



The Lost Arts of Hearth and Home: The Happy Luddite's Guide to Domestic Self-Sufficiency

Ken Albala , Rosanna Nafziger , Rosanna Nafziger Henderson

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The Lost Arts of Hearth and Home is not about extreme, off-the-grid living. It's for city and suburban dwellers with day jobs: people who love to cook, love fresh natural ingredients, and old techniques for preservation; people who like doing things themselves with a needle and thread, garden hoe, or manual saw.

Ken Albala and Rosanna Nafziger Henderson spread the spirit of antiquated self-sufficiency throughout the household. They offer projects that are decidedly unplugged and a little daring, including:

- * Home building projects like rooftop food dehydrators and wood-burning ovens
- * Homemaking essentials, from sewing and quilting to rug braiding and soap making
- * The wonders of grain: making croissants by hand, sprouting grains, and baking bread
- * Adventures with meat: pickled pig's feet, homemade liverwurst, and celery-cured salami

Intended for industrious cooks and crafters who aren't afraid to roll up their sleeves, *The Lost Arts of Hearth and Home* will teach you the history and how-to on projects for every facet of your home, all without the electric toys that take away from the experience of making things by hand.

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From Reader Review The Lost Arts of Hearth and Home: The Happy Luddite's Guide to Domestic Self-Sufficiency for online ebook

Susan Grace says

What a wonderful book! I received this as a gift from a very dear friend who knows how I like to experiment in cooking. I am a crafter and I love to create! This book offers heartfelt, joyful guidance on everything from sewing to brewing spirits to making a ring out of a silver quarter! I am definitely going to make a ring! I thoroughly enjoyed the "go for it" attitude on all the arts Ken and Rosanna write of. They share their own experiences, experiments and successes. What a delightful book!

Rachael says

This was more fun than I expected. Not a 'back to lander' book but a nice practical guide for home & hearth skills. Witty writing and doesn't try to stay within the 'history' or 'niche' of the happy hippy homesteader but instead makes these skills simple and contemporary in our regularly busy lives. I would happily own this book for reference on how-to's and recipes.

Denise says

Title is a bit misleading, this is more of a "cabinet of curiosities" style book than an actual guide to do anything, there's more reminiscing and musing on things than actually getting down to much how-to business. But still, it's an interesting "cabinet" they've collected. I really must try those caramelized eggs.

Kristin says

skimmed, read sewing/quilting material.

Ietrio says

This is a book for people who have too much time on their hands. And the title is misleading, nothing about luddites.

Emily Mellow says

I love Ken Albala's writing and now want to read his other books. While I do feel like I learned a lot from

this book and got inspired to try new stuff, it would really be improved with useful photographs illustrating each section. Nevertheless, it was a pleasure to read.

Kathleen says

I love the whole DIY, self-sufficiency, anti-consumerist movement. And I understand why people in that subculture choose to do things like grow their own food when it's "easier" to buy it. Part of that culture is reclaiming lost skills, becoming more self-sufficient, in order to extricate oneself as much as possible from a destructive and exploitative capitalist system. I'm all for it.

This book is not in that spirit. It seems like the only animating reason here to grind your own flour or make your own vinegar is that it's old-timey and quaint. Right now, old-timey things are trendy, I guess. But the whole old-timey for old-timey's sake is a real bastardization of the whole DIY, self-sufficient ideal. On the surface, it seems similar, but the earnestness and the critique of capitalism is missing, and that's what gives it its meaning. It's like a hipster, capitalist rebranding that vacates all the meaning and purpose of a handmade life.

I could be reading way too much into this. And I'm sure the authors are wonderful people. But this wasn't for me.

Mark says

This is a very US-centric book, but once past the occasional recommendations for places to buy stuff in the US, and the US measurements, things like descriptions of US legal issues around proper Normandy camembert (made with unpasteurised milk), poppy seeds (common on bagels, but apparently 'not allowed') add a little interest for the non-US reader.

Some of the stuff just isn't likely to be done by those in small UK households - building a wood-fired oven, anyone? and there are a lot of places where a decent illustration would have helped a lot, such as showing, not just describing an 'apple peel braid'.

For me, a highlight of the book was 'jasper of milk'. That's something I might well try once, for the fun of it, but it's hardly a lost art of hearth and home. More like a lost conceit of the rich man's cook.

Laura says

There are some pretty far out DIY projects in this. For example, I am NEVER going to take the time to collect and process acorns in order to make acorn flour crepes. They sound amazing but wow, WAY too much work for me. Ditto for most of the stuff in this book. However, I did read through all of it because it's really quite interesting to read how to make all this stuff if you really want too. And now I totally want to collect old wool blankets and make us a braided wool rug for our dining room which will last 100 years.

Jennybeast says

I really like this book and its emphasis on doing work by hand. Great selection of skills and recipes, easy to follow directions and notes. Someday, someday, I will work through more of the contents.

Stefan says

pretty cool, but more esoteric than practical overall. Good read though

Cheryl says

Some interesting things - I think I am not gonna GRIND my own wheat for flour however. :)

Allison says

Having finished reading this charming little book, I find myself immediately wanting to read their first one, *The Lost Art of Real Cooking*.

This book is chock full of interesting recipes and directions for recreating lost but still useful, handy and fun to know how to make things. I really like the way it is organized and each individual component covered could be tried at home separately as an afternoon or weekend project. And, while it isn't specifically written with children in mind, many of the projects could easily be incorporated into a bonding experience/quality time with the kids.

Cory says

This is an entirely impractical, mad, and merry adventure through a grab-bag of archaic and odd domestic arts. The breezy, "try it and you might like it!" attitude might confuse or annoy some readers, but I found it a refreshing change from typical DIY books that expect very little imagination. This contains more inspiration than instruction, and should be approached accordingly. Some sections are detailed projects (rug braiding, kombucha), others are little more than off-the-cuff suggestions, and some are even illegal or essentially impossible (several involve ambergris).

I give it 4 stars for being entertaining read; I also have an ulterior motive in encouraging independent thought and wide-ranging curiosity. My only gripes are a bit of a blase attitude towards some potential dangers, and I vehemently disagree with the authors on the supposed "depressing greasiness" of my beloved Purim treat, the humbly delicious hamantaschen.

In the end, the introduction to the last chapter could nicely serve as a summation of the entire book:

"[These ideas] are meant to inspire rather than intimidate. Most important, they are the kind of

work in which you can get lost; hours pass happily, and in the end you have something both beautiful and functional, both craft and art."

If you enjoy this book, do read the the equally fun prequel, *The Lost Art of Real Cooking*.

Erin says

Fun, quirky, but serious book that tells me not only how to make my own kombucha but also how to clean with it and the history behind it. Everything in this book is done taken the long way--from making quilts to building an outdoor cooking stove. The writers speak authoritatively and are intense about the slow ways of making a house a home, in all the domestic arts. A fascinating read not because I'm going to implement much of what I read, but because I learned so much reading it.
