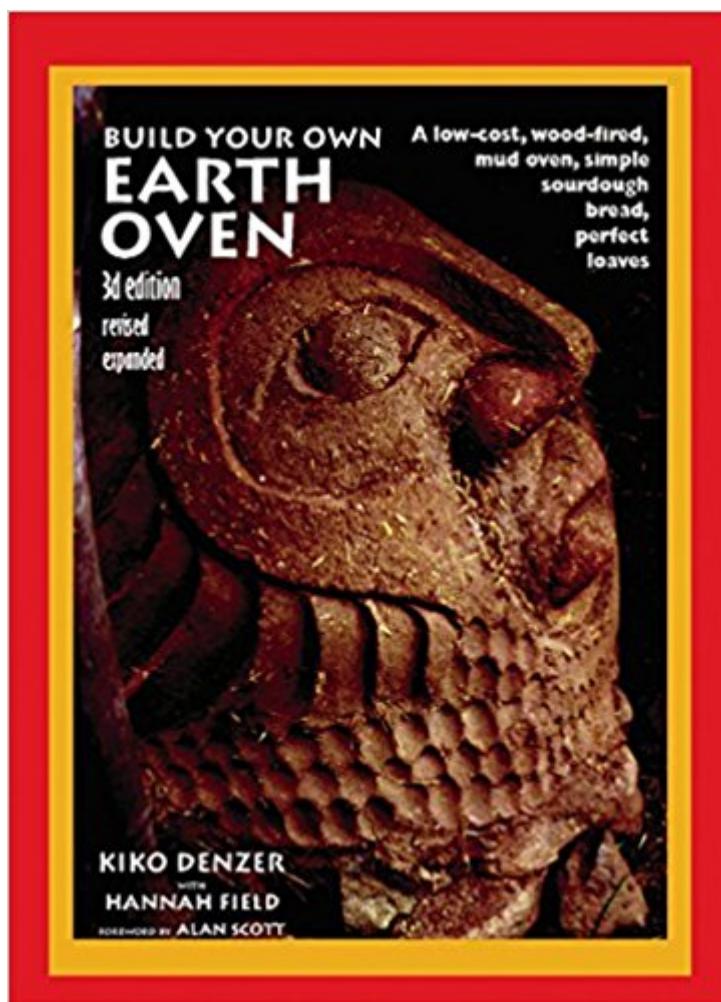


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# Build Your Own Earth Oven: A Low-Cost Wood-Fired Mud Oven, Simple Sourdough Bread, Perfect Loaves, 3rd Edition



## Synopsis

Earth ovens combine the utility of a wood-fired, retained-heat oven with the ease and timeless beauty of earthen construction. Building one will appeal to bakers, builders, and beginners of all kinds, from: the serious or aspiring baker who wants the best low-cost "bread oven, to gardeners who want a centerpiece for a beautiful "outdoor kitchen, to outdoor chefs, to creative people interested in low-cost materials and "simple technology, to teachers who want a multi-faceted, experiential project for students of all ages (the book has been successful with everyone from third-graders to adults). Build Your Own Earth Oven is fully illustrated with step-by-step directions, including how to tend the fire, and how to make perfect sourdough hearth loaves in the artisan tradition. The average do-it-yourselfer with a few tools and a scrap pile can build an oven for free, or close to it. Otherwise, \$30 should cover all your materials--less than the price of a fancy "baking stone." Good building soil is often right in your back yard, under your feet. Build the simplest oven in a day! With a bit more time and imagination, you can make a permanent foundation and a fire-breathing dragon-oven or any other shape you can dream up. Earth ovens are familiar to many that have seen a southwestern "horno" or a European "bee-hive" oven. The idea, pioneered by Egyptian bakers in the second millennium BCE, is simplicity itself: fill the oven with wood, light a fire, and let it burn down to ashes. The dense, 3- to 12-inch-thick earthen walls hold and store the heat of the fire, the baker sweeps the floor clean, and the hot oven walls radiate steady, intense heat for hours. Home bakers who can't afford a fancy, steam-injected bread oven will be delighted to find that a simple earth oven can produce loaves to equal the fanciest "artisan" bakery. It also makes delicious roast meats, cakes, pies, pizzas, and other creations. Pizza cooks to perfection in three minutes or less. Vegetables, herbs, and potatoes drizzled with olive oil roast up in minutes for a simple, elegant, and delicious meal. Efficient cooks will find the residual heat useful for slow-baked dishes, and even for drying surplus produce, or incubating homemade yogurt.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"... the essential bookâ ¡worth many times its price in avoided labor and frustration"--Dan Wing, author, *The Bread Builders: Hearth Loaves & Masonry Ovens*"[It] will awaken in you...the artisan vision, where earth meets hand meets spirit"--Peter Reinhart, author, *Crust and Crumb*"Creative. Innovative. Brilliant. ...the definitive book on how to build an adobe oven..."--William Rubel, author, *The Magic of Fire*"...simplicity itself: brief, brisk, artful, and well-written....empowering throughout...fruit of a new movement for sustainability, it celebrates the pleasure of living well with the earth."--Peter Bane, Permaculture Activist

Kiko Denzer's latest book is *Make a Ray Jacobs Rocky Mountain Dulcimer*. For more, see his author page, and/or look up his page on his publisher's website.

Best present I ever gave to a frustrated baker. If you have ever struggled with Rube Goldberg methods of making artisanal breads in modern home ovens, this is the book for you. The downside is that you need - at least - a yard or patio to build your oven. So this book is not for city or apartment dwellers. And, while the DIY skills are within most people's abilities, it may take a couple of experiments to get it right. So start with a simple model and - assuming you want or need to - build up to a more complex oven. Also, while the materials needed are pretty much readily available, combining them to make the building material requires reasonable adult physical strength. in other words, building an earth oven isn't a weekend activity for you and your young children unless some adult volunteers are on board. Finally, whether you would run into problems with local building or zoning codes is something you should check before launching the project.

This is the bible for building a cob oven! The descriptions of sourdough bread are excellent but the instructions for making bread are a bit too loose to follow. For making the oven, this is the book. For baking, you'll probably need a different book.

This is a great book on building low cost earth ovens yourself. It is very interesting and explains the different steps in the materials, building it, shaping it, and cooking in it. It has many beautiful pictures of earth oven structures, and ideas for building your own outdoor or indoor earth oven. It's a great book and well worth the money spent.

If you're seriously considering building your own, like I am, all I can say is; BUY AND READ THIS BOOK! You will be so glad you did.

My husband bought this because he is into pizza making. He plans on building his own oven when we move in our next house that is HOA free. He really has enjoyed this book and goes through spurts where he won't put it down for a week- by now he has read it several times. It has tons of useful information and pictures both snap shots and drawings. He has enjoyed it and finds it very useful. Very good buy.

Kiko Denzer wants you to play in the mud, to express your artistic self and create a work of art that just happens to bake the best bread you'll ever eat. My copy of the book has dog-eared pages, smudges and smears; it has been well-loved. I'm about to finish my first oven following the book's guidance. Other than buying some mason's sand and the firebrick, everything else has either been donated, scrounged, or dug out of the ground. The simple act of relying on cheap or free parts has taken a little more time, but has been a great experience and given me a sense of resourcefulness and accomplishment. And it's amazing how the same bread recipe baked in an earth oven can be so much better than that baked in a regular oven! I encourage you to buy the book, pour over it, enjoy the photographs, but by all means just go ahead, run out and get dirty.

This book, although written on a somewhat technical subject, is an enjoyable read. The author conveys a positive, you-can-do-it attitude. When contemplating an undertaking like building a clay oven, that kind of encouragement is very helpful. It's easy to talk yourself out of undertaking such a project, so Denzer's cheerleading and "just get out there and try it, it will work" writing style is appreciated. The book has kind of a green, hippy vibe to it. That's not a bad thing, it just might not suit everyone's preference. There's a lot of circle-of-life-positive-energy-return-to-the-earth stuff there, but the remaining content of the book makes it worthwhile whether you get into that aspect or not. Personally, I tend to agree with a lot of it, but from a different perspective, so it wasn't really a

stumbling block for me. Obvious throughout the book is the author's enthusiasm for clay ovens and hearth bread.

I bought the first edition several years ago when I started baking bread. It took a few years to finally decide that while my kitchen oven was fine for bread (with dutch ovens/cloches), it just doesn't work for great pizza or BBQ (no smoke). So I bought the third edition and started work. The new edition has new information that makes it well worth buying (even if you have a previous edition). Denzer is an excellent writer. I think he brings out the scientist and artist among his readers: his book is not so much a recipe for building an oven as a discussion of the experiments you can do to understand clay, fire, and bread. The first layer of my oven is drying now and I'm planning my insulation and plaster layers. The process is lots of fun and Denzer encourages his readers to try out their own ideas and play around.

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