

COUNTRY LIVING



D I G E S T

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1. LOG HOME DESIGNS - BASIC CONCEPTS



Log home designs can be divided in several ways. Understanding log home designs and basic concepts can help you select the design that is best for you. As you are getting involved in the design process, consider these basic concepts as they apply to your design:

- o **Shape of Log Used** - the logs used in your log home can be shaped in various ways. They can be full round, D-shaped, square shaped, rectangular shaped or Swedish cope style. D-shaped logs will have one side of the log flat with the other three sides being rounded. The Swedish cope style has a portion of the bottom of the log cut out so that the log rests more securely on the log beneath it in the wall.

- o **Type of Log Wood** - there are many wood species commonly used in log home designs. There is no such thing as a "best" wood to use, rather, each species has advantages and disadvantages. Wood types include cedar, cypress, Douglas fir, hemlock, lodge pole pine, oak, spruce, white pine and yellow pine. If log home designs, construction and maintenance are done properly, any of these woods will provide many decades of enjoyable log home living. If not designed, built and maintained properly, none of the woods will hold up very well.

- o **Peeled or Milled Logs** - peeled logs used in log home designs will have the bark and outer sapwood removed. This can be accomplished by hand or by the mill's machinery. Milled logs are run through machines that will create the desired log shape when finished. The log surfaces will be more smooth and uniform in milled logs.

- o **Corner Systems Used** - here are the four main corner systems used in log home designs:

1. **Butt-and-Pass** - these corners are formed when one log stops where it meets the intersecting log, and the other log extends past the corner. There are many variations

involving the shape of the area where the logs butt. Usually the passing logs have a cutout into which the butt log fits.

2. Dovetail Corners - these corners are used mostly with square or rectangular logs. The end of each log is cut in such a way that produces a fan-shaped wedge. As the logs are stacked, the ends of one wall's logs will be locked into the perpendicular logs.

3. Notched - notched corners are also known as saddle-notch. A saddle-shaped notch is cut into the bottom of each round log so that this notch on the bottom of the top log straddles the top of the log coming from the perpendicular wall. Both logs then extend past the corner. The saddle-notch is one of the most traditional corner intersections used in log home designs and is favored by many handcrafters. These type of corners are very strong, but they do require more construction time. Notched corners are also easier to seal and hold corner logs better than butt-and-pass.

4. Post Corners - the log ends are cut off perpendicular to the length of the log and joined at the corners using what amounts to vertical posts. This type of construction is not as labor intensive. This corner style sacrifices some of the traditional log cabin or log home look. Using post corners will require a different engineering treatment than other log corners, because the vertical posts do not settle with the horizontal logs.

One of the best ways to learn more about log home designs is to view log home plans that have been successfully built. Every plan that you examine can give you design ideas that you had not thought of. Trying to create brand new plans from scratch can be time-consuming and expensive. You can save considerably if you can find great plans that exist that you like. Just be sure the plans service can make changes to the plans so they become exactly what you want. That way, you really can create the log home design that will provide you many years of enjoyment.

2. HOW MUCH DOES A LOG HOME COST?

"How Much Does a Log Home Cost?" is the single most asked question in the industry, and also the most difficult one to answer. The customers aren't the only ones who are frustrated; dealers and manufacturers are fully aware that not giving an easy answer could lose a sale. However, in reality the answer is "That Depends", and the sooner the homeowners accept this statement the sooner they can start looking in the right place.



The first thing you need to do is distinguish between a handcrafted log home and a milled log home. Handcrafted log homes will cost anywhere from 2-4 times as much per square foot as a milled log home, when you take into consideration the size of the logs and the intense labor required from the first day the logs are selected. If the logs are not evenly sized, you know right away you are looking at a handcrafted home.

MILLED LOG HOMES: If you select a handcrafted log home, you don't need to be reading this article! For the rest of us, there are other basic factors to consider if you are looking at price: log diameter, log species, and log corners. The first two factors speak for themselves. The corner system, however, can make a big difference. For instance, think about how the logs are stacked. If you remember your Lincoln Log toy, you had to find the half-log to start the first course. This is the way a Saddle-Notched corner system is constructed. The courses are staggered and logs are notched to fit snugly together, and when you look at the corner you will see each log end lying on top of the one below it, creating a continuous unbroken stretch from top to bottom. The notches require another run through the mill, and will add to the eventual cost.

When you look at a Butt-and-Pass log home you will see a gap between each log past the corner. This is because all the logs are laid on the same plane; the first course is started with a full log and it butts up against the other wall log which runs past it. The next course reverses the process. There is no notch to hold them together, hence a less time in the mill. If you compare a butt-and-pass house to a saddle-notched house, dollar for dollar the butt-and-pass house should be less expensive. This is where aesthetics kicks in.

A home with logs that are flat inside-and-out will probably be joined with a dovetail system, where the logs are notched at an angle and snugly fit together. Think of the corner of your kitchen drawer. These also require more precision equipment and are a little more expensive to build.

There are other corner systems, but these three are the most common. Just bear in mind that the corner creates one of the big differences between one milled manufacturer's product and another's.

LOG PACKAGES. After you have decided on the corner system, you'll find that every company quotes their logs differently. To get a real apples-to-apples comparison, you must ask for a quote on the logs **ONLY**. And remember that the logs constitute 1/4 to 1/5 the cost of the eventual house. I think you're going to find that within the same size, species and corner system, the basic costs will not vary all that much from one manufacturer to another... not including shipping, of course.

Many companies quote on a Weathered-in Shell, which means all the components for a weather tight house: logs, windows, roof sheathing, doors. It's tempting to get this kind of quote, but remember that you may be paying thousands of extra dollars to ship generic lumber across the country. And when the extra stuff is delivered, it's up to you to store it all safe and dry on site. If your contractor buys the lumber locally, you can get it delivered when you need it, rather than months ahead of time.

IT'S A CUSTOM HOME. Once you get past erection of the log walls, you're going to discover that your log home is not a whole lot different from any other custom home. The roof materials are the same, the heating systems are the same, the windows are basically the same. Most of your decisions are on the inside of the house: stock kitchen vs. custom cabinets, granite vs. Formica, wood floors vs. carpeting, tongue-and-groove vs. sheetrock, antler chandelier vs. wagon wheel... here's where the wild differences in price can add up. It's a custom home, remember, and the choices are up to you. In the mid-Atlantic states, the square foot price of a custom framed house and a custom log home will be pretty equivalent. When looked at from that point of view, the whole pricing equation starts to make more sense.

BOTTOM LINE: This is where we all get into trouble. There's no agreement as to a budgeting price, because local costs vary so much. Four years ago, when I started designing my home, the magazines said to budget \$150 per square foot. I thought this was outrageous, but in the end, we spent about \$157 per square foot for a saddle-notched home with 8" pine logs and some upgrades, so I'm glad I paid attention. If you start there, you'll at least be in the ballpark.

3. WHAT IS AN OFF GRID SYSTEM?



An Off grid system refers to a house or building being independent from the conventional electricity supply line by generating the electricity it needs using its own electricity generators. Off grid systems are particularly common among those who live in remote areas where connecting to the main supply line is expensive. Nowadays, they are also being used on suburban houses that have the option to opt out of the local electricity supply line.

There are few different factors that motivate people to have an off grid system. One important reason is the money they end up saving over a certain period of time by not having to pay the local electricity supplier. Another reason is the rate in which it reduces the carbon footprint. Having your own electricity system to power up all your electric needs would mean that you end up saving tons of green house gas that would have been generated if you were to use the local electricity supply.

In most cases, houses use solar panels and wind turbines as generating systems to get their house off the grid. Assembling these systems cannot be done in a few days and sometimes would take months to accomplish. Solar panels and wind turbines can be purchased for reasonable prices. A notable new trend among those who go off grid is that they build their own solar panels and wind turbines. One could go DIY for their generators if they have some very basic building or electrical skills.

Batteries play a huge role in an off grid system as they are used as the primary storage device. Using deep cycle batteries is considered best as they allow reaching the deeper levels of storage which is a feature that may come in handy when using electricity at

night. Choosing the right electricity inverter is also important as they are the primary unit that converts electricity to its usable form. They should also have the capacity to work with the additional solar panels or wind turbines that you may decide to connect over time.

Having other renewable energy systems such as solar hot water systems and dirt batteries would also largely benefit an off grid system as this could be used to power up water heating and outdoor lighting which consume a fair amount of electricity on their own part.

The energy efficiency of your entire house is very important when opting for an off grid system. This would mean using energy-efficient electric equipment, keeping your house free of any leakages, having proper insulation, installing a grey water management system and following various other energy-saving activities on a daily basis. Of course, going off grid as a family should very much be a combined effort. Each individual may have to play their own part in conserving electricity and should take equal responsibility in doing so.

Opting for an off grid system would mean that you would no longer need to depend on conventional electricity and would have a great positive impact on the environment from your part since the electricity that you would use will be one hundred percent green.

4. LIVING OFF GRID AND OFF GRID POWER GENERATORS

The New Trend of Living Off Grid

Modern life became heavily dependent on complex systems. We are connected to electricity lines, water lines and sewer pipes. Most of us are connected to cable TV (or dish TV) and to telephone lines; we subscribe to cell phone services and are connected to the Internet one way or another. Each of these services is supplied by a big organization, a business entity or a public entity. We are also heavily dependent on public transportation systems and on the Freeways system.

The Desire to Go Off Grid

Some of us feel inconvenience with this dependency. The systems are complex and although many safeguards are built into their operation we all remember occasional electricity and other services shutdowns. Reasons can be a momentary overload, a nature disaster, bad weather conditions or strikes. As individuals our power is small compared to the different service providers. For them we are a number on the service contract and they follow their rigid rules, backed up by batteries of lawyers. We don't like paying the monthly bills although the bills are fair and are for a high quality well regulated product

Many of us are tired of getting on the congested roads to work. So no wonder people want to leave all this behind them. Living off grid in the fullest meaning of the term means to be autonomous in electricity supply, water supply, sewer handling and garbage disposal. For some it means getting less dependent on electricity and to build their own autonomous power system.

The Autonomous Community

If you take into account the need for human interaction and for a school, maybe one solution is to build a self sustained community. Group size of few hundred people is big enough to support autonomously its needs and it is not too intimidating to the individual.

The Off Grid Home

Many people decide to buy the land, to plan and to build their own Self Sustained Home or to join a group of off grid dreamers. With hundreds of thousands already living off grid, plenty of magazines and articles can be found.

Popular subjects are:

- Finding the real estate for an off grid home

- Self supported power generation
- Self supported water supply
- Self supported sewage and garbage recycling or disposal
- Self supported Appliances
- Off urban areas style of living

Off Grid Power Generation

With the advent of clean energy power generators, many off grid homeowners tend to use off grid solar power systems and off grid wind turbines. These systems are reliable, clean, silent and almost maintenance free. The clean energy generators don't require fossil fuels and the transportation of fuel from remote depositories. The system is backed up by a silent small diesel generator for cloudy days and for windless days.

5. WOODWORKING FOR HOME



Woodworking for home is a special DIY package that everyone who engages in woodworking at home will surely love. Using over 14,000 blueprints featured in this special package, you can accomplish home woodworking unassisted.

This woodworking material is not just another do-it-yourself material online; it has been put together by a well experienced and professional wood worker who has spent 2 decades in the profession! So you know you can only expect the best from this software. The blueprints numbering over 14,000 are so simple and easy-to-follow to accomplish woodworking at home.

Woodworking 4 home is a downloadable e-material. Just to inform you earlier, you need a fast internet connection because the downloading is much, but you will surely succeed sooner and start enjoying the package. It contains comprehensive plans that give you direction on how you can construct a wide range of things.

Features of Woodworking 4 Home

The material features sections of jobs that are printable for new starters, intermediate, as well as advance level woodworkers. Each project listed in the 14,000 blueprint spells out the materials that are required, comprehensive graphics as well as easy-to-follow instructions for accomplishing the project. The book basically contains all requirements for completing an entire weekend woodwork projects. In the simplest term, this online e-material is woodworking-made-easy.

Once you have this valuable material with you, you can start building sheds, cabinets, beds, tables and so many other wood-related items. It is a do-it-yourself aid for accomplishing woodworking at home. If home woodworking is your hobby and you like exploring wide range of woodwork plans and projects, then you will easily fall in love with this e-book. You can also save a lot of money accomplishing your woodwork all by yourself using the numerous plans provided in the book.

The most amazing thing is that you can follow the easy steps outlined in the book and build something admirable even if you do not have any experience on wood working before! The person that packaged the book did an excellent job; it is one of the step-by-step downloadable materials online that are worth making reference to. Well, it is not surprising that the book features expertise by all standards since the person that put it together is an expert with 20 years experience in woodworking.

Most reviewers are saying that woodworking 4 home is a pacesetter for most e-materials on woodworking that existed before it. "It is the most comprehensive and easy-to-follow woodworking plan around on the internet", says a reviewer. The specifications in the plan are accurate. The use of graphics for illustrations in this book further simplifies woodworking and makes one to yearn for woodworking at home. There are also video illustrations in the package.

Even your younger boys can start learning home woodworking using the e-book; you will be amazed at how fast they will learn and acquire woodworking skills using the step-by-step guide.

6. THE REALITIES OF HOMESTEADING TODAY

Is homesteading still a possibility for those desiring a simpler, more natural life? The answer is YES, with some qualifications. Find out the realities of homesteading today in this article.

Homesteading today is unlikely to begin with finding free property. There are no national programs that provide land in exchange for developing it. The programs that do exist are local, and tend to be in remote areas of the country.

This means that most likely you will be buying your homestead property, and possibly acquiring a mortgage to do so. Even if you are able to acquire the land and build on it mortgage-free, there will still be property taxes. Therefore homesteading today will require more cash money than in pioneer days.

This means you will need a plan to support yourself, with one or more work from home businesses, or a job off-homestead job. It is possible to run your homestead as a mini farm, raising vegetable crops and livestock to feed yourself, with a surplus for sale.

However, don't underestimate the learning curve required to be successful at these endeavors; it can take several seasons to learn how to reliably and efficiently produce most crops. And if you are depending on your mini farm for cash flow, you will need to focus on crops that provide a quick turnaround.

This would rule out starting an orchard for example, as most tree fruit will take several years to bear a crop. Even most small fruit will produce nothing the first season. One business that does provide relatively quick cashflow is a market garden.

The start-up cost for this homestead business can be quite low, if you start smart. You could begin by growing vegetables for yourself and perhaps a few friends and neighbours. You could even solicit some cash from them to help with the start-up costs, and pay them back with vegetables from your garden.

Market gardening is easily scalable; that is, you can start small, then as your skills and confidence grow, you can expand to the limits of your property (and your ambition). This fulfils one of the requirements of homesteading today.

Raising meat chickens and weaner pigs are two more possibilities for the modern homesteader. Day-old meat chicks will be roaster size and ready for sale in 10 to 12 weeks; weaner pigs will reach market weight in about 4-5 months. This means that, in most areas, these livestock animals can be raised in a summer season. Raising your livestock in warm weather only means low start-up costs.

These are great starter farm businesses, and the whole family can help out. Kids can get involved looking after the animals, and learn where their food really comes from.

These three homestead businesses have the potential to provide you food and folding money. But before you jump in, you need to ask yourself if you are ready for the realities of homesteading today. Needless to say there will be hard work, but beyond this successful homesteading requires a mindset of self-reliance.

You are 100 percent responsible for the success of your homestead; you need to value function over form, have a tolerance for setbacks, and have a genuine love for going your own way. Your life partner better have these characteristics, too, or it will be an unhappy little homestead.

So if you are immune to stress, treat every problem like a learning opportunity, and believe that the only real security is what you can carve out for yourself, you may be ready for homesteading today.

7. HOMESTEAD LAW

When applying for bankruptcy, it is natural to have many questions. Bankruptcy can be a stressful and confusing procedure. Will you lose all your assets? What chapter of bankruptcy should you file under? But one of the most important and provoking questions you might have is: Will I lose my home? That's where the Homestead Law comes in.

Homestead Law outlines that, during bankruptcy, homesteads are exempt from a creditor's reach. Each state has varying differences in Homestead Law. In the eyes of Florida, a "homestead" is more than just a single family home but can be a condo or even a mobile home. A homestead, simply put, is the primary place of residence of said person. A person may qualify for homestead law protection by being a permanent Florida resident.

Under the statutes of the new bankruptcy law, homestead law in Florida provides protection up to 125,000 dollars unless the debtor has lived at the property for a continuous forty month time span. Homesteads that have been owned for more than this 3.3 year time span are exempt from this new limit of 125,000.

Texas and Florida are particularly debtor friendly because their homestead laws, beyond filing for bankruptcy, are limitless. In Florida the homestead exemption covers certain amounts of land; half an acres in a city and one hundred and sixty acres in a rural area. Know your bankruptcy laws in your state. In all states, the protection of the homestead is a basic right of every citizen. So much so, that it is part of a state's constitution. Bankruptcy law in Texas and Florida, being as generous as it is, provides the most protection for your wealth and assets.

What does not qualify as a Homestead?

- A second home.
- An investment Property.
- Properties titled in the name of corporations, companies, trusts, and partnerships.

In addition, consensual liens, like mortgages, cannot be erased even if the mortgage is attached to the property under the exemption. This simply means that the exemption might not benefit the debtor if he or she owes a lot of mortgage on the property.

8. DIY SHED PLANS - ARE THEY ANY BETTER?



DIY shed plans are no different from other DIY projects. Most people who wanted to build their own sheds on their backyard are just too happy to build their own with a prefabricated kit. You do not need to be an ace carpenter when doing your DIY shed ideas and building your shed is made even easier because the shed plans and the instructions that goes with it are easy to understand and comes with the prefabricated kit. What is great about the shed kits is you do not need to think of the materials you need to use. Everything comes with it that makes it a lot easier.

Constructing your own shed is not hard to do. What you need is a creative mind and a plan that will be providing you with a set of instructions to help you. The step by step instructions that go with the DIY shed plans are very simple and not difficult to follow. The crucial part is choosing your plan for shed. Not all DIY shed tactics available online have full information as they claim to be and very few can be trusted to deliver whatever they claim online. In choosing your shed tactics you need to be thorough in your search and not to jump on every shed plan available. Some DIY shed ideas are downloaded for free while others are not. You should choose your DIY shed idea according your specific need.

Getting a paid DIY outbuilding plan is more beneficial compared to the free shed plans. Paid ones come in diverse designs along with the blue prints and the specific

instructions. The list of tools and materials you need to use are contained on the shed plans. You are also assured that these plans were designed by experts.

There are certain points you have to consider when going for free DIY barn plans especially if it is your first time to build a shed. DIY shed plans that come for free do not have all the information that you need to help you in building your shed properly. Most do not have blue prints and colored illustrations and designs. Remember when something is offered for free you only get the value of what is free.

If you are considering investing on a DIY barn ideas prefabricated kits are available in the market. Everything is contained in the kits and you will not be having problems in buying materials and equipment by yourself. The most important thing is to buy shed plans that will suit your needs. DIY barn plan kits are more expensive compared to making your own shed. You can find DIY barn plans at Home Improvement Stores.

Are DIY shed plans any better? DIY barn plans are better because you are provided with all the information, step by step instructions, materials and equipment and you do not need to worry about anything. Everything comes to you in one go and you can build your shed in less time while making your own takes more time. The only thing about DIY shed ideas is they prove to be a little bit expensive compared to making your own.

9. DIY RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR FREE ELECTRICITY

It almost sounds too good to be true - diy renewable energy for your home, your business, and/or your RV, free to get AND good for the planet AND you can easily install it DIY!

The good news is that it is not only possible but 100% TRUE!

Renewable energy comes directly from nature - wind, sun, wave and water.

Most of us don't live beside the sea or by a stream or river and this rules out wave and water power for all but a few, but we can still have DIY renewable energy from the sun or from the wind all in our own backyard and other than for the initial outlay it is all for free.

Whether you opt for wind power or solar power, or a combination of the two will depend on where you live. If you live in an area that has a regular wind blowing, a good wind turbine system capable of delivering 500+ Watts of power is a huge energy saver.

Wind power is probably the oldest method of getting free energy - we have all seen Western movies with an old windmill pumping water from the well. Happily things have moved on a long way since those days and today wind turbines, a turbine being a hugely efficient windmill, and provided the wind speed is around 10mph, or above, you should pretty much get enough power to meet most, if not all, of your electricity needs.

Clearly different turbines have different power outputs and do depend on the wind speed but you should still on average save up to around 80% on the electricity costs that you currently pay to the utility company.

Industrially manufactured and custom installed wind turbine units can cost thousands of dollars but doing it yourself can cost well under \$200.

How much do you pay every year to the power company?

Stop throwing away so much money - a minimal investment of less \$200 and you start getting power for free day after windy day using DIY renewable energy AND it helps save the planet!

It should be noted though that it does need a bit of space and if you only have small yard or flat area of roof you might have to install a smaller unit which will deliver less energy will still do the business if combined with a DIY solar energy system.

The other money saving way to reduce your energy costs is DIY solar power.

There are 2 systems for getting free energy from the sun - traditional heating (direct heating from the heat of the sun) or electricity generation (uses solar cells).

Both systems are well within the budget of everyone and are easy enough to put together to be well within the capabilities of DIY'ers everywhere.

For around \$200 it is possible to have an electrical generation DIY solar system that will provide sufficient power for your fridge, washing machine, computer, TVs, lights etc. The great thing about this is its size which means it can also be used in RV's. The more panels you can together the more power you can get.

The other DIY renewable energy system is capturing heat by using water or liquid filled panels. These are very efficient in providing heat for central heating or hot water. Dollar for dollar these systems give the quickest payback against outlay as the energy heats saving gains are substantial.

Stop wasting money today and instead start helping to save the environment and get plugged into DIY renewable energy.

Most people do not realise that it is possible to use DIY Renewable Energy such as solar energy and wind power to generate enough electricity so that you could save as much as 80% of your normal electricity costs, in fact in some cases it is even possible to generate so much electricity that you are able to sell it back to the power company. Find out how DIY Renewable Energy can save you money.

10. THE ADVANTAGES OF LIVING IN TINY HOUSES

Recent economic difficulties have forced everyone to make some hard choices when it comes to the household budget. Many people are downsizing everything in their lives from the cars they drive to the homes they live in. For some, the movement toward tiny houses is about saving money but for others, the opportunity to live a simpler life is just as big a draw.



The average size of a tiny house is between 100 square feet and 400 square feet. By comparison, the average size of new houses built in the United States in 2013 was approximately 2,600 square feet. A compact living space is attractive to individuals of all ages, including college graduates, newlyweds, and retirees.

One of the most obvious advantages of a home this small is the owner does not need a huge plot of land. The house is portable enough to move virtually anywhere. Manufacturing costs are low because builders do not need as much material and it takes fewer hours to assemble. That translates in a significantly smaller price tag making it affordable to more consumers. Tiny house owners do not have to worry about signing a 30-year mortgage just to have a roof over their heads.

The savings continue long after moving into this type of house. They are much less expensive to heat and cool than a house that covers a couple thousand square feet. Miniaturized appliances cost less to purchase and require fewer resources to operate.

New construction traditionally puts a strain on the Earth's natural resources. Moving into a tiny house is especially attractive to those people who want to reduce their carbon footprint. Because of their size, many of these homes are constructed with recycled materials. After they are built, they are energy efficient and produce less waste.

Tiny house designs make the maximum use of the space available. Concealed storage closets and cubbyholes take advantage of areas that are typically wasted. Without extra space, occupants are less inclined to accumulate possessions that they do not really need. Without the clutter, the rooms appear and feel bigger than they actually are. Cutting down on purchasing impulse items means less waste, less money spent, and more money saved.

Many people realize that they lead a higher quality of life after they have eliminated unnecessary possessions. They lose the desire to buy status items just to keep up with their peers. They feel less stressed and receive more happiness out of the little things in life that are more important in the grand scheme of things.

A smaller home means less time spent on maintenance and cleaning. Instead of taking hours to dust, vacuum, and wash windows, it takes just a few minutes to clean the entire house from top to bottom. This means more time spent with family and enjoying life.

Despite all the benefits, living this type of lifestyle is not for every. Before making the commitment to living in a tiny home, individuals should weigh their options and consider the disadvantages of downsizing to just a few hundred square feet of living space. One of the biggest problems is likely to be deciding which possessions to keep and which to sell, donate, or discard. As difficult as it may be, many people find this process to be liberating once they make it through.

Living in smaller quarters requires a high level of organization. A little bit of clutter goes a long way in a small space. Someone who cannot stay organized will become quickly overwhelmed. The home will look more like a storage closet and will lose all of its appeal.

Someone who loves to entertain guests at home will have a hard time following this lifestyle. Accommodating any extra people indoors will be challenging if not impossible. Depending on the climate and the time of year, homeowners can consider entertaining guests outdoors. Creative use of outdoor space is an effective way to increase the amount of usable space available. A porch or deck provides a comfortable place to barbecue, dine, or just kick back and relax whenever the weather permits.

The reasons people choose to move to smaller homes are personal but many are looking for a simple life and a way to escape living from paycheck to paycheck. The satisfaction of being self-sufficient is something else that people gain when they downsize their living space. Moving into a tiny home can be the ideal solution for someone who wants to achieve financial freedom while living a lifestyle that is friendly to the environment.

11. HOW A TINY HOUSE CAN FIT ANY LIFESTYLE

Do a search on the internet for "Tiny House" and you'll find a lot of information. It seems this tiny trend is catching on all across the world. Individuals, couples and small families are choosing to downsize their lives to live in much smaller spaces that are usually much less expensive than conventional houses. Small houses like this



can range in size from less than 100 square feet to up to 900 hundred square feet. So, you're interested in knowing more about the Tiny House movement? Before going through the process of building or buying you own, this information can help you narrow down your small living choices.

Tiny Houses are often on wheels, but not always. One of the leaders of the small living movement, Jay Shafer of the Tumbleweed Tiny House Company, suggests building the little houses on trailers so they can be moved easily. This also helps get around some of the laws surrounding such small homes. Many municipalities have codes that don't allow people to live in spaces under a certain square footage. By building a house on a trailer, it is no longer a house and it becomes an RV. Not everyone builds these small homes on wheels. Check your local codes to see if a small house might classify as a "building of no consequence" before starting your project

Tiny houses are often sustainable, but not always. The small home movement and environmentalism seem to go hand in hand. Many builders use sustainable building products and create environmentally friendly systems in their homes. It is not unusual to find a small home built with all reclaimed wood. Sometimes it is difficult to build a conventional home using these items, but the scale these houses allows the builder to use much less of the product making it effectively cheaper. Many small homes are also off the grid using solar energy or rain catchment systems for water use.

Tiny houses are built with all the necessities of a conventional house. There will typically be a seating area, a dining area, a kitchen, a bathroom and a sleeping area

which is most often a loft. The beauty about the tiny house movement is that the each owner and builder can customize the space to work best with their own lives.

If you're interested in considering your own small home there is a wealth of resources available online. It is also a very tight online community and you can often find individual blogs from tiny house enthusiasts from all over the world. Tap into these resources, talk to some other tiny house builders and learn just what kind of space will be good for you and your needs.

12. BASIC ELEMENTS OF COUNTRY LIVING ROOM FURNITURE



Country living room furniture can actually make your home look good, but only if you know which pieces to pick and when to stop collecting knick knacks. If you go overboard, you may end up looking like a store for a country home rather than a chic home that is inspired by country living.

The Shopping Guide

Homes may differ in terms of style, but recreating the country feel with country living room furniture is quite easy. First, you need to know what should go into your shopping guide. Before you worry about the cost, the list is quite small. Furniture necessary in creating a country living feel usually includes a beautiful wooden coffee table with a nice, deep finish and some accents. When you already have a wooden coffee table, there is no need to match your sofa by buying an all-wood one. This creates a log cabin feel, which is something that you do not want. The country living essence is easier to achieve and more reasonable when you only have a few elements.

After the wooden coffee table, you can also scout around for wooden side tables for both ends of your living room sofa. It is best that you try to buy these things within the same color hue for an all-over coordinated look. So now you have the wooden coffee table, the wooden side tables - the last thing that you need is a cozy-looking rocking chair that you can dress up to make it look less grandma-ish and more modern home with a comfy country feel. This brings the furniture list to an end, so you can now move on to

identifying the other stuff you need to get to enhance the country feel in your living room.

Accents to Invest In

Plushy throw pillow in interesting patterns and cheerful designs are necessary. Buy different throw pillow cases and do not be afraid to mix and match various patterns because on a plain beige sofa, they will get along quite merrily. To accent your wooden coffee table, try to look for a simple centerpiece such as hand blown glass or a wrought iron decorative item to contrast with the table. A total opposite of what you might expect will further highlight the appreciative factor of your coffee table because the things do not blend in so much.

Other accents include low-lighting table lamps and candle holders you can strategically place around the living room to create that cozy feel. That is usually what most people are after anyway - to inject the homey feel of a country living room into their home by way of furniture and accents. To further amp up the "warmth", add to the busyness of the room by stacking together an interesting assortment of coffee table books onto one side of the living room set up. It is a more laid-back way of displaying books rather than keeping them on a shelf, and the colors one can spy on the spine of such books add to the playful vibe of your country living-inspired room without making things look too dowdy.

13. COUNTRY LIVING WITH WIND CHIMES

As the stress of everyday life increases, many people are drifting away from the city and attempting to spend more and more time in the country. There is certainly good reason to do so. Country living offers a safe, simple and traditional way of living that is difficult to attain in larger, more suburban areas. Country homes, with their large porches, tinkling wind chimes and expansive backyards are certainly enticing to individuals looking to get away from the stress of the daily grind and escape to a way of living that is more soothing.



If you have recently moved to the country or you are considering a move to the country, you may find that furnishing a country home is quite different than a home in the city. One of the most important aspects that should be understood about country living is its basic simplicity and nod to traditions. The porch is one of the most important areas of any country home.

In many ways, the porch provides an extension to the rest of the home. In many country homes, porches wrap around the entire home or are at least quite expansive. Most porches on country homes are large to serve a number of different purposes. They can be used for relaxing, resting, dining, visiting or simply enjoying the beauty of the country. Regardless of how you choose to use your country porch, a set of wind chimes can not only enhance the beauty and relaxation of this special area but can also provide a welcome when you return home. If you entertain frequently, you can count on your guests being welcomed by the tinkling serenade of music from your chimes when they first arrive.

The type and style of wood chimes that you choose may depend on the outdoor décor you have selected for your porch. Many homeowners select décor that will blend in well with nature; including wood furniture. Cedar and pine are two of the most commonly used woods for outdoor country living pieces. When selecting your wind chimes for your porch, consider selecting a set that will beautifully compliment your existing décor.

In many ways, a country porch serves as an outdoor living area. As such, you may want to set up several wind chimes to provide a background of soothing music while you dine and entertain. Whether you are dining outdoors or simply relaxing in your rocking chair

and watching the world go by, you will be able to listen to the soothing sounds and tunes of your country wood chimes.

With the wide variety of styles and designs available in wind chimes today you will be certain to find a set that will perfectly suit your country living style. From traditional to whimsical to personalized and unique, wind chimes are a must for your overall country living theme. When placed strategically on your porch they will add a pleasing visual and sound dimension to your country experience.

14. BIGGEST MISTAKES IN SOUTHERN COOKING

There is Southern Cooking and then there is SOUTHERN COOKING! You can follow a recipe and still come out with a dish that does not resemble what the recipe intended. The reason is technique and the little secrets that are not included in the recipe.

Technique is as important as the ingredients and proper technique helps you avoid the following common mistakes made by novice cooks. You can find many free Southern recipes on the internet, but few web sites provide the additional information needed to be a real Southern cook. So when you find a site that does, bookmark it and stick with it for your Southern recipes. (See Resource Box below for recommendation).

7 Biggest Mistakes:

1. Failure to Properly Preheat Oven When Baking.

Have you ever made cornbread that came out soft and crumbly without a crust? Or biscuits that did not rise and have a gray color? It was probably due to the fact that your oven was not properly preheated. When baking, the crust is set in the first 10 minutes. So, if you want a nice, golden crust on your cornbread, be sure to get the oven up to 400 degrees before you put the cornbread in.

Ovens vary in how long it takes to reach a given temperature. Some ovens will reach 400 degrees in 4-5 minutes. Some will take as long as 15 minutes. A good practice is to get a thermometer (any food thermometer that goes up to 425 degrees will work) and time how long it takes your oven to reach 250, 350, 400 and 425 degrees. Write it down and keep it handy if you cannot remember. Then always allow the allotted time to reach the desired temperature before beginning your baking.

2. Undercooked Vegetables

Keep in mind we are talking about Southern cooking. Not Chinese or West Coast casseroles. Many vegetables, Southern Style, are cooked considerably longer than most people tend to cook them. Specifically, green beans are cooked until soft and dark green in color. They are not crunchy and bright green. Okra and green tomatoes are cooked until some burned edges appear and are very crunchy. As a general rule boiled vegetables are cooked until very tender and fried foods are cooked until crunchy (this goes for cornbread, fried chicken and pork chops, too).

3. Failure to Use Cast Iron

Southern cooking is best cooked in cast iron cook-ware. The cast iron holds and transfers heat unlike any other type metal. Food just does not cook the same in aluminum or steel. Especially cornbread. Besides, it is the traditional way to cook Southern.

Older cast iron tends to have problems with rust and food sticking, but the newer cook-ware comes already cured (seasoned) so it is not as much a problem. However, it is not difficult to cure your cast iron if you have an older style. You can get complete, free instructions in the web referrals below.

4. Failure to Use Onions and Bacon

Onions and bacon (or bacon grease) are used extensively in Southern cooking. Some cooks, however, stray away from cooking real Southern because they (or family members) do not like onions and/or concerns about the fat content in bacon.

They do this because they fail to understand the reason for using bacon and onions. They are NOT in the recipe so that you taste onions or bacon. They are there only to provide subtle flavor. A unique Southern flavor. If you do not like onions, use only a small amount and remove the onion from the dish before serving (put onion in cheesecloth while cooking and it is easy to remove). If you are concerned about the calorie content of bacon, do not use whole bacon. Just add 1/2 tsp of grease from previously cooked bacon. And, accept the fact that Southern cooking is not inherently low fat. It is meant to be flavorful and robust. So, use that bacon and onion for real Southern dishes.

5. Overworking Dough

Southern breads are meant to be light and fluffy. Even cornbread should not be heavy and solid. Many Southern cooks never learn how to make good biscuits. And homemade Southern Biscuits are the trademark of good Southern cooks.

Three errors cause bad biscuits (and other breads). First, do not overwork the dough. Biscuit dough should only be kneaded three times. No more. Just enough to shape it for cutting out the biscuits.

Second, when cutting the dough, do not push down and twist the biscuit cutter. Push straight down and straight back up. Twisting compacts the edges of the dough and causes uneven cooking.

Third, remember the previous mistake above...preheat your oven. A cold oven can result in flat, hard biscuits.

6. Yellow Cornmeal and Sugar in cornbread

Everyone has their own preference, but, please do not use yellow cornmeal in cornbread. It may be mental, but it just does not taste the same as white cornmeal. Besides it looks funny. And, NEVER, NEVER put sugar in cornbread if you want authentic Southern cornbread. Cornbread is bread to accompany a meal. It is not dessert. It is not cake! It is BREAD. So, if you like sweet cornbread...go ahead and use your sugar...but, do not call it Southern Cornbread!

7. Failure to Use buttermilk

All good Southern cooks use buttermilk in everything except desserts. Regular milk does not add the flavor that buttermilk does. Especially in any dish with cornmeal (cornbread, hush puppies, tamale pie, etc.). If you do not have buttermilk, you can make a reasonable substitute by stirring 1 tablespoon of white vinegar in a cup of regular milk. Allow to sit for a minute before use.

These are some of the most common mistakes (or lack of Southern cooking technique) made in Southern cooking. You can ignore all of them and make eatable food, but it will not be traditional Southern. Even some good Southern cooks fail to comply with all the above, but they have probably developed a variation of these same techniques.

So, get in that kitchen, fire up the stove and make your family a real Southern dinner tonight.

15. RUSTIC PORCH SWING BED



Owning a porch has a purpose in your life and that is to enjoy the oxygen that you are fortunate to breathe outside of your house. It is not healthy to just stay indoors, when you could feel the breeze of the wind and appreciate nature without having to go far. Your porch should be used and letting it be stagnant is just sad, when you could make memories in that area with your loved ones. It is never too late to use it and a rustic porch swing bed is just the right furniture for you to add there to bring colour and good vibes to the place.

For the swing bed, you should consider first the size of your porch where you plan to put up a swing bed. Be precise on the measurement so you won't encounter any troubles when mounting of this item. You can choose whether you can do this yourself or get some help from swing bed suppliers. And in case you ask if there is such a thing, the simple answer is, of course, there is! If you are just living in the United States, you can order a swing from this company called Outdoor.

Their materials are of high quality, and they make it a point that their services will satisfy their customers. They have variants of swing beds to choose, and you can also choose from the many colours of the mattress that they offer that goes along with the swing. These guys mean business, therefore you won't expect mediocre products or services from them. You can order right on their website that you can find below. As long as you have your credit card ready for you or even your PayPal, then you're all set to have this rustic porch swing bed for your enjoyment.

Source: Outdoor

Link: [Outdoor](#)

16. OUTDOOR LOG SWING



Have you ever feel the urge of wanting to escape from the day's stress, but got no idea where you are heading to? Look no further than your own yard. Building your own outdoor log swing can be a perfect project and a better weekend gets away. It is a good spot for relaxing while reading your favourite book and sipping your coffee. Increasingly often, young people spend their time in front of the computer instead of experiencing the natural world around them. Well, it's pretty hard when you live in a urban area, but not impossible! The opportunities you have to just feel the nature, enjoy the shade of the trees, the smell of the flowers and grass, is right at your grasp. Add a swing cushion or outdoor toss pillows to make the bench more comfortable, so you can spend hours enjoying the gentle swaying and cool breezes.

There are actually a numerous article that you'll find online regarding building your own outdoor log swing. You may also take into consideration reading the wiki how version if you like a more detailed instructions. The first thing that you have to consider before putting up your swing is to know where exactly you'd like it to be build. For most people, they prefer it at the back of their yard or in front. So whatever suits you, it is all up to you to decide. You need to exactly measure the space where you will want to be installed as well as consider how deep the seat will be and how tall the back should be.

Choose exactly what materials to be use for building your log swing and gather all the possible tools that you might need for this kind of project. Tools would likely be such as hammer, jigsaw, tape measure, drill with bits, lumber, eye bolts and wood screws.

Source: Goods Home Design

Link: [Goods Home Design](#)

17. EAGLE POINT CABIN



A house no matter how small it is can be a good investment and it is something you likely will not regret when you get old. If you are someone who is looking for something worth investing your money in, why not try a small cabin located on the west coast of Washington in San Juan Island. Here you will only have the best view of nature at its finest because you won't even have neighbors to block the view from you. This place will also protect you from the winter winds. We are talking about Eagle Point Cabin, which is currently available for sale.

This cabin was designed by Prentiss Architects complimenting the structure of the natural landscape in the area. From afar, it has the quaint yet appealing look of a simple homestead's nook. However, once you get inside and have checked out its interior, that's when you will know it was not built with only simplicity in mind. Measuring 688 square feet, this small cabin is full of high-end appliances and everything in the kitchen is custom-built including the cabinets. It has one bedroom and a 4-piece bath area. If you are wondering if you will ever see the grandiose view outside this cabin, the answer is yes because of the large windows surrounding it from the living room, the bedroom and even the bathroom.

What we love about this cabin is the fact that it supports a green kind of living. Its roof alone is free and this is what makes the inside of it well insulated. Its walls are also insulated and since it is exposed to the winter sun, you won't even have to use the heater or the wood stove that can be found in the living room.

Source: Small House Bliss

Link: [Small House Bliss](#)

18. SPECTACULAR TREE HOUSES IN THE WORLD



It cannot be denied that tree houses are a trend nowadays, as far as great living is concerned. In fact, a lot of nature lovers are opting for these houses. Aside from being at one with nature, living in tree houses will also give you a relaxing living experience. The truth is, their different kinds of tree houses all over the world. There are those that are simple, and there are also those that are fancy. In addition, there are also those that are built for very little while others are on the other end of the scale. With that being said, here are some spectacular tree houses from all over the world.

1. Alnwick Garden Treehouse

This treehouse is constructed from Scottish, English and Canadian pine trees. It is perfectly located amidst Alnwick Gardens, which is a popular spot as it is one of the largest open public gardens you can visit when in Europe. Inside this treehouse are several facilities such as a juice bar, classrooms, and a restaurant.

2. The Minister's Tree House

This treehouse deserves to be called as the biggest treehouse the world has to offer. One thing to note is that it took 14 years to complete its construction. This is a 10-storey building using six trees as the foundation that measures 97 feet in height.

3. The Mirror Cube

What kind of tree house is it? Well, this is one of those hanging tree houses. It is built with an aluminum frame for its base and reflective glasses for its walls. It has an infrared film that will drive birds away so they will not fly into the mirrored walls.

4. High-Tech Hideaway

What is interesting about this treehouse is the fact that it is built with so much luxury. In fact, it is filled with gadgetry. It has CCTV camera that can record everything that is happening inside and outside the tree house. It has a plasma screen television where you can watch your favorite TV shows. For more security, it is built with fingerprint locks system.

If you want to see the full list and details of these spectacular tree houses in the world, simply visit the WONDERLIST website below.

Source: WONDERLIST

Link: [WONDERLIST](#)

19. THE WHITE ELEPHANT



Wow, this White Elephant tiny house is fabulous. If you need any inspiration for a tiny house project, then it's best that you read on. There are so many tiny housing projects now that will push you to be creative and be inspired to create your own. You will experience a lot of benefits living in a tiny home, and you will tell yourself the moment you decide to take this leap of faith, why have you not thought about it years ago? So if you don't know where you would invest that money you have saved, we encourage that you do it to build your tiny house. You may even do something similar to the one about to featured here.

This tiny home can be found on the island of Bali, Indonesia. Would this not be a perfect vacation spot! Living in a place like this with all the tropical environment will make you feel like you're always in paradise. This house took a year and three months to build, and its design was taken from the style of the Balinese Rice Barn. It has two floors, and you will also find a loft inside it.

The bath area is also inside, and you can find it on the terrace of the house. There are curtains that can be used to protect the privacy of anyone who will use it. If someone wants to do some kitchen action, a kitchenette is provided so you will have a great space to prepare some delicious meals! The loft in this space is ideal for meditation, so if you want a peaceful scene and complete serenity; this one is for you.

Source: TINY HOUSE SWOON

Link: [TINY HOUSE SWOON](#)

20. MICRO LOG CABIN



If you are living considering a log home, there are a few things that you will appreciate knowing in regards to the maintenance. Logs are a natural resource and just like conventional housing there are things to do to keep your home in tip top shape.

Your log house needs protection from UV rays, wind, rain and snow. The sun's ultraviolet rays can be dangerous to the surface of your log cabin. According to Austen Lansing, "the ultraviolet rays from the sun can cause cellular damage in the surface of wood. If these damaged wood cells are not removed, they become a food source for micro fungi. As the fungal growth progresses, the wood become darker and eventually begins to rot." To avoid this, you can plant trees to the west and south side of your home to keep it in the shade.

Your log house also needs protection from the wind. The wind can speed up drying, cracking and chinking. Most log homes will require chinking as they logs dry and shrink over the years. "The wind has an abrasive effect on the wood when dirt and sand particles are pounding against the surface throughout the year," Lansing says. Consider positioning your house in the lot in a manner that will windy conditions. Again, you can plant trees on the west and south sides of the house.

Always remember this because this is very important: precipitation is the log homes' greatest foe. Cleaning, Staining and sealing should be done on a regular basis. Also, work properly on the gutters. "Deep overhangs will also help decks and sidewalk from draining away from home."

Source: Goods Home Design

Link: [Goods Home Design](#)

21. COZY WEEKEND GETAWAY CABIN



There are actually a lot of options on where to spend your vacation. Some prefer to be at home surfing and browsing the internet, exploring new songs, movies to watch, or new collection of books to read, others might experiment new hobbies to polish their old talents and abilities, while some prefer to hang out with some mates talking and chatting. Most of the time, everyone is getting physical like trying an outdoor activity and extreme adventure stuffs; but among the majority, some people wanted to spend their vacation away from the stressing life in school, office, work and projects. So what is the really best place to consider? Either you want it along the beach or in a resort with a swimming pool, it is very important to find a cozy room to relax.

What is a cozy cabin? It is a perfect place where you are comfortable curling up to and where relaxation takes place. You can check Tiny House Vacation via Facebook and check this cozy cabin they have. It can cater four occupants and has different amenities that you'll surely love like cable TV, has a kitchen, bathroom, shower and free parking as well. This cabin room has a queen sized bed and a kitchenette for tourist who wanted to spend their time cooking while on vacation. It has a private hot tub that you'll surely enjoy right outside your back door nested within a large deck with trees surrounding on it. This would also be a perfect getaway and a romantic place as you can also enjoy strolling to the creek while listening to the sound of water flowing.

This cabin room will only cost you \$100 per night which allow you to roam at the 356 square feet size of the area and is just located at Wimberly, Texas. Start planning your vacation now and free up your mind even just a week away from stress and work. Be alive and relieved, visit Tiny House Vacation rentals now for further informations.

Source: Tiny House Vacations

Link: [Tiny House Vacations](#)

22. FAIRY TALE DREAM HOMES



What is your fairytale home? Is it a sweet little hobbit hole in a mountain, a gorgeous modern glass house, or a forever classic and always cozy log cabin in the mountains? What exactly is the appeal of a log home? Why are so many people attracted to the idea of cozying up by the fire with a mug of hot chocolate by a large and inviting log fantasy home? There are several simple possibilities for this appeal.

First, one needs to close their eyes and imagine a quiet mountain setting, and a glorious amber sunset. Upon arriving at home, you can enter a space of your dreams to the sound of a crackling fire place, the smell mixing together fresh burning wood and cocoa being brewed on the stove top. The sounds are inviting and the space feels like a fairy tale.

Everyone dreams building their own dream house. There are actually four processes on how you can build it. First thing is, you must have a land of your own. If you already have a lot, you are actually one step closer to building up your dream house. If it happens that you are still searching a lot, you may consult a Realtor. Second thing is, you need to hire an architect. Depending upon your budget and the design you want, you can actually hire an architect to transfer your plan into a blueprint. Third is having a floor-plan, you can actually find via internet various floor-plan designs to give you more ideas. And lastly, you can create your dream house with a builder.

The coming homes in the links are a mixture of cozy, luxurious and perfection and really are out of fairy tale. Always bear in mind that the path to your dream home matters on numerous factors, budget as well as the level of customization must be one of your top priorities to consider.

Source: Architecture Art Designs

Link: [Architecture Art Designs](#)

23. DUBLDOM, A MODULAR TINY HOUSE



We would like to think that this is becoming the era of tiny houses. It is not something new for people to even choose building and living in a tiny home. It could be a bit challenging and it is going to take a lot of adjustments for those of you who are not used to living in small spaces, but once you get the hang of it and the moment you appreciate the many benefits of living in one, you will say to yourself that it is one of the best decisions you've made in life so far.

Allow us to feature today this tiny house that we discovered in Russia. It is called a DublDom, which means a double house. A company named BIO Architects is the one who designed and who helped the building of this cute modular dwelling possible. There are two of these houses that the company created, one is measured as 26 m² and the other is 40 m², which is also known as its sibling house. The 26 m² was sent to the area dividing into two main parts along with a deck. The back of the house also comes with another space that could be a good place for storage.

This tiny house is a perfect example of the amazing things you could do even if you only have a small space. You will also learn the advantage of having the professionals help you in building it. The project is not that hard to finish when you have the proper tools, vision and a lot of helping hands to make it happen. The final touches have to be interior design, which includes the lighting, the furniture and other pieces that would make this tiny home a liveable space.

Source: Small House Bliss

Link: [Small House Bliss](#)

24. THE BOX HOUSE: AN OFF-GRIDE CABIN IN AUSTRALIA



Living off-grid is now cool and gone are the days when people viewed you as unusual when you told them this was your lifestyle of choice. Now people will view you as this adventurous and an awakened human being who is not necessarily a fan of the system. Someone who can't be taken down by the man if we may put it that way. Living off-grid will present its own set of challenges, but it will also give you a freedom like never experienced before. It doesn't matter how small your space it, the point is you are "living." You don't need a mansion or some penthouse in New York only to be stressed about your rent and your painful mortgages. Living shouldn't be stressful. It is a gift that we all should enjoy.

Featured here is a great idea of an off grid cabin called The Box House located in Australia. This cabin can be found South of Sydney. The owners started as campers in the area, who eventually got tired of it and decided to build a more substantial shelter. An architect by name of Nicholas Murcutt designed the cabin, inspired by a timber barn that still looks modern because of its shapes like a cube.

A family of four can live in it comfortably. This cabin is 36 m² (388 sq.ft) that comes with an additional loft that is half its original size, so it offers adequate space.

Its walls are not insulated, offering a gum framing as its interior look. It was first built without a bathroom. After a period of time a second storage shed, heated with solar panels became the bath area.

Source: Small House Bliss

Link: [Small House Bliss](#)