

SHELTER & SPACE · GUIDE 02

# Small Space Prep Guide

Studio apartment. Shared housing. No basement. No problem. Preparedness works in any space.

Nearly 40 million Americans live in apartments. Millions more live in shared housing or small spaces. This guide was written for you. Small space is not a disqualifier — it's just a different set of parameters. And parameters are solvable.

## ■ MINDSET: MARGIN, NOT BUNKER

The goal is not to fit a year's worth of supplies into a closet. The goal is to create a small, meaningful buffer — a few extra days of food, water you control, a plan that doesn't depend on store shelves being stocked. Every item in your kit should earn its space. Multi-use beats single-use. Compact beats bulky.

### Reframe "prepping" as "margin":

You have financial margin when you're not spending every dollar the moment it arrives. You have preparedness margin when you're not entirely dependent on systems working perfectly right now. Small margins, compounded over time, create real resilience.

## ■ WATER STORAGE IN SMALL SPACES

The standard guidance is 1 gallon per person per day. For a 72-hour supply for two people, that's 6 gallons — roughly the size of a medium bag of dog food when stored efficiently.

OPTION	HOW IT WORKS	COST
<b>Clean 2-Liter Bottles</b>	Rinse, fill with tap water, store in a dark cabinet. Replace every 6-12 months. Stacks under beds, in closet corners.	Free
<b>Stackable Water Containers</b>	5-gallon BPA-free containers with spigots. Slide under a bed or behind furniture.	\$10-\$15 ea.
<b>WaterBOB (Bathtub Bladder)</b>	Liner fits any standard bathtub, holds up to 100 gallons. Store flat until needed — near bed footprint.	\$25-\$30
<b>Purification Tablets</b>	When storage isn't practical, purification is the fallback. Treats hundreds of gallons. Fits in pocket.	\$5-\$8

### HIDDEN STORAGE

The space under a bed in a standard apartment can hold 10–15 two-liter bottles laid flat in a shallow bin — 5–7 gallons stored completely out of sight.

## ■ FOOD STORAGE WITHOUT A PANTRY

You don't need a pantry. You need a system. Keep a rotating supply of shelf-stable food that integrates into your existing kitchen space.

LOCATION	WHAT WORKS THERE	CAPACITY
Under the bed	Flat bins with canned goods, bottled water, packaged foods	HIGH
Top of closet shelf	Lightweight packaged foods, first aid kit, documents folder	MEDIUM
Behind furniture	Stacked cans in a tote bag, water containers	MEDIUM
Inside ottoman / storage furniture	Compact supplies, documents, power bank, radio	SMALL
Under the sink	Sanitation supplies, water purification, cleaning items	SMALL
Dedicated go-bag	72-hour kit in one bag — grab and go when needed	PORTABLE

#### THE ROTATING SHELF METHOD

Add one or two extra cans to your regular grocery run each week. Put newest purchases at the back, use from the front. Over 4–6 weeks, you build a real rotating supply without ever feeling like you're "prepping."

## ■ THE SMALL-SPACE GO-BAG

For apartment dwellers, the most likely emergency scenario may involve leaving — not sheltering in place. A go-bag solves small-space storage and evacuation prep at the same time.

#### ■ Water + purification

Two 1-liter bottles + purification tablets. First 24 hours covered.

#### ■ Food for 72 hours

Peanut butter packets, granola bars, jerky, trail mix, instant oatmeal — no cooking required.

#### ■ Documents (waterproofed)

Copies of ID, insurance, medications, contacts in a zip-lock bag.

#### ■ Cash in small bills

\$40–\$60 in fives and ones.

#### ■ Flashlight + batteries

Small LED flashlight and a set of spare batteries.

#### ■ Phone charger + power bank

Fully charged before any anticipated event.

#### ■ Basic first aid

Compact travel kit — bandages, antiseptic, pain reliever, personal medications.

■ **Change of clothes**

One set, rolled tight. Sturdy shoes if your everyday shoes are impractical.

■ **Battery-powered radio**

Small hand-crank or battery model keeps you connected to emergency broadcasts.

**Where to keep it:**

Keep it by the front door, in a closet near your exit, or under your bed. Reachable in under 30 seconds without thinking. You shouldn't have to find your go-bag during an emergency.

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Official Sources: [ready.gov/plan](https://ready.gov/plan) · [ready.gov/kit](https://ready.gov/kit) · [redcross.org](https://redcross.org) · [cdc.gov/disasters](https://cdc.gov/disasters)