

Tin Can Kits

This presentation will cover Tin Can Kits, and several variations on the theme. Not only are these types of small kits available in tins, they are also often available in alternative containers such as super duty zip-lock type bags, nylon pouches, plastic or stainless steel wide mouth water bottles, and plastic tubes, for instance.

There are commercial civilian kits, actual military issue kits, kits tailored for camping survival, bushcrafting, winter sports, desert environments, and many others. And of course you can make your own, which will usually get you a kit better suited to your needs than commercial ones.

There are many variations on the kits; in size, contents, and definitely quality of both the container and the contents. The quality issue, and the question of will you have it with you when you need it, makes me consider some of the kits a 'having one of the poor quality ones is worse than not having anything situation'. And believe me, being a devout 'having something is always better than not having anything' kind of guy, that is really hard for me to say. It is a matter of having something you are counting on being there to use actually being there. And what can be a real killer, is counting on things that are going to let you down in a big way when you need them most.

And that is one of the things about having a kit like this. It is minimal to start with, and if you need it, there is a very good chance you are going to need it desperately; you are not going to be in the best of condition to start with; your level of stress is probably off the charts; it will likely be dark, cold, and wet; you will be shaking; and often as not there will be a baby crying, a toddler trying to run off, and someone screaming in your ear to Hurry Up! Not to mention the Zombie about to eat your brains.

So choose one with items that will actually work under those conditions, and that **you** can make work under those conditions. Your life, or the life of someone you care about, could very well be at stake. This is truly a case of you get what you pay for being a very important consideration. Yeah. I do make fun of some of these kits, as you will see. But I do take this subject seriously when it is important.

On the question of whether you will actually carry one of these kits as part of your EDC, there are a few answers. Probably not. Not likely. Maybe. No. Not just No, but #\$_@% NO! Once in a great while, a person might slip one of the tins in their pocket or purse. But they are seldom everyday carry for most Everydays. Going to the field can be different. You might just slip one in your cargo pants thigh pocket.

Now, if you were, say, a closet Batman Utility Belt major fanboy, like I am actually admitting to being, but did not have a bad back in general, and spinal stenosis in L4 or L5 lumbar vertebrae in particular, so that wearing anything bulky on your belt threw your back out and caused you great pain; AND did not particularly mind how you looked in public... (Take a good look. Do I really look like I care what I look like in public?), then you might wear one in a

nice case on your belt on a daily basis. (Get with Todd. He can probably make you a leather case for one you would be proud to wear on your belt.) Along with the Leatherman, SAK, flashlight, cell phone case, pager, two-way radio, pepper spray, holster, magazine/speed loader pouch, and any other miscellaneous absolutely necessary items.

Some of the tins really are better than nothing and though you might not want to carry one on you, they can be tossed in the door pouch or console or glove box of your vehicles, slipped into your shooting bag, gym bag, attaché case, bike tool bag, or whatever. One of the good uses of Tin Can Kits is as an addition to a bug out bag, INCH kit, and some of the other larger kits to provide a minimum amount of items in case you have to ditch the main kit. And the tins and other containers can be used to create sub-kits that keep specific items together inside a larger kit.

Another good use is as an introduction to prepping for non-prepping friends/relatives, especially if you put one together with them so they know what is in it and how to use it. It can often provide them with at least some basics to have with them when they would not otherwise, if given as a gift. Some women will be much more likely to carry one, since some carry a purse that has the space and will keep it out of sight. Some guys will carry one for the ‘cool’ factor.

What are in these kits, in general? I have already said it varies greatly. But most do have some things in common. Usually fire making materials, some type of signaling device, a compass, and a sharps of some type. Others add water filtering or purification materials, even a means to carry water. A writing instrument and waterproof paper. A mini-saw in lieu of in addition to a sharps blade. Fishing gear. Cordage. First-aid items. Duct tape, vinyl tape, electrical tape. Candle or micro flashlight. Information stickers/micro-booklets. Perhaps ‘food’. The more things you add, the bigger the container and the heavier. You are a prepper, you are here getting information and training.

Most of the items you will know how to use. (Or should.) But sometimes information you do not use all the time can be difficult to remember under stress, so having information in the tin can be important. There are wallet size cards available. The old Brunton 8800 cards were good if you can still find a set. ESEE has a good set. You can come up with your own information and print it (double sided) on water resistant paper, or on large mailing labels and fasten them inside the bottom and top of the can. (Or use the water resistant paper and glue it in/on the tin.) If you carry a Fresnel lens between the cards or paper sheets, you can use small print to maximize the amount of information and still read it. (Besides, some of the Fresnel lens will not fit the smaller tins if in their sleeve.) Get a 4x or better one.

Some of the more comprehensive are packed to the brim. Others leave a bit of room for you to add your own choices and/or contain only non-expiring items so you can add your own fresh items that require rotation.

Some of the kits are suitable for long-term storage, without anything in them that will deteriorate over time, or need periodic rotation. Others will need to be opened and some items

rotated on a regular basis. When you put together your own kit, you can choose which way you want to go. Or you can do a two part kit, with the long term, non-expiring items in one sealed container and the items that need to be rotated in a separate one. In either case, include a desiccant to keep the moisture level down. And if you use some form of tape to seal the edges of the tin, use good quality electrician's tape or a strip of good quality duct tape. Or you can use a really heavy duty rubber band, or a band cut from a bicycle tire. Or vacuum seal it.

I would advise against wrapping the tin in duct tape with the intention of having a supply of it for emergency. Unless that is what you happen to need first, you will be unwrapping and rewrapping it to access the tin. It will eventually lose stickiness. Better to have a compact roll, flat pack folded piece, or some wrapped around an old credit card. Note: the card is good for extracting bee and jellyfish stingers from the skin.

Cordage can take up quite a bit of space if there is much of it, especially paracord. It is often best to wrap the cordage around the tin. You can carry more, and it is easier to take off and put back on that duct tape. Bank line is much cheaper, much more compact. 550 cord is stronger, and you can pull the inner strands for individual use. 750 cord is even stronger, with 11 inner strands rather than 7.

Besides these general kits, there are some specialized Tin Can Kits, too. Primarily fishing kits and medical kits. Sometimes sewing kits and eyeglass repair kits. If you are building your own, you can put together pretty much anything you want, using an appropriate size container of whatever material you choose.

These containers can be just about anything. You can buy specific tins. Might be something you already have around the house. Anyone an Altoids user? Anyone have a pencil case left over from third grade? Anybody ever buy Christmas or Halloween candy in really cool special containers? Am I the only one, or has anyone else ever bought Christmas or Halloween candy in those really cool special containers, just to get the container? I have several different types of containers here that I have acquired in various ways at various times for you to see what some of the options are.

Seeing just what you have in one of the commercial Tin Can Kits can be a bit of a Pandora's box, since if you open them before needing them, not only can you often not get everything back in the tin, you have often compromised the integrity and seal of the tin, allowing air, and therefore moisture, inside when you close it back up, if you can get everything packed back in. And in the case of the easy open top tins, like sardine can type kits, there is no way to even close it back up. If you do open one, replace the desiccant pack if there was one in it, or add one, if not.

So consider the size, shape, material, and contents of these tins carefully and choose wisely. Because they can be expensive. Because the good ones ARE expensive, and the ones you put together using top quality gear are going to be expensive. At least in a relative sense to what is available.

As part of the handout for this presentation, I have included lists of the contents of a few of the better (in my opinion) kits, and pictures of some of them, along with a source. As always with my advice and opinions, please do your own due diligence research and make choices that might affect your safety, and the safety of others carefully.

Here is a list of some options to consider:

Sharps: Scalpel blade, single edge razor blade; razor blade knife; mini-pocket knife; mini-folding saw; wire saw; mini- to medium Swiss Army knife; small to medium single blade pocket knife

Signal devices: Tube whistle; Perry whistle; small/flat whistle; Fox Survival whistle; tiny-metal to medium glass mirror; mini-flares

Navigation devices: Button compasses of various sizes; small baseplate compass

Fire making gear: Book matches (really poor choice); Wind/water-proof matches w/strike strip; micro- to small ferrocerium rod w/striker and w/ or w/o a small magnesium bar; Fresnel lens; mini-Bic

Cordage: 550 cord; bank line; 750 cord, braided fishing line; Kevlar cord; SERE cord (3 Kevlar inner strand 550 type cord), dental floss, sisal cord (good for fire starting, too)

Water purification and carry: Various iodine based tablets (no virus protection), some chlorine based tablets (no virus protection), various chlorine dioxide tablets (virus protection)(for any of the tablets check for Cryptosporidium protection. Some do and some do not. Those that do usually require 4+ hours of treatment time.); oven roasting bag for water carry; an Aqua-pouch; a commercial water bag; a folded up zip-lock bag (preferably heavy duty)

Lighting: Relighting gag birthday candle; beeswax tea lights; regular emergency candle; candle in a can; homemade candle in a can; various keychain micro-lights, 9v Blocklite, Petzl e+LITE

Food: bouillon cube; hard candy; Tootsie roll; Horlick's Malt tablets; Chicklet's two-piece gum; sugar packet

Odds & Ends: Bandana, emergency sunglasses, zip-lock bag, pot handle, information cards

Some things to not put in Tin Can Kits: Anything just because it will fit. Even if you find some 'neat' things that are tiny and will fit in a small tin, do not include it just because it will fit. If it does not have an important use, under the circumstances under which you will be using the kit, do not put it in there. Snare wire only if you can really make snares. Oh, by the way, the Altoids size tins make good char cloth makers and carriers.

Any questions or comments? Suggestions or recommendations?

Some sources and resources:

Always check Prep and Save first.

If you cannot find it here/there, always shop around for the best pricing and availability. Keep an eye on shipping costs. It can often cost more to get something shipped even if the item is a cheaper price, than it does to buy local. This presentation document will be put up on the Meet Up and www.nnpg.net sites so you can have a clickable link to the things below, especially since I made them small print with that in mind.

http://www.survivalresources.com/Products/Survival_Kits.html

http://www.survivalresources.com/Products/Water_Containers.html

http://www.survivalresources.com/Products/Water_Purif.html

http://www.survivalresources.com/Products/Misc_Containers.html

http://www.survivalresources.com/Products/Pouches_Bags.html

http://www.bestglide.com/pocket_survival_tin.html

http://www.bestglide.com/Military_Government.html

http://www.bestglide.com/fishing_series_survival_kits.html

<http://www.shop.gxpathy.com/Mighty-Mega-Cache-MM000010.htm>

<http://www.vigilantgear.com/cordage/>

<http://www.fieldandstream.com/photos/gallery/survival/food/2006/08/make-survival-kit-out-altoids-tin-and-two-more-life-saving-diy->

<http://www.instructables.com/id/An-Assortment-of-Altoid-Tin-Survival-Kits/>

<http://www.twowolvesoutdoor.com/IzulaWalletKit.htm>

http://www.amazon.com/Esee-Izula-Gear-Survival-SURV-CARD/dp/B004OWROD6/ref=sr_1_4?ie=UTF8&qid=1426119061&sr=8-4&keywords=survival+cards

https://search.yahoo.com/search;_ylt=A0SO8w8qif1UD6kAJAhXNyoA;_ylu=X3oDMTE4NGE0a2dpBGNvbG8DZ3ExBHBvcwMxBHZ0aWQDVkIQNTMxXzEEc2VjA3Jlbc1ib3Q-?fr=ymyy-t-500&ei=UTF-8&p=altoids+survival+kit&fr2=14166

http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss_1?url=search%3Daps&field-keywords=survival+tin

https://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images;_ylt=A0SO80z5xvIU7JsAuL9XNyoA;_ylu=X3oDMTE1ODNhaWRwBGNvbG8DZ3ExBHBvcwMxBHZ0aWQDVkIQNDQyXzEEc2VjA3BpdnM-?p=tin+can+survival+kits&fr=sfp&fr2=piv-web

http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search%3Daps&field-keywords=survival+tin+kits&rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3Asurvival+tin+kits

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Some lists of various commercial kits:

Rescue Flash Signal Mirror, Fox 40 Micro whistle, Spark-Lite Firestarter, 20mm Survival Compass, 2" x 26" Duct Tape, #22 Scalpel Blade, 6 ft. of .020" Stainless Steel Utility Wire, 2" x 3" Fresnel Lens Magnifier, 50' Heavy Duty Nylon Thread, 10'- 150 lb. test Braided Nylon Cord, 4 Fish Hooks, 2 Sinkers, 1 Snap Swivel, Heavy Duty Sewing Needle, 3 sq. ft. Heavy Duty Aluminum Foil, 4 - 2" Safety Pins, Pencil, 2 sheets Waterproof Paper, Waterproof Survival Instructions, Content List, and Re-sealable Waterproof Plastic Case.

Mini-Match™ mini-magnesium firestarter and 2 Tinder-Quick™ fire tabs for fire starting, a Whistle for signaling, a 20mm Button Compass for navigation, a folding pocket saw (it should be noted that the saw is now orange - not red) from the tool group, a mini lead pencil, and 2 sheets of water-proof paper

Spark-Lite™ Firestarter – Orange, 6 - Tinder-Quick™ Fire Tabs, AMK Mini Rescue-Flash™ Signal Mirror, Fox 40® Micro Whistle – Orange, 20mm Button Compass, 10' Type III, 7 Strand, Parachute Cord, Fishing Kit, In Small Vial, 50' - 20 lb. Braided Fishing Line, 6' Brass

Snare Wire, Folding Razor Knife, Folding Pocket Saw, Fresnel Magnifier, Duct Tape Flat Pack - 2" x 50" - Blaze Orange, 7 - Safety Pins - 2 #1 & 3 #00, Sewing Needle, 2 - Waterproof Paper - 2.125" x 2.75", Mini Pencil

Weather Resistant Tin Container, Adventurer Button Compass, 10 All Weather Survival Matches, Derma Safe Razor Knife, Sewing Kit w/6 Safety Pins, 6 MP1 Water Purification Tablets, Adventurer Survival Whistle, Mini Survival Fishing Kit, Vinyl Tape, Type 1A Utility Cord, Brass Snare Wire, Emergency Signal Mirror, 2 Beeswax Candles, Compact Flint Fire Starter w/Striker, 3 Fire Starter Tinder Tabs, Adventurer Fresnel Lens Fire Starter, 6 Band Aids/Butterfly Bandages, Pocket Wire Saw, 2 Industrial Grade Tie Wraps, Water Bag, Survival Instructions, Pencil, Silica Gel Desiccant, 2 Survival Instruction Labels, Heavy Duty Laminate Packaging

duct tape, 2 chicken bullion cubes, sheet of paper, VERY small bar of soap, 10' light twine, a cotton ball, 4 straight pins, 1 needle, small spool of thread, 1 razer blade, 10 matches do NOT use strike anywhere they might ignite in box!, match striker, 5 feet dental floss, match stick, 12 small rubber bands, flint, 1 produce bag from your local supermarket, 2 band-aids, small neosporin pack, 1 gauze pad

Band aid (2), Sewing kit, String, Mini multi tool, Plastic sandwich bag, rubber band (2), About 10 feet of Duct tape wrapped around the body of an old, cheap pen, Relighting candle, Magnifying glass, Tweezers, Whistle, Firecracker, thermometer, compass, Dryer lint, Fishing hooks, sinker, Matches

Some pictures (all are copyrighted from their respective sites)





