



Build your own earth oven

3rd Edition

Kiko Denver and Hannah Field

RRP US\$17.95, ISBN 9780967984674

Published by Hand Print Press (2007)

132 pages, 18 x 25cm, paperback

B/W photos and illustrations,

8–page colour gallery

• REVIEW BY LYNDA WILSON •

This revised, expanded and updated version of a DIY classic will step you through the process of building an earth oven in your own back yard. Illustrated throughout, the text is well complemented by the accompanying photos and detail sketches.

Starting with the basic principles, the book works through locating your oven, materials and tools, digging for dirt, footing and floor, shaping the void, mixing mud, applying the layers, removing the sand form, fitting a door, and finishing. Most materials to build will be readily available, perhaps in your own back yard.

Finishing is where the process can get really creative, should you so choose. While it has no effect on the overall functioning of the oven, mud lends itself to the creation of all sorts of designs and sculpting – to make your oven truly unique.

While the basic design is for a layered dome-shaped shell of mud and sand, this new edition also includes a super-insulated version, which uses less fuel and retains heat longer.

Not only does the book help you create your earthen masterpiece, it also helps you bake the perfect loaf, with detailed instructions on firing and baking. Armed with this book and about 20–30 hours of work, you too can have your very own back yard earthen oven.

Eight simple steps to a basic mud oven: dig dirt, lay a footing, make a sand form, mix mud, build up layers, remove sand form, make a door, bake bread. It really is that easy! ■

Available from Hand Print Press, www.handprintpress.com

Other oven & heater books to consider

- **The Bread Builders: Hearth Loaves & Masonry Ovens** (1999) Daniel Wing & Alan Scott, ISBN 9781890132057
- **Adobe Oven for Old World Breads: Bread Cook Book** (2002) Charel Scheele, ISBN 9780595243426
- **The Ultimate Wood-Fired Oven Book** (2008) Anna Carpenter, ISBN 9780764329166
- **The Book of Masonry Stoves: Rediscovering an Old Way of Warming** (1998) David Lyle, ISBN 9781890132095
- **Fire Places: A Practical Design Guide to Fireplaces and Stoves Indoors and Out** (2006) Jane Gitlin, ISBN 9781561588350



Rocket Mass Heaters

Superefficient woodstoves you can build

Ianto Evans and Leslie Jackson

RRP US\$18 (PDF version \$13),

ISBN 9780966373837

Published by Cob Cottage Publications

(2nd Ed. 2006)

100 pages, 20 x 27cm, paperback

B/W photos and illustrations

• REVIEW BY ROB HADDEN •

Over the years I have been increasingly interested in masonry stoves that have been in use in parts of Europe for hundreds of years. Having seen them in operation in America, I was very impressed with their efficiency at using all the heat from the wood and storing it in the mass masonry. Creating almost zero pollution and using hardly any wood, they should be setting the benchmark for stoves around the world. However one of the drawbacks is the cost – anywhere from \$10,000 to \$30,000 and more.

So it was timely that I have come to review this book by Ianto Evans and Leslie Jackson who are utilising similar technology to create their own simple and cheap version of this technology without the need for a large masonry mass with a vertical emphasis.

Rocket mass heaters utilise the same methods but instead of using heavy bulk materials to make the heating unit, they use steel drums and homemade ducts and chimneys along with good insulation to create very high operating temperatures. The heat flows from the main firebox and out through a system of stainless steel ducts through massive stone seats or beds weighing up to three or more tons and storing all the heat. The remaining gasses exit the pipe at very low temperatures and consist of mostly water and very little smoke at all. The combustion temperatures are extremely high and take very little wood to achieve this feat. After firing the stove for some hours, you can let it go out and the heat from the mass masonry will slowly keep the room warm for many hours.

While the layout and format of the book is a little bit mickey mouse, the information is well presented and all the necessary information to construct this unit is clear and precise and easy to follow. A discourse on the working of a fireplace and how inefficient our current heaters are leads on to his experiments with rocket mass heaters over many years.

While he concedes that they are not exactly ‘fingertip control’ and they do need to be stoked occasionally, this is no great hardship for those of us who use wood heaters now. Like anything that is experimental, they need fine tuning to get up and running, but the paybacks in very low fuel use, next to zero emissions and a constant gentle warmth are very good rewards for persevering to make one. If you are genuinely interested in sustainable warmth, check out this book and be inspired. ■

Available from Rocket Stoves, www.rocketstoves.com