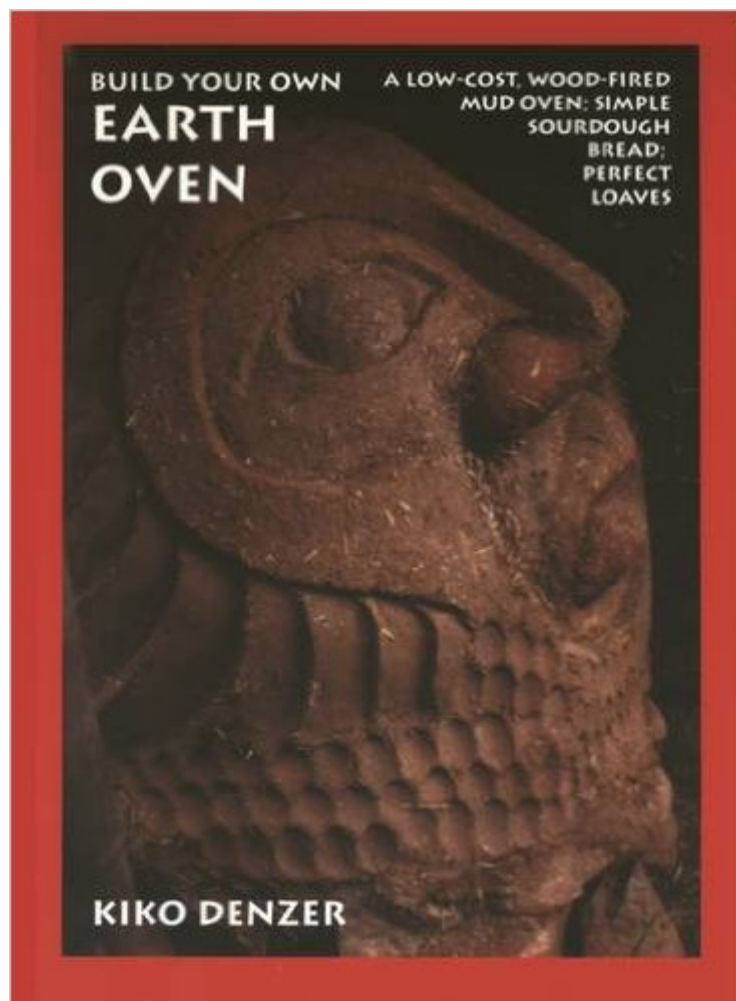


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Build Your Own Earth Oven: A Low-Cost Wood-Fired Mud Oven, Simple Sourdough Bread, Perfect Loaves, 3rd Edition



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.

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Customer Reviews

I built my oven using this book. I loved every step of this process. I am a smallish woman with no masonry experience, yet I built my beautiful oven almost all by myself! It was so much fun and such a satisfying experience that I'd recommend the project to anyone interested in wood-fired baking. I am a pastry chef and a baking and pastry instructor, and I've always wanted a wood-fired oven, especially since I am a big pizza geek. The pizzas that I am getting out of this oven are spectacular. They are light as air and crisp, but chewy at the same time. Perfect char. And after the pizzas are finished baking I scoop out the fire and slip a couple of sourdough boules in there, and within half an hour I have lovely bread! I highly recommend this book. And don't be discouraged if you don't get a great pizza the first time you try--it took me several attempts to even get a decent fire, but now it's a breeze! The temperature inside my oven last night was too high for my infra-red laser thermometer to read (and it goes above a thousand degrees. In fact, this morning I realized I singed my hair and my eyelashes when I got a little too close (I'm investigating a solution for this problem!)) Follow up: Still using my beautiful oven. I've helped others build ovens now, too. I would recommend sealing the dome of the oven with a plaster product (I used Quikwall Surface Bonding Cement, and I added the optional acrylic fortifier), so that it is weatherproof. I know this book disagrees. I just didn't want to have to cover it with an ugly tarp when it rains or when the sprinklers go, nor did I want to build any kind of structure around it to protect it. The oven is pretty and I want it to be seen!

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