

Riffin' on Foods that Need No Fridge

You might be surprised how well you can eat fresh without a fridge, even in the tropics. Onions and potatoes will keep for weeks (but not together, please). Lemons, limes, and oranges—especially those with thick skins—will survive for weeks. Fresh green tomatoes shrug off lumpy seas and still ripen nicely. Bananas don't like cold to begin with. Hang a green bunch from the backstay, and they're happy. Be ready, though. They ripen fast . . . banana bread for breakfast!

Rice and beans offer simple sustenance. Wrap them in a homemade tortilla, add a little hot sauce, and it's Mexican Night. Wax balls of cheese, Parmesan wheels, and long sausage links turn the galley into a deli.

Breadfruit is a born voyager, but taste best cooked over an open fire. (Baking is the safer choice while underway.) Coconuts last ages, but husk them ashore, where a long stake and machete can be wielded without harm. Big purple mangoes are hardier than the yellow varieties. Pick them when they bear a tinge of purple. There's a secret to ripening a green papaya. (Tell me if you know what it is!) Or you can and shave a green one into a fiery Thai curry.

Green pineapples will ripen fast, lasting five or six days, but then the fruit flies launch their invasion. Pomelo, the giant ancestor of the grapefruit, are a South Pacific staple. Stock

up at the Saturday market, and you'll have your citrus fix for weeks to come.

Eggs will cross an ocean at 6 knots. Turn them every other day. Celebrate arrival in Tenerife with a Spanish omelette. Let the kids eat peanut butter.

If you miss milk, the ultra high-temperature (UHT) pasteurized milk in the carton or powdered milk go fine with oatmeal. Grains do well in sealed bins, so you'll never be short on bread. (Bay leaves keep the weevils at bay.) Don't feel like baking? Top your cabin biscuits with tinned butter.

What about condiments? Ketchup (with its 57 herbs and spices) and mustard pose no problem. Even mayonnaise doesn't need a fridge for the short term. Buy the tiny jars and serve with a dry, clean spoon. Miracle Whip has a half-life measured in decades (scary, I say). Pickles, well, are pickled.

Leafy vegetables challenge the seagoing chef. Iceberg lettuce loses hope on a boat. Baby spinach quickly goes limp. Cauliflower and broccoli are better bets. Half the fun is in the hunt. Seek out locally grown greens that have never felt a chill.

A fresh, firm cabbage endures all manner of abuse, although these are hard to find in the islands. More common abroad is ancient bok choy. It wilts after a couple of days, but still stir fries well. Simmer with fresh sliced ginger. Chinese long bean also make a good stir fry and will survive a long

week in a vegetable basket. Carrots and cucumber suffer well the indignities of sea travel. Wax the cucumber to add a few days to its life. Squash, too, are a forgiving source of vitamin A.

What about meat? Now there's the rub. Unless you're a natural canner, or are the son of a son of a sausage-maker, preserving will require some practice. If you're well armed with spices, Jamaican jerk or Padang-style chicken will please the chili lover.

If not, so what? The ocean is your Save-A-Lot. Mahi-mahi and conch ceviche will last for another day. Sooner or later, though, the lemons run out. Ignore the bad rap on dried and salted fish. It serves to fill the void and can be tasty when seasoned right.

If you've made it this far and you still think you need to convert that ice box into DC refrigerator, turn to page 7 for more guidance. As for me, I'm happy cruising without. Sure I like ice in my sundowner and a cold beer now and again. But then, that's what friends with fridges are for.

I'll bring the limes . . . and some sweaty cheese.



Cover photo: Technical Editor Ralph Naranjo's Ericson 41 is secured ashore in Galesville Harbor Yacht Yard. (Photo by Ralph Naranjo)

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