



## *Be Prepared for Surprises*

You can never predict when you might find yourself unprepared for a meal - surprise guests *do* show up at times, you *do* forget to thaw out meat every now and then, and grocery shopping trips *do* get delayed sometimes.

Everyone dreads being caught off guard with nothing to serve when people drop by. But a well stocked freezer and pantry will ensure that you always have party food at the ready without much prep.

Keep yourself and “emergency shelf” stocked, and **DO NOT** use the items you put there, unless you are truly caught off guard. Then, always immediately replace what you use from your supply.

Concentrate on stocking the shelf with canned, dry, and instant foods, even if you do not normally use these foods. As a rule, they have a very long shelf life. Of course, even these foods can stay on the shelf only so long. Date each can or container and make a habit of replacing them regularly. For example, every three to six months, take one of the emergency shelf items, replace it with an item from your everyday shelf (date the replacement), and use the older item in that night’s menu.