

HEALTHY, WEALTHY & WISE

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Are You PREPARED For **SEVERE WEATHER**

BPT

One of the most visible consequences of a warming world is an increase in the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events. Tornadoes, floods, hurricanes and more - severe weather is increasing around the globe. Are you ready if a threatening storm hits your home?

Storm frequency and intensity is growing, which means it's important for homeowners to take a proactive approach to severe weather preparedness. Having the right equipment and gear on hand and ready to go means your family can stay as safe and as comfortable as possible.

Power Outages and Severe Weather – Power to your home may be intermittent and unreliable during

bad weather. In worst cases, entire power grids can go out for days or weeks at a time. It's very important to prepare by having flashlights ready, stocking up on batteries and properly maintaining a generator to power necessities in a home.

If you are without electricity, a portable generator can help power critical household equipment. For example, Honda offers a model with a fuel-efficient engine and a digital ignition for easy startup. The control panel features 10 outlets and a

See "Are You PREPARED" on next page

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12-volt DC outlet, so you can power things like a well pump, a refrigerator and freezer, lights and electronics like TVs and cell phones to stay connected to emergency information.

When selecting a generator, it's important to know the right size for your needs, which is based on the rated wattage of what you want to power - as not all generators have the same power draw. To do this, add up the wattage of tools, appliances and motors you will want to run at the same time, then select a generator with the running wattage rating to match or exceed the total load. Items with electric motors require additional surge wattage at startup that can double or triple the normal wattage requirement - so look at the surge watts required.

Having a generator is only half the battle during severe weather. It is just as important to use the equipment safely and maintain it properly by following generator safety and maintenance tips:

1) Store units properly: When not in use, keep your generator clean and covered in a safe, accessible location.

2) Perform maintenance: Being prepared is key, and a critical component of that is making sure your gear is ready in advance of serious weather. To that end, test the generator monthly to ensure it's working properly. Just like any other engine, a generator requires maintenance, so keep up with the manufacturer's recommended schedule for things like oil changes and spark plugs. Find a store near you that offers parts, service and repair expertise to ensure that generators, water pumps and other equipment are tuned up and ready.

3) Use fresh gas: There is approximately a 90-day shelf life on fuel, especially in smaller quantities like what would be in the gas tank of a small engine or a small gas can. Never use bad gas in a generator or you risk damage to the engine.

4) Run units wisely: Place generators outdoors away from your home, but shielded from rain as much as possible. Never run generators inside or covered tightly because this can clog spark arrestors and filters resulting in a fire hazard. Additionally, not ventilating exhaust increases risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

5) Keep it clean and level: Always run the generator on level surfaces free from debris or other items. Non-level or vibrating surfaces may result in problems including poor engine lubrication, which can cause overheating.

6) Don't overdraw power: The size of your generator will dictate how many things it can power. Keep in mind, items with heating elements or motors often need double their rated wattage to start up, which is called surge.

Unfortunately, severe weather is an unpredictable fact of life for property owners. Having a generator can be life changing during extreme weather, but dealing with the aftermath of even a small flood can still be overwhelming. Hopefully you never have to go through flooding or storm damage to your home. But if you do, it is important to minimize the damage immediately by calling a qualified cleaning and restoration company to get your home back in shape fast.

Contact **A-Town/Hi-Tech** today if you have any questions, need any help or to schedule your next appointment.

The Good Life



Good Clean Funnies

How do you make an octopus laugh?

With ten-tickles.

What was the first animal in space?

The cow that jumped over the moon.

Are monsters good at math?

Not unless you count Dracula.



South Texas BORRACHO Beans

Directions

Place pinto beans into a large container and cover with several inches of cool water. Soak beans 8 hours to overnight.

Cook bacon in a large skillet over medium-high heat until crispy, about 10 minutes. Remove bacon slices to a plate lined with paper towel to drain, reserving the bacon drippings. Chop the bacon.

Drain and rinse pinto beans; transfer to a large pot. Pour enough water over the beans to cover by several inches. Stir salt and garlic powder into the water; bring to a boil and reduce heat to medium-low. Add bacon, reserved bacon drippings, beer, cilantro, green onions, diced tomatoes, and jalapeno pepper to the water; bring mixture to a simmer and cook until the beans are completely tender, 90 minutes to 2 hours.

Cook's Note:

The jalapeno is for flavor only. I don't recommend eating it as part of this dish.

These Borracho-style beans are perfect for the Fall. They are great for tailgating or a backyard BBQ!

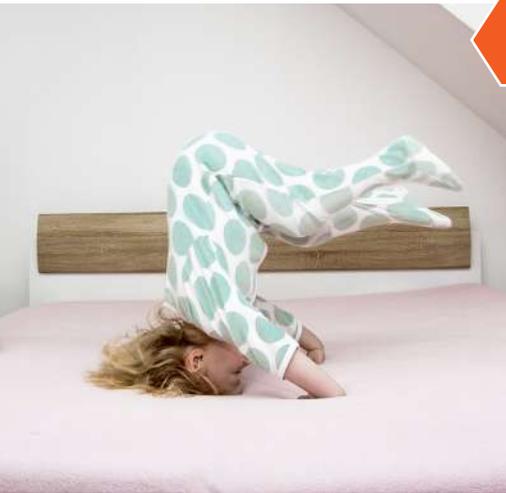
Ingredients

- 1 pound dried pinto beans
- 1/2 pound bacon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 (12 fluid ounce) bottle dark lager-style beer
- 1 bunch cilantro, chopped
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped
- 1 (14.5 ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 1 fresh jalapeno pepper

Recipe courtesy allrecipes.com



Win a GOLD Medal: Protect Your Children from Tip-Overs



After watching weeks of the summer Olympic Games, young children may be inspired to attempt their own competitions at home.

Before kids start practicing their favorite Olympic sport they watched over the summer, parents should be aware that furniture and TV tip-overs pose a significant risk to children. Tip-overs happen so fast! It's literally in the blink of an eye, often with a parent close by. Adults should install anti-tip kits to furniture and TVs to reduce the risk of tip-overs and keep their little gymnasts safer while they try their own gold medal floor routine.

Increasingly, anchors are provided with the purchase of new furniture and TVs. But if they are not, people can purchase an inexpensive anti-tip kit online, or at their local hardware store.

There are additional safety steps for families to take to reduce the risk of a furniture

and TV tip-over incident. Adults should:

- Store heavier items on lower shelves or in lower drawers;
- Keep TV and cable cords out of reach of children;
- Avoid storing items, such as toys and TV remotes, on top of furniture or TVs, where children may be tempted to climb; and
- Place TVs on a sturdy, low base, and push the TV back as far as possible, especially if anchoring is not possible.

Parents or caregivers who take these easy steps to protect children deserve a gold medal; but the true reward is knowing they made the lives of their kids safer.

How to INVEST in the PLANET

More than ever, people are interested in using their investment money in ways that help the planet, directing funds toward green stocks and other areas.

The trend goes by many names, including green investing, ethical investing, socially responsible investing, and ESG investing (for environmental, social and governance). When you do your research, check into a fund or advisor's methodology of choosing investments to make sure it aligns with your goals.

Also consider that green investing has been on an upswing, which could be a cause for caution as well as enthusiasm. Kiplinger's says that from the start of 2020 through late January 2021, "a basket of U.S. renewable-energy stocks has out-gained the broad S&P 500 index by more than 200 percentage points."

It added that the median price-earnings ratio of the renewable names, based on projected profits, was 40 percent higher than the S&P 500's.

In other words, green investing is at a high and could encounter a bit of a shake-up, though its long-term prospects still look favorable. A number of exchange-traded funds include portfolios of companies with an environmental focus.

So how to get started? NerdWallet suggests investing in ESG funds and investing in sustainable stocks. ESG funds are mutual funds graded using ESG principles, investing in companies that have a sustainable and societal impact.

You can also request an impact report that details the effect your investment has had on the real world.



The good news is that whatever matters to you most - be it climate change, environmental pollution or the plastic problem - there will be an investment fund or portfolio available for you to back this cause with your savings.



MASTERING the Dishwasher: Tips For BEST Use and Care

To rinse or not to rinse? Bowls on top or bottom? Should pots and pans go in at all?

Here are some tips and tricks to best use and care for your dishwasher.

1) Select a quality dishwasher: When purchasing a new one, look for one that has drying technology, flexible loading features, is energy efficient and, of course, has a thorough, reliable clean.

2) Load your dishwasher properly: To maximize space and ensure your dishes are clean and dry, follow these simple steps:

- No pre-rinsing needed: Simply scrape food off the plate before loading.
- Load your glasses at an angle to avoid water pooling on top and dripping when unloading.

- Make sure your plasticware is dishwasher safe, and that you've followed your manual's instructions for plastics.
- Ensure tall items, such as large plates or pots, are not blocking the movement of the spray arms.
- Avoid stacking silverware and put knives sharp end down for safety.

3) Keep your dishwasher spotless: Keep the exterior and interior of your dishwasher clean according to your manual's instructions.

Additionally, clean your filter with warm, soapy water and a scrub brush every few months to remove food debris that may hinder your dishwasher's performance. It's located at the bottom of most models.

Have you ever found yourself rearranging the dishwasher after someone else loads it? One of the great household debates is how to load the dishwasher!



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