10 WAYS FROM UKRAINIAN WINTERS

10 Winter Blackout Tricks

For four winters in Ukraine the power went off for many hours every day. These are the ten things the old people living alone did to make the dark hours safe. Keep this list in your kitchen drawer beside the lamp.

with love, Maria

Your list: tick each one when it is done

- ☐ Find the place where you get stuck
- ☐ Keep two kinds of water
- ☐ A month of medicine, and a paper card
- ☐ Cash in small bills
- ☐ The power bank sleeps in your pocket
- ☐ Your light-hours list
- ☐ Porridge under the fur coat
- ☐ A strand of fairy lights
- ☐ Know your warm room, and who drives you
- ☐ The water-jug lamp

Tonight: fill a jug, find your headlamp, turn off every light in the kitchen, and make your lamp once.

1 Find the place where you get stuck

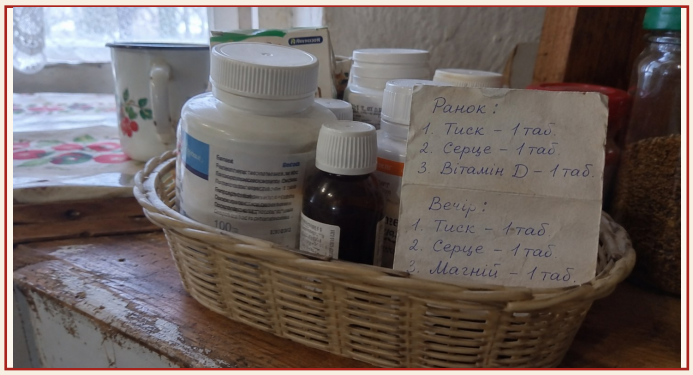
The most dangerous place when the power goes out is not the dark room. It is the place where you get stuck.

- [ ] Ask what in your house stops working with no power: the garage door, a lift chair or bed, a stair lift, the elevator.
- [ ] Pull the garage door's red emergency release cord once while the lights are on.
- [ ] Ask if your lift chair or bed has a battery backup; keep an ordinary chair beside it.
- [ ] Put a stuck bag there: water, flashlight, snack, one day of pills, a charged phone.

2 Keep two kinds of water

One gallon a day is for drinking and cooking. The toilet and the washing need three or four times more.

- [ ] Drinking water goes in the kitchen.
- [ ] Toilet and washing water goes in the bathroom: washed milk jugs or a bucket by the tub, about three gallons a day.
- [ ] To flush with no power, pour about one gallon into the bowl quickly, all at once.
- [ ] On a well, the pump stops with the power: fill everything the evening before a storm.



3 A month of medicine, and a paper card

In the dark you will not remember, and your phone may be dead. Paper does not need a battery.

- [ ] Call your pharmacist this week and ask for a ninety-day refill before the winter.
- [ ] Ask: "Which of my medicines must stay cold, and how long are they fine without a fridge?"
- [ ] Write the answer and your doses on a paper card and keep it with your pills.

4 Cash in small bills

When the card machine and the bank machine are dark, the one shop with a generator wants paper money.

- [ ] Put sixty to one hundred dollars in small bills and a roll of quarters in an envelope.
- [ ] Keep the envelope with your outage things, not in your wallet.

5 The power bank sleeps in your pocket

A cold battery drains itself in the night. A battery wants to be warm, like you.

- [ ] Charge your power bank tonight and keep it in your bathrobe pocket or under your pillow, never on a cold windowsill or in the car.
- [ ] Keep your phone at one quarter charge or more, always.
- [ ] Write "charge the power bank" on your calendar once a month.
- [ ] When the lights go out, turn your phone to low-power mode.

6 Your light-hours list

When you are tired and cold, you do not think clearly. With a list, you just follow it.

- [ ] Tape a list inside a kitchen cabinet door. When the power comes back:
- [ ] 1. Plug in the phone and the power bank. 2. Boil water. 3. Cook tomorrow's meal.
- [ ] 4. Refill your water jugs. 5. Call one person and say you are fine.

7 Porridge under the fur coat

«під шубою» — under the fur coat

My grandmother wrapped the boiling pot in blankets, and it finished cooking by itself, with no fire at all.

- [ ] Bring oats, bulgur, couscous or rice to a boil while you still have power or gas.
- [ ] Put the lid on and set the pot in a picnic cooler lined with towels; close it. In an hour or two you have a hot meal.
- [ ] Or put the grain in a wide-mouth thermos, pour boiling water over it and close it; it is soft and warm by lunch.
- [ ] Eat it the same day, within a few hours.

8 A strand of fairy lights

With little lights on the shelf, a cold kitchen looks like a home again, not like a shelter.

- [ ] Take one strand of battery fairy lights from your Christmas box.
- [ ] Put it in the kitchen drawer with fresh batteries.
- [ ] It is safer than a candle and lasts the whole evening.

9 Know your warm room, and who drives you

«пункти незламності» — points of invincibility, the warm lit rooms

Nobody had to sit alone in the cold and the dark. For the old people living alone, this mattered more than anything.

- [ ] Call your town or county and ask where the warming center opens when the power goes out: often a library, a church, a senior center or the fire hall.
- [ ] Write its address and phone number on paper.
- [ ] Decide who would drive you there, and call that person this week to ask.

10 The water-jug lamp

The water catches the narrow beam and spreads it, and the whole jug glows soft and even, like a real lamp.

- [ ] Take a clear gallon jug of water or a milk jug.
- [ ] Put the strap of a headlamp around it, the light facing in toward the water.
- [ ] Turn it on and set it in the middle of the kitchen table. Your hands are free.

I am writing my grandmother's ways down in a small book. You are on my list, so you will hear first when it is ready.

Maria