



Self-Sufficiency Guide (Living off the Land)

Tony Kelbrat

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Homesteading is a back to nature movement geared for self-sufficiency and independence, a seemingly dirty word in our culture where we're dependent on the powers that be for food, gas, electricity, etc.

You have to be tough to wanna get away from all that to do for yourself. It's a movement away from the mainstream to a rural shift geared for peace in the natural habitat.

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There are all manner of people who engage in homesteading like the hardy, mountain men types who go up to Alaska, an informal town of seniors with RVs who live on an abandoned air force base in the California desert, a commune up in Tennessee that operates a wolf sanctuary and welcome anybody as long as they're willing to help out with the daily chores and a man who built an Indian teepee and lived in the woods with his family for awhile.

The philosophy of homesteading is to make it without much money, hence, for all you people out there not interested in the 30 year mortgage and the institutionalized job, there are ways around it.

For most people, homesteading is a ticket out of the rat race, a way out of the city, a spiritual cleansing kind of like back to nature from whence we all came anyway.

Homesteading is a Henry David Thoreau type dream for many people who'd like to retire to the woods and live a more basic, simpler life where they take care of most of their needs themselves without help from the outside.

Be forewarned that life in the country could turn out to be not at all like the romantic visions you might have about it. The flies alone could be killers up north after the winter thaw. Before you plunge into it, investigate. Go camping a few times, buy a small piece of land, build a shack on it and try planting a garden.

Some people love the isolation, others can't stand it. You have to be the type who loves to do things by yourself away from people. If you live up north, there might not be snowploughs in your area and you could get snowed in for awhile.

The big advantage is that you can become as independent as you wanna be even setting up a generator for your own electricity, therefore you can become self-sufficient oblivious to the conditions of the world outside and live your own life. With satellite TV, you can watch it all from your paradise on the lake in the middle of nowhere.

The best piece of advice I can give is that you should have a partner who loves you and feels the same way about country living beyond the power lines.

If you have kids, they might be restless and rebellious. If you don't have such a partner, you might meet one by volunteering for ecological type projects or putting a classified ad in country/ hippie type artsy

newspapers or magazines like Mother Earth News.

Be humble with each other. Couples break up in the woods just like in the city. You will need some money to get started on building your own homestead and figure out some service or skill that can earn you some casual income.

Bartering will work with your country kin and storeowners might swap something like eggs and vegetables for clothing, tools, etc. You might have a part-time job, make crafts, sell vegetables, offer blacksmithing services, etc. You might build a cottage or two in the woods to rent out as a weekend getaway/ summer vacation cottages. If you have enough land, you could build a cottage on it and sell it.

Before you move, learn about where you're moving to. Get a subscription to the local newspaper. Start acquiring homesteading tools and learning how to use them. Always buy professional type over casual homeowner tools.

Go to farm auctions and buy a cheap tractor for farming and bulldozer to clear land. If you live up north, buy a good woodstove that you can cook on.

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