

Sustainment Foraging- Guerrilla Snacking is crucial



I wrote an article last year about the importance of building out an [ARK \(Autonomous Recovery Kit\) pack](#) if you travel long distances for leisure or work. I also briefly touched on why you want to carry lightweight calorie-dense foods that are already prepared. Now, this information is all well and good, but one of the biggest key issues I did NOT cover was how you will be able to sustain yourself long-term, if you had to walk, ([without a scooter or other means of transportation](#)) say, 175 miles back to your home. In my opinion this is where most articles I think miss the mark. Sure, you have said get home bag. But just because you keep a case of MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat) in your truck doesn't mean that is going to sustain you if you plan on walking twenty miles a day, for ten days or longer. This is where Sustainment foraging (Guerrilla snacking) comes into play. This is part of a progression-based preparedness plan.

SUSTAINMENT FORAGING:

What is sustainment foraging? [Anthropologists describe a concept known as **embedded procurement**, where resources are collected while already traveling for another purpose.](#) While the concept is typically applied to hunter-gatherer mobility and raw material acquisition, preparedness presents a different challenge. During a prolonged walk home after a disaster, the objective is not to gather resources—it is to get home. Food (fuel) simply becomes another logistical requirement, or a means to end along the route. I call this **Sustainment Foraging (or what I like to call “Guerrilla snacking”)** which is the intentional collection and instant consumption of wild edible foods encountered along your route to supplement your current food supply, maintain your energy, and keep putting one foot in front of the other until you make it home.

WHY COIN A NEW TERM?

Traditional foraging is about finding food. Sustainment Foraging is about getting home. You are not wandering through the woods looking for your next meal. You are not going to have time to whip out your trusty, never-before-used pocket slingshot, shoot a squirrel, then build a fire to cook it on a spit while everyone within a five-mile radius comes looking for the guy making smoke. Nope. Your mission is to gather calories whenever the opportunity presents itself, consume them immediately, and keep moving. Every edible plant, berry, nut, or strip of cambium you harvest helps supplement the food you are already carrying while buying your body just enough fuel to reach the next mile. In other words: **Prepper fantasy ends where reality begins.** Your job isn't to live off the land—it's to get home.

SUSTAINMENT FORAGING

GUERRILLA SNACKING IS CRUCIAL.

You're not hunting for a meal. You're fueling the mission: getting home.
Every calorie you gather in the moment is one less calorie your body will rob you of tomorrow.

CALORIES YOU CAN GATHER ALONG THE ROUTE

Actual calories based on commonly foraged wild foods.

DANDELION FLOWERS	BLACKBERRIES	WALNUTS	PINE CAMBIUM (INNER BARK)	CHICKWEED	ACORNS (WHITE OAK)	MAPLE SEEDS (SAMARAS)
						
1 CUP	1 CUP	1 OZ (14 halves)	1 OZ	1 CUP	1 CUP	1/4 CUP
25 CAL	62 CAL	185 CAL	30 CAL	20 CAL	103 CAL	35 CAL

Calories are approximate and can vary based on growing conditions and preparation.

CALORIES BURNED

Walking 10 miles with a 25 lb pack

2,200 – 2,800 CALORIES

Actual burn varies by body weight, terrain, pace, temperature, and pack load.

CALORIES YOU CAN GATHER

Realistic total from common foraged foods

400 – 700 CALORIES

"Guerilla snacks" won't replace your rations, but they will slow the deficit.

THE BOTTOM LINE

THE GOAL ISN'T TO REPLACE EVERY CALORIE.
THE GOAL IS TO SLOW THE DEFICIT.

A DAY ON THE ROAD – EXAMPLE

(10 MILES WITH 25 LB PACK)

CALORIES BURNED Estimated Range: 2,200 – 2,800 CALORIES	CALORIES CARRIED Typical Daily Rations: 1,800 – 2,200 CALORIES	INITIAL DEFICIT Estimated Range: -400 – -1,000 CALORIES	SUSTAINMENT FORAGING THROUGHOUT THE DAY Example Total Foraged: 400 – 700 CALORIES (From a mix of the foods above)	NEW DEFICIT Estimated Range: -100 – -600 CALORIES Still a deficit. Still work to do. But a better tomorrow.
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EVERY CALORIE YOU GATHER IN THE MOMENT IS ONE LESS CALORIE YOUR BODY WILL ROB YOU OF TOMORROW.



This infographic was created at the request of Sgt. Silverman's math to help explain the importance of Sustainment Foraging.

DISCLAIMER: Always positively identify any wild edible before consuming. When in doubt, leave it out.

All calculations are approximate and based on data from the USDA FoodData Central, the National Institutes of Health, and other verified health and outdoor resources.

Sustainment Foraging — The intentional gathering and immediate consumption of wild edible foods encountered along your route to supplement your current food supply, maintain your energy, and keep putting one foot in front of the other until you make it home.

SCENARIO:

You are heading home in your rental (most of my stories start out like this as I travel constantly for work) on I-40 East heading towards NC outside of Knoxville, TN when the ground starts violently shaking. It is near dusk, and the highway in front of you lights up with hundreds of angry red eyes as people begin hitting their brakes and head towards the breakdown lane. You follow suit.

The earthquake only lasts minutes, but you can tell people are shaken (pun intended) as they get out of their vehicles and mull about the highway. You try to make a call, but you get that annoying “*bee-boh-bling*” sound and the well-known “we’re sorry, are circuits are busy at this time...”

You begin making your way East again when the traffic comes to a complete stop. People are mulling about the highway listlessly, hoping the traffic continues. You get out of your rental and spot a trucker. You walk up to his window and he tells you, “The CB is going crazy with bridge collapse reports. We’re stuck”.

You know what you need to do. Grab your ARK pack and start hoofing it. You have one hundred and ten miles to go to your house. On a good day, that’s five consistent days of walking with a twenty-five-pound pack. You start your hike, scouring the highway shoulder for anything edible as you begin your long journey home.



There is no possible way to convey every scenario and every geography at each season across the globe for this article to cover all areas of how to properly prepare now, but I will list out below a non-exhaustive list of the top priorities, to hopefully get you started in the right direction.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW:

- First and foremost, you should always get with your primary care physician before following any directions someone suggests / advises you to do. Just because you have intestinal fortitude, equipment and a crazy desire to walk across your home state so you can brag to your grandkids around the campfire that you “survived the apocalypse”, does not mean you are physically capable of doing so. Always get sage medical advice FIRST, before taking on anything such as what is described in this article.
- Once you are cleared by your Primary Care Physician to engage in extra strenuous activities such as rucking, you should first get yourself a great pair of hiking shoes (trail runners) if your season permits. If you are reading this in the dead of winter, then hiking boots. Regardless, you need fantastic, comfortable footwear to help you get from point A to B.
- Do you have a bag to get home? If not, [you might want to read this article](#) as it can help break down some questions you may have as you build out your plan.
- Start practicing walking with your backpack for short distances (if your primary care physician gives you the green light) with your new loadout and do so with very little in it to get used to the weight.
- Seriously consider taking a wild edibles course (or two or three) in your area. You can look for a location near you through “[EAT THE PLANET](#)”.
- Once you take the course, make sure you practice what you learned and eat what you find (if you feel comfortable that you have properly identified said wild food is truly edible).
- Which leads me to my next bit of advice which is; start your library now. This does not need to be an expensive investment, and sites such as eBay have a great selection of used wild edible books. Here is a small list of examples; [The Best Books on Foraging Wild Foods and Herbs](#)
- Finally, practice eating wild foods if you have access to them in your yard, a local forest, or along a hiking trail. Be careful about what you eat, and consider using reputable wild edible plant apps on Google Play to help with proper identification.

CONCLUSION:

In my experience, there always seems to be a huge emphasis of “surviving” a catastrophe, but very little is ever discussed about how to sustain oneself in an austere situation. Food, water and security will be at the forefront of your most critical survival skills. If you lack the skills, all the equipment in the world will not save you as preparedness works best when viewed as a system rather than a collection of individual skills. This article is NOT meant to instill fear, but to invoke consideration of where you the reader is at in your preparedness steps. Learning how to live off the land, regardless of any calamity, will put you light years ahead of the pack.

Stay safe, stay resilient, and all the best learning about wild foods!

DISCLAIMER:

I am not a licensed nutritionist, financial advisor, or medical doctor. The information in this article is for information purposes only and does not replace professional treatment, diagnosis, or advice. Always check with your physician or qualified healthcare provider with any medical questions, and never disregard professional medical advice based on something you read here.

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AI-Assisted Visuals & Examples

If you've been reading Tertiary Prepper for any length of time, you've probably noticed charts, graphs, calculations, and visuals that explain preparedness concepts in ways you don't normally see discussed. Many of those examples were created with the assistance of artificial intelligence—but only after I gave it very specific instructions on what I wanted to teach.

I don't use AI to create my preparedness philosophy. I use it to help visualize it.

Many of the tertiary concepts discussed throughout this magazine—such as **Sustainment Foraging**, **Pressure Testing**, **The Autonomous Recovery Kit (ARK)**, **Quiet Protein**, and other original frameworks—are my own ideas and observations. AI simply helps me communicate those concepts through charts, graphics, and examples that make them easier to understand.

Preparedness is rarely black and white. There are very few absolute right or wrong answers—only different experiences, different priorities, and different ways of solving the same problem. My hope is that these articles simply give us another reason to sit around the campfire, challenge conventional thinking, and ponder practical solutions together.