



# Meal, Ready-to-Eat, Individual (MRE)



In the modern battlefield, warfighters often move on short notice — and can face extremely intense combat. In these situations, nutritional intake can have a great impact on a soldier's performance. The Meal, Ready-to-Eat, Individual (MRE) is the standard military ration developed to support the individual soldier in all the Armed Forces (Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines).

## Why Is It Needed?:

The MRE replaced the C Ration in the early 1980s — and since then, it has been continuously updated. However, feedback from Operation Desert Shield/Storm suggested that soldiers would consume more if their preferences were taken into consideration. Since 1993 improvements have focused on replacing items based on soldier survey results to make the rations more acceptable and to expand variety.

## Key Features:

- The MRE must maintain high quality for three years at 80° F and for six months at 100° F.
- The ration must be highly acceptable to soldiers.
- The MRE must meet the Office of the Surgeon General's nutritional requirements.
- The packaging must meet stringent durability requirements — including resistance to airdrop, rough handling and temperature extremes.

Since MRE XIII of 1993, over 140 new items (70% of which were non-developmental items) have been approved. 35 of the least acceptable items have been replaced and 4 vegetarian mealshave been introduced. The number of menus increased — incrementally — from 12 to 24.

## Benefits:

**Soldier Acceptance...**Positive feedback from Operation Iraq Freedom and field tests indicate that the soldiers are giving the MRE high approval rates — and the more acceptable an item, the greater the likelihood it will be consumed.

**Greater Variety...**Changes in the menu help reduce monotony, meet varying consumer tastes, and keep pace with the latest advances in nutrition, packaging, and food processing.

## Point of Contact:

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