



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

*By Reader's Digest*

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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.

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

"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. Hetts*

#### From 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 Enquirer

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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.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Michael Brown:**

The reason why? Because this Back to Basics: How to Learn and Enjoy Traditional American Skills (Second Edition) is an unordinary book that the inside of the e-book waiting for you to snap the idea but latter it will shock you with the secret the idea inside. Reading this book next to it was fantastic author who write the book in such remarkable way makes the content within easier to understand, entertaining means but still convey the meaning entirely. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this ever again or you going to regret it. This phenomenal book will give you a lot of rewards than the other book include such as help improving your ability and your critical thinking means. So , still want to hold up having that book? If I had been you I will go to the reserve store hurriedly.

#### **Herbert Haubrich:**

Are you kind of active person, only have 10 as well as 15 minute in your morning to upgrading your mind talent or thinking skill actually analytical thinking? Then you are having problem with the book when compared with can satisfy your limited time to read it because this time you only find reserve that need more time to be read. Back to Basics: How to Learn and Enjoy Traditional American Skills (Second Edition) can be your answer given it can be read by you who have those short time problems.

**Nichole Gibson:**

This Back to Basics: How to Learn and Enjoy Traditional American Skills (Second Edition) is brand new way for you who has attention to look for some information mainly because it relief your hunger associated with. Getting deeper you in it getting knowledge more you know or perhaps you who still having tiny amount of digest in reading this Back to Basics: How to Learn and Enjoy Traditional American Skills (Second Edition) can be the light food for you personally because the information inside this book is easy to get through anyone. These books build itself in the form and that is reachable by anyone, yes I mean in the e-book application form. People who think that in reserve form make them feel drowsy even dizzy this reserve is the answer. So there is no in reading a publication especially this one. You can find actually looking for. It should be here for you actually. So , don't miss the item! Just read this e-book style for your better life along with knowledge.

**Tony Hogan:**

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