

How To Start Homesteading INEXPENSIVELY

By far this is one of our most requested how to. Much to people's surprise homesteading can be very expensive if you let it. We have come up with some easy ways to get your homestead journey started off inexpensively.

This is geared for those who have a backyard, but some of these tips can apply for those who no access to a yard.



Step 1: CHANGE YOUR MENTALITY from a consumer to becoming a producer.

It is VERY important to have this mentality, because when you become a homesteader, you will be producing hopefully, most of your own food. Start off with this mental change in the kitchen first. Start cooking from scratch. Give you and your family a break from going out to eat all the time. Learn to cook from scratch, all the things you love to eat at restaurants. Then learn how to make basic foods like bread, whole chickens, and how to cook and serve fresh vegetables. Then learn to take those store-bought veggies and regrow some of them.



Step 2: **Learn to grow PROTEINS.**

Each homestead is different and is as unique as the families that live in them. One skill that you should learn very quickly is how to produce protein on your homestead. Whether that protein is in the form of eggs, or meat, this is a skill that all meat eaters should learn how to manage no matter where you live. If you live in the United States, then you probably have heard of HOA's. Homeowner Associations or HOA can govern what is and may not be on your property. This includes animals, and structures. Your city and county may also have restrictions on the types of animals and the placement of animals on your homestead.

We recommend the following types of animals, as long as their presence on your homestead does not break any rules, laws, or covenants in your area.

1. Chickens
2. Rabbits
3. Quail

We recommend these animals as the start-up cost is low to acquire, and house these animals. Also, they are relatively quiet and easy to learn how to care for.

Let's discuss a few things to get you started with these animals.

1. **Housing.** All three animals can be housed relatively inexpensively. You can either build or purchase premade housing for them. We recommend for chickens to build your own coops. We will include some plans that you can print for chicken coops. Rabbits we recommend buying the cages and setting them up in your very own rabbit hutch, again plans will be included.

2. Food. Each of these animals require different foods, but here are a few tips to feed them inexpensively.
 - First try growing the food that they eat. Start doing this sooner rather than later, as it is cheaper to grow the food, than purchase it in a store.
 - Second, try feeding them the excess food from your table. This would include, kitchen scraps, leftovers, etc. If you need to buy feed, do not buy pelleted feed for the animals. Just like humans, you need to be able to identify the food in its whole form. Buy hay, buy seeds, and sprouts your seeds. Again, you are what you eat. The healthier your animals are the healthier they will be when it is time for you to eat them.

3. Let your animal's breed. For chickens this can be more difficult as city ordinances, covenants, and laws can make it nearly impossible to have a rooster. By allowing your animals to breed you are now creating a situation where you are actually reproducing meat on your homestead. When you allow your animals to breed and raise those animals it is now up to you to decide whether or not you want to call the animals that are being raised and put them in your freezer or canner or preserve that meat however you choose. But choose you must because when you allow your animals to breed you can now get a lot of meat out of a few number of animals. This is especially true with rabbits. Rabbits are well known for their breeding capabilities, and they will not disappoint you in their ability to fill the freezer. There is one caveat I will say in this section; Chickens if you do not have a rooster, you cannot breed more chickens. The most inexpensive way to do it is to find a local farmer however you choose to find them and purchase fertilized eggs. When you purchase fertilized eggs, you now have the option to either incubate those eggs yourself which keep in mind there is a cost to buying an incubator or if you have a hen who is broody you can stick those eggs under her and allow her to hatch them out naturally. We personally started with an incubator, and we absolutely love hatching out our own chicks. So, you want to frequently turn over your Hens as their viability for your homestead lessons as the years go by.



Step 3: Learn to grow a garden

I know for many of you this might come as a surprise that this is actually the third step. But growing a garden for human consumption should not in my opinion be the first priority. But it is a priority. For many people when they hear growing a garden, they think to have raised garden beds. There is certainly a place in every garden for raised garden beds. However, that is not the most inexpensive way to get your homestead started. The best way to start your gardens is to simply grow in ground. For many people they get intimidated by growing and ground because maybe the soil is not perfect. For example, if you have clay soil, clay soil is something that we deal with here on our homestead, there are several ways that you can amend your soil. Clay soil is actually not a bad thing clay soil retains a lot of nutrition you just need to break up all of that clay so that it can be bioavailable for your plants.

This means that the first thing that you should start to do is composting. Composting need not be complicated all you need is green vegetables or plants mixed in with brown mixed in with some coffee grounds and mix that all together with water and let it compost down. Then you can start amending your soil I recommend that you find a sunny spot in your backyard and start with one long row and when I say long row I mean as long as you can get in your yard maybe that's simply a 5-foot-long row that's OK. The longer the better I would recommend a 20-foot-long row I know that sounds a lot but trust me it's not.

In that row you can start growing some of your vegetables by growing in ground and making the needed modifications to your soil you have one area just one long row to care for you would be amazed at what you can grow in that particular row. As the years will go by, you'll start to come up with a garden design of your own but keeping it simple keeping it in ground and growing from seed is the most absolute inexpensive way for you to start growing.

Here is a list of a few more things that you can do on your homestead inexpensively that will get you started:

1. Start composting
2. Seed saving
3. Regrow certain vegetable from the grocery store
4. Look for and store free wood that can be used in future projects around the homestead
5. Learn how to freeze, ferment, and dehydrate foods. DO NOT start off canning. Canning can be more expensive.

It is our hope that this brief list and explanations will help you gain more insight on how to start your homesteading dream, without breaking the bank.

Happy homesteading.