- ☐ High yields – generally higher than crops grown in dirt
- ☐ Pest control – is far easier as most pests live in soil and head for the plant to feed.
- ☐ No pesticides on food – no need to rinse and waste water
- ☐ Easy to harvest – just go to the plant and pick

The major disadvantage to hydroponics is the potential for root rot and other diseases. Indeed, if a plant in soil gets a disease caused from too much moisture,

that plant may still live and produce. If this happens to a plant in a hydroponic environment, it will die and will likely spread the disease to other plants quickly. This could be a disaster so great care must be taken when growing in this manner. Thus, there is a need to begin learning about this kind of growing now.

There are basically two ways to grow plants using hydroponics, though there are a vast number of derivatives from these.

Static

You may have done this yourself and did not think about it. In fact, many people today grow plants in their kitchens using a rudimentary form of this method.

The most common plant that people use is Ivy. They will take a sprig of Ivy and using toothpicks hold that sprig in a Mason jar or coffee cup with water in it. Then they place just the tip of the sprig into the water and wait. Within a few days, the sprig develops roots and a new Ivy plant grows. Later they usually plant that in a pot in their house or give it as a gift.

I have even done this with a potato. If you want to try this at home, it is simple. Take a small potato and stab it on four opposing sides with a toothpick somewhere near the middle. Then set this on top of a cup (the toothpicks hold the potato in place on the cup) with a small part of the potato in the water within the cup. Set it on a window sill and watch a potato plant grow. If the water level gets too low for the roots to get to, add more. In general, if you want a healthy plant though, allow some of the roots to stay over the water line—they need to breathe.

Here is something else to try if you never have.

You need a zip-lock bag, a napkin, and some plain old beans (the dry kind you buy in the store –doesn't matter what kind as long as they are dry). Insert the napkin into the bag flat within and moisten it. Now lay the beans on one side of the napkin within the bag. Set this in the windowsill and watch. Within a few days, the beans will begin to sprout leaves. Leave them in for a week or two and see how much growth you get from them before they rot. (Left long enough, they will rot—they will need air to survive.) Now if you want, you could transplant them to a grow cup and within a couple of months have a plant producing beans.

See, you can grow any kind of plant using this simple method and you can do it indoors. You can use cups, buckets, the sink, tub, and toilet, anything that can hold water.

Now, if the roots are kept partially in and partially out of the water, the plants should do fine. But if you have a large container with a fixed system for holding the plants in place and some roots are covered while others barely touching, just provide some kind of aeration to the water. This can be as complex as an aeration pump like you use in a fish tank and as simple as splashing the water around a bunch with your fingers every day. The object is to get air into the water so that the plants can breathe.

Now, how do you create things to hold the plants in place?

If you use buckets, create holes in the lid and place the plants into these holes. You can use netting over some buckets and drop the plants down until the lower leaves rest on the netting. Cardboard can be used to make a holder again by placing holes or slots within to hold the plants over the water.

Get creative. There are no rules other than survival.

Flow

In the flow method, the water is circulated along a channel wherein the roots are located. The main advantage of this is that the plants roots get constant combinations of air and water-born nutrients. This is done by creating a trough, often circular, wherein the water is circulated throughout and the roots kept both moist and aerated. However, this system requires some form of pump so unless you have electricity (which may be unlikely) or the means to create a pump system (like with a windmill), this method is likely to be of limited use.

As mentioned earlier, there are other methods but basically all hold to the same basic principles: provide nutrients to the plants while not allowing the roots to get too wet which causes death to the plants. In all the other methods, the need for power is present and because electricity supply lines are likely to be disrupted, it seems pointless to teach about these other methods. All are basically variations on this one so if you want to learn more, just look up aeroponics, ebb and flow, run to waste, rotary, fogponics, bubbleponics, sub-irrigation, and deep water culture.

One more thing worth noting however is that some hydroponic growers are now using a number of substrates for growing plants. In other words, they are replacing soil with other porous materials that can hold the plants in place while water is kept below the surface of the substrate material. This makes it easier to grow hydroponically in some situations. And these can be used whether you are using the static or the flow method because the substrates allow considerable flow.

Some substrate materials used are:

- ☐ Clay aggregate
- ☐ Growstones
- ☐ Rice hulls
- ☐ Perlite
- ☐ Vermiculite
- ☐ Gravel
- ☐ Pumice
- ☐ Wool
- ☐ Packing peanuts

Essentially, these materials all have the same goal—to keep the plants stationary while growth takes place. All these do is replace soil as the means of getting water to the plants while keeping the plants anchored. If you are considering using any of these, you should take the time to learn about each for there are both advantages and disadvantages with each. For instance, some may allow for bacterial growth between crops which could kill ensuing plant growth.

Finally, a couple of things to note about nutrients in the water. Water will become depleted of the nutrients after some time and should either be replaced or replenished. Also, watch for salt buildup on the edges of the container (white

film). When the water becomes too saline, the plants will fare badly. And do not use commercial fertilizers as these will damage the roots (just as you must have soil between such fertilizers as explained earlier, these fertilizers will burn the roots if placed in water that flows over them). Developing the right nutrients for hydroponic crop growth is beyond the scope of this book so here is a link that can get you going in the right direction <http://scienceinhydroponics.com/2011/01/the-first-free-hydroponic-nutrient-calculator-program-o.html>

Of course, that information is for those wanting to learn how to grow hydroponically now and under optimal conditions (when stores are open whereby you can buy what you need). What can you do if this is not an option?

Simple. Water that has not been stripped of nutrients, such as distilled bottled water, will grow plants. They may not be the best yields, but they will grow well enough to provide you with food. River and pond water is going to be better than tap water, but you work with what you've got. Then only exception to this rule is to avoid sea water. The salt in this water will kill the plants and is useless unless you know how to desalinate it. That is yet another area you could study for it could be an issue if you live in an area with mostly access to such water.

Regardless of the methods you investigate, this information should help you understand what to do should you need to grow plants for food after the collapse of the dollar.

Foraging

If the situation after the collapse of the dollar degrades to the point that essential services are entirely stopped, expect foraging to be normal. Of course, the first things to be foraged are dumpsters, grocery stores, and food plants. But I am not talking about hunting for scraps. I am talking about the kind of foraging that our caveman ancestors used to do. I am talking about the kind of foraging the Native Americans did not long ago and that people living in the jungles of the Amazon and the outback in Australia do to this day.

Ironically, such peoples as these will be the least affected by the global crisis that will ensue should the dollar collapse. These people already know how to live off the land for they have been doing this for centuries.

We on the other hand are going to have to learn a whole new skill-set. Think dark ages revisited. As the cowboys traveling across the plains of Texas had to know what plants and roots and berries and leaves could keep them alive if their beans and jerky were somehow lost or stolen, we are going to have to know how to find suitable food.

Essentially, there are four groups of vegetation that you should begin to learn about. Even if you don't now, you should get a good field guide for just in case.

Wild Berries

There are a number of different wild berries that grow during the summer months throughout American and other nations. No matter where you live in the world, you should learn these things for the collapse is not likely to only affect the U.S. As I stated in my earlier book, this collapse is likely to spill over into other nations because of the interwoven nature of the dollar to all other currencies. In fact, the only things propping many nations up today are the IOU's issued by the U.S. government in the 60s and 70s. These are still on the books and show up as income to the good. When America defaults, the balance sheets of most European nations will enter deeper into red ink than most are already. They will collapse as well.

So everyone everywhere needs to learn about the berries that grow wild near their home.

These include blackberries, dewberries, blueberries, wild strawberries, mulberries, and many more. If you don't know now, find out. Knowing could save your life.

Tubers

Roots are something few people think about but the fact is that there are numerous trees and shrubs that have edible roots. For instance, root beer is made from the root of the Sassafras tree and the leaves are used to make Gumbo File', which is the base ingredient in gumbo in Louisiana Cajun cooking.

There are numerous breeds of wild potato that if you correctly identify, can provide you with a good source of starchy food.

In addition, there are forms of carrots that can be found and eaten throughout the Southern United States and many more. In fact, nearly every tuber that we buy in the grocery section of the supermarket has a wild counterpart. This is because in most cases, these veggies were simply taken from the wild many years ago and propagated until we have the forms we currently eat. The wild counterparts are generally much smaller, growing more like weeds than proper foods, but they will keep you alive.

Canna lilies, which grow abundantly in the southern U.S. has large bulbs which can be boiled and eaten providing a great source of starch.

The best part of tubers is that you can find them during any season.

Also, don't forget that there are numerous forms of mushrooms that can be had. For instance, in England, Truffles grow wild and these are even today considered a delicacy for many. Throughout the world there are many varieties of mushroom that grow wild and are good for food but be careful for there are many which are poisonous. This is why you need a good field guide.

Nuts

Of course, nuts are perhaps the easiest of wild food sources to identify for they all have shells that most of us have seen before. Even if we have never seen a Walnut tree, most have cracked one or two around Christmas time when someone brings in one of those mixed bags and no one has a nut-cracker. Even then, the nut-cracker usually just sends these hard-shelled delicacies flying across the room for they just don't fit in the darned things.

And then there are pecans, and hazelnuts, and Brazil nuts (if you live in Brazil).

Also, few know this but acorns can be eaten. But a word of warning. Acorns should be cooked or soaked in water first to reduce the Tannic acid levels. This can be toxic if too many are eaten. In addition, when raw, acorns are bitter (from the Tannic acid) but when cooked provide a slightly sweet flavor. The way to do this is to boil the acorns repeatedly until the water no longer appears brown (that is the Tannic acid leaving the nut). Once cleaned of the acid, they can be roasted like any other nut. The best part is, acorns are abundant.

Something else that can be done with acorns is to press them for the oil. This oil can then be used for cooking just as you would vegetable or olive oil. Something else worth noting for those with blood sugar problems. There is some evidence that acorns can lower blood sugar levels.

Leaves, Flowers, and Stems

There are many plants worldwide that are edible which many people never think of eating. Most are not very tasty, but will keep you alive.

For instance, in the southwest U.S., the Agave Cactus has flowers and buds which, when boiled can be eaten.

The Acacia tree which appears in tropical climates worldwide can provide food from the leaves, pods, and flowers.

Dandelion greens can be eaten much like mustard or turnip greens; in fact, the entire plant can be eaten even the flowers and roots.

Even daylilies can be eaten in their entirety.

Arrowroot grows in water in temperate climates worldwide.

Bamboo, if you take the young shoots and boil them, is not only edible but somewhat palatable.

The Juniper has berries and twigs that are edible but be careful that the plant is really a Juniper for some refer to common cedars as a Juniper and these can be harmful. Also, it should be noted that the Juniper is the plant from which Gin is made (the berries) and these berries can be roasted and ground to make a coffee-like drink.

Another plant you may not think of eating but which is edible is the Cattail. You see them growing along highways and in ditches all the time, but the shoots of young plants are a good source of starch and can be boiled and eaten or beaten out and ground like wheat for flour. In addition, the female part on top can be boiled and eaten before it matures.

Also, the Palmetto palm which grows throughout the southern U.S. is mostly edible. The seeds can be ground into flour, the heart is starchy, and the fruits can be eaten raw.

Here is another that may freak some out. Pine needles, cones, and young shoots. The cones are boiled only when young and are completely edible and the seeds produced once the cones open can be roasted and eaten or ground into flour. The needles can be boiled to make a vitamin C rich tea.

Water lilies also can be eaten, especially the flowers and seeds. Also the rootstalks can be eaten if peeled back and ground for flour.

The point is there are numerous plants with leaves and flowers that can be eaten should you need to. However, some things to keep in mind are in order. First, don't eat if the plant is growing in water you know to be contaminated. If there is any question, boil it. If it is wilted or appears spoiled in any way, it is and if eaten can make you very sick. If it is growing somewhere like alongside a house or ditch, it may have pesticides on it and should be thoroughly washed. Also, always be sure that the plant you identify as being one that is known to be edible is in fact that plant. Some plants have imitators and these can kill you. In short, always be certain of what you are about to eat. If you are not sure, there are ways to find out.

I found a really good website that you may find useful. It contains tons of great information for surviving not just from plants, but in other ways as well. Be sure to check it out below. There is a really good test for deciding if a plant is safe for food or not. I would have reprinted it here, but was unable as of printing to contact the owner of the site.

<http://www.wilderness-survival.net/plants-1.php>

Raising Animals

If you have the land on which to do it, raising animals for good is one of the surest ways to survive. This is because you don't have to wait for animals to reach a certain season before harvesting. Just chop and chomp. Of course, this is provided you are not overrun by hungry hordes of people. In other words, if you raise animals, be prepared for both the best and the worst. In this part, I am going to give you the pros and cons (other than that already mentioned) of various kinds of farm animals. You can decide if raising them makes sense for you or not.

Livestock

The advantages of livestock are that generally, these will either feed a lot of people or a few people for a long time. Of course, if there are only a few of you to be fed where you are located and there is no electricity, you are going to need to know how to preserve the extra meat—you don't want it to go to waste.

There are a couple of ways.

The first is to salt it heavily and dry it in the sun. The way you do this is to cut it into strips, lay it on a layer of salt, then add another layer of salt, then another layer of meat, then salt, then meat. Do this several times and allow the meat to fully absorb the salt for a few hours. Then take the strips and hang them over a line made of rope or such. After some hours in the sun, the salt and sun will draw out all the moisture and you will essentially have jerky made the easy way.

Another variation on this is to get ice chests (or wooden crates) and cut the meat into steaks. Layer of salt, layer of meat, repeated until the chest is full. Close it and when needed, take some out and cook. Just be sure to add peppers and other seasoning to the meat for it is going to be very salty. And cook well, for raw meat under these circumstances can get you violently ill, especially pork.

Another trick is to create a salt and seasoning mixture to soak meat strips in. After a few hours in this marinade, hang the strips in the sun to dry. Better jerky.

However, the best way to preserve your meat is to build a smokehouse. This is not hard to do and can be as simple or fancy as you like. Just build a low roofed building of about 10' x 10' x 6' and leave gaps between the low roof and the sides. The gaps need only be a couple of inches for you do not want critters getting to your food. Inside, build a pit in the center for keeping coals going and along the sides build racks and shelves for placing the meat within. Build a fire in the center, and then reduce the fire to a smolder. You want smoke, not fire. Place the meat within and every day go out and add more wood to the fire. To ensure you have smoke, soak the wood in water overnight then add onto the smoking coals. Oak, mesquite, and hickory make great wood for a smokehouse if you can find it. Pine is terrible so avoid this unless you are completely desperate (though, if there is pine nearby, there are surely some hardwoods in the area as well).

Once the meat is smoked (cooked) thoroughly, which can take anywhere from a day to a few days, depending on the thickness of the cut, you can then salt it and preserve it for later use.

Sheep/goats

After the collapse, perhaps sheep and goats will be among the best livestock for keeping alive. This is in part because more than likely, you are going to want fresh meat often and not want to worry about smoking an entire head of cattle. A small goat can feed a family of four for a few days and the meat will stay good for a few if you cook it all and find a place to keep it reasonably cool.

Another advantage of these types of livestock is the space they require. In general, you can have five sheep per acre depending on the size. Also, you cannot keep just one sheep for they often pine themselves to death—then you have to eat it...no waiting. Sheep are social creatures and if you are going to have them, you need a small flock. An advantage to keeping sheep is the wool they provide, which must be sheared every spring. If things get too bad, it could be useful learning how to spin wool for clothing.

Goats by contrast can support on an acre between 10 and 12. This is because goats will literally eat anything. With Goats, if you have any trees on the property, these will be stripped as high as they can reach. If it is green (and often even if it is not) a goat will eat it. You may have heard the jokes about goats eating tin cans...no joke. If they get hungry enough, goats will eat even that.

Also, goat's milk is far more nutritious than cattle and the cheese is finer. Even the meat is better than cattle. In fact, Cabrito, which is the Spanish term for goat, is a delicacy in Mexico. The best way to cook this meat is roasting.

The bottom line here is that in a situation like most will find themselves after the collapse, goats are likely the best form of livestock to keep.

Cattle

Cattle are one of the most plentiful forms of livestock in the nation currently, but the supplies will rapidly dwindle after the collapse. A major drawback to this form of livestock is that one head requires one acre of land. Another drawback is that unless you are feeding many people, you will have to have a smokehouse. This will be the only reliable and economical way to preserve the meat.

A major advantage to cattle is that most are very hardy creatures and the meat is quite clean, even if it is undercooked or slightly (only slightly) spoiled. In addition, the hide can be tanned for heavy garments if you live in a northern clime.

Horses

Few think of eating horse today and this could be an advantage. Should people begin roving about for food, this is likely to be one of the last that many will consider. But this was the main food source for the Huns, who virtually lived on horses. They were a hardy crowd of people largely because horse meat is very healthy as far as meat goes. Now, I have never eaten horse personally, but I understand it is quite good.

In addition, should you not have a means of creating fuel, you will need transportation and horses are very good for this.

Pigs

Pigs are good for only one reason: They will eat anything you would otherwise waste. Beyond this, unless you have some means of refrigeration, you don't really want to smoke this meat. Of course, if you plan on having friends and neighbors over for meals from time to time, these would be great because whatever is left over they can take for the next day. You don't want to eat pork much beyond that.

Other

There are a number of other forms of livestock you could keep such as Llama's, and even deer. Whatever you decide on, just be sure to check into the health aspects of storing the meat.

For lack of another place to mention this, consider raising rabbits. The big advantage of rabbits is that they multiply like, well rabbits. They are easy to keep and as long as you ensure that the space in which you keep them does not have open access to the ground, you will keep them. If you try to place them in a pen without fencing below to keep them in, they will dig out.

Also, when you go to kill them, be sure to be gentle. The best way is to hold them firmly yet gently, petting them to get them to relax. Then give them a firm karate chop to the back of the neck. The reason you do this is because when a rabbit gets excited, lactic acid rushes their muscular system...this is what allows them to spring so quickly away. If they are excited when you kill them, that lactic acid will be trapped in the meat. Too much of this and you will get Montezuma's revenge (the shits).

Another way to kill them quickly is to relax them as aforementioned then quickly wring their neck. However you choose to do it, do it quick when they are relaxed. Of course, if you are not eating rabbit every day, you do not have to worry too much about the lactic acid.

Poultry

Poultry comes in many forms, but the most common is the humble chicken. But there are many others such as ducks, geese, and even song birds. All of these can be caged and kept for food.

Chickens

The greatest benefit of keeping chickens is that you can get eggs from them every day. This is a great advantage in staying alive but be sure that they get plenty of corn in their diet. You will need to set up a coop and roost, otherwise they will not produce. Fresh straw is advised at least once every couple of weeks in the roost and be sure not to kill all the roosters.

In fact, most who raise chickens, keep just one rooster per twenty or thirty hens and keep the roosters in separate coops. Otherwise, the roosters may fight and kill each other.

Another perk is that you can have fried chicken often.

But catching them can be tricky so here is a simple trick. Get a wire coat hanger and unbend it so that it is long and reasonably straight. Now bend one end about four inches from the end so that it forms a kind of crook. Now you can use this to catch them by the leg.

When you kill the chicken, all you need to do is cut off their head using a sharp axe or hatchet. Hold them down on a chopping block and give the neck a whack. Now if you let them go, they are going to flail about like a chicken with, well, their head cut off. This can be very messy so one trick for avoiding this mess is to have a line set up with a hook. Hook a double-looped string between their legs and once you chop off their head, you can simply hang them from the hook. The blood will still fly, but it will be reasonably isolated. In addition, once they stop flailing, the remaining blood will drain out onto the ground. This will make the meat cleaner and safer.

Ducks

Ducks are not much different from chickens except they taste different and you must clip their wings every so often or else they will fly away.

To clip their wings, all you need to do is take a pair of scissors and cut about three inches off the tips of their wingspan. Just pull the wing out and the feathers that are longest at the end, clip these. Now Donald or Daffy or whatever your kids name him, will be unable to fly. That way, when you need him for the cooking pot, he will be there.

And if the kids really have named him, be prepared for tears...at least the first few times.

Pigeons

Yes, you can eat pigeons. And the best part is that you can also train them to carry messages to other people. You can send them such messages like, "Dinner at 8...bring the bird."

Other

As already mentioned, there are a number of birds that you can keep for food. Parrots, Cockatiels, Sparrows (thought they are really small), Quail, Doves, you name it.

Of course, some wild birds are illegal to keep in cages today, but don't forget... the collapse of the dollar will mean the collapse of the United States as a legal entity. The laws of the United States therefore, will effectively cease as well. The sky will literally be the limit when it comes to caging and eating birds.

Fish

Farming fish?

Why not?

In fact, all around the world many kinds of fish are already being farmed. From north to south, east to west, fish farming has become one of the primary ways many cultures get the commercial fish that appears in stores and restaurants.

If you have enough land or the right set-up, you can raise any kind of fish you want. One thing will want, however, is a ph meter for fish in general prefer a ph around 7, which means the water is neither acidic nor alkali. If you have a choice though, make the water a little on the acidic side and they will fare well.

How do you do this?

You will need to store up on powdered forms of acid, such as citric as well as an alkali such as soda. It does not have to be anything fancy unless you want it so. Just check the water every week and if it is too much one way or the other, add the opposite chemical. In other words, if the water is too acidic, add soda. If it is too alkaline, add some acid. Just be careful not to add too much and take readings all around the pool or pond or whatever you use. If you only take a single reading, you could add when you don't need to or worse, just happen to get the only place in the pond with a higher acid level than the rest. If you adjust the water too much too quickly, you could kill your fish.

In addition, there are commercial fish foods you can buy and you should stock up. Of course, if you raise crops, you may even be able to raise what is needed to feed whatever kind of fish you raise.

Catfish

Catfish are bottom feeders and scavengers. This means that you can feed them anything and they will eat it. They are like the goats of the deep.

But not too deep. In fact, your pond should be at least six feet deep, but need not be much more than this. In addition, if you really want to have good “crops” the bigger the pond the better. Catfish will grow to meet the size of the “tank” they are as well as according to the food supply and the number of other fish competing for food. An ideal length for most for eating would be fifteen to twenty inches so a good size pond is ideal. If you want to raise catfish as in a commercial farm today, you will want a pond at least an acre in size.

Of course, if you are only planning on having enough to supplement other foods you will raise, a half-acre pond should suffice for your family, unless you really like fish or you have a really large family.

One other thing to consider is feeding. If planning something like commercial operations, generally plan on feeding one pound of food for every hundred pounds of fish stocked. But if you are planning a small family pond, you may instead just stock the pond with other kinds of fish. These will not only feed the catfish, but also provide food themselves. In fact, when you have cleaned your fish, you can toss all the guts and head and such into the pond for food—the catfish will eat these.

Bream/Crappie

The beauty of bream and crappie (white perch or sac-a-lait) is that these fish reproduce quite quickly and provide great food for the catfish. In addition, they are reasonably easy to catch, especially in a pond you own.

For instance, if you build a cage of sorts (really just a place for small fish to feed wherein larger fish cannot get) and place cans of cream corn, dog food, or pasta within, you can provide an abundance of food for these smaller fish. Simply poke holes in the sides of the can and toss these into the cage. The food will leach into the water and attract the smaller fish.

To catch them, simply fish with worms or minnows very near to this cage and you will catch all you want. In addition, this simple method of feeding them will naturally increase the sizes of all fish in your pond.

Another fish you may decide to stock are Bass, but if you want the pond for regular food, I recommend against these. They tend to eat more than they provide food wise.

Carp

Another fish that tends to grow rapidly and according to the space it lives within is the carp. Another name for this fish is the Goldfish.

Although not the tastiest of fish for eating, carp tends to produce well and can supply ample food.

Gar

Another fish that tends to grow quickly and abundantly is the gar. Another breed of this fish is the northern pike. These grow large and quick so if you are going to need food and lots of it, this can be a good fish to stock. One word of caution, however. This fish feeds voraciously on other fish, but is also a scavenger. So you will need other fish well-stocked too. Personally, if I have catfish in my pond, bream, and crappie, I do not care to have any others besides minnows and frogs. This way, I have the cleanup crew and little competition for food among the rest.

However, if you like gar (Pike), these fish are easy to raise in large numbers. If you are not sure whether you like this fish or not, simply go somewhere that people are fishing sometime.

If you are in the north, folks will tell you all about it and maybe teach you how to catch some. In fact, many fish markets in the northern states sell gar.

If you are in the south, just tell folks fishing what you seek and there is sure to be someone who will give this fish to you. I grew up in the south and I noticed this. Coonasses (slang name for a Cajun from Louisiana) will eat anything...except gar. In general. There are many who will, but only hot. This is because once it cools off it is like eating cotton. Not good, unless you are very hungry.

Saltwater

Many people today have saltwater fish tanks in their homes. As any of these will tell you, having such a tank is a lot of work. This is because saltwater tanks require special systems and attention beyond the simple freshwater system.

The same can be said for saltwater fish farming, which is done, but with great difficulty—with one exception.

If you live in a coastal area where there is an abundance of brackish water, you have the right environment for altering that area for saltwater fish cultivation. Of course, if you are considering beginning your project now, be sure to check into both State and Federal Environmental laws for you may well run afoul of such.

But after the collapse, these will likely not be a concern. The only way you will need to worry about such laws is if the nation dissolves into 50 independent nations, much as did the former Soviet Union. In that case, your State laws will continue in effect, so if your project is for after collapse, just become familiar now with State law on this matter. Why Now?

Remember, it is likely that there will be disruptions of most services we now take for granted. If there is not Internet or electricity, you will be unable to easily look up the law. If you go to the courthouse seeking answers, the officials there are likely to be both a skeleton crew and far too busy with other matters. They may tell you to just do as you please—in which case you will likely run into problems later.

But here is the easiest way to actually build your saltwater fish farm.

If you have marsh property, you are right there. All you need to do is dam it up and find a way to divert salt water in. Most of the time, this should not be all that difficult, especially if you live near a salt ditch.

If you do not, you can still convert a freshwater or brackish pond with little difficulty. Simply purchase chemicals to make the water salty then stock it. The fish will maintain the salt level naturally. The only exception to this is if the pond is fed by an underground spring.

This can be easily checked for. Take temperature readings all along the shore, then enter a boat and take readings of the surface and near the bottom. Record these readings. Also, get a depth-finder and map out the bottom. If you see something that looks like a deep hole and the temperature in that area is much lower than the rest of the pond (10 – 20 degrees), this is certainly a freshwater feed and no amount of chemical will maintain the saltiness of the pond. If the temperature is between 5 and 10 degrees lower, it is likely, though not necessarily a freshwater feed. Best to assume it is or spend a bunch of money trying to find out. There are professionals who can determine this for you—at a nice cost.

What will you stock in your saltwater pond?

You certainly want any fish that you like to eat. But beyond that, you want to stock it with crabs, oysters, and shrimp. These will provide food for the fish and help create a balanced ecosystem.

Shrimp

Speaking of shrimp, these critters are not hard to grow in any saltwater environment. All you need are some saltwater plants, like plankton. How do you get these?

You can buy this commercially, but really, because most of the “plants” that shrimp eat are nothing more than tiny, floating specks of kelp and plankton, you can just as easily load up a couple of barrels of saltwater from the ocean and dump it into your pond. They will be there and they will grow. Either method works well, but just be sure to give the plant life a few months to grow before stocking with shrimp.

If the shrimp are going to be the basis for fish food, then additionally, you need to give the shrimp a few months to establish themselves prior to introducing the fish. If you are going to mix the pond with serious predator fish, introduce the gentler fish first and give them time to establish themselves.

Crawfish

Crawfish are all across the south today. These are mostly farmed in rice fields. The method is really very simple. Once the rice is planted and begins to sprout, crawfish can be added, but in most areas of the south, they will simply arrive on their own—they love shallow bodies of water where there is an abundance of food.

I am not going to spend a great deal of time on this because more than likely, if you live in the south where these are already grown, you likely already know more than I or know someone who does. If you live in the northern locations, you are not likely going to be able to grow crawfish of any size to bother eating anyway, so don't bother.

I mention these mostly because if you find yourself in an area with large, shallow bodies of water in the south, you likely already have a crawfish pond in place. All you really need to do is build some traps and harvest them.

The way to do this is simple.

Build a cage about two feet long by one foot square. On one end, close it flat with a kind of trap door that you can open easily and on the other end, make a funnel with about a 2' opening in the center and connect the top of the funnel to the cage, with the funnel pointing into the cage. The material used for this cage should have sections less than half an inch apart at most. Then put some kind of meat, such as bacon or chicken neck within the cage and drop it into the water. Be sure to make some kind of marker so you know where the cage is located (you want to do this from a shallow-bottom boat)—a closed milk jug works well. Tie it to the cage and drop the cage in the water.

Come back later and harvest your crop. Drop the cage back into the water and return again when hungry. Of course, don't take more than you need and be sure to keep the traps out of the water when you are not planning to harvest. If left within too long, the crawfish will die in the cage.

Not only will this waste valuable food, but they will stink when you bring up the cage.

Pond

There are basically two kinds of ponds that can be used for farming fish. Big ponds and little ponds. Kidding.

You can choose to stock your pond with only one kind of fish—the kind you wish to harvest. The only difference size really makes is how much fish can be supported in the pond. Some fish do poorly unless given great deal of space and others require less. But the one thing that every fish farm requires if there is only a single kind introduced is food. You will have to feed your crop.

However, if you choose instead to develop a balanced ecosystem pond—one that is stocked with a variety of fish, you do not need to feed them. You will be creating a self-sustaining fish farm. The only real difference is in the harvest.

Generally, a single-type farm uses traps or nets or other systems and simply farms the entire stock each season, restocking again and again. This is how the commercial growers do it.

But that will not likely be the most practical and efficient method after the collapse because supplies will be harder to come by. So the balanced ecosystem is likely to be the best route.

Pool

After collapse, you can use that swimming pool you spend \$40 thousand on to swim and enjoy the pleasures of a life of ease since you won't need to go to the office anymore.

Or...

Did you ever see the Beverly Hillbillies?

Remember the cement pond?

If you need a place to grow fish, you have it in your back yard. Just be sure to clean the water of chlorine. The way to do this is by simply swimming in it for a while and not adding more. Get out your ph test kit and get the ph to around 7. Once it is at a 7ph without chlorine, you are ready to stock it with fish.

However, if you want a self-sustaining pond, be sure to add some aquatic plants such as water lilies and such first. Then add some smaller fishes, turtles, and frogs. After these are all established, you can add some regular fish and there you go...Your own cement pond like the wealthy Clampett's have. And you thought the way to the rich life was through your now-defunct 401K.

Tub/tank

Basically, anything that can hold water can be used to raise fish. Of course, the larger the body of water, the more fish it can hold and the more self-sustaining it can be.

But if you want to raise a few fish in a tank of some sort, this can be done. You will just need to provide food for the fish. An easy way to do this is to have two tanks. One for the fish that you will eventually eat and another for the fish you will feed them.

The feed tank will be stocked with minnows and other very small fish that can be scooped out and placed into the other for food from time to time. Of course, another way of feeding your stock is to breed crickets in a cage or earthworms in a bed.

And if you get really hungry and the fish are not doing well, you can always eat the crickets or earthworms. Not kidding. Lots of protein in both (more on this in Part VI).

Reptiles

Now if you are like most people, the thought of eating a snake or alligator is repulsive. Of course, if you are one of those folks who have ever tried reptiles, you already know that the meat is exceptionally lean, clean, and delicious. In fact, fried gator is a common food in parts of the south, every year in more than one location Rattlesnake roundups are held whereby people enjoy this killer is served up in killer ways, and lizards are considered a delicacy in much of Central and South America.

Indeed, reptiles are good eating and the best part of raising them for food is that they can provide a dual benefit. Some of them make great guards of the home.

Imagine that you are away for a time to find something much needed for your home and a burglar decides to break in because without electricity and police, this is a very real likelihood. While you are out, he breaks in only to find your home is guarded by an eight foot boa. Think he is going to stay around? Not likely.

Snakes, even reasonably harmless ones like boas are the most feared of all animals. Leave one out while away and you likely do not need to fear anyone staying long should they enter without permission. And while Spot the boa is guarding the house, his little miss is in her cage hatching your future dinners.

So what do you need to do and know if you are going to raise reptiles for food?

First know that if you are going to get started before the collapse of the dollar, you should check into local zoning ordinances and State laws. In some locations, it is illegal to keep reptiles, in some it is illegal to have more than a certain number, and in others there are strict regulations related to the kinds of cages and locations in which they are kept.

For instance, no “wild” animals may be “kept” as pets or any other purpose under Louisiana law and this includes rattlesnakes and various others that are normally found living wild in the State. The only exception to this law is if you have a special permit for such things as farming the snake for the venom to be sold in producing anti-venom or for research purposes. Pet snakes, such as Corn Snakes and Boa’s do not fall into this category.

The bottom line is if you are going to start a snake farm, be sure you know the laws involved or else you could find yourself frying. Many communities are not very happy with having an abundance of such critters living nearby, secure cages or not.

The next thing you want to know about reptiles is that most of the tastiest are predators and usually carnivores. You will need to also raise mice, rats, or similar rodents to provide them with food. The food need not be live and in the case of rattlesnakes, they actually prefer it a little spoiled because they tend to have difficulty digesting. Alligators like fish. However, lizards and turtles are herbivores so you will need to have vegetables for these to eat.

In addition, you naturally want to make sure that any cages in which you keep your reptile farm creatures in are very secure, especially if the reptile is of the dangerous kind.

Finally, you should know that the added advantage to this kind of farm is that the skins of most reptiles are great for making boots, belts, and gloves. In fact, some of the best on the market today are made from these skins so this will even give you something additional of value to trade as people will be just as vain as they are today even if they lack money to make purchases.

Snakes

I can only think of one downside to raising snakes for food—they are so loving that it is easy to get attached. Seriously.

I once had a Ball Python and he would greet me at the door every night when I got in from work. Before I could get anything done like eat or take a shower, I had to play with him. I named him Cash and he was so cool. I would come home and before the door was completely open, he would be on the shelf waiting for me. I would step in and Cash would slither down onto my shoulder. Then he would wrap himself around my neck and begin to give me a gentle massage as if giving me a Ball Python bear hug. After a minute or two of this, he would slide down my arm, up to my face and sort of give me kisses with his tongue flicking in and out at my cheek. Cash was soft and beautiful and I fell in love with him. I was heartbroken when I had to give him up because the place my job took me did not allow such pets. I gave him to a good friend who loved him as well.

I could have never eaten Cash.

But now a rattlesnake is another story. I can eat a rattlesnake no problem. Any other for that matter.

But if you are going to keep snakes, be sure to stock up on a good anti-bacterial hand cleaner. If you are handling them with your bare hands, you need this for many do carry Salmonella. It is carried in their feces which tends to get on them somewhat as they move about their cage. Of course, most snakes are very clean animals for they will pick a corner in which to do their business and generally stay away from that corner other than to do their business. But in the moving into position, there is some that is going to get on them. It is unavoidable. It is kind of like if you had to swim through your toilet bowl before you could sit on the pot. Try as you might, you are going to get a bit shitty.

The other thing to remember is the cage. Don't underestimate snakes. They are quite cunning when it comes to finding a way out. Be sure the cage is secure at all times.

I once had a Ribbon Snake in a ten-gallon aquarium. He was not as long as the tank was high and I got into the habit of not latching the top cover. Then he molted and little did I know, but Ribbon Snakes double in length every time they molt. He got out and I never saw him again—though I am sure someone in the apartment complex found him.

Another thing to remember if you are going to raise poisonous snakes is to have anti-venom on hand for just in case. In fact, it would not be a bad idea to learn how to make it yourself because it does not have a particularly long shelf-life. If conditions after the collapse continue for long enough, you may not have access to this and will need to know how to make it. Also, remember especially to learn about where the poison glands are located because when you butcher them, you don't want to cut into these. Doing so will poison the meat and when you eat it, you will be poisoned.

Also, remember this. When a snake's eyes get milky, they are not sick. They are about to begin molding and their eyes will remain such until molting is over. Do not go near them during this time as they become highly aggressive. This is because shedding their skin (molting) is painful for them and any indication that they are about to be handled will be met with extreme violence. They are simply protecting themselves so don't take it personal if you forget and they remind you.

Alligator

Alligator is delicious. Dangerous, but delicious.

However, a little knowledge will go a long way. For instance, did you know that if you flip an alligator over on its back and rub its tummy, it will go to sleep? Knowing this can come in handy if he gets a little rowdy. It also serves to put the creature on notice that you are in charge. This is a very independent animal and if you have a couple that you are keeping for breeding, it will be good to make this known to him as soon as possible.

Strange as it may sound, alligators do get attached to humans, especially if raised from hatchlings. Of course, do not take this to believe that it will never bite you. It very well may if it gets the chance for it is a wild animal. But they do learn their limits and if handled right, can be quite tame and friendly. Of course, what is friendly for a dog can get you killed when dealing with an alligator, so be sure to keep this in mind.

And when you skin the gator out, remember that the white meat (and the best meat) is in the tail. Fry this part and be ready for a delicious treat and remember that their favorite meat is the one entering their strong jaws.

Which brings me to why you need to know how to put them to sleep. If they ever do manage to clamp down on your arm or leg, the only way to get them to let up is to put them to sleep. You are not going to pry their jaws open for this would be like trying to get your old lady's legs open after 20 years of marriage. Forget it. Put her down—I mean, to sleep.

Lizards

In Central America, Iguana's and other lizards are often caught and skewered like shish-kabobs. They are usually roasted over an open flame and are considered a great delicacy. I cannot say that I have ever tried to eat Iguana, though I had one once I often wanted to kill.

Here is something to remember about raising Iguana's and most other lizards. If they are feisty when they are young, they will be mean as adults. Eat these first. Nothing hurts quite like a mean-spirited Iguana slapping you across the face with his tail.

And just as with snakes, you need to have anti-bacterial solution on hand for they carry Salmonella. Now, that said, the ones that are sold in America have virtually had this bred out of them—in fact, these are no longer imported for this reason, but are instead bred in the U.S. for the sake of controlling this. Still, there is a minute change that they could carry the bug and if you catch it, you are likely to die even now with great medical treatment.

Iguana's and other lizards feed on vegetation of all sorts and the occasional crickets or mealworms. In general, if you want healthy lizards, feed them 90% vegetation and 10% protein. And be sure to mix the veggies among the different kinds for too many green leafy kinds like spinach will lead to calcium deposits in their joints. Of course, this only matter in the case of your breeders. The others are not going to live long enough for this to be a problem.

Turtles

Turtles are good, but getting into the shell is hell. The best turtle for eating happens to be the only really dangerous one—the Alligator Snapping turtle. This turtle has strong jaws that can take off a finger and the personality to match. Let it get the chance to bite you and it will, every time.

Most people who raise these to eat today do so in ponds along with other fish and such. However, because these are scavengers and because of the nature of their systems, when you catch one for eating you want to prepare it just right. Otherwise the meat will not taste very good.

All you need to do is have a large container like a 55 gallon drum. The drum is going to stand on one end and the top open. Be sure to put a spout and valve down low so you can drain it. You want to fill it up to within a foot and a half from the top of the drum with fresh water. Place the turtles within and let them sit overnight. Drain the water and notice that it will be brown. Fill the drum again and repeat. Keep doing this every day until the water is quite clear. It usually takes a minimum of four days and up to ten. Don't feed them during this time as you want their system cleaned out. This makes the meat far tastier.

Also, be sure to learn what your turtles eat. Snappers like meat, but many others prefer vegetation.

As far as getting the shell open...you're on your own.

Kidding. I wouldn't do that to you. The best way to get into their shell is to first get it to bite at a stick and pull its head out. With the neck extended, cut the head off. Tie some rope to the hind legs and let the blood drain for six to eight hours or until the blood stops dripping. Par boil the turtle for about five minutes then you can cut the shell in half by applying pressure against the seam that connects the top and bottom shells. Once you split that seam, you can pull the shell apart. Now you can remove the skin and the entrails then cut off the feet, but not too high up for most of the meat is in the legs. Finish skinning and cut the meat off with a sharp knife. You can now cook the meat any way you want. It makes a fine Sauce Piquant or fry's up nice, though can be rather tough fried.

Amphibians

If you've never had frog legs, you will want to be thankful for the collapse of the dollar. When it comes to delicious food, fried or sautéed frog legs can't be beat. The meat is darkish, but tasty. One of the more popular ways to serve these is to fry them as you would fish, but I prefer to fry them more like chicken. The only difference is that the first is generally fried in corn meal and the latter in flour.

But another way to serve these is sautéed in a garlic butter sauce. Of course, this will mean that you are going to have to grow garlic in your garden or trade for some and I certainly hope you do. Besides the health benefits of garlic, when you serve up frog legs in a garlic butter sauce, your family is going to forget for a time that the economy is gone.

Now if you are planning on raising frogs in a pond or pool, if you mix them in with aquatic wildlife you will not need to provide food. They will find all they need naturally. If you are going to raise them independent of anything else, you will need to raise some kind of insect, such as crickets or worms to place in their water.

Of course, I am telling you about the American Bullfrog. Most other frogs simply do not have enough meat on them to bother and some excrete toxins for protection from their skin. You will want to stay away from these for obvious reasons.

As for catching them, there are two ways.

The first is to use what is called a Gig. This is simply a pole with a sharp, three-pronged fork. It kind of looks like a tiny pitchfork or an even smaller version of Poseidon's trident. All you do is sneak up on the frog and stab it, catching it with the gig.

The other way is to catch them by hand. You will go after them in the dark and shine a light into their eyes. Blinded, you simply reach out and grab them. Of course, this is assuming you will have found a way to power your flashlights. If now, go for the gig.

Of course, if the container in which you are raising the frogs is small and you have total control over the population, you should have little difficulty catching them.

House Pets

I really hate to even bring this one up, but the reality is that house pets are edible. I have personally never tried dog or cat, but I understand they are pretty good. As with any meat, you can fry, boil, roast, or stew Fifi and Kitty. I know this kind of grosses many out to think about it, but the book really would not have been complete if I did not mention this.

People have done worse things than eat house pets in dire circumstances and the reality is that should the collapse take out the governing structures of the nation or world, it could come to this. The only reason I mention it at all is to mentally prepare some who may be living in denial. Things can get bad...really bad. You need to know that our four-legged friends may begin to look really good at some point.

I am not going to beat this subject, but I had to mention it. Of course, there are many other ways to obtain food, so for most, this will certainly be a last, or next to last resort.

Hunting Animals

Without a doubt, one of the more popular means for obtaining food will be hunting—at least for those who live outside major cities. More than likely, many who read this book already own guns and have been hunting at least once in their life. Of course, there are far more ways to hunt than simply with a gun and this section will consider each method.

For those who have never hunted a day in their life, the collapse could be an enlightening experience. Indeed, there is nothing finer in obtaining food than hunting, killing, and cleaning your kill yourself. Personally, I think modern society is too far removed from the activity. We should have at least one animal in grocery stores that we have to catch and kill before we can take it home.

Chickens would be a good choice for this because unless you have a tool like the one I described earlier, catching the buggers can be tricky. And imagine the fun shopping would be if the catch bin were visually open to all. Then imagine the delight as kids get to literally see a chicken-with-its-head-cut-off. It will bring new life to the expression. We could even place side bets on how long it will take someone to catch the bird. Really, there is only one thing that could be better. Having people catch their own greased pig.

Yes, there are going to be many eye-opening experiences after the dollar collapses. And many entertaining ones as well. I think it just may be good for humanity to return to the hunter-gatherer phase of existence for a time. It will make us appreciate what we have now and maybe the next generation will not be in such a hurry to destroy it.

In any case, we should now consider hunting and we will start with guns.

With a Gun

I think many people who hunt today do so simply because it gives them a good excuse to shoot guns. Face it, shooting is fun. One of the best things about serving in the military for me was getting to shoot the 50 Caliber. Did you know that with a few well-placed rounds, you can cut down a fully grown pine tree? Of course, when we are young and Uncle Sam is footing the bill, we don't use "well-placed" rounds—we fire with all we've got and yell, "Timber" to the top of our lungs.

Still, hunting with a gun gives the same thrill. It doesn't matter if it is a shotgun or a rifle. It is fun. Personally, I think that is what all the fuss over protecting firearms in our culture is today. No one wants a revolution and few really want to have to use an assault weapon against neighbors (except the annoying ones maybe). No, fully automatic 100 round assault weapons are just a lot of fun to shoot.

But assault weapons are not too practical for hunting animals because too many large rounds ruin the meat by tearing it to shreds. In fact, the most common hunting weapon is the lowly shotgun.

Shotgun

As already mentioned, one of the favored hunting weapons is the shotgun. Although there are numerous shotguns you can buy for hunting, the three most popular are the 410, the 12 gauge, and the 20 gauge. Each has its own advantages.

The 410 is light and suitable for young shooters for there is little kick to it (recoil). The pattern is tight so it is a very good gun for hunting small animals like dove, quail, and squirrel. But it is not so good for larger game.

Both the 12 and the 20 gauge are used by most adult hunters because you get greater range and the shells hold more shot. Thus, the game is far easier to hit. In addition, these two tend to provide larger patterns which make them easier to hit game with.

In recent years, many hunters have even taken to using such shotguns for hunting deer. This is because in many more populated areas, rifles are not permitted because of the danger of accidentally shooting humans. So the alternative is a "slug gun" which is nothing more than a shotgun with slugs rather than shot. About the only real difference this make against hunting with a rifle is that slugs tend to not have as great a range. But in most instances, the hunter is in a deer stand with the area baited so that the deer come much closer than if they were on foot anyway.

Rifle

Nevertheless, the rifle is still the preferred method of hunting big game for the rounds travel true and with range. Thus, with a good rifle and scope, there is no need to get so close that you spook the animal.

This does make a difference. A spooked deer for instance, tends to provide tougher meat. This is because when a deer is shot on the run, the muscles are all contracted to their maximum and once killed, they remain so. If you want the meat to be more tender, don't spook the animal. In this respect, the range of a rifle is a great advantage.

Another obvious advantage with a rifle is that a well-placed shot with a rifle can bring most any wild game down, whether it is a deer or a moose. Bear can be taken with one shot as can an elephant (with the right rifle, of course).

BB/Pellet Gun

Of course, if you are hunting something small enough—say birds and small rodents, even a BB or Pellet gun can provide food for your family. The only downside to using these is that you are limited to small game. Shoot at a bear with one of these and all you are likely to do is piss off the bear. And I can tell you from experience—even a small bear can run pretty fast.

Still, the reality is that when you are in need of food, any gun is better than no gun. Shoot it, clean it, and bring it home for dinner. That is the point of hunting.

Trapping

If you're not handy with a gun or don't have access to one, no problem. There are plenty of other ways of obtaining animals for food. Trapping is one of the oldest methods which humans have used to get the meat they need to survive. Way back in the day, when Mammoths and Saber-tooth Tigers roamed the earth, people were digging pits and constructing various other kinds of traps to catch these beasts for food. When the stores close and food becomes scarce, such tactics could again become popular for a time.

Not only is it useful to be aware how to build these traps for obtaining food, but knowing what to watch for if you are out hunting with your gun would be an advantage. Some of these methods can get you into problems or killed. People always revert to the old ways during emergencies and the longer the duration of the effects of the emergency, the further they tend to revert back.

In the dark ages, it was not uncommon for a man to wander into some snare meant for bear or fall into a pit meant for deer. Either situation could be bad for the unsuspecting and if the situation becomes so dire that the use of rudimentary traps becomes normal, you can get seriously injured if you don't know what to watch for.

Pit Trap

Perhaps the oldest form of trap in history is the Pit Trap. It is as simple as it is deadly and if placed in the right location, can provide ample food while simultaneously eliminating competition for food. All you need to construct one of these is something with which to dig. A shovel works well.

Of course, a shovel takes a lot of time to dig a pit large enough for big animals, but if that is what you have to work with, then it will do the trick.

Basically, you just need to dig a hole in the ground large enough to catch whatever kind of animal you are seeking to catch, but deep and wide enough that it cannot jump or climb out. In general, for small game such as rabbits and wild boar, a pit about 5 x 5 x 5 will suffice. Once the pit is dug you then take branches and make a loose thatch over the top. Be sure to make it loose or else the smaller rabbits will simply stroll across with nothing happening. Of course, if your goal is to catch something heavier, like a boar, then certainly make it such that it will not cave from a rabbit crossing.

If you want to hide it well, take some leaves and grass and toss it on the thatch covering and try to make it rather natural in appearance. Also, if you have any kind of bait to attract the particular animal you seek, add this to the center of the thatching. If you stock up now, you can get many different scents for a variety of wild game in the sporting goods store or online. For instance, there is a fluid for attracting deer which is really nothing more than doe piss. You can find stuff to attract boar, bear, antelope, moose, you name it. If people hunt it, you can find something to draw it in now. You won't likely find this stuff after the collapse, but you can now so stock up. I would recommend a couple of bottles for each kind of game you think you can trap near you. If you are not sure what these are, just go to the Wildlife and Fisheries website for your State. There you will find a plethora of information on wild game in your area.

Naturally, if you are going after deer, you are going to need a deeper pit, so be prepared to dig a bit. Also, it will need to be wider so that when the deer steps on the thatch, it does not have enough of a lip to catch on to and the thatching will not provide a means for climbing out. Likewise for bear. And if you are going after something really large, like a moose, be prepared to dig for a while.

In addition, if you want to make the pit such that any animal falling into it will not be able to escape, simply put spikes in the bottom. Just take some strong poles or limbs, sharpen both ends with one end very sharp and pointed. The less sharpened end is then driven into the dirt in the bottom of the pit with the sharp points sticking up. Put several of these mostly near the center and when the animal falls into the pit, it is sure to be injured or even killed. This is the upside. The downside of this is that you need to check it more often for should the animal lay dead in the pit for long, it will begin to decay and will be unfit to eat (you could get sick and die). In general, you want to find the animal still warm; if it is stiff from being dead too long, you may want to be very wary of the meat.

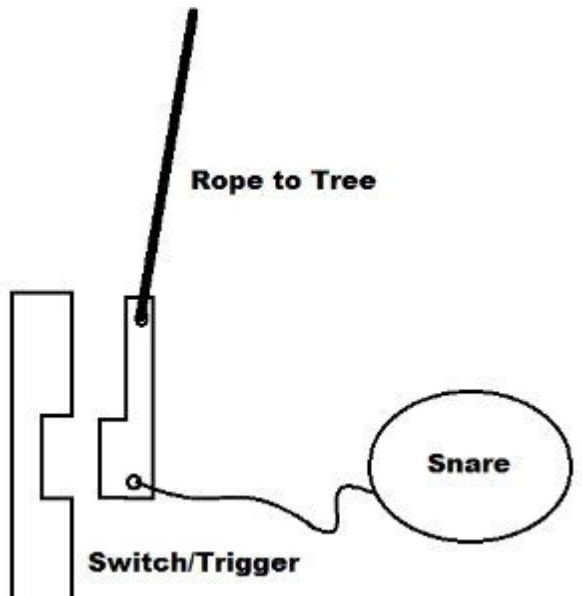
Also, it would not be a bad idea to have a couple of additional tools for digging. Get a good axe for cutting through roots and a strong lever about six feet in length for

removing rocks. Also, a pick-axe would be useful for cutting through sandstone in the south and stronger bedrock in the north. In fact, if you live in mountainous regions, you may not be able to use this method very easily for some rock you will not get through without blasting—you know, dynamite. I am not telling you to go buy dynamite, for that could get you into trouble in today's world, but if this is an issue, you may want to consider some other forms of trapping.

Snare

Pretty much as soon as man figured out how to use vines as rope, the snare was invented. It's a simple design. All you do is make a loop or noose on one end of the rope and tie the other end high in a very springy tree. You are going to pull the snare noose to the ground and secure it such that the natural spring in the tree will snatch the animal up and cause it to hang.

There are a number of simple ways to do this.

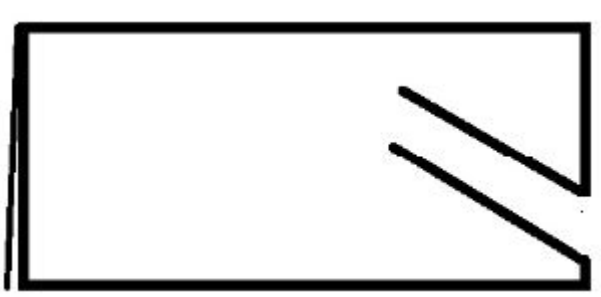


One way is to place a small stone over the rope on the ground leaving the snare looped such that a small animal that runs through it will snag the loop and simultaneously knock the rock out of the way, triggering the tree back into place. However, this can be tricky considering that the rock cannot be too big, nor the tree too springy.

The most important things to remember when setting up a snare is that first, the loop or snare itself, must have a loose slip knot in it so that when the animal runs through, it tightens easily around its neck. This will panic the animal and cause it to trip the switch or trigger you have devised. Also, the tree must be able to bend nearly to the ground and with such firmness that you struggle a bit. If it is too loose, it will be ineffective. Next, you must choose a spot where animals travel and these are easy to find for just like people, animals tend to have favorite paths they travel. Find these paths and set your snares directly in their way.

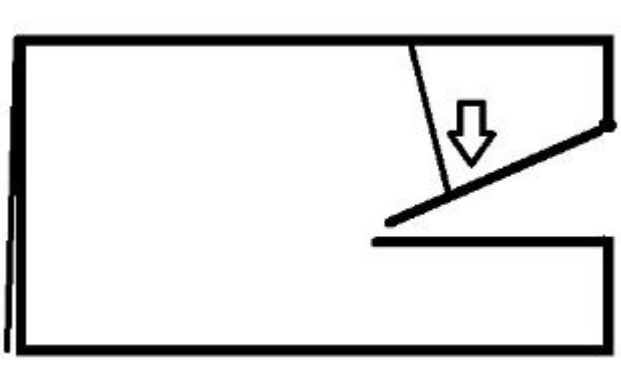
One of the best ways is to devise a "switch." The way to do this is to use a couple of short sticks or poles with notches which fit snugly, but not too tight. The first pole is about two foot in length and is driven into the ground right where you want to place the snare. It should have a squared off notch about two inches. The second pole is about eight inches in length with a squared off section that will fit into the first. Then the rope is attached securely to the smaller end while a smaller rope snare loop is secured to the bottom of the second pole. When the game runs through, the switch is tripped and the snare activated. Dinner is served.

Cage



Cage traps are fairly easy to construct out of virtually any material. Obviously, the best material is wire mesh such as used for chicken coops or rabbit cages. But you can even construct these from sticks, small branches, reeds, or bamboo interwoven such that a cage is formed.

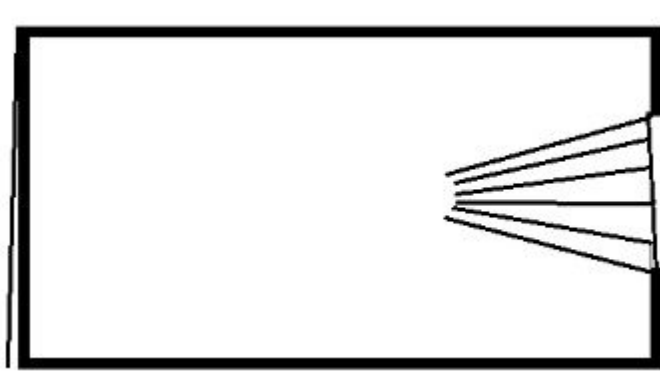
There are a couple of ways to create the trapping part of the cage as well.



One way is to devise a door that snaps shut once the creature is inside and tugging at whatever bait you have placed within. The easy way to do this is to attach a spring to the door such that the animal can force it open, but not having opposable thumbs, cannot reopen it. Of course, some animals are smart enough to still get the door open, so it becomes necessary to devise a lock. These are ok, but personally, I prefer a simpler method.

All you need to do is create a system whereby the animal can enter, but cannot exit. In fact, you can usually buy similar devices for catching mice and rats in most hardware stores. If you want to get a good look at one, buy one and take it apart. These usually use sheet metal and are simple to build using thin sheet metal, a pair of cutters, and rivets. These are known as “live-catch” traps and are very useful for anyone wanting to catch food for eating. Remember, the best way to trap food is to catch it alive—the meat is safer that way.

The usual system is to create a closed box that has a door on one end and a wedge-like opening on the other, sometimes with springs. The animal is able to climb into the box to get to the bait, but cannot get out.



In addition, such traps can even be bought commercially for larger animals such as squirrels and rabbits although these are not as common as those for mice.

Another design similar to the sheet metal employs a cage that allows the creature in but makes it nearly impossible to get out. Basically, a funnel is made such that the wires point inward. The animal can slip past these just fine, but on trying to exit, it is faced with a choice much like the ones presented in the Saw movies. It CAN get out, but not without personal bloodshed and sacrifice. Most animals will not get out. In fact, this is the kind of trap used for catching crawfish for they really cannot escape because of the nature in which they move.

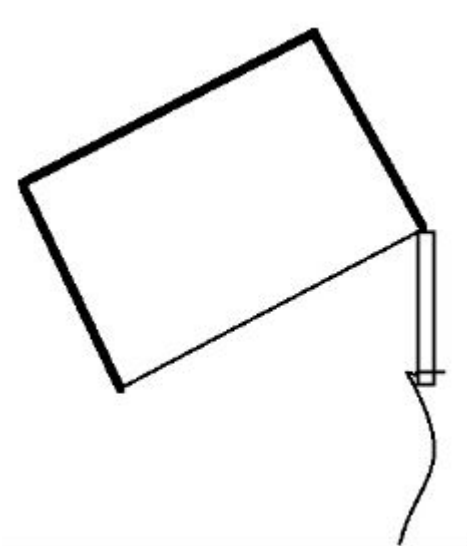
The images should give you some idea of what to do. These are simple drawings and I know that all that snazzy. I confess, I am not the greatest artist in the world. But I am not trying to sell you art, I am trying to save your life. The images illustrate well enough the simplicity of design you can employ in building a trap for catching virtually any small animal you wish. Just bait them and wait.

Snap

Most people are familiar with Snap Traps. These are the kind most often bought to catch mice and rats. It is a simple device with a strong spring, a trigger, and a bait plate. The mouse comes up, eats the bait and because the trigger is fairly sensitive he (or she) triggers the spring to snap the trap shut, usually crushing its little head.

This is the same basic type of trap that was used during the trapping era in America for bear and other large animals. You have likely seen these in movies, usually when some goofball is lumbering through the woods and steps on one. It snaps shut, breaking his ankle, him screaming. Depending on the plot and the kind of movie, he is either a) shot, b) left for dead, c) helped and in the process gets someone else dead, d) laughed at relentlessly, e) chews his foot off or something else.

Actually, bears would actually do this. Journals from trappers reveal that often these did return to their traps only to find nothing more than a bear claw. Not much of a meal that night. Hmm, I wonder if that's where the idea for the pastry came from.



Box

This kind of trap is just what it implies. It is nothing more than a box or crate.

The way to do this is to simply take a stick or pole about six to eight inches in height (or much larger depending on the animal to be trapped, though for large animals one needs to be ready to move quickly for they are good at getting out of such traps) and place the stick such that it is propping up one end of the crate or box. Then tie a string or thin rope to it and take that with you to a hiding place where you can see the trap. Yes, this one you need to man.

The reason you need to watch it, is because bear in mind, one part of this trap is open...the part on the ground. Most animals can dig out even if they cannot move the crate.

All you need to do is place bait under the box and wait for an animal to come for it. Then pull the rope to yank the pole from under the box and the animal is trapped. Now you go get it, but remember to be ready because most animals are going to come out fighting or running when you lift the crate or box. You are going to have to move quickly to either catch it or not be bitten. These are actually fairly good traps for raccoons for their curious nature allows them to meander on in, but remember that they often carry rabies so be very careful. In fact, it would be best to have some long Kevlar gloves for removing most animals from cages when still alive. Of course, if you use a crate with openings in the sides and/or top, there is nothing preventing you from subsequently spearing the animal and killing it before opening the trap.

Fishing

When you think about it, fishing is essentially trapping. The only difference is that with fish, water is involved (but then, you knew that, right?).

If you are like most people, you know at least a little about fishing so I am not going to bore you with a lot of details and such. I could, for I simply love fishing and virtually grew up on the water. We spent every weekend at the lake and there was a pond right across the street from my house. Not far were a few good rivers and at least once a month we went to either the Gulf of Mexico or the salt marshes. So I love fishing. Ironically, I hate to eat fish and pretty much never do.

Pretty much what I am going to do in this section is introduce the various ways to catch fish and provide a few tips that many may not have ever heard. I don't need to go into a lot of detail because pretty much anyone can figure out how to fish with a few easy instructions from anyone they know who has ever done so. This section just introduces the concepts and adds a few pointers.

Rod and Reel

The most common method of fishing today is with a rod and reel. This is nothing more than a combined fishing pole with a spool with a handle for winding up excess fishing line. This allows you to cast your baited hook further from you than without such a device.

You can learn how to cast from the person you buy the set from. Just remember that you need the rod and reel, hooks, line, corks (or floats or bobbers—depending on where you live), and sinkers (or lead weights). This is all pretty much common sense, but here it is anyway.

There is no wrong way to set up your line—I have seen every possible configuration work...for I have tried virtually every configuration. But in general, tie your hook at the end of the line and place a sinker (lead weight) about six to ten inches above this. This adds tension to the line while allowing the bait to float more freely (hence, naturally) in the water. If you are fishing on the bottom (without a bobber), the weight will keep the bait off the bottom entirely which is good for preventing snags (in theory, though I got many a line snagged as a kid). If using a bobber, this keeps the bait floating freely in the water.

Put bait on the hook and cast the line in the water. Wait until the fish takes it. If you have never fished before, be patient and wait until the fish is pulling. This may cause it to swallow the hook, but that you can retrieve when you clean it. If you yank prematurely or just don't set the hook, it will get away.

Here is how to tie a hook. Just slip the line through the eye of the hook and bring about an inch and a half of slack through. Holding both the main part of the line and the part you just brought through between your thumb and forefinger, spin the line several times. I recommend at least six, though I have found that nine spins seems to work best. Now after you have spun these two parts of the line together, there will be a small gap where they first meet near the eye of the hook. Run the end of the line (the short part you pulled through) through that gap. Then run it back through the loop you just created by running it through the gap. Now tug on the end of the line that runs to the reel while holding the hook and line firmly with thumb and forefinger, but not so firm that you do not allow the line to move. You have just created a form of slip knot which is fairly similar in nature to a noose. The more a fish pulls on the hook, the tighter this knot becomes so that you need not worry about it coming untied.

Cane Pole

Fishing with a Cane Pole is just like using a rod and reel except that you cannot cast your line very far. No need, for most fish are actually close to the shore when feeding anyway—that is where most of their food is derived.

Of course, there are cane poles that are quite long and these can give you good range for getting into deeper water if you'd like, but really, any pole will do.

The best part of fishing with one of these is that if all you have is some string and a hook, you can make a pole. Cut down a piece of bamboo and trim off the branches. Be careful though, these are pretty tough and you are going to need a sharp knife. Then you want to be careful with that sharp knife as well—ask me how I know.

I have a neat scar across my middle finger that bears witness both to how tough bamboo can be and how a sharp knife can mess up a good day of fishing. Of course, now if someone asks me if I have any scars, I have carte blanche to shoot them the bird. Most find it amusing.

Trot Line

One of the best ways to fish if you want to stock up and don't want to spend a lot of time fishing is to set trot lines. Generally, these are set using a boat and there are a couple of ways to do this, but they can also be set from the shore.

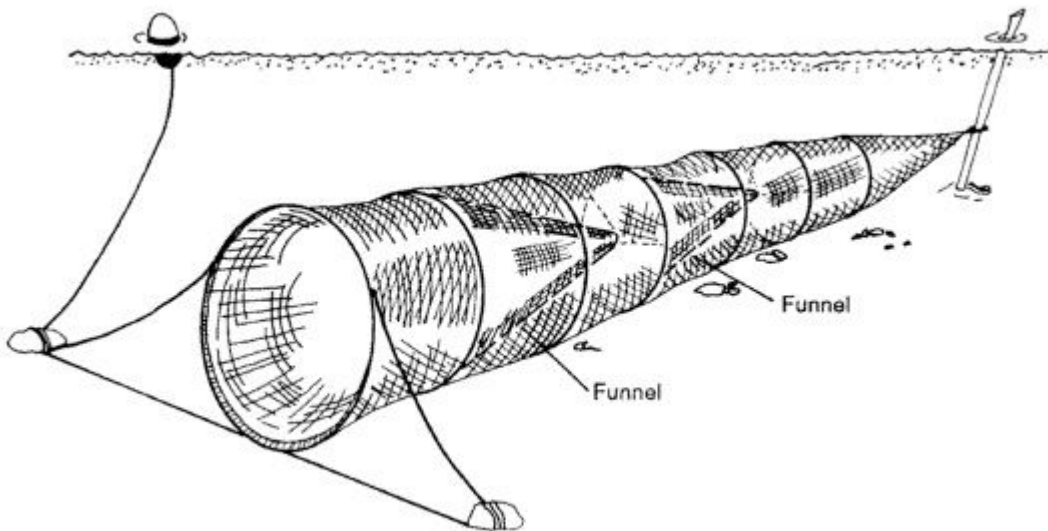
All this consists of is a sturdy fishing line with hook and sinker attached to something in such a way that you do not have to watch over the fishing. Some like to simply take a boat long the shore and tie them to branches of trees over the water. This is effective for the trees provide natural springs to pull back on the fish as it takes the bait, thus setting the hook.

Another way is to run a line across a river, leaving enough slack that it can sink deep. Then attach numerous additional lines from this one spaced every few feet apart all the way across. Bait them all and come back in a few hours. The best haul we ever got from a trot line in one shot was 24 fish, all good sized. Nearly every hook had one on it.

Hoop Net

A hoop net is just as it sounds. It is a net that I designed to act more as a trap. It is similar in nature to the cage trap used by people catching crawfish, but much larger. In fact, if a person were to make a metal cage the size of the average hoop net, it would be far too cumbersome and heavy to put in a standard size fishing boat.

There a couple of ways to use these. One is to set it and return later to retrieve your catch. If you do it this way, just be sure to have the opening facing either upstream or cross stream



(downstream just doesn't work out all that well).

Another way to use this is to troll with it. That is, rig up your boat so that you can tow it along behind you in the water. Then when your boat is pulling sluggish, you have a load. Kind of like my two-year old—when I see him waddling and becoming sluggish in his run and gait, I know he has a load. Your boat will act the same.

One thing to be aware of however: Not all States permit the use of hoop nets for fishing today so if you decide to buy one and use it pre-collapse, be sure to check the laws where you live. Just because you can buy them does not mean you can use them. In many cases, if you get caught, you will have your nets, your boat, and maybe even your truck confiscated (depending on where you are caught—Game Wardens often wait until you hook up your boat and trailer to the truck before “checking” you. Then they can get it all.).

Trap

There are numerous kinds of traps that can be bought or made for catching fish. Most are similar in nature to the kind used for catching crawfish and can be built from a number of materials. For instance, lobster traps such as are used along the north eastern coast of the U.S. are generally made from wood slats and wire mesh. Likewise many of the older crab traps used along the Gulf Coast.

There is literally no end to the designs, but all have a couple of features in common.

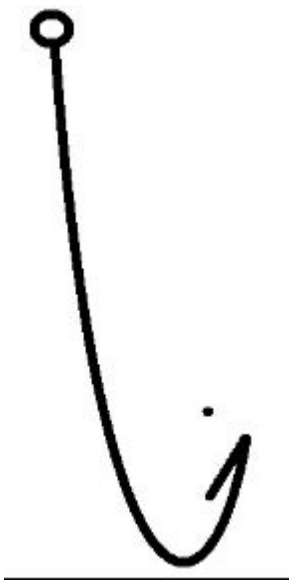
There is an easy way to open and dump the trap quickly. There is a funnel of some type that allows the crustacean in without it getting out. There is a float tied well above that can hold it up, even if loaded full of the fish being caught. The trap is baited to attract the fish.

Cast Net

This is a very hand-on way of fishing and is a lot of fun.

A Cast Net is just a big flat net with plenty of slack in the middle and weights long the edges. To cast the net, you hold the center slack in you least dominant hand and the weighted portion in the other, your throwing hand.

To set this up, you drape the slack over your arm while loosely holding up the net with that hand, as well as the end of the rope attached to the net. Then making sure the net is loose and spread open, hold part of the edge of the weighted portion while swinging your body in such a way that you cast the net out. The goal is to get the net to fan out much as a rodeo roper gets the rope to fan out and loop the cattle. If you do it right, the net will fan out, spread as wide as it can, then hit the water spread. As the weights carry it down, it will catch fish and shrimp.



To get the full effect and catch as much as possible, a skilled caster knows just when to pull back on the rope, which causes the weights to close in, effectively closing the net. As it is brought in, the weights prevent the bulk of the fish and shrimp from escaping.

Homemade Hooks

If for some reason you find yourself entirely without any fishing gear whatsoever and need to be able to get food for your family, you can make hooks. Just remember the design and the rest comes easy.

I have seen hooks made out of strong twigs and even carved wood. There are really only three elements to any hook.

The first is the eye, which allows you to securely attach a line. The second is the barb, which prevents the fish from getting off the hook. And the third is the hook itself. This allows the line to be pulled, pulling the hook against the mouth of the fish, and setting the barbs so it can be brought to shore.

That is all there is to a hook. You can make them from wire coat hangers or anything that can be designed similar to the image to the right.

By Hand

One method of fishing that few have tried is catching fish by hand.

In fact, catching catfish by hand is a sport in its own right today called Noodling. Personally, I think that sounds more like some freaky sex trick, but no, noodling is a real form of fishing.

This is not to be confused with the more simple form of catching fish by waiting when they are spawning and then just reaching in to grab them. No, Noodling involves wading into the water, getting down into it often up to the neck, and finding the holes which catfish often like to hide. When a catfish is found, the Noodler will then reach into the hole and often reach into the fish's mouth and down to the gills. This is used often on the large catfish that tend not to get caught by traditional means.

However, a word of caution. Sticking your hand into a hold in the bottom of a lake, pond, or river is likely to deliver something other than a catfish. More than one Noodler has been bitten by a snapping turtle, snake, or something unidentified at the time.

The reality is that noodling is not a good way to find food unless you have no other means. In other words, catching fish by hand is only good for two things: Extreme Sport or Sheer Survival.

Snagging

If you live near a spillway or seaway, snagging fish is a great way to put food on the table. The upside is that it is easy and quick. The downside is that you do need a rod and reel and you have absolutely no control over what you catch. For instance, if you bait your hook when fishing traditionally, you can choose a small hook and worms to catch bream or you can use a larger hook with minnows and go after white perch. Or fish on the bottom with liver for catfish. You sort of decide what you want for dinner. This applies whether you are fishing freshwater or salt.

But when you are snagging fish, what you snag is what you get—it's like playing the lotto but under water.

If you live near a spillway, it is easy to do. You are going to need Treble hooks for this. This is a triple or three way hook, the kind you see on Bass lures. Tie a heavy sinker on the END of the line and attach a few hooks above. This is done simply by making a loop in the line, passing it through the eye of the hook, then feeding the loop over and past the body of the hook. This will make it stick out in a funny way and that is what you want. Tie the first hook about a foot and a half from the sinker and the next a foot above and likewise with the next.

Now cast this directly onto the spillway near the bottom, where the spray is beating up from the water rushing down. As soon as it reaches the water begin reeling it in, jerking the pole firmly but not so much you yank it out of the water. Just jerk it. You are trying to snag fish. Once you feel the fish fighting against the line, you snagged you one—reel it in.

Saltwater is pretty much the same but you need to watch the top of the water to see where the fish are feeding and schooling. This is where you will cast—or I should say, just past them, then snag back. The way you spot the fish schooling is that you will see swirls near the surface and occasionally hear and/or see the splash where they are hitting shrimp and smaller fish. Also, if you see what appears to be glitter under the water that is moving, it is. These are schools of minnows or shad and there are certain to be larger fish on the perimeters feeding off these. Cast beyond the school and snag as soon as you reel back to them.

One thing to beware. Some localities and States ban snagging currently so be sure to check the laws where you live. Those with such laws treat this with the same aggression they treat hoop nets. Be sure or be careful.

Spearing

If you live where you can see into the water, you can spear fish. Of course, this is not an easy thing to do and when you do, you should have a very sharp spear with a barbed head.

Really, this is no different from using a spear gun when scuba diving except that you have no gun and you wade in the water rather than swim.

Of course, if you are desperate and have no other way to fish, you can find a good straight branch, whittle it down, and spear fish. All you do is hold the spear at the end and stab it at the fish—very hard. You must stab the fish hard enough to break through the body and remember that the scales for a sort of armor so your spear needs to be very sharp and you need to be forceful.

If you are one of those guys whose wife wears the pants, better send her on this one.

Bow Fishing

Another way to fish is with a bow. Again, you need fairly clear water so that you can actually see what you are shooting at and once you hit the fish, you may need to move quickly to catch your kill, especially if fishing in swift streams and rivers.

Using a Bow

Using a bow is pretty much like using a gun in that you aim, you fire, and you retrieve your kill. But that is as far as the resemblance goes.

Bows are elegant and fun. When you fire a bow at your kill, it flies silent. There is no noise to alert your prey what is about to happen. If you shoot clean and are using good hunting arrows, you can take down a deer with a single shot. If you do not, you had better get off that second shot quick for unless you hit a spot that will virtually paralyze the deer, you are going to be hard-pressed to get a second, much less a third.

I know of a guy who never lets his prey get away if he hits it. He believes that to hit the deer then let it escape is wasteful, for the deer is likely to die anyway. So he gives chase. One time, he was two days returning, but he had the deer—or at least, one that looked like the deer...who can tell?

Using a bow requires a very steady hand and an even steadier eye. The plus side of learning how to use a bow is that should you have no other means of weaponry, you can always make your own bow if there is wood and some form of string available. More on this shortly.

Pro Bow

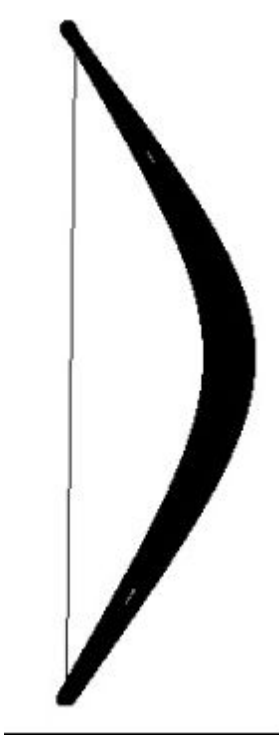
There are numerous kinds of bows which can be bought commercially at present. How easy these will be to obtain after the collapse of the dollar is anyone's guess.

For instance, if a simple older style bow is what you want, they are still fairly easy to find. Most today are made from fiberglass and composite materials, though it is still possible to find some made from various kinds of wood and bamboo.

However, the favored bows today are compound bows. If you go to the section where the bows are, these are the ones with pulleys on either end. The reason for the pulleys is that when you pull the bow string back, the pressure is compounded such that even though it takes little effort to pull the string, the force exiting the weapon is such that you can hit targets very hard at great distances. These are the ultimate bows for hunting for if you are a good shot, there is virtually nothing you cannot kill with one of these.

In addition, crossbows, once difficult to find have made a comeback and some of the designs incorporate the same compound structure of the above mentioned bows. This means that these newer crossbows are far more powerful than any of their predecessors and indeed, the most powerful of any bow which can be bought today.

Homemade Bow



Of course, if the collapse catches you off guard and you cannot locate a good bow, you can always make one. Making a bow is fairly simple, depending on the design you desire.

First, find a flexible length of wood such as hickory, juniper, mulberry, teak, or something similar. Bamboo is good too if it is not too large. It needs to have some bend to it without being too bendy. Nor should it be too green or too dry. You want it to bend but not break.

Next examine the piece to figure out the natural curve. Also, make sure it is free of knots and such.

Now you are going to need to shape the bow by shaving the ends somewhat with a sharp knife. You want the thickest part in the center with the ends shaved down a bit.

Then you will need some means of securing the bow string to the ends, such as notches.

Add string to either end. The string should not be the entire length of the bow, but be shorter such that you have to bend the bow somewhat to get it on.

To make arrows, simply choose very straight pieces of wood about two and a half to three feet long, and shave these smooth. Then sharpen the point and make a notch on one end. Feathers are not vital, but if you can get some great. Split the feather down the center and glue them to the end of the arrow in thirds (you will glue the feathers on three opposing sides of the end with the notch). If you make the point sharp, you need nothing else. You could chip away at some rocks though and make an arrowhead. The design is such that all you do is tie it securely to the end of the

arrow. If you have never seen a rudimentary arrow head, look at the image to the right.



Spears and Blow Guns

Spears are perhaps the easiest hunting tool to make. All you need is a long, straight shaft and a good knife to shape and smooth it with. Make a point on the end or even tie a spear head (similar to an arrowhead, though usually much longer) to it and you are done. If it is straight enough, you can throw it and with some practice become quite good at hitting your target. If it is not straight, you can always use it by hand to spear fish or animals you sneak up on.

Blow guns are not that difficult to make either, nor are the darts. For the gun, select a good straight reed or even bamboo. If using a reed, just get something like a wire coat hanger to clear the center, and then glue something to one end as a mouthpiece just so you don't get splinters when shooting it. Some kind of cloth or a thin piece of leather folded over the lip and glued in place works well.

For the darts, you can make these from any small piece of straight metal, such as the wire coat hanger. Cut these into 3 inch pieces and sharpen one end. Glue some cotton to the other end, just enough of a mass so that it will fit into the blow gun, but not too snug. You need something to force the dart out when you blow, but you don't want to think of yourself as the big, bad wolf trying to get rid of a brick house. Also, you can find growing wild in many parts of the nation, thorny vines. Some of these have thick thorns about 2 and a half inches in length and are usually quite sharp. If you can find these, they are great.

Finally, if you want to take down your target quickly, find some poisonous frogs. There are far too many to list, but these are found nationwide. There is a toxin that many frogs, especially certain tree frogs, excrete when they sense danger. You can stick these frogs with the point of the dart and it will begin to excrete the toxin. Then you just rub the toxin on the dart and be careful not to prick yourself.

Sling Shot

There are a couple of ways to build a sling shot.

One of the oldest is the kind that King David in the Bible used to slay Goliath. It is nothing more than two long strips of leather with a small leather pouch attached in between. The pouch is really nothing more than a patch of leather about 3 inches by 3 inches. The way you use this is to place a rock into the pouch, which is fairly formed when you are holding both strips by the end in one hand. Then begin to swirl the rock over your head and when ready to fire, bring your hand forward, aiming, while releasing one of the leather strips you are holding. The best way to hold these strips is to wrap one through your middle finger and ring finger into your palm while the other is held between your thumb and forefinger (this is the part you release). On release, the rock will sail ahead at quite a speed...enough to kill a giant, according to the story. Such slings were once used in warfare widely and are very deadly in the right hands.

Another way to build a slingshot is to make a simple Y-shaped handle you can hold and attach a rubber band type material to either side with a patch in the middle. Then all you do is pull back with the patch/pouch loaded and release when ready. Generally speaking, such slingshots do not carry the force of the sling, but they are easier to learn to shoot accurately.

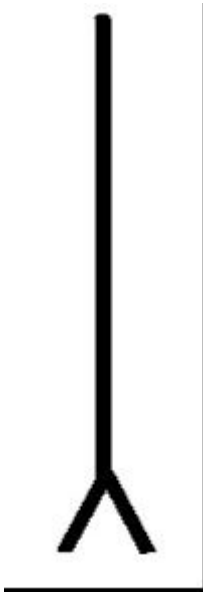
The third kind employs a leather strap attached to the base of the slingshot such that it wraps the wrist. This allows you to put far more force behind the firing of the slingshot. These can be purchased today with a very nice design and usually a padded wrist bar and are called, Wrist Rockets. These can do far more damage than a simple slingshot, but still far less than a sling.

Knives

Yes, you can hunt with knives. Who hasn't seen the movies where a man gets into a fight with a bear or a lion using nothing more than a big knife, such as a Bowie Knife? In fact, this was part of the reason Jim Bowie invented this massive blade—for hunting. The guy was perhaps a little insane, but we must give him Kudos for he was one of the brave soldiers at the Alamo who gave his life so that Texas could gain independence. Anyone should be proud to own a Bowie Knife and use it for hunting.

Of course, you can also always attach a good blade to a spear and extend the range of killing ability.

Snake Hunting



Snake hunting is really pretty easy. You find them under rocks and in berry patches. To catch them, all you need is a good sack such as burlap and a pole or long stick with a Y in it. The Y portion need not be that large, only a couple of inches actually.

All you do is locate the snake and using the pole, trap him by using the Y to pin his head to the ground just where the head meets the body. Because this is generally the smallest part of the snake at this point, when you pin him down with the Y, he will be unable to get away. Then you carefully grab the snake behind this Y and place him into the sack.

Simple, provided you are not afraid of snakes. And if you are, hunger should help you overcome your fears. Either that or you may starve.

Conservation

This part of the book is a little different. Until now, I have focused on finding food. But once you get that food, you need to know how to conserve or save what you have for later use. There are a number of ways to do this depending on what you have. Earlier I told you how to build a smokehouse and gave you simple instructions for salting or drying meat. Now I will provide some other ways to store what you hunt, gather, or otherwise obtain.

Recycling

The next two suggestions are less ways to store than to reuse something which you have already made too much of. The only reason they are here is to make life a little more pleasant for you when food becomes scarce. During that time, little things will mean a lot so enjoy.

Bone to Broth

If you have cooked up some kind of meat and have bones left over, save these bones. You can reuse them the next day to make a broth for soup. Of course, you should have some way to preserve these in a cool environment. Like if you have taken steps to provide emergency electricity to your home such as using a windmill or generator, you will be fine. If it is winter and gets cold, place them outside in a sealed container to keep critters out.

All you need to do the next day is place the bones into water and boil them for a few hours. They will produce a fine broth from which you can make a soup. In fact, the bones can be boiled along with any veggies you want to add so that these absorb the flavor of the broth as well. Chicken bones do especially well like this and in the winter, provides medicinal qualities that cannot be overstated.

Spaghetti to Chili

If you have made spaghetti one night and have sauce left over, you can easily convert this into chili by simply adding chili powder and cumin. Cook your beans separate then add the former spaghetti sauce now turned chili base and voila, you have chili. Simple and nothing goes to waste.

Use Everything

Folks in Louisiana are known for things such as Boudin and Gumbo. What many do not realize is that many of the best dishes served in that State are made from literally EVERYTHING an animal has to offer—liver, kidneys, tongue, gizzards, stomach, intestines, and so on. Literally everything.

This is because traditionally the Cajuns have retained their older customs of making meals without wasting anything. There was a time when this was the norm in most of America and the world and in fact, it still is really.

Ever wondered what Bologna is made from? What about Hot Dogs?

That is right—these are made from everything...At least, everything that doesn't get sent to the meat packers. When food becomes scarce, you are going to want to conserve and learn how to make all parts of an animal good for food. You are not going to want to waste anything.

Want to make some Jell-O? Grind up the bones and make gelatin, which is the base ingredient.

What follows are some of the ways to make certain parts of an animal tasty or otherwise get used.

Organs

Fry them, dice them up and add a little actual meat and put them in a stew or other dish. There are many ways to serve organ meats but be careful. If you have gout, these will send your uric acid levels so high you won't walk for a week. If not, enjoy.

Bones/Marrow

As already mentioned, the bones can be ground into a sort of flour that is called gelatin. This can be used as a base in soups, for making pudding, or as a thickening agent in other recipes. The marrow within can be used to make lecithin, which is an ingredient used in Chocolate for making it firm, yet smooth (although I should note that lecithin for chocolate has not been made from marrow for many years in America—now it is made from soybeans).

In addition, boiling the bones releases the marrow which makes great broths. Some even force the marrow out of the bones to dry it as a broth agent and there are others who actually suck the marrow from the bones as part of their meal.

Canning and Storage

If you have never canned food, you should learn how before you actually need to. What you are going to need are plenty of Mason jars and lids, wax, a large cooking pot, preferably a pressure cooker, and the produce to be canned.

There are two methods for doing this.

The first is to use a pressure canner/cooker. With this method, you will not need the wax and this is a far better process. You will prepare the foods to be canned and wash and sterilize the jars and lids.

Place the food into the jars and be sure to move a knife down into the mixture a few times to get out any air bubbles. Now place them into the pressure cooker with the lids on but not too tight. You want the air to escape from the jar as it simultaneously seals—this keeps out bacterial and preserves the food pretty much forever. Close the pressure cooker lid and heat according to the directions that come with the pot. Be careful when removing the lid (after the pressure is let off) for there will be steam within. Carefully remove the jars and let set overnight to cool. Push on the top of the lid and if it does not pop up, the jar is sealed. If it does, you will either toss the mixture or repeat the process. That is up to you. Remember, you will be killing all bacterial so if you choose to redo the process, it should not be a problem. But that is your call.

The second method is for if you don't have a pressure cooker. You still fill the jars and place them into water about half way up but do not put the lids on yet. Heat to boiling for 20 – 30 minutes. This will heat the food within as well. Have a separate pot melting the wax and be sure to use something you can pour from. With the heat off the preserves pot, pour the wax onto the food to be canned, about a half an inch in depth. Carefully place the lid on the jar while it is still in the hot water, but do not tighten fully just yet...hand tight is fine. Once the jar is out, using thick gloves now tighten the lids. As the air between the wax and the top of the lid cools, it will seal the jar. The wax is there to seal out bacteria.

The reason the first method is superior is because there is no possibility of bacteriological contamination when done right. In the case of the wax, it is possible.

The safety against this is to simply pay attention to what you open. If it appears to have discolored, especially compared to the others, it is likely spoiled and do not use it.

The method you choose will depend on the items you have available to you when you need to do this. Obviously, you should obtain what you need now before the stores close for good, but that is up to you.

Dumpster Diving

Now, if you get really desperate, remember that some people are still going to waste food. I don't like the idea of getting food from a dumpster, especially at a time when most people will not have refrigeration, but it beats starving or eating my brother-in-law. Just be sure to cook anything you take from such a situation very well. Heck, over cook it then cook it again. Do what you must.

Insects

Chocolate covered ants, fried grasshoppers, locusts with honey, the list goes on. For some even today, eating insects is either a delicacy or a novelty. Either way, there are many multi-legged creatures that will make a fine stew once the stores shut down. I do not bring this up to gross you out or imply that you are not going to be able to provide something more substantial for your family. But we never really know just how dire circumstances could become.

Indeed, in some areas, there will undoubtedly be plenty of food. For instance, in areas where people already grow their own food are mass produce food for sales elsewhere, there is liable to be plenty. Farmers will continue to farm, but if some of these only have seed provided by the genetic manipulators, their seed will be worthless after the first crop. And what if there is plenty of grain to feed livestock but no fuel to get it to them? Before long, the large herd breeders will exhaust their stocks and be unable to breed more than their land will support.

This could cause shortages even if people are working together in some regions.

And if you live in a city, well, you are pretty much screwed as far as substantial food is concerned. Those creepy crawlies you spray for now will return and when they do, get your crock pot out.

The point is this, if things get so bad where you are that there is nothing else to eat, there are plenty of insects that are not only quite edible, but rather tasty if prepared right. In this section, I am going to provide first a partial list of the insects you can consume (a full list would take an entire book in itself) and then provide some recipes to make eating insects something more like a church dinner. Really, fried chicken's got nothing on earthworm fajitas.

Partial List

Agave worms – you know the ones...The worms in the bottom of a bottle of good Tequila. Not only are they great pickled in a bottle of the good stuff, they are very tasty as part of a meal. In fact, these are still eaten in much of Mexico today and their nutrient value is very high. I recommend these in a stew or battered and fried.

Ants – of all kinds are edible. They are crunchy and rather sour, which is part of the reason why these are often served as chocolate-covered. If you happen to live in Australia, you are in for a special treat for there you have Honey-pot ants, which have an abdomen that looks like a big bubble (well, big for the ant) of clear liquid. In fact, it is. Eat this ant and enjoy the sweet, nectar for a great treat and plenty of quick energy. Excellent survival food if down under.

Bees – They have been feeding you honey for years and that is all they eat themselves. Thus, as you can imagine, bees are full of flavor. Of course, you may imagine a sweet taste, but in reality they taste more like bacon—or was that the lard I fried them in? No, seriously they taste of bacon or mushrooms...kind of a cross. Also (and this will sound strange), the adults can be dried and ground into a flour. Bet you never look at a honey loaf the same again.

Centipedes – are edible and in fact in some parts of China, these are skewered lengthwise on a stick, roasted, and sold as street food. Centipede on a stick anyone?

Cicadas – if you have ever spent any time in the south or southeastern U.S. in the evening during the spring, you have heard Cicadas. These are the insects that make a loud squealing sound like a grasshopper on speed. Also, when one begins to make that sound, usually a million-gazillion join in making nights in the south especially delightful. Imagine a million violins all played at once from high in the trees, though with slightly less melody. This is all part of their 17 year mating, molting, and then dying ritual. The Cicadas come out after a 17 year sleep, shed their outer shell and become a different sort of critter (like a butterfly, sort of), then mate, lay eggs, and die. The best time to get them for food is right after they molt for their bodies are soft and tasty.

La Cucaracha – That's right, the lowly cockroach may survive a Nuclear Holocaust but he is unlikely to survive 300,000 hungry Americans after the stores close. Eat them toasted, fried, sautéed in a nice garlic sauce, or any other way that suits your fancy. Tastes of chicken...seriously.

Crickets – not just for fishing. You can eat them too. Cook them as you would cockroaches. Does that tell you anything?

Dragonfly – these are eaten in many parts of the Asian world today. The way you catch them is to dip a stick into palm sap (or honey) and wave it in the air. They will come to it and getting caught in your trap, become a tasty meal boiled or fried. Of course, on the flip side, the Dragonfly is seen as the harbinger of

good things so you may not want to go after them. You may need all the good luck you can get after the dollar collapses. Your call.

Earthworms – are high in protein and eaten worldwide even today. Cook them anyway you like. Some prepare an entire dish of these and eat them as you would spaghetti. On the plus side, with earthworm spaghetti, there is no need for meatballs. Got all the protein you need right there in your backyard.

Grasshoppers – You did not think that these would not make the list did you? Grasshoppers live everywhere on the planet and even today are eaten roasted with chili and lime in much of Mexico as a special treat.

June Bugs – or simply beetles were eaten by Native Americans by roasting them over coals to be eaten much like popcorn or roasted nuts. Orville Redenbacher beware—competition's coming.

Locusts – perhaps no insect is as famous for being used for food as the locust. In the Bible book of Leviticus these are specifically mentioned as ok for food for the Israelites along with crickets and grasshoppers. In the days of Jesus, John the Baptist's entire diet was said to consist of locusts and wild honey. They are still edible today and to a serious Jew, better than pork.

Louse – not only edible, easy to raise and carry around with you. Just get some on your scalp and whenever you feel hungry, pick them out and have a quick snack. Of course, they are terribly small and annoying, so maybe it would be better to find something else.

Mealworms – Not just for Iguana's. You too can eat these little worms in virtually any manner you choose. Sautee those in garlic and roasted tomato's for a very tasty dish.

Roly-polies – you know the ones. These cute little bugs with bunches of legs that curl into a ball when you touch them are not only fun, but also good for food. In fact, their entomology places them in the same family as other crustaceans like lobster, crab, and shrimp. What this means is that although small, they are great in a butter sauce.

Scorpions – often skewered in Thailand and China, these feisty creatures are said to taste similar to soft-shell crab.

Tarantula – yes, you can eat these spiders. Contrary to popular belief, tarantulas are not so poisonous that they can kill a human. If they bite, it does hurt but you will not die. Hence, not only do they make great pets, when you get really hungry all you need to do is toss them into the stew. They are very high in protein and even said to act as a natural form of Viagra. Watch out—you may have to battle your former Congressman for these.

Termites – not hard to find, though when we do we are more concerned with saving our house than saving our lives. Still, termites are edible and are supposedly tasty even raw.

Wasp – and no, I am not advocating cannibalism. Wasps can be eaten either as larvae or adults (just be careful of the stinger—not likely to feel so good in the roof of your mouth). They are good roasted or fried and have a buttery flavor.

Preparation Tips

I hope you enjoyed that small list of the more common insects that you can eat should food become really scarce. Now I am going to give you a few nice tips for dining on these delicacies.

Many insects live on decaying animal matter, but will also eat vegetation. Do a little homework here and determine what kind of insects live near you and what they feed on. If they tend to live more on decaying creatures in the wild, catch them alive and place them into a cage of some sort (you know, something that will hold them). Then feed them nothing but vegetation for a few days. This will clean them out so that they taste better.

Earthworms are good but bear in mind that running the length of the body is one long intestine. We know what is inside an intestine, right? Right. So to make these taste better, put them into a container with fresh grass and a few inches of water. You can leave them in this for a few hours and eventually they will eat the grass and the water and their system will be cleaned out pretty well. Of course, for the most part much of what is in that intestine is nothing more than dirt, but that dirt is gritty when eaten, so I recommend the water and grass.

Some insects are way too small to even consider making a meal from unless you are able to find a nest and obtain plenty. Every one of the insects on this list can be eaten raw, but cooked is usually far better. Just remember that for if you have not many or do not have a way to cook them, feast away. Just try to imagine you are eating nuts or popcorn at the cinema.

Steal vs. Share

I once knew a guy who almost always made off with my pen. He would borrow it and later when I needed it...shoot...John's got my pen again. I would retrieve it naturally and to be honest, he never really took it intentionally, he was just absent-minded and would place it into his own shirt pocket when finished. One day he grinned at me as he gave me back my pen and said, "You know there are two kinds of people in the world. Those who buy pens and those who don't. Guess which one I am?"

I never forgot that and through the years I have seen the wisdom in that statement. It really is true that people can be fairly summed up as those who steal and those who do not. Those who do not tend to share more than the first group.

I believe that after the dollar collapses, most people are going to want to retain some semblance of civilization, no matter how difficult that becomes. It may not be all that difficult as much depends on how prepared the mass of society is going into that disaster. But if it does become difficult to maintain civil society; if people do roam the countryside looking to only rape, pillage, and plunder; if we do enter another Dark

Ages (which is what happened after Rome collapsed), there will for some time still be those who will hold on to some form of civilization.

In other words, there will be two basic groups: Those who remain civilized and those who welcome the ensuing anarchy with loving arms. These two groups can be further broken into those who share and continue to trade and those who only steal and suck off the teat of society. When you think about it that way, we already have these two groups co-existing today so not much will change really, except that there will be no government safety net and the stores will be closed.

So what should we do depending on the side we decide to be on? The next two sections will answer that question.

Stealing

If you believe that the way to be at that time is to steal, then steal away. I don't, so I am not going to give you any pointers. Really, I doubt that I need to anyway for if that is your mindset now, you likely already know more on this topic than I could possibly share. Just remember one thing. Without police and law, stealing does not get you arrested—it gets you shot. You may survive for a time, but eventually someone will get you. It is simply not a matter of “if” it is a matter of “when.”

Sharing

I believe in civilization. I believe in Western Civilization. I believe in caring. I believe in sharing. Are you all weepy-eyed yet?

Seriously, no great nation or people have ever been built that did not first have some form of civil code and some means of governing society. There was a time ever so briefly years ago when I believed I could embrace anarchy. But on careful consideration of the idea, I realized that anarchy is simply not viable. Sure, if I want to go live in the woods and eat tree bark for the rest of my life, I could live the anarchist lifestyle now. But I don't think that many in the anarchist movement have given serious thought to what anarchy really means.

For starters, the very notion that Anarchists could organize makes no sense. The very definition of anarchy resists attempts to organize. In fact, I fairly consider myself Libertarian but refuse to join the party because one of the key tenets of libertarianism is the abhorrence of political parties. Hence, a true Libertarian could never join the Libertarian Party. Likewise, an anarchist could never organize and be an anarchist. So clearly, many of those who will welcome the demise of governance after the collapse have not given careful thought to their position. Some have...most have not.

Anarchy means literally, No government or No rule. For a time after the dollar collapses, there is sure to be at least some time before people reorganize and rulership returns to the world. This will be a period of anarchy.

But if people are to survive and thrive, indeed, if humans are to return to a period of progress again and live better than cavemen, humanity will need to get organized. Someone will need to be in charge. That sucks, I know. But without social order, we will return to the Dark Ages and forget all that we now take for granted.

Remember that Rome was a Republic with a Senate much as we. Rome made all the same fiscal mistakes that America is now making. Rome collapsed because of a terrible economy and in her wake she left us the Dark Ages. This was a time when all that Rome had discovered, built, and developed was lost to ignorance and widespread poverty.

Forget what you have watched on TV and at the movies. Life during this time was not a giant Renaissance Festival...life was hard. Lifespans were much shorter with the average man living to be around 35 and the average woman living a shorter life still. Many died in childbirth. All advances in Medicine made by the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans yielded massive disease on the ignorant populations. Warring factions fought for control over small territories constantly with the peasantry caught in the middle and often paying the largest toll. Food was scarce and the goods which people could obtain even scarcer. Generally, you only had what you could make or obtain in your small village. Also, don't forget that even though there was something akin to anarchy though much of the known world (by Western standards) at that time, there were still those who ruled, though more as dictators. So really, there was no anarchy then either.

Bear in mind too that the Renaissance was called that and celebrated because it marked the time when people were finally emerging from the darkness. Society was reentering civilization. So forget those silly romantic notions. Anarchy will not be a good thing.

So how do we prevent a new Dark Age with the ensuing anarchy?

Only by getting it into our minds now before collapse occurs that we are going to continue sharing and trading can we reorganize to prevent a new Dark Age. If we decide now that when that time comes we are going to help each other, work together to rebuild, and plan new social structures, whatever these may be, we can avoid the total collapse of civilization.

Personally, I think that is a laudable goal. I believe that we could do no better to history than to avoid at least one of the outcomes of Roman Senatorial greed and bluster. While our politicians blindly and with the most obtuse of minds take the same path as that former world power, we can prepare to both survive and thrive in the wreckage they create.

With that in mind, I now take you to the final segment of this book for sharing with others is only part of the equation. If we are to thrive, we need to rebuild an economy. This begins with trade.

Barter

Neanderthals left nothing behind of their culture because they had no culture. Culture is derived from having a common way of doing things, a common language, and customs, rules, and order. This was perhaps the only time in history when it could rightly be said that humans lived according to anarchy and where are the Neanderthals today?

Gone.

They were displaced and eliminated by humans who organized and built civilizations. Civilization is the key to progress so when the dollar collapses, we need to be prepared to pick up the reigns and maintain some semblance of order and structure.

This begins with trade and without currency to provide a medium of exchange, we will need to revert to simple bartering or trade. Bear in mind that money is nothing more than a tool. It is a very useful tool, sure, but that is all it is...a tool. It is a tool to determine who gets what share of resources. Hence, it is a tool for measuring and allocating an economy. Nothing more.

Alcohol or sex could serve the same purpose.

Have you ever heard the expression, "Tally this up?" That comes from the use of Tally sticks as a form of currency. Tally sticks have been in use for thousands of years as an acceptable means of exchange and in fact, these were in use in England as late as 1826. Of course, they were not in common use that recently, but some were still around and held value. A Tally stick was nothing more than a stick of wood with notches carved into them to represent value of something. It was split after the notches were made so that one part served as a setting of the value and the other half

represented something held in store that had true value, like so many bushels of grain or livestock.

In other words, after the collapse of the dollar it need not take long for society to develop some means of measuring trade and value. Until that time, people are going to trade for various things and some will hold more value than others. This section is devoted to trade of various goods and services which are certain to hold more value and can be traded for food and other needed items until some form of currency is developed.

Make Alcohol

After the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the number one item of trade was Vodka. In other words, alcohol served as the currency with the highest value for trade and those who had it fared well. Those who knew how to make it fared well. Those who traded for it did not. But of course, they were spending their food to get drunk so you do the math.

One note on trading alcohol. In most parts of the U.S. today, it is still legal to make beer and wine for personal use up to certain limits. Be sure to check into the legal details where you live before starting on this if you do so pre-collapse. After the collapse, there will be no U.S. laws to pester you with so you decide how to handle matters at that point. For now, you should know that it is illegal to distribute (which includes give away) any form of alcohol without the proper permits and such. So keep it to yourself. Doubly for hard grain alcohol; do not make this while America still stands. You can get arrested for making alcohol here in the land of the free even if it is for running your tractor—the oil companies hate competition, you know.

Beer

Making beer is not that difficult, at least not making homemade rotgut brew. Of course, like anything, the more time you spend doing it the better you become. But after the collapse, there will likely be such a shortage of beer and so many hardcore beer drinkers that even if the stuff you make turns out tasting like weasel spit, someone is going to want it.

Here is what you need.

- ☐ Large kitchen Brew pot
- ☐ Kitchen strainer
- ☐ Kitchen thermometer
- ☐ Large funnel
- ☐ Rolling pin
- ☐ Clean water
- ☐ Air locking cap and 3 gallon brewing bottle
- ☐ Bottles
- ☐ 3 lbs light dried malt extract
- ☐ 8 oz crushed malt
- ☐ 1 oz pellet hops
- ☐ 1 pkg brewers yeast
- ☐ 3/8 cup sugar

Start by crushing the malt with the rolling pin into course flour.

Pour the water into the large pot. Add the grain, cover, and boil to around 150 degrees. Turn off the heat and let it stand for 30 minutes. Then remove most of the grain from the batch using the strainer (just dip it and you don't have to get it all, just most).

Now get it boiling and add the malt. Keep it boiling and add half of the hops. Continue boiling without letting it boil over for one hour. Stop the heat and add the rest of the hops. Let it steep about ten minutes. Then cool the batch. It is best if cooled quickly like placing it into a freezer or tub of ice water, but if this is not possible, then do your best.

Once cooled, pout into a clean, sanitized brewing bottle (the big one) with the air lock cap so that CO₂ can escape while preventing O₂ to get in. Be sure that you have at least two and a half gallons of this brew. If too much boiled off, you can add some fresh water before pouring into the bottles. Of course, the only thing this will do is weaken the brew somewhat so if you are going for volume, add the water. If you are going for alcohol content, leave it be.

If the side of the bottle is cool to room temperature, add the yeast and cover with the air lock cap. Let it sit for about ten days in a cool, dark place. Keep it out of direct sunlight.

Now you are ready for bottling but before you do, boil the sugar in about a cup of water for five minutes and let cool. Add the sugar water to the mix, bottle it up, and

the beer is ready for trading.

Wine

Wine is much simpler to make and if you do it right, you can make some pretty strong stuff that will surely fetch top trading value.

What you need.

- ☐ A large water jug. Get a sturdy one.
- ☐ A balloon
- ☐ Bottles for bottling the wine later
- ☐ Siphon (a clean hose will do)
- ☐ Turkey Baster
- ☐ Fruit (or 100% PURE fruit juice with NO additives—fresh fruit, juiced is better)
- ☐ Sugar (2 pounds)
- ☐ Yeast (1 packet)
- ☐ Yeast nutrient (1 TBSP)

What you do.

Sanitize your bottle and other equipment.

If using a five gallon water jug (and you should), you are going to want to mix the sugar thoroughly with the juice. You can do this separate in smaller bottles (such as quart jugs) then mix it in the larger or whatever you decide. As long as all the sugar is dissolved into the juice it will be fine. Mix it thoroughly for a couple of minutes to get any gasses out of the mixture.

Add the yeast and if you want to add more juice you can bring the level up to within a couple of inches from the neck with no problems. No more mixing needs to be done.

Now put the balloon over the neck and secure it with rubber bands so that it is not going to come off. This will allow the CO₂ to fill the balloon and at a point it will begin to escape through the pores in the balloon without allowing O₂ in. But watch it. If the balloon pops, you need to move quickly as you do not want oxygen in the wine. This will ruin the batch, most likely turning it to vinegar.

Store it in a cool, dark place and leave it for about a month to a month and a half. It should be done at this point and to check, simply take the turkey baster and dip it into the wine. Take a taste. Taste like wine? It's ready. Bottle and store or serve. Your call.

Hard Alcohol

Be ready because after the collapse, hard alcohol will be the most desired commodity for a couple of reasons. To start with, people are going to want to escape through drunkenness. Why not? They won't have to go to the office and won't have the money for a vacation.

The other reason is that without gas stations, there will be no gas. Hard grain alcohol will run your car. It will run rough, but it will run. What do you think ethanol is? Yup. Moonshine.

Of course, the best kind of engine to have at this time is a diesel for it will run reasonably smooth on whatever combustible liquid you add to the tank.

The point is, if you want to thrive you need to have something of value to trade for food, even rare hard-to-find luxury foods like bananas (remember, these are all currently imported from South America). Hard alcohol fills that bill nicely.

How to Build a Still

Apologies.

I was going to explain how to build a still in this section but was advised by my attorney against doing so.

But here is a great website: <http://www.instructables.com/id/Build-a-Whisky-Still/>

Stock up on Alcohol

Of course, there is nothing wrong with stocking up on alcohol today, provided you do not live in a dry county (yes, they still exist). If you store alcohol you don't have to worry about spoilage and when the supplies run low, the value will go up. So if you use this commodity sparingly, in time you will dominate the new market.

Just as in the former USSR, when the Ruble collapsed alcohol was the primary currency and those who had it fared nicely. Some even grew wealthy through cunning trades for the stuff. People were willing to "sell" anything that had value under the old regime for food and alcohol and those who took the deals were able to sell many of these items after the economy returned to relative normal. This gave them a huge economic advantage and a new upper class was formed from the ruins of the Communist hard-liners foolishness.

Of course, most of these were/are Russian Mafia which to be fair did exist prior to the collapse in that country, but some were ordinary folk who could see what was coming. We tend to believe here in America that the fall of the Soviet Union was a big surprise but plenty of people saw the markers in the economy well in advance and those who were able took precautions. The situation here today is no different.

One word of warning: You may want to check into local and state laws related to how much alcohol you can have on hand at any given time. I don't know for certain as I have not found any such laws, but there is always the possibility that those brilliant minds in DC could pass one tomorrow that forbids such stockpiling. They will likely call it "intent to distribute" and label you a terrorist somehow. Just be careful and check into the legality of doing this where you live. Remember, if you get into trouble for stockpiling, they will take your entire supply and have a big America-done-collapsed party on C-Day with your booze.

Cheap

Stock up on cheap booze. Someone will want it. Just as people buy rot-gut today, people will trade for the cheap hooch after the collapse. So if this is all you can afford, get it.

Remember too that the longer the fallout from the collapse takes, the lower supplies will become. If you can hold on to the cheap stuff long enough, it will become the good stuff (especially if there is nothing else). The law of supply and demand will still apply.

Premium

Remember too that there is always going to be someone looking for the finer things in life. If you can hang on to some 100 year old Brandy or a fine Cognac, you will be able to make some incredible trades during the new Dark Ages.

High Proof

Wild Turkey and Bacardi 151 should be in high demand as these can be easily burned in your car. Think the price of gas is high now?

Wait for the collapse then gauge the price of fuel. Oh, yea. It is going to be pricey to take the car anywhere. If you can have plenty of this stuff stored up, you will be riding high...literally.

Stock up on Tobacco

You likely know of someone who would kill their own mother if they ran too short on smokes and she was holding out. Indeed, hardcore smokers will likely do anything, sell anything, give up anything for a carton of Kools after the stores close.

So stock up.

And here is a tip, especially if you are not a smoker and don't know. Cigarettes go stale. They have an expiration date on them and after that they are terrible.

Of course, to a smoker who cannot get cigs, this is not going to matter. But if you take special precautions to prevent this from happening, those smokes will retain even greater value. How can you do this?

Couple of ways...

- ☐ Keep the tobacco in a freezer especially in a freezer bag
- ☐ Store it in a freezer bag and keep it in a cool, dark place
- ☐ Store it in a humidor

In short, if you keep the tobacco from going stale you add much greater value to the stuff.

Cartons

Stock up on cartons of cigs. When you go to the casino, why not take your winnings and invest in the tax-free smokes at the Reservation stores? Buy them by the carton. There are a couple of reasons for doing this.

For starters, you are stocking up; and by the carton is both cheaper and more convenient.

Also, when you go to trade for something else of value, having an entire carton will almost be a status symbol. Look at the situation in prisons. Smokes are traded all the time. The average guy trades in individual smokes. Those with some pull and position trade in packs. And those with the most clout can offer entire cartons!

Really, when you think about it, it's not that much different from the current socio-economic situation today. The common man rents a house. The one doing ok buys a house or two. And the fellow with the most clout develops subdivisions.

Cigarettes will be a major status symbol in the new economy. Not smoking them, but having them to trade and the more you have in the larger, originally factory sealed containers, all the better. So if able, why not go one further and buy cases. Just remember, if you want to keep cases of smokes fresh, you need to either place them into a walk-in cooler or wrap them well in plastic. The shrink wrap used on loading docks will work nicely.

Pouch

Not to be forgotten is pouch tobacco which is mostly used for pipes, but some like to roll their own. Indeed, after the economy collapses and the stores close the first things to get plundered (read: looted) will be smoke shops and it will not be long before alcohol and tobacco are gone.

Most people will go on a huge party binge because facing facts, most today are pretty much hating on the government. In fact, as I go to publication with this book, Congress is at an all-time low approval rating—just 9%! This is lower even than Cockroaches (which will have at least some use after the collapse).

Indeed, most American's today are so sick at what our government is doing that the initial response when the dollar busts will be to celebrate. Yea, the Big Bad Brother is dead. There will be days and days of drunken orgies before most people begin to emerge from their substance-related stupors to realize that there is no food, no services, no police/protection, no order, no jobs, no anything. It is going to be a shock for many and just as a person goes through the five stages of grieving, people are going to react in very strange, yet predictable ways as they slowly come to terms with reality.

To tell the truth, from a purely sociological perspective it will be a fascinating time.

But you will be prepared both mentally and economically. You will have your pouch tobacco and will be ready to provide...for a price. This is how you will thrive.

Chew/Dipping

The market will not be limited to only smoking tobacco for just as people today dip and chew tobacco, there will be those who will seek out their favorite brands. If you have them, this will give you a major one up.

In fact, you should think of the demographics of snuff and chewing tobacco today. The socio-economic standing of such tobacco users tends to be higher than smokers. So whereas with cigs you will have a large population willing to shell out over the long haul, with this product you will have something that those who have something of value to trade will want.

The only real difference is that these people will likely only trade in the early term; as the effects of nicotine withdrawal occur; and before they come to complete terms with what has happened. This will give you a tremendous psychological advantage which can allow you to make some really great deals (for yourself anyway).

Grow Tobacco

Naturally, if you have some land you can grow tobacco. At one time, this was the major cash crop in America (today it is Marijuana). But tobacco is not that hard to grow and when you harvest it, all you do is cut the stalk below the bottom leaves and hang it upside down to dry. This causes the sap, which contains most of the nicotine, to run into the leaves. Once dry, you can chop it and roll it into smokes or simply trade it in bulk. Either way, this is going to be a great trade crop in the new economy.

Grow Marijuana

For the same reason I cannot tell you how to build a Still, I cannot tell you anything about growing a perfectly natural crop. But facing facts, it is not like many other plants for growing. Also, be sure you do not do this now (unless you live in a free state such as Washington or Colorado).

Make Dope

Super Big NO NO on this one from my Attorney. Sorry, but I cannot teach you anything too life-saving. But naturally, after the collapse there will be plenty of people making various substances for sale. The tricky part of this will be finding the stuff (raw materials) from which to make it anyway, so this chapter may have been without merit anyway. But if you are able to get/make such things, this stuff will be like gold after collapse. Just like it was in the former USSR.

Just be careful who you ask about making dope today—it is fairly illegal in America today to learn anything unapproved by our government. And we wonder what's wrong with the educational system.

Sex

OK, so here is a topic sure to get me into hot water. Sex.

Facing facts, when the economy tanks, sex will be everywhere. Women of all ages will be slinging their goods without shame. What proof have I of this?

Consider any depressed economy in the world today. The Philippines has one of the lowest GDP per capita anywhere and a quick look on Craigslist will reveal that women are very active in the sex trade. Head for the border towns of Mexico. There are government sponsored bordellos there called Boys town in ever border city. Thailand. Cape Town. All of Central America. Much of South America. The slums and Ghettos of America. Look at the places where the economies are weak and women will be selling sex. That is simple reality.

When the economy tanks, there are certain to be many using this tool to obtain the basic necessities of life...food, shelter, water, clothing...ok, maybe not clothing for they won't be using that much, busy as they will be trying to survive.

So if you are trying to feed your family and you are not some fat, old guy, you stand a good chance of survival if you are willing to give something of yourself...literally.

Services

I know, I know. Sex is a service so it should be in this section right?

Sue me. Oh, that's right. I almost forgot, money is soon going to be worthless so a suing me would be pointless. So don't sue me. Instead, read on. There are only three more parts to this book and I hope by now you have gotten some really great ideas for how you can both survive and thrive after the collapse of the dollar by not only feeding your family, but having extra to trade with others.

To be sure, services such as lawyers are going to have no value after the collapse. Given that, I find it both strange and amusing that these folks who make their livings in law are not lobbying en masse to stop our government from taking our economy. When it goes, no lawyer will have a job, nor will they have any marketable skills.

No, the marketable skills after collapse are going to be rather different. Some we will still have some call for such as hair cutting and manual labor of various sorts (provided someone can pay or have something of value to trade).

What follows are the three services I believe will be of the greatest import in the new economy, at least for some time.

Security

There will be plenty of hungry and desperate people roaming the streets (many because the banks—just as broke as anyone else—will force them out using mercenaries). These people will be dangerous for the most part and anyone with the means to hire private security should be ready.

This should not be difficult for there are always big, tough guys ready to provide muscle for those willing to pay. The trick is going to be having something of value with which to secure these services.

That is why you need to stock up and create the means to continue the supply lines. You will need security, but as you accumulate more wealth in the way of various items, you will be in a better position to pay. For instance, although the items mentioned in this book and especially in this segment overall are the ones that will be in demand, as the economy slowly begins to return to some semblance of normalcy, people will begin wanting certain luxury items. If you have these in a warehouse somewhere, you will be able to provide.

But you are going to need security. Reliable security.

On the flip side, if you are unable to provide the basic needs for your family, you can rent yourself as security out to someone who has an overstock. This will be one way that many will survive.

Teaching

If you know how to do any of the things I describe in this book, someone is going to want you to teach them. If you know some other useful things, such as how to build a windmill, how to convert a car to running on water, how to drill for water, how to _____. Fill in the blanks.

It is not a stretch to expect that certain basic services will be in demand, for these were in the former USSR when it collapsed and are things that everyone needs to live. But there really is a range of things that people will need to learn how to do if they are going to survive.

For anyone able to teach basic survival skills and certain other things which will enable most of society to return to some semblance of normalcy, there will be a demand for your services. By teaching what others who were unprepared need to know, you can better position yourself and survive. If you are good, you may even thrive.

And if you have taken enough steps to plan ahead, you certainly will thrive.

Medical

Simply put, medicine is medicine so after the collapse people are still going to need those who know how to fix them up. Of course, modern diagnostics will be fairly obsolete without electricity and other such services.

But those who know how to set or splint a broken bone, those able to perform emergency surgery, those who know how to deliver babies will all have importance. Really, it matters not what part of the medical field in which you now participate. In the new economy you should have something useful that others will want and be willing to barter for. (Unless you are a hospital administrator with a degree in business or law—then you are best to keep silent about that for most are going to blame the collapse on the lawyers and economists.)

The point is that medical-related professions are truly recession proof. Even after collapse, there will be a demand for your services. That will not change.

Best Wishes

I wrote this book for a couple of reasons.

The first is because of the overwhelming response I received from readers of my first book, *Survive and Thrive After the Collapse of the Dollar*.

Many of my readers responded to me asking for more information than was provided in that book. That book provided a quick overview of what to expect and the basics on how to plan for what is coming. But many wanted more, so here it is. If the response on this book is as positive as the first, I shall expand the series to include other future survival and thrival related topics.

The other reason I wrote it is because I care.

I believe that collapse need not mean the end of the American way of life, but rather an opportunity for reverting to the original ideals espoused by our Forefathers when they established this nation. I believe that if we can avoid becoming little more than mindless barbarians pillaging and plundering and instead set our course collectively to rebuild society, we have a golden opportunity awaiting us.

Most today are beginning to see that war is only ever destructive. After two very costly wars overseas, most now see that the economy is nearing collapse because of the cost of conducting those wars. Of course, this is simplifying the situation somewhat, but you get the point. After collapse, if we allow ourselves to become a warring nation, albeit on a much smaller scale and against each other, we will only go backwards.

The collapse of the dollar will pose unique challenges along with opportunities. It is my fervent desire for this not to happen. But facing reality, Congress even now prepares for still greater spending of money we don't have while convincing the public they are "cutting back." All this does is dig the hole deeper and push the date for collapse nearer. Unfortunately, there are still not enough people paying attention to force Congress to do anything other than what they are already doing. And what they

are doing is terrible, reprehensible. The worst part is that they are so drunk on power and wealth that even they don't see what is coming.

So my goal here is not to discourage you with what we cannot do now, but rather encourage you with what we can do once the smoke clears and a new day dawns on the continent we call home.

About the Author

C. Jeff Oakes writes from his home in Texas, USA. With a BA in Criminal Justice, he is an ardent student of human nature, criminal justice, law, and politics.



He has written numerous books, blogs, and newspapers and currently works as a Ghost Writer for clients worldwide. His recent publications include many genres, mostly related to the human condition.

A father of one, he is especially concerned with the future of the nation at this time for it appears that politicians seem bent on destroying the economy. His concern is that his son will not enjoy the same lifestyle as past generations for he and his generation shall be burdened with the debts we have created over the last 20 years.

If you are interested in having him write for you, he can be reached through his website <http://jeffoakes.me> or by email at freedomwritr@yahoo.com

Look for his books on Amazon Kindle where he publishes exclusively.

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Signs of Life

In these short stories, we are taken to both the heights of achievement and the depths of despair as we explore what it means to be truly alive.

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B008YNLYJQ>

Justice in America Vol. 1

Criminal Justice essays by C. Jeff Oakes.

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00AT95C7S>

Principles of Order: How we can Ban Guns and Keep Liberty

This book suggests a possible solution to the current dilemma facing America today regarding gun control. Coming soon to paperback.

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Beware What You Wish

This Poetic Novel takes the reader through a stranger-than-fiction account of one man's desire to have that which is forbidden.

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00ATGETHA>

Minor Justice?

Is it possible for a child to also be an adult?

It is if that child finds himself in the U.S. Criminal Justice System. Conservative Judge Jacob Thomas has a case that bothers him. A stern and cold judge, he is on the verge of having a change of heart...one that is killing him. He must pass sentence on a thirteen year old boy and both choices are too harsh, even to him. If he follows his conscience, his career is over; if he does not, he cannot live with himself.

Inspired by a true event which took place in Florida over ten years ago, this Novella poses many serious questions about the state of Justice in America today.

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00BC08TJQ>

Jack and Jillian

Soul Mates. Everyone has one, but how can one know when they have met theirs? How can one know if all those tiny similarities are the result of cool fate or cruel fate?

Jack Jackson is a widowed man reaching middle age who only once came near to connecting for life with the passion of soul mates. Now stoic and a bit of a neat freak, he meets a much younger woman, Jillian Russell, who turns his life completely around. Through Jillian, Jack learns to live again, to love again, to experience passion like he has never before known, and to finally start believing in fate.

But as we all know, fate can deal some pretty strange cards at times and in this graphic, erotic Novella by C. Jeff Oakes, Jack, Jillian, and the reader discover that soul mates are not always what they seem.

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00BAF41HC>

Table of Contents

[Dedication](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Foreword](#)

[Growing Food](#)

[Veggies](#)

[Rows, Hills, and Flat Planting](#)

[Starches](#)

[Greens](#)

[Tubers](#)

[Vines](#)

[Grains](#)

[Fruits](#)

[Vines](#)

[Trees](#)

[Bushes](#)

[Cacti](#)

[Growing Outdoors](#)

[Traditional Rows/Hills](#)

[Square Foot](#)

[Terrace](#)

[Climbing Plants](#)

[Indoors](#)

[Balconies](#)

[Greenhouses](#)

[How to Build](#)

[Maintaining Proper Temperatures](#)

[Maintaining Proper Moisture Levels](#)

[Seeds/Nuts](#)

[Hydroponics](#)

[Static](#)

[Flow](#)

[Foraging](#)

[Wild Berries](#)

[Tubers](#)

[Nuts](#)

[Leaves, Flowers, and Stems](#)

[Raising Animals](#)

[Livestock](#)

[Sheep/goats](#)

[Cattle](#)

[Horses](#)

[Pigs](#)

[Other](#)

[Poultry](#)

[Chickens](#)

[Ducks](#)

[Pigeons](#)

[Other](#)

[Fish](#)

[Catfish](#)

[Bream/Crappie](#)

[Carp](#)

[Gar](#)

[Saltwater](#)

[Shrimp](#)

[Crawfish](#)

[Pond](#)

[Pool](#)

[Tub/tank](#)

[Reptiles](#)

[Snakes](#)

[Alligator](#)

[Lizards](#)

[Turtles](#)

[Amphibians](#)

[House Pets](#)

[Hunting Animals](#)

[With a Gun](#)

[Shotgun](#)

[Rifle](#)

[BB/Pellet Gun](#)

[Trapping](#)

[Pit Trap](#)

[Snare](#)

[Cage](#)

[Snap](#)

[Box](#)

[Fishing](#)

[Rod and Reel](#)

[Cane Pole](#)

[Trot Line](#)

[Hoop Net](#)

[Trap](#)

[Cast Net](#)

[Homemade Hooks](#)

[By Hand](#)

[Snagging](#)

[Spearing](#)

[Bow Fishing](#)

[Using a Bow](#)

[Pro Bow](#)

[Homemade Bow](#)

[Spears and Blow Guns](#)
[Sling Shot](#)
[Knives](#)
[Snake Hunting](#)
[Conservation](#)
[Recycling](#)
 [Bone to Broth](#)
 [Spaghetti to Chili](#)
[Use Everything](#)
 [Organs](#)
 [Bones/Marrow](#)
 [Canning and Storage](#)
[Dumpster Diving](#)
[Insects](#)
[Partial List](#)
[Preparation Tips](#)
[Steal vs. Share](#)
[Stealing](#)
[Sharing](#)
[Barter](#)
[Make Alcohol](#)
 [Beer](#)
 [Wine](#)
 [Hard Alcohol](#)
 [How to Build a Still](#)
[Stock up on Alcohol](#)
 [Cheap](#)
 [Premium](#)
 [High Proof](#)
[Stock up on Tobacco](#)
 [Cartons](#)
 [Pouch](#)
 [Chew/Dipping](#)
[Grow Tobacco](#)
[Grow Marijuana](#)
[Make Dope](#)
[Sex](#)
[Services](#)
 [Security](#)
 [Teaching](#)
 [Medical](#)
[Best Wishes](#)
[About the Author](#)
[More Books by C. Jeff Oakes](#)