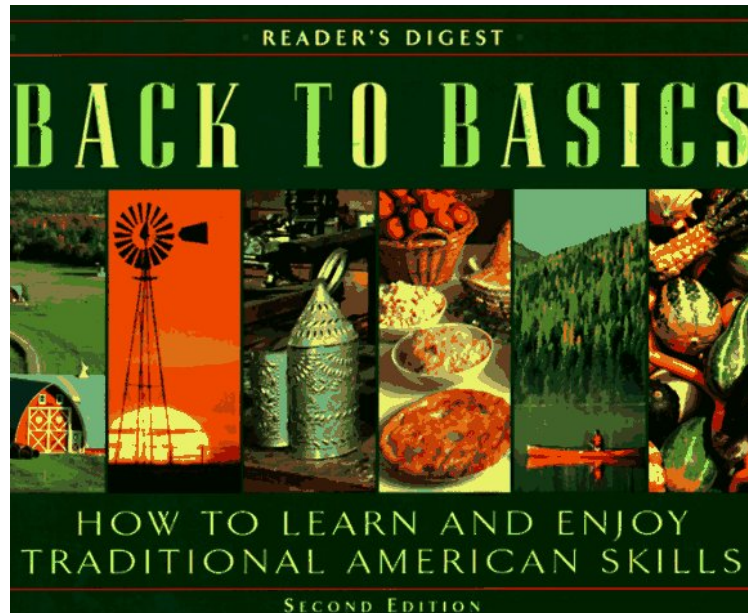


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Back to Basics: How to Learn and Enjoy Traditional American Skills (Second Edition)

Reader's Digest

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Reader's Digest : Back to Basics: How to Learn and Enjoy Traditional American Skills (Second Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Back to Basics: How to Learn and Enjoy Traditional American Skills (Second Edition):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. but so practical fantastic! Arrived in unbelievably great shape By Customer This book is ancient, but so practical fantastic! Arrived in unbelievably great shape. The only clue to its age are the haircuts and clothing of people in the pictures. 25 of 25 people found the following review helpful. A great get-started book on many basic self-reliant skills. By ybl_8257 This book touches on so many practical skills, it's terrific! You'll learn everything from soap making to building your own rough-hewn cabin by hand -- and what to look for when picking the best site for your homestead. There's something for everyone. 4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. User Friendly Foxfire By EquesNiger I was a huge fan of the old "Foxfire" series of books as a child, and the romantic notion of living WITH the land while living OFF the land has never ceased to appeal to me. This invaluable volume has been around for some time, and essentially improves on the Foxfire concept by incorporating pictures, diagrams and removing quite a bit of the "folksiness". Probably of most immediate use and value to readers would be the section on land acquisition and value. If you're planning to build or buy a home, the sage advice in this section is of immense value. Using natural features to cool in the summer and maintain heat in the winter - for example planting windscreens of conifers and deciduous, the latter of which direct air during their leafing season and allow it to pass when bare of leaves - was novel, and pulled me even further into the other nuggets of wisdom in the later parts of the book. There's a ton of stuff in here - and, while the book is by no means small, it still amazes me how much is crammed in its 450 pages. Everything from building a log cabin, setting up a root cellar, beekeeping, kitchen

gardening vs. full gardening, drying and smoking fish and meats, basket-weaving, stocking a lake with fish to how to ski and use snowshoes is covered. While the passages for each are brief and not comprehensive, the gist of the book is to get you to START - and there's more than enough data here to ensure you do that successfully. As you add these habits and pastimes to your lifestyle, there's further reading you can do. One of my favorite reference texts and one I refer to often even living in a flat.

This how-to, user-friendly guide teaches self-sufficiency-covering all of life's essentials: shelter; alternative energy sources; growing and preserving food; home crafts; directions for making herbal remedies; and even home-grown entertainment.

.com "Voluntary simplicity" has become a catch phrase for what seems to be a yearning for a simpler, more self-sufficient and economical way of living in the late 20th century. This book, first published in 1981 and recently updated, was probably many folks' first in-depth exposure to the idea of a simpler life, making things by hand, and enjoying a stronger sense of control over personal budgets, home projects, and lifestyles. Hundreds of projects are listed, illustrated in step-by-step diagrams and instructions: growing and preserving your own food, converting trees to lumber and building a home from it, traditional crafts and homesteading skills, and having fun with recreational activities like camping, fishing, and folk dancing without spending a lot of money. This book will have you dreaming and planning from the first page! -- Mark A. HetttsFrom the Back Cover"Open the book at any page and there's something of interest." -Chicago Sun-Times "...it would be an asset to anyone's personal library at home. We recommend it highly." -Kansas City Times "It is a superb reference book, better than any number of those that pretend to teach you survival skills by concentrating on just a few crafts." -Survival Tomorrow "This is really an encyclopedia and, like a good encyclopedia, the narrative is clear and complete, the illustrations are plentiful and the whole thing is thoroughly indexed. You can spend a fortune on a library of neo-pioneer books or you can buy BACK TO BASICS." -Times World News, Roanoke, VA "If you're going to go back to the good old days you'll need something the good old days didn't have...an instruction manual." -Cincinnati EnquirerExcerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.BACK TO BASICS is a book about the simple life. It is about old-fashioned ways of doing things, and old-fashioned craftsmanship, and old-fashioned food, and old-fashioned fun. It is also about independence-the kind of down-home self-reliance that our grandparents took for granted, but that we moderns often think has vanished forever, along with supermarket tomatoes that taste good, packaged bread that does not have additives, and holidays that are not commercialized. At its heart BACK TO BASICS is a how-to book packed with hundreds of projects, step-by-step sequences, charts, tables, diagrams, and illustrations to help you and your family reestablish control over your day-to-day lives. The book is organized into six main sections. The first deals with shelter, the second with energy, the third with raising food, the fourth with preserving food, the fifth with home crafts, and the sixth with recreation. The subjects presented lead in logical sequence along all the way stations on the road to self-sufficiency. An added feature, "Sources and resources," lists suggestions for further reading plus names of suppliers of hard-to-find equipment. Practical, useful information is provided on just about every skill and handicraft under the sun. You will learn how to make your own cheese, raise your own chickens, harvest your own honey, generate your own electricity, and brew your own applejack. You will be able to try your hand at blacksmithing, broommaking, and stone masonry. You will discover how to make soap, tan a hide, build an igloo, heat with wood, smoke a salmon, and create your own cosmetics. Some projects are difficult and demanding-building a log cabin or installing a solar water heating system are tasks for someone with experience, skill, and a strong back. But most of the jobs are well within the capabilities of the average person, and many are suited for family participation, especially for the kids. While BACK TO BASICS is a book for doing, it is also a book for dreaming. There is no need to run out and start baking adobe bricks in order to enjoy learning the ins and outs of adobe construction. (It might even set you thinking about putting up your own adobe home someday.) Similarly, your imagination is apt to be fired by the interviews with folks around the country who are already practicing the skills and crafts described in BACK TO BASICS. Among others, you will hear from a husband-and-wife team who built a log cabin in Alaska, some suburban kids who raise goats and pigs in their backyard, a city worker who specialized in urban gardening, and a New Hampshire artisan who is keeping alive the Indian art of building birchbark canoes. There are also descriptions of by-gone ways of doing things: the technique of pitsawing, the Indian way of smoking a deer hide and making jerky, the inner workings of a water-powered gristmill. These- along with the historical background of each skill and charming old prints that illustrate many of them-make for fascinating reading. Americans are a contradictory people. No nation has ever moved farther from the hard realities of wilderness existence. Yet, paradoxically, no nation has clung more tenaciously to its early ideals-to the concept of personal independence, the mystique of the frontier, to the early pioneers' sense of rugged self-reliance. It is as if somewhere, deep in the American spirit, there has always lurked a distrust of the very technology that we, more than any other people, have spawned. Perhaps this distrust was an accident, but perhaps it was fate; for in the light of recent events that have called into question our easy dependence on modern technology, it seems to have been prophetic. Americans have long yearned for a return to basics; now, suddenly, it has become a necessity. BACK TO BASICS can

do much to guide the way.