



Tiny House Dwellers Discover **SUN OVENS**



Increasing numbers of tiny houses are emerging around the country as people look to downsize their lives. Thousands of homeowners have abandoned social climbing when they discovered a small house can lead to a simpler, fuller life. They are gaining time for

family and friends and connecting with nature while freeing themselves from life consuming mortgages.

Living tiny is a social movement where people are choosing to downsize the space they live in. The typical American home is around 2,600 square feet, whereas the typical tiny house is between 100 and 800 square feet. People are joining this movement for many reasons, but the most popular reasons include environmental concerns, financial concerns, and the desire for more time and freedom.

Making delicious meals in a small kitchen can be challenging and an ever-growing number of tiny house dwellers are discovering **SUN OVENS®** as an inexpensive, safe, efficient, and delicious way to cook and a perfect alternative when living tiny. They have learned how to grab hold of the sun's power to cook a greater variety of delectable foods with less space, cost, fuel, and environmental impact.

The benefits of using a **SUN OVEN®** when living tiny include:

- Sunlight is free
- There is no need to hook into the power grid or fill propane tanks
- Life in a tiny house leaves a smaller environmental footprint and using a **SUN OVEN®** goes along with this lifestyle goal by eliminating the greenhouse gasses of other cooking methods.
- Cooking outdoors reduces the need to be stuck in a hot kitchen and the need to cool off a hot house on warm days.
- The lack of ventilation in some tiny houses allows cooking odors to linger and traps steam and carbon monoxide, so the moisture levels remain long after cooking. Not with a **SUN OVEN®**.

[READ MORE](#)

Want to Learn More about how a Sun Oven® can Benefit Living Tiny?

Register Now to join our upcoming online class

Title: *How to use sunshine to multiply your Tiny House cooking options*

Date: Wednesday-January 24 2018

Time: 7:30 p.m.
Central Standard Time, (8:30 p.m. EST / 6:30 p.m. MST / 5:30 p.m. PST)

Duration: 60 minutes plus live Q&A

Cost: There is no cost for the class, but advance registration is required.

What is your Most Burning Question about Food Storage or Emergency Preparedness?

Send your questions to editor@sunoven.com

Billie Nicholson



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Getting Your House in Order



A new year, a new set of twelve months (52 weeks) and another opportunity to get your life organized - to set goals and devise plans on how to work toward succeeding with those goals. "Getting your house in order" is defined as arranging affairs and solving problems.

The first thing we think of are areas for personal growth. Lets start with spiritual growth.

Religious leader, the late David O. McKay, responded when asked how he maintained his spirituality, that he did five simple things at the beginning of each day.

I rise early

I wash my body

I put on clean clothes

I subdue my spirit before the Father (prayer)

I wait for the inspiration of the Father (items of most importance today)

If you start each day this way, the focus of your life will change to one of love, obedience and service. You will become aware of the items that need your attention the most on any given day. [1]

How do you organize each day? Do you go through some days and feel that you've gotten nothing accomplished? US Admiral William McRaven that your focus on accomplishing tasks should start each day with the simple act of making your bed! He says, "If you make your bed every morning, you will have accomplished the first task of the day. It will give you a small sense of pride, and it will encourage you to do another task, and another, and another. And by the end of the day that one task completed will have turned into many tasks completed. There many reasons to make your bed. If you have a human sleeping partner, do this together. It's quicker and it will give you both a sense of togetherness - a way to start the day together. [2]

Next, you may be thinking of caring for your family. One of the most common new year goals is budgeting or taking control of your finances. [Jordan Page](#) shared 5 tips:

1. Develop a spending strategy helps you spend money smarter.
2. Divide and conquer - each partner can be responsible for specific expenses. Make a list of everything you spend money on and assign that expense to a person. That way nothing is missed.
3. Focus on three budgets - grocery, family and "other."
4. Break it down weekly not monthly. It will be easier to manage.
5. Don't push yourself too hard - the goal is to succeed; keep at it.

Two more financial thoughts:

Arranging reoccurring payments on an online auto-payment plan with your bank so you don't miss any. Also, make sure that all partners know how to access the online accounts with passwords, etc., should they need them.

Your goal is to be able to live on 70% of what you bring home in income. 10% should go to tithing and 20% to savings/investments. [3]

Getting Your House in Order, Part 2

Is your home in a state of disarray?

The more disorganized it is the harder it will seem to find the energy to get it in shape. Shape? How about removing clutter? Here are some [tips to help you establish order](#). [4]

First consider breaking big projects down into smaller tasks. Start with the storage spaces in your home. De-cluttering here will give you a place to put those extra items you find in other places. Then move to the most popular room in the house - the kitchen.



1. Unify utensils - get rid of broken items, bag up extras. Organizing just one drawer at a time will give you incredible satisfaction - and motivation to move to the next.
2. De-junk the drawers - bag those extra gadgets. Use small containers to organize.
3. De-clutter cabinets - do you have a zillion plastic containers that come tumbling out of a particular cabinet whenever you open the door? Time to get a 2 gallon plastic bag and store the extras. Sort and stack the containers that fit with their lids.
4. Now on to the refrigerator - is it full of sauces and gravies? Toss anything old and fuzzy, wipe down the shelves and reorganize the front if it is full of magnets and artwork. Move some of the extra magnets to the side, they will stick there too for when you need them.
5. Review the contents of your pantry. You should have that all organized by date with the oldest in front. Divide the space into food zones - dry goods on one shelf, like canned goods together. This will help you see at a glance what you have and what you need to purchase.
6. Make yourself a home office - even if you don't have a business! Designate a place where frequently required information can be kept in a binder, in a drawer or cabinet.
7. Make a power center - a place where all electronic devices go to be recharged. Short on outlets? Use a power strip. Organize the cords with re-useable zip ties. Bag up the extras.
8. Do you have piles of papers? Start with one pile and sort it into bills to be paid, manuals and warranties, etc. File the warranties and manuals, sort the bills in order of due date so they can get paid in a timely manner.
9. Did you read all the magazines that came in last month? If there are articles you want to keep, scan it or tear it out (remember to write down the source and date) and put them in a binder. Start a box for magazines to give away (we take ours to a nursing home nearby). Store magazines you want to keep in a caddy or box.
10. Once you have organized and filed the papers you need to keep, get rid of the rest. Use a paper shredder to destroy documents that contain personal information.
11. Clear your home entryway of stuffed that gets dropped just inside the door. Provide boxes for in and out going mail and a rack for keys.
12. Do you take off shoes upon entry? Get a boot tray or a cubbie unit to keep them organized. A bench may be welcome, too, as a place to sit while lacing shoes.
13. Coat closet review - Donate little-used outerwear. Make bins for hats, mittens, scarves for the top shelf and a rack on the floor for boots and snow gear. Bag up extras.
14. Do you have a cluttered garage? Try hanging some items on the walls.
15. Use pegboard to organize tools and hanging racks for larger items.
16. Now it's time to move to the kids' room - put books together on a shelf. Arrange by book or author's name to make finding them easier.

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Getting Your House in Order, Part 2 continued

17. Get a bin for stuffed animals, one for toys, and another for sports equipment.
18. On to the bathroom(s) - Throw out expired medications, wipe down the shelves and arrange them by family member, or use, like dental.
19. Organize toiletries. Consider a shelf unit above the back of the toilet, if you don't have enough storage space. If you have a closet, arrange items in bins and mark the bins for easy access.
20. In the bedroom - arrange your most frequently worn shoes on a shoe rack or short shelf. Stow all others in a clear plastic bin and store under the bed.
21. If you haven't worn a clothing item in more than a year, consider donating it to charity and start another bag. Organize what's left by color or season.
22. Drawers are next. Organize the top of your dresser or chest of drawers into bins or bowls. Sort thorough regularly. Fold or roll contents of each drawer. Sort by color or item, like short sleeve shirts or long sleeve shirts, shorts, pjs., etc. Out of drawer space for sweaters? Use clear plastic bins and store under the bed. (remember #21).
23. Linen closet - Keep a minimum of three sets of sheets for each bed. (one on the bed, one in laundry, and one spare). To store sets neatly, put the flat and fitted sheets and one pillow case inside the second pillow case. Bundles can be stacked.
24. Laundry room - Arrange the products you use regularly within easy reach. Extras should be stored out of sight. Are you saving the dryer lint to use as a fire starter? If not, keep a trash can nearby for trash in pockets and the lint.

Organizing for the end of life

Often, "getting your house" in order means making plans for leaving life on earth. Most of us have no idea when we will die, but we can have a say in how we leave and the impact it will have on our families. Two impacts of dying need to be considered. First is getting your financial affairs in order. Surveys have shown that more than half (55%) of all Americans will die without a will or trust. Almost half do not have life insurance or savings to help cover not only end of life expenses but making accommodations for survivors as well.

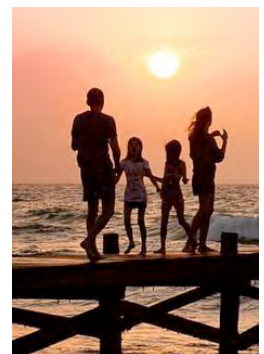
Setting up an irrevocable trust allows you control over how your hard-earned savings are dispersed to the people you love, or to the charities or causes you believe in. There are many advantages of a trust including savings on taxes and exemptions from estate and gift taxes. There are a variety of trust types and there are attorney fees involved.

Writing a will costs less money than setting up an irrevocable trust fund, but it will not allow you much control over how your assets are used. Your property is subject to more taxes and the terms of the will can be contested in a process called probate. [5]

Most people don't like talking about death, but it is unavoidable for each of us. Making funeral plans ahead of time will leave fewer decisions for survivors and reduce stress.

The second impact to consider is one of mending fences with family members. If family is one of your priorities, then settling disputes and healing grudges should be, too. Steps to doing this include getting to the root of what caused the rift, stepping into the other person's shoes, consider the effect on the rest of the family, choose to forgive by being the first to reach out, take responsibility for your actions and apologize if necessary because healing the relationship is important. [6]

References



Materia Medica - Black Pepper

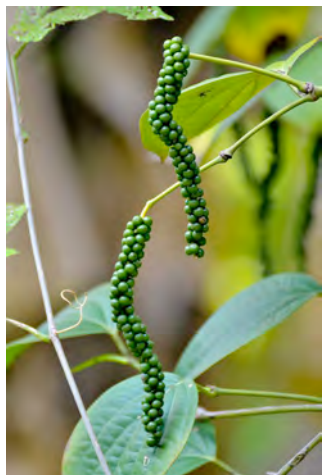


Photo: [Wikimedia](#)

Botanical Name: Piper nigrum

Common Name: black pepper

Family: Piperaceae

Ayurvedic/TCM Name: Xin Xiu Ben Cao (Newly Revised Materia Medica)

Parts Used: Dried unripe fruit

Native Region: Indigenous to Malabar coast of India

Geographic Distribution: Southeast Asia, with Vietnam making huge efforts to become the largest producer worldwide (1/3), India, Brazil and Indonesia make up

the other 2/3.

Botanical Description: The pepper plant is a [perennial woody vine](#) growing up to 4 meters (13 ft) in height on supporting trees, poles, or trellises. It is a spreading vine, rooting readily where trailing stems touch the ground. The leaves are alternate, entire, 5 to 10 centimeters (2.0 to 3.9 in) long and 3 to 6 centimeters (1.2 to 2.4 in) across. The flowers are small, produced on pendulous spikes 4 to 8 centimeters (1.6 to 3.1 in) long at the leaf nodes, the spikes lengthening up to 7 to 15 centimeters (2.8 to 5.9 in) as the fruit matures. The fruit of the black pepper is called a drupe and when dried is known as a peppercorn. [1]

Cultivation: Pepper can be grown in soil that is neither too dry nor susceptible to flooding, moist, well-drained and rich in organic matter (the vines do not do too well over an altitude of 900 m (3,000 ft) above sea level). The plants are propagated by cuttings about 40 to 50 centimeters (16 to 20 in) long, tied up to neighboring trees or climbing frames at distances of about 2 meters (6 ft 7 in) apart; trees with rough bark are favored over those with smooth bark, as the pepper plants climb rough bark more readily. Competing plants are cleared away, leaving only sufficient trees to provide shade and permit free ventilation. The roots are covered in leaf [mulch](#) and [manure](#), and the shoots are trimmed twice a year. On dry soils the young plants require watering every other day during the [dry season](#) for the first three years. The plants bear fruit from the fourth or fifth year, and then typically for seven years. The cuttings are usually [cultivars](#), selected both for yield and quality of fruit. [1]

Harvesting Guidelines: A single stem bears 20 to 30 fruiting spikes. The harvest begins as soon as one or two fruits at the base of the spikes begin to turn red, and before the fruit is fully mature, and still hard; if allowed to ripen completely, the fruit lose pungency, and ultimately fall off and are lost. The spikes are collected and spread out to dry in the sun, then the peppercorns are stripped off the spikes. [1] To harvest black pepper, the clusters are harvested while still green, but mature. These are immersed in almost boiling water for a few minutes after which they turn dark brown to black. The berries are then dried in the sun for 16 to 20 hours. The skin of the berries shrinks, giving the peppercorn a wrinkled appearance. To prepare white pepper, the berries must be picked when they are ripe or red, and then fermented to remove the flesh surrounding the peppercorns. The fruit flesh ferments by means of bacterial fermentation. The peppercorns are then washed repeatedly, until the clean grayish-brown peppercorns remain. They are then dried in the sun for 12 hours.

[Continued](#)

Step by Step to Making Turmeric Powder



Pensacola, FL's climate this year was agreeable with our [turmeric plants](#). They grew so much that the pots were misshaped as the rhizomes forced their way horizontally, splitting some plastic pots. As colder weather approached, the leaves died back and it was time to harvest some of the rhizomes and repot others. It didn't take long to fill our harvest basket as we worked the soil loose and broke off pieces of rhizomes. Many of our readers have wondered what to do with turmeric rhizomes? You can simply wash and store them, using thin slices in cooking or process them to make turmeric powder. Here's a step by step guide to making turmeric powder.

Note: turmeric has a strong yellow color and everything it touches will become yellow, but the final results are worth the trouble.



The first step is to wash rhizomes to remove dirt caught in between the "fingers". Often this will mean breaking them apart. Then cover them with water and boil for 45 minutes to remove the starch and soften them. Make thin slices and spread on drying pans or dehydrator trays. If you are using an oven, heat to lowest temperature and dry for 2-3 hours, until slices are crispy. If you are using a dehydrator, set temperature at 105°F and run overnight. Place dried slices into bullet, food processor or other food grinder and process. Sift powder from debris and grind remainder again to get it all powdered.



Store dried turmeric in spice jars, tightly sealed, in cool dark cupboard, out of direct sunlight. Ground turmeric is good for 2-3 years according to the McCormick Spice Company. If you want to store fresh turmeric rhizomes, place them in dry paper towel inside an open plastic bag. They will keep for 1-2 weeks. Cut off any moldy spots that develop and change the paper. They can also be frozen if sealed tightly to prevent desiccation. Slice into cooking pot from frozen state.



Chickpea and Cauliflower Curry from Our Solar Chef



Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1 apple, peeled, cored, and diced
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh ginger
- 1/4 cup mild red curry paste*
- 1 sweet potato, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch chunks (about 2 cups)
- 2 cups cauliflower florets, broken into small pieces
- 2 1/2 cups previously solar cooked chickpeas **
- 1 (14-ounce) can petite diced tomatoes
- 1 (14-ounce) can vegetable broth
- 1/2 cup coconut milk (regular or lite)
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 1/2 cup (lightly packed) spinach leaves

Serve this vegetarian stew with plenty of basmati rice to soak up all the velvety sauce.

Directions

Set Sun Oven out to preheat.

Heat the oil over medium heat in a large pot or Dutch oven. Add the onion, apple, and ginger; cook, stirring often, until just softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in the curry paste. Add the sweet potato, chickpeas, tomatoes, and vegetable broth; stir to combine. Cover and transfer to the Sun Oven. Cook until the vegetables are soft, 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Stir in the coconut milk and spinach, replace lid and continue cooking until heated through, about 20 more minutes.

Makes 8 servings.

Note: If you use the double stacking pans, you can cook the rice and stew at the same time.

* [Red Curry Paste](#)

** Soak overnight after washing. Place in pot and cover with water +2". Bake in Sun Oven for 2 hours. Can add quartered onion, carrot and celery stalk and bay leaf for extra flavor.

Recycling Plastic Bags to Benefit Others

Plastic bags have become one of the most ubiquitous consumer items on earth. They are light weight, low cost and water resistant, making them convenient for many uses. Unfortunately, they have also become a major expense for environmental litter clean up, take a long time to decompose (estimated 1,000 years), and pose dangers to animal and aquatic life. Some states have seen such high expenses that they've resorted to banning plastic shopping bag use. How about you? Are you using plastic or reusable shopping bags? Do you still have some laying around and are wondering what to do with them?

Made from petroleum products (crude oil, natural gas or other petrochemical derivatives), the plastic used for grocery bags was discovered 85 years ago. Major retailers and grocery chains switched to their use in the 1970's and '80's. [1] According to *The Wall Street Journal*, the US goes through 100 billion plastic shopping bags annually and that 4 out of 5 grocery bags are now plastic. Only 3 percent of plastic bags are estimated to be recycled. [2] Here is an example of a way to recycle plastic grocery bags to benefit others.

Groups of ladies (The Emerald Coast Bag Ladies) in Florida's panhandle area, get together every week to create crocheted sleeping mats for the homeless made from recycled shopping bags. It takes about 700 plastic bags and 100 man-hours to complete one of these mats. All skill levels and ages can become involved in this project. One of our local ladies drives a county school bus. She had the idea to use the idle time children spend on their rides to and from school by incorporating their assistance tying the plastic bag sections into long lengths of "plarn." Once the lengths are tied, they can be rolled into balls keeping the plarn from getting tangled and making crocheting easier.



The children noticed a number of homeless sitting and standing along the school bus route. When our bus driver completes a mat, they stop along the route and give the mat to a needy person.

There have been a lot of benefits from this project. In addition to recycling shopping bags and benefiting the homeless with soft, water-proof sleeping mats, the children have learned valuable life lessons of cooperation and giving.



Photos by Dorothy Barrett