

Homesteading Quickstart Guide

Jumpstart your homestead dream today!



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What is Homesteading?

Homesteading has meant different things over the years, but in essence it means that you produce some or much of what you consume at home.

For example, a homesteader might grow some of her own food, cook meals from scratch, make her own soaps, candles and natural cleaning products, home remedies and herbal medicines.

He might mend his own clothing, build his own projects from scratch and even sell or trade some of his goods in exchange for the items he cannot produce on his own.

Homesteading, therefore, goes hand-in-hand with self-sufficiency and is a viable lifestyle option for anyone looking to increase their self-reliance and decrease their dependency on money, governments, companies and corporations to provide all of the basic necessities of life.

Homesteading offers a path to a simpler way of life in which you can start to escape the rat race of the modern-day world, live closer to nature, take more control over your health, finances, security and even your schedule and live a life that's more in line with your own personal value system.

In short, homesteading means that you are a producer of goods rather than just a consumer. This means you become less dependent on middlemen and modern society to provide for you, making you more self-sufficient and your family's livelihood more secure.



What Homesteading is Not . . .

While homesteading might be a pathway to a simpler life, it's by no means easy. In fact, it can be a lot of hard work!

Homesteaders are known for their grit, determination and resourcefulness, and for their ability to overcome all sorts of obstacles that might lead someone else to throw in the towel.

Things don't always go right. Vegetable gardens

face disease and infestations. Home canning jars break. Meals burn. Projects go awry. Livestock die and escape. These are the facts. Even the most "successful" homesteaders face at least some of these challenges over time. But the most successful pick themselves up, dust themselves off and keep going.

Homesteading isn't about getting everything right or being able to provide for yourself and your family without any outside help at all. It's about being resourceful, stepping up to the challenge when the going gets tough, finding creative solutions to problems and making the best of every situation.

Homesteading is also about community. No one can possibly produce and do everything they need by themselves. It's about doing for others, asking for help when you need it, trading goods and services with your neighbours and knowing that you still need a little money to pay the bills and buy the raw goods that you can't produce on your own.

Homesteading isn't about putting all of your homegrown eggs in one basket. On the contrary, it's about creating more security by creating multiple "baskets" to draw from when needed.

How to Start Homesteading

(wherever you are)

It's a common misconception that you need to own acres of land out in the country to be a homesteader. But in the modern homesteading community, this simply isn't true!

Many modern homesteaders live on suburban plots with small backyards or even in condos or apartments in the heart of the city! And many of them rent rather than own their own property.

While you might not be able to keep a dairy cow in your front yard or chickens on your high-rise balcony, there are things you can do right now wherever you are to start homesteading and living a more self-sufficient life today.

Start in the Kitchen

While you may or may not be limited by your outdoor space, if you have a roof over your head, you probably have a kitchen under that roof.

You can start homesteading right away in your kitchen by learning to cook a few meals (or a few new meals) from scratch. Start forgoing pre-packaged and processed foods and start purchasing raw ingredients like flour, sugar, spices, oils and vinegars. And if you can't grow your own, you can buy seasonal fruits, veggies, eggs honey and even ethically-raised, free-range, grass-fed meat from your local farmers market. Then all you need to do is invest in a few basic and versatile kitchen tools that will help you to prepare a huge range of meals from scratch at home.

Here are a few basic from-scratch recipes and ideas to start with:

- [Easy, No-Knead, Homemade Bread](#)
- [Perfect Pizza Dough](#)
- [One-Minute Homemade Mayo](#)
- [Quick & Hearty Beef Stew](#)
- [Rustic Apple Crumble](#)

Preserve the Harvest

Even if you're not growing food yourself, you can buy organic, local, seasonal produce and learn to preserve it at home for good eating all year long.

Shop your local farmer's markets in the spring, summer and fall and load up on fresh, organic fruits and veggies. Then grab some Mason jars and a canner and learn to preserve that food to last all year long!

You can also preserve food by dehydrating (with a dehydrator or in the oven, or even sun drying), and even just by freezing!

Here are a few of my favourite canning recipes for beginners:

- [Sugar-Free Applesauce Canning Recipe](#)
- [No-Pectin Strawberry Vanilla Jam](#)
- [How to Can Blueberry Pie Filling](#)
- [No Frills Dills Pickle Canning Recipe](#)
- [Dehydrated Cinnamon Apple Slices](#)
- [Honey-Sweetened Peaches](#)
- [How to Use A Pressure Canner Safely](#)

Grow Some Food

Even if all you have to work with is a window box, you can still grow some food at home. Start with an herb garden if that's all you can manage. Or if you have a little more space, try some easy fruits and veggies like strawberries, lettuce, tomatoes or beans.

Some plants are easier when bought as seedlings and starts, such as strawberry plants, onions, garlic and some herbs. Others are best grown from seed, like peas, beans, carrots and beets. And some are pretty easy to grow either way, like tomatoes, lettuce, peppers and squash.

Here are a few tips and ideas to get you growing, no matter how small or large scale you go:

- [A Complete Guide to Organic Gardening for Beginners](#)

- [5 Food Plants Anyone Can Grow](#)
- [10 Fall Gardening Tips For A Productive Garden Next Year](#)
- [How to Grow, Cure & Store Garlic At Home](#)
- [The Easy Way to Grow, Harvest & Preserve Basil](#)

Learn to DIY

Homesteading isn't just about food! (Well, it's a lot about food, but not ALL about food;). It's also about making all sorts of things from scratch, repurposing old items and giving them new life and doing as much as possible for yourself with your own two hands.

Learn a new skill (or hone an old one) and start making some of the products you use at home yourself. You could learn to sew, knit or crochet and make your own clothes, quilts and other household items. You could learn construction, handyman or mechanic skills and do your own home repairs, building and renovation projects and automobile maintenance. Or you can learn the art and science of candle-making, soap-making and handcrafting all sorts of other home and body goodies to create quality products that are all-natural, free from dyes and preservatives, easy on your wallet and create less waste than store-bought alternatives.

Here are a few ideas to get started DIY-ing:

- [DIY Essential Oil Rollerballs](#)
- [DIY Hair Pomade with Rosemary Essential Oil](#)
- [All-Natural DIY Bathroom Cleaner](#)
- [How to Build a 3-Bin Composter for Under \\$5.00](#)

Live Frugally

Homesteading is about living frugally and within your means, being resourceful and making do or doing without. Frugality is a natural "side effect" of the homesteading lifestyle and mentality, even if money isn't a concern. It's also often the "cause," as many people choose homesteading as a means to live well on less money and escape the modern debt cycle.

But frugality doesn't mean being cheap. It means getting as much value as you can out of the money and resources you spend. It's about quality over quantity, knowing the difference between a good deal and a waste of money, repurposing old items to make new and useful

things, making do with what you have and being grateful for it, and valuing time with loved ones and priceless experiences over the endless pursuit of acquiring consumer goods.

Here are a few tips and posts to inspire you to live more frugally and get the most out of everything you do!

- [10 Tips for Saving Money at the Grocery Store](#)
- [How to Shop From Your Pantry Like a Pro](#)
- [12 Frugal Living Tips for Spring](#)
- [12 Frugal Living Tips for Summer](#)
- [12 Frugal Living Tips for Fall](#)

Be Prepared

I once heard it said that not all preppers are homesteaders, but all homesteaders are preppers. This is because a self-proclaimed prepper might stockpile store-bought food and goods and spend his days preparing for Armageddon, but might not do any of the other things listed above. Whereas a homesteader typically does a little of everything listed above, and that, in turn, helps her to be prepared, whether “prepping” is the ultimate goal or just a byproduct of these other activities.

Growing some of your own food helps you to be prepared in case disaster strikes and food becomes scarce or unavailable for some other reason. Preserving it helps you to be prepared for the winter months when food is more expensive, and ensures you have food on hand in case of a crisis. Knowing how to create a meal from scratch means you won't starve if you can't get your hands on pre-made or processed foods. DIY-ing and having basic crafting, construction and repair skills can come in handy if a situation were to arise where you have to fend for yourself. And living frugally means you are prepared to live within your means (and maybe even have some money put aside) in case of emergency, like in the very real event of a job loss or natural disaster. (It's not always about preparing for the zombie apocalypse;)

But there are other ways to be prepared too. Here are a few ways to start getting prepared:

- [15 Emergency Preparedness Items You Need to Have Packed & Ready to Go](#)
- [10 Steps to Water Security for When SHTF](#)
- [5 Homesteading Skills to Practice While Camping](#)
- [How to Prepare Your Kids for an Emergency At School](#)

So, How Do You Know If Homesteading Is Right for You?

(and what should you do if it's not?)

As romantic as it sounds, homesteading is not for everyone. As mentioned earlier, it can be a lot of hard work, and it requires sacrifices in other areas of life if you are *really* going to make a lifestyle out of it.

You need to be able to face disappointment, overcome obstacles and meet challenges head-on. You need to understand and accept that you will spend time, money and other resources on projects that will sometimes fail miserably in the end. And you need to make peace with the fact that, while homesteading does give you more control over many aspects of your life, you are never fully in control. Nature, the weather, governments and laws (stupid as some of them may be) and the powers that be in the Universe hold ultimate power over our lives and over some of our failures and successes, both as homesteaders and as human beings.

But as homesteaders especially, you need to let go of the need to control everything because when things go wrong (which they can, do and will), you will be much more equipped to deal with them, learn from them and move on, stronger for having had the experience.

I've talked a lot about some of the traits that make a successful homesteader (grit, determination, resourcefulness, creativity, frugality, the desire and ability to learn new skills and try new things, etc.) and I talk more about some of these traits in the following article:

- [5 Traits of a Successful Homesteader](#)

But what should you do if you just don't think you have it in you to move fully into this lifestyle or if you feel like giving up after a while?

While the homesteader motto might be to "dust yourself off and keep going," the truth is that some people just aren't cut out for this lifestyle and trying to live a life that's not for you can be downright depressing. So my best advice is to know when enough is enough and don't try to push yourself to keep going if it's making you miserable.

But often times we're simply overwhelmed because there is always so much to do and learn and it can be hard to keep up with. So take it one step at a time. Don't bite off more than you can chew.

- Choose one new skill at a time to learn, work and focus on until you feel confident with that skill. Then move onto the next thing.
- Choose one new meal or item to make from scratch and work on that until it becomes second nature. Then try something new.
- Choose a few easy fruits and vegetables to start growing and add more things slowly each year. Every year in the garden is a learning experience, and even the most experienced gardeners deal with crop failures and bad harvests. Learn from mistakes and know that there will always be next year to try again.

Do what you can where you are. Never doubt your abilities and don't be afraid to call yourself a homesteader even if you're stuck in the city in a closet-sized apartment. If you can cook a handful of meals from scratch, bake a simple loaf of bread and grow a few herbs, you're a homesteader in my books ;)

And don't forget to enjoy the simple life. Because as much work as it might be sometimes, homesteading affords us the opportunity to live more closely in line with our values; To spend more time at home doing homestead-y things with loved ones; To learn the true value of time over money; To become more in tune with nature and, hopefully, live closer to the land.

It empowers us to take more control over our own lives and over the wellbeing of our families. It enables us to provide for our families and offer them safety and security in a world that often feels anything but safe and secure.

It allows us the opportunity to slow down and enjoy the simple, beautiful things in life like watching a seed grow into a plant or a seeing a baby chick hatch from an egg; Collecting fresh salad from the garden and fresh eggs from the chicken coop in the morning; Enjoying the rich flavours of home-canned strawberry jam in the dead of winter and the comforting smell of fresh-baked bread on any given day; Experiencing the joy of sharing all of our successes, failures, laughter and tears with our loved ones, and the feeling of pride that we grew, cooked, crafted and created this beautiful life of ours from scratch with our own two hands.



Wishing you health, wealth & homestead
happiness :)

Anna



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