

Easy Guide to Start a Homestead

“Homesteading” can be a big and scary word. It can imply a fear that one must buy ten acres of farmland and a herd of cattle before they can even begin. But, that is definitely not the case! There are easy steps one can take to begin the transformation into self-reliance. By definition, all “homestead” means is a person’s house, property, and outbuildings. It is only in recent years that homesteading has become to mean so much more. Today it only means to be more self-sufficient. Here I will share some easy ways to set out on your own homesteading journey.

At its core, homesteading is a lesson in frugality. If you have to spend a lot of money to get started, then it’s not worth it. People love to barter and trade for goods. Do you have a killer bread recipe or are you a talented sewer? Trade those skills for what you need. If you are starting from absolute scratch then think about learning these skills to get started:

Learn to cook from scratch. No box of store-bought, just add meat dinner will ever taste as good as something made from scratch. The internet is a plethora of delicious and easy recipes. Pick a few and then expand. Do you know how easy it is to even make your own pasta?

Bake your own bread. It really isn’t that hard (I promise!), it only takes some patience. Heck, you don’t even need a mixer because there are many no-knead “artisan” style recipes out there (thank you, Pinterest!). There is nothing better than the smell of baking bread and no sweeter treat than having a fresh slice with a meal. Bread in the store is expensive, but making your own is cheap and people love receiving it as gifts or for payment on something else.

Plant a garden. It’s that simple. No yard? There are veggies that love a good pot and a sunny patio. Zucchini is one of those prolific vegetables that is hearty and delicious. It grows fast and typically produces a lot of food. It is a versatile vegetable that can be used for food or traded for other goods. I currently have a blackberry bush in a giant toy bucket on my patio so you really can use anything to grow your own food.

Make your own soap. I know this sounds intimidating, but once you do it you will see that it’s very easy and so rewarding. Because it’s a scary thing to make your own soap, it will also be in-demand with people for trade. Soap making does require a bit of an investment upfront because you don’t want to use the same dishes that you use for food but I’ve seen many of the needed supplies available at the nearest dollar or thrift store.

Finally, start small! Set realistic goals and do not overwhelm yourself with too many projects at once. If you get gung-ho and decide to do all the things at once you will quickly burn out and decide that store-bought box of hamburger dinner is so much easier (even if it tastes like cardboard). Learn how to keep a few chickens, master from-scratch pasta, or get that zucchini plant to grow before moving on to the next project. Above all else, have fun! Homesteading can be so rewarding and the skills you learn will last a lifetime.

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