



Provision like a sailor!

By Spike Abram

It's uncertain times we live in - supermarket shelves are empty and toilet paper is being sold on the black market. While we're all working out how to live through this, it occurred to us that we might be uniquely positioned to offer some insight.

As sailors we often plan for extended periods without resupply and try to consider all situations before leaving the dock. Our daily lives are determined by the wind and tides - factors that are inherently out of our control.

So from the Gunboat family we hope to inspire, help and maybe bring a little joy or humor into your home as we all gaze out the window and dream of life aboard somewhere in the sunshine.

Gunboats are fast... really fast... and yet it can still take us two to three weeks to cross an ocean. With four to six crew on board at a time that's a lot of mouths to feed, and even if we had cell phone reception I doubt Uber Eats would be able to find us.

For the sake of perspective here's one scenario - one crew member on an offshore passage eats eggs for breakfast every day - that's three dozen eggs alone! Given that we can't all be like the French sailor Guirec Soidée and sail around the world with a pet chicken that's a lot of eggs to keep and store.



Yacht Chef Perspective

*After 8 years on TRIBE,
Anna has over
40,000nm under her
belt and earned her
Masters in Nutrition
while working
on the boat.*

The key to removing anxiety and feeling ready for uncertain times is to plan, plan, plan. Making limited trips to the grocery store requires thinking ahead and making sure we have a clear idea of what to purchase.

Make note of the number of people in your household and their preferences and then plan out a menu for the duration of time until guaranteed to be able to provision again. This means more recipes, less free styling!

With time on our hands there are so many great websites and apps that make this a fun and easy task, but where to start?

For inspiration some of Anna's favorite resources are:

- Cookbooks by Donna Hay – Fresh, simple and a recipe for any occasion.
- Magazines or Websites like BBC Good Food
- And Apps - the New York cooking app is awesome!

“On long deliveries I always try to ensure everybody has one big hot meal a day – something loaded with vegetables and a good source of protein. We make a point to sit down to eat that meal together – it keeps crew morale up and stops us from becoming anti-social and retreating to our cabins off watch. I'm ready with both easy-to-assemble and pre-made meals, such as Chili with extra vegetables, Mexican mole with avocado and cucumber slices drenched in lime and sea salt or a simple fresh fish or meat pie. I make a few meals the day I get home from the supermarket that can be stored and used later on the offshore delivery. Cooking down zucchini's, eggplants, peppers, leeks etc. into meals takes up less space but still provides the same nutritional value when we are getting low on fresh food. In the end, planning ahead saves time and keeps us healthier and happier.”

TRIBE spent winters in the Caribbean sailing between Grenada and the Bahamas, with each country offering up different ingredients and food cultures.

“I loved provisioning down island” Anna shared. “Some islands had huge French supermarket chains with freshly baked baguettes, Italian cold-cuts and beautiful cheeses flown straight in from the French countryside. Other islands like Grenada offered a more local variety with stands overflowing with fresh produce from island gardens and the fisherman cutting off huge chunks of sashimi-grade tuna straight off the boat. It sounds like an amazing experience but in terms of how we’re planning meals under “stay-at-home” orders, its not that different to the world we live in today.

“I would plan out for a week on TRIBE with 9 people on board and have to try to buy it in one day with limited dry storage, fridge and freezer space. Quite often I couldn’t find what I had hoped for and would have to freestyle and substitute with whatever looked good at the time.



TRIBE pictured in the Exumas Bahamas

What To Look For?

When choosing produce and meats, the better they're cared for the longer they'll last.

Try to pick unblemished fruit and vegetables, and from local sources wherever possible. Not only will it taste better, it's beneficial to your community, especially during these times.

Consider purchasing meats in pre-packaged vacuum sealed pouches, to extend their fridge life.

Then make sure that you take care of your delicate produce and temperature-sensitive meats on the way home.

Storage

Storing food in the right environment retains its freshness for longer.

Most fruits and veg can be stored for a few days in the refrigerator between 35 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit (about 2-4 degrees C). At the same time, some like lemons, bananas and tomatoes thrive better at slightly warmer temperatures, although still below 50 degrees. Storing fruit and veg accordingly in different parts of the fridge can stop them from ripening too fast.

How they're stored also makes a difference. Leafy greens such as spinach, kale, and even broccoli last longer when wrapped in paper towel inside a sealed container. We've also learned that cauliflower and broccoli cause the others to decay quicker, and keep them separate from the others, or cleaned and in sealed containers.

Herbs last longer wrapped in damp paper towel and placed inside bags or containers. Or for herbs with long enough stems, you can also treat them like fresh cut flowers -try keeping them in a small vase with water in front of a window and trim the stems every couple of days.

Freezer storage on a boat is usually limited but still essential to store meats for long periods of time. When it's time to freeze meat, package it into sealed bags in your chosen portion size. It's always a good idea to write the date and contents on each package prior to it going into the freezer, to ensure that you use it before its expiration date.

| Produce | Longevity |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| Apples | 4-8 weeks (fridge) |
| Avacado | 4-7 days (room temp) |
| Blueberries | 1-2 weeks (fridge) |
| Brocoli | 7-14 days (fridge) |
| Carrots | 3-4 weeks (fridge) |
| Cucumbers | 1 week (fridge) |
| Iceberg Lettuce | 7-10 days (fridge) |
| Onions | 2-3 months (room temp) |
| Oranges | 3-4 weeks (fridge) |
| Potatoes | 3-5 weeks (Pantry) |
| Strawberries | 3-7 days (fridge) |
| Mushrooms | 7-10 days (fridge) |

In general fresh packaged meats will last the following lengths of time in a freezer that stays below 0 degrees F (-18 degrees C):

- Beef 6-8 months
- Fresh chicken 1 year
- Pre-packaged deli meat 6-8 months
- Salmon 6-9 months

Pre-Cooked Meals

Often before heading offshore on a longer passage, chefs pre-cook 'delivery' meals, expecting to be ready with meals no matter what sailing conditions they encounter. But there's another good reason to prep this way - it ensures the other crew members can pull their weight and prepare meals that are guaranteed to be tasty!

Anna says "I do a lot of cooking while we are still tied to the dock, and immediately upon return from the supermarket. We have limited storage for produce and meats so cooking 4-5 meals straight away also helps get everything in the right place. These meals are then put in cooking trays and into the freezer, ready for pre-heating. One of the crew's favorites is my Mexican Chicken Mole recipe which I often serve on rice with cucumbers and a drizzle of lime. Leftovers can be served on fresh greens or simply wrapped in tortillas, it's a winner!"

Anna's Mexican Chicken Mole

Recipe for 4:
Cooking time: 75 mins

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons of vegetable oil
8 chicken thighs (or chicken leg pieces)
1 chopped onion
1 Green bell pepper – Seeded and diced
1 poblano pepper – Seeded and diced
3 Cloves of Garlic – Chopped
2 Tablespoons of chilli powder
½ Tablespoon ground cumin
1 Can 14oz fire roasted tomatoes
¼ cup raisins
2 Chipotle peppers in adobo sauce, chopped (you will find these at the grocery store in the Mexican section in a tin)
1 Cup chicken broth 1 cup dark beer
2 tablespoons peanut butter
2 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon salt
2 chopped squares of unsweetened chocolate

For Serving:

Cooked White rice
Warm tortillas
Sour cream and fresh chopped cilantro

HOW TO MAKE IT:

Heat oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add chicken and brown on all sides, set aside.

In the same skillet, sauté onion, bell pepper, poblano pepper and garlic. Cook stir until veggies are soft and slightly caramelized. Stir in chilli powder, cumin and cinnamon and cook 3 garlic cloves.

Add tomatoes, raisins, chipotle peppers, chicken broth, beer, peanut butter, sugar and salt. Bring to a simmer and cook for 20 minutes stirring often.

Pour the sauce into a blender or food processor and add chocolate, cover and blend until smooth. Transfer the chicken into a deep heavy cooking pot or skillet. Pour sauce over chicken. Cover and simmer for about 45 minutes or until chicken is cooked through.

Serve warm over cooked white rice with warm tortillas. Garnish with a dollop of sour cream and a sprinkle of fresh cilantro.



Improvise!

Once you run out of fresh and have eaten all your pre-made bulk meals now it's time to get creative!

Consider tinned goods. There's a huge variety and many slot right into recipes or go easily into new snack ideas. Fruit, soups, corned beef, salmon, crab, clams, anchovies, herring, tuna, beans and vegetables.....get online, jot down some recipes and give it a try. We think you'll be pleasantly surprised.

Check the food selections at different stores than you're used, to both streamline the number of stops you make and recover items that are out of stock at the grocery store. Some pharmacies carry baking products like flour, fresh milk and healthy snacks like nuts. Target stores (USA) have a good array of meat, frozen foods and even the odd roll of TP if you get there at the right time. We've encountered a gas station or two that rival a high-end supermarket. So double-up on your stops!



Be ready to go off-plan on your recipes with tried-and-tested substitutions. We say, they can derail our plans but they can't derail our meals. Try some of these useful substitutions for items that you may not be able to find in the grocery store.

- Yogurt can be substituted for sour cream, cottage cheese, creme fraiche and marscapone.
- Most oils including coconut, avocado and olive can be substituted for butter, shortening or lard in any baking recipe
- Buttermilk can be made by adding one tablespoon of lemon to a cup of milk and letting it curdle for five minutes before using.
- Quinoa, Farro, Barley, Millet and Couscous are great alternatives to rice and also add nutritional variety to meals.
- Dried beans and frozen vegetables are great substitutes for fresh. A delicious spinach and bacon quiche can be whipped up from ingredients solely from your freezer and pantry.
- Ground flax can be substituted for eggs in baking
- Almond meal or other nut meals can be substituted for half of the flour in a baking recipe

For a more comprehensive list, google as you go or get the e-book edition of: [Substituting Ingredients: The A to Z Kitchen Reference](#)

Fish On!

We have great fun fishing on the Gunboat and a decent amount of success! We have caught Marlin, Mahi Mahi, Tuna and Wahoo over the years. We're careful to only land fish that we can eat and release the others.

Once a fish is filleted and cleaned we freeze the filets in amounts that can be easily defawed for specific meals and quantities..

Poisson Cru – a Tahitian dish that is sweet, refreshing and exotic.

Place the raw diced Mahi into a ziplock.

Add fresh lemon juice and let the fish marinate in the fridge until the flesh becomes opaque and remove.

Chop fresh scallion onions
Add coconut juice to take away the acidity

Add some chilli pepper for spice and serve – and find out for yourself why its considered the Tahitian national dish!

Ultimately it's still possible to eat a healthy variety during this time. Sailor's advice seems to be plan out a menu, adapt whatever you can find and make the most of spending more time in the kitchen cooking a meal with or for your family. Oh and while you're at it - why not throw on a bit of reggae and make a tropical cocktail because no-one said we can't still have fun in quarantine!

Stay safe and well and I hope to see you on the water soon

Spike

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