

1855 Survival Ideas for Now

Natural disasters, wars, etc. still happen.
We are told to pack a getaway kit of essentials.
Learning some skills would be a good idea too.

Some may actually be better than what we do now, in terms of sustainability.

1) always grown your own fruit and vegetables

From Victory Gardens in WWII, to staying alive in the Great Depression, to knowing what is in your food (organic, GMO free, etc.), tasting better (think ripe and not stuck in transport unripe)

2) made your own musical instrument(s)

Will definitely make you a better musician (understanding your craft) and an appreciation for the art form and artists.

3) driven a horse drawn carriage or wagon

Carriages and wagons can be built from local materials, horses bred and raised. try doing that with a car.

4) saddled a horse

This is about working with another sentient being, cooperatively. definitely useful.

5) used a communal outhouse (digging your own hole does not count)

Removes the feelings of being special, privileged or superior. We all poo.

6) gathered wild mushrooms for consumption (not to get high)

Could save your life if stuck in the wild. besides, they are wonderful, much more flavor than store bought. As the wrong one makes you sick (or dead), teaches you concentration and the advantages of being careful. Lasts a long time dried too.

7) used a cast iron wood burning stove for cooking and baking

The food tastes so much better. Speed and convenience does not mean better, only faster in our over stressed out existence.

8) used and maintained a kerosene lantern for light

Could you make a modern LED lamp from scratch? Any lamp fuel properly stored lasts a very long time. not true of modern batteries. Not safe to limit yourself to only one way to perform a necessary task.

9) made and eaten beef, horse or deer jerky (or pemmican)

Nny hunter knows this one. Fresh means will spoil quickly (think recalls, food poisoning, etc.). Jerky will last for years and is lightweight and easy to carry long distances.

10) walked or rode a horse more than 500 miles without a map

We become too dependent on our gadgets. Most 'city' dwellers are lost without a GPS unit guiding their every move. This is an essential skill we have lost.

11) had major surgery without pain killers

Pain is part of life. Surgery could save your life. Not ideal of course, but the ability to handle pain is also an important ability.

12) sutured a wound with available needle and thread

Field survival, but safer than an infection, or loss of a limb.

13) used a cap and ball black powder pistol/rifle to survive

Yeah, probably only for perfectionist period re-enactors. but we could all learn a set of skills to save ourselves or others.

14) used a hot iron to cauterize a wound or amputation

Infection was the number one killer from survivable wounds in most wars, could save your life.

15) joined a posse to hunt down a murderer or thief

This is about our commitment to public safety. Should never be about revenge, racism, or hate.

16) made sourdough bread

No brainer. Homemade sourdough is incredible. ALL homemade bread fresh from the oven is heavenly.

17) drank water from a stream or lake unfiltered

Pre-giardia, a protozoan parasite, this was common. The taste is so good without chlorine (which has saved countless lives in our overcrowded world.)

18) killed, dressed and cooked your own meat

Do we have any right to eat meat if we do not face our prey and accept our own ultimate fate? Every living thing is both prey and predator.

19) made your own camera and light sensitive materials

Could you make a digital camera from scratch? Are your drawing skills so good your work could be used to document accurately a person or event? Many photographers are returning to 'slow' photography. There is a certain aesthetic and sense of peace we lost when faster/easier won out.

20) spun yarn and wove your own cloth

Would you survive running around naked in the snow or desert?

21) made your clothes by hand from the above

See above.

22) washed your clothes in a tub with homemade soap

Power failures are a pain, but so are lice, fleas, allergies, fungal infections, etc. This is a life saving essential skill. Actually superior as all day in a tub gets clothes WAY cleaner than 20 minutes in a modern washer. We sacrificed yet again because of our need for SPEED.

23) been with someone when they died

Our current habit of hiding our old and dying far away to die alone and without respect is a strong reflection of what will happen to us when our time comes. Being with someone you know when they die does a lot to assuage our own fears of death. It will happen, not optional.

24) lost someone you knew to violence committed by a stranger

Probably not so rare in our modern world as we would have hoped. Anger, hate and greed are real now as well.

25) made your own bricks to build a house with

In our search for zero cost heating and cooling we lost the idea that thick (18") walls made of common mud and straw work remarkably well.

26) felled a tree to make furniture or housing using only hand tools

Doing anything with hand tools brings a sense of calm that no power tool can. Slow down, appreciate the smells, feel, art of doing this yourself. Definitely worth it for mental health if for no other reason.

27) ever sent or received a telegram

Much easier to set up a telegraph system again after a disaster. Learning morse code, not so easy. This may be a wash.

28) ever used whale oil for lubrication or lamp fuel

In this time of mass extinction at our hands, maybe better to use a plant oil. Coconut oil works remarkably well.

29) never been in a motorized car

Certainly convenient, but how many times have we been held hostage to our morals because we sold out to those holding the fuel pump. then add climate change. a.k.a. how long can you tread water?

30) never used a phone of any kind

A number of people are returning to flip phones because of the need to break their addiction to the constant attention a smart phone provides and demands. There is ALWAYS a side effect to any tech. being constantly on-call to others will lead to an early death. Stop, think, consider, before acting. Hmm, that might even save lives.

31) can read and write in full handwritten cursive script

(Hint: a secret code your teenage children will not be able to read). There is a feeling that cannot be described when using pen and ink.

32) kept accounts in a ledger book by hand

This is a funny one. Too many people overly trust their spreadsheets and calculators to the point, where they no longer see horrible costly errors no bookkeeper from then would have missed.

33) had Cholera, Typhus, Yellow Fever, or Tuberculosis

Plagues and pandemics are not just a 21st century event. Communities that did not learn to work together for the public good, went extinct. (Entire towns disappeared in the Black Death years)

34) cast lead characters to hand set a block of text to print

Lead causes brain damage, in children especially. not a skill you should attempt now. Printing allowed the first 'social media' to occur and has overthrown governments and businesses then and now. Maybe try wood block printing or ceramic letters for now.

35) depended on a hand wound pocket watch to tell time

Teaches us to slow down. No alarms, must wind daily, in your pocket so you are not constantly checking it.

36) made a dip pen from a twig/feather and used hand made ink

Scratching on rocks with a bit of charcoal from the fire is not the same. This does work and was used by scribes for thousands of years.

No one could afford 'cheaply' made materials. Had to last for generations. Most often you had to repair it yourself and that means the knowledge and skills to do so.