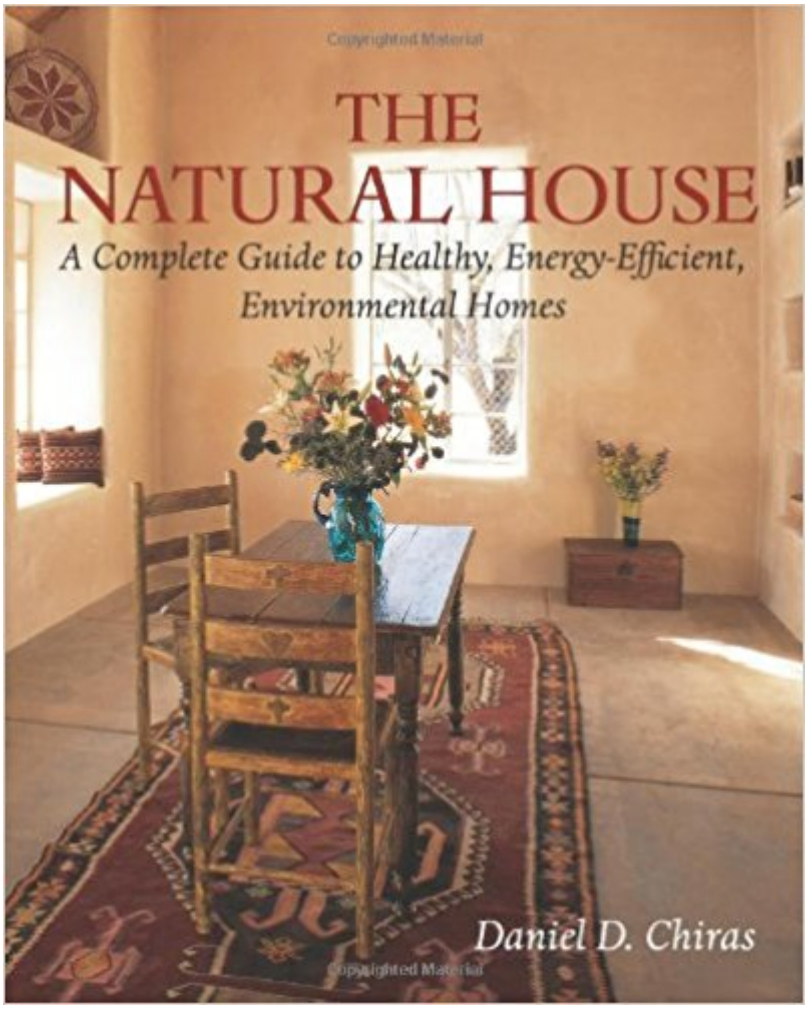
# The Natural House: A Complete Guide To Healthy, Energy-Efficient, Environmental Homes



## Synopsis

The Natural House is a tour of the construction, costs, and pros and cons of fourteen natural building methods. Straw Bale, Rammed Earth, Cob, Cordwood, Adobe, Earthbags, Papercrete, EarthshipsÃ¢â ¬Â¦whatever the method, the common goal is to create a house that is economical, energy efficient, nontoxic, soothing to the soul, kind to the environment, and pleasing to behold. This comprehensive sourcebook offers in-depth information that will guide your search for the perfect sustainable dream home. It is a must for home builders, contractors, and architects. Author Dan Chiras shows how you can gain energy independence and reduce your environmental impact through passive solar heating and cooling techniques, solar electricity, wind power, and micro-hydropower. He also explains safe, economical ways to obtain clean drinking water and treat wastewater, and discusses affordable green products. While he's an unabashed advocate of natural building techniques, Chiras takes care not to romanticize and to alert readers to avoidable pitfalls. His detailed, practical, and ecologically sound advice can save tens of thousands of dollars, whether you are buying, building, or renovating a natural home.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Simply put, this is the most comprehensive and most useful introduction to natural building systems and practices available. A book that anyone setting out to build a home of natural materials should read--cover to cover."--Alex Wilson, executive editor and publisher, Environmental Building News

Dan Chiras paid his last electric bill in June of 1996. It is not that he has disavowed the use of electricity and modern conveniences, but rather that he has turned to the sun and wind to meet his family's needs. In 1995, Dan, a former full-time college professor with years of experience in sustainable development, built a state-of-the-art rammed earth tire and straw bale home in Evergreen, Colorado. He installed solar electric panels on the roof; a year or so later he installed a small wind generator. Since that time, he has met nearly all of his electrical needs for his home and office from these clean, renewable sources. Dan also heats his home in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains 8000-feet above sea level with energy from the sun thanks to passive solar design. For backup heat on those cold winter nights, he burns a cord of wood a year, gathered free from his community. His annual gas bill, mostly for showers and cooking, runs about $120 a year - about $2 to $3 per month for natural gas and $10 per month to read the meter! Dan has spent much of the past 30 years studying sustainability and applying what he has learned in solar energy, natural building, and green building to his residences, and most of the last ten years sharing the practical knowledge he has gained through writing, lectures, slide shows, and workshops. Dan has published 21 books to date including several college and high school textbooks: Environmental Science: Creating a Sustainable Future, Natural Resource Conservation, Human Biology, and Biology: The Web of Life. His high school environmental science text, Environmental Science, was selected as the official book of the U.S. Academic Decathlon's 1991 competition. In the early 1990s, Dan published two trade books on environmental issues and sustainability for a general audience: Beyond the Fray: Reshaping America's Response and Lessons from Nature: Learning to Live Sustainably on the Earth. Since 1995, Dan has focused most of his attention on residential green building. He has written extensively on the subject. His is books include: The Natural House: A Complete Guide to Healthy, Energy Efficient, Environmental Homes; The Natural Plaster Book; The Solar House: Passive Heating and Cooling; Superbia! 31 Ways to Create Sustainable Suburbs; and The New Ecological Home. His newest book, EcoKids: Raising Kids Who Care for the Earth will be published in the Spring of 2005 by New Society Publishers. Dan also writes extensively for magazines, journals, newsletters, and newspapers. He has published nearly 250 articles on environmental issues, sustainability, natural building, natural plaster, green building, and passive solar heating and cooling. His articles appear regularly in Home Power, Mother Earth News, Natural Home, and The Last Straw. Dan also writes frequently for World Book Encyclopedia (Science Year) and Encyclopedia Americana. He authored a 12-page article on the environment for Encyclopedia Americana. Dan has written environmental pollution section for World Book Encyclopedia's annual publication, Science Year, since 1993. In 1997, he wrote an extensive piece for World Book on

population growth and its many implications. Dan also wrote the ecology and air pollution sections for Encyclopedia Americana. In addition to his writing, Dan has served as an adjunct professor at the University of Colorado in Denver and the University of Colorado at Denver. He has been a visiting professor at the University of Washington, where he taught a course on environmental science. He currently is a Melon Visiting Professor at Colorado College where he teaches courses on renewable energy, ecological design, and sustainable development. Through his writing and teaching in the 1980s and early 1990s, Dan played a leading role in promoting critical thinking, an understanding of the root causes of environmental issues, systemic solutions to environmental problems, sustainable development. He pioneered a systems approach to sustainable development and has played a lead role in articulating the principles, policies, and practices of sustainable development which seeks ways that business and society can prosper within a healthy environment. He is currently focusing most of his research and writing on sustainable building and sustainable communities. Dan's free time is spent mountain biking, canoeing, playing music, and gardening.  For more information visit danchiras.com.

It covered most of the natural building styles, gave brief introductions into how each type of building is constructed.The best thing about this book is that the author included a summarizing list of pros and cons with each style at the end of the chapter.Examples of pros and cons listed at the end of each chapter:Will building in this style result in adequate insulation?How expensive is building with this style?Is building with this style difficult?How often will maintenance need to be done?Can you make disastrous errors building in this style, or are mistakes generally amenable?Another thing I was pleased to find us that the author emphasises the hardships people have had as a result of building unstable, hazardous, and unusable natural houses and states that he wants readers to avoid building techniques that would result in those situations...And I decided to focus on Cob building ;)

I recently started my "journey" on learning about sustainable living, and natural building. I've been researching every type of construction technique I can find. I wish I had found this book first! It's a great overview that can point you in the right direction for the technique(s) that are best suited for you. Rather than researching every topic out there this book has allowed me to let a few drop off my "radar" so I can focus on what best pertains to my likes, desires, situation, and geographical location.The author does a great job of giving the basic overview of the varied techniques as well as some great specific and anecdotal information as well. Easy to read and informative. The standard

hippie preachiness is present but kept to a minimum.I’m not a fan of books that waste my time. On the contrary, this book has saved me time by allowing me to concentrate my focus on what will work for me.

Love this book! It has so much information about different green building ideas, and compares them in a way that’s both informative and interesting to read. I would recommend this for anyone thinking of building, it’s full of the information you are probably looking for! Every idea or way of doing something is clearly explained and easy to understand.

If you’re interested in building a natural home (cob, rammed earth, straw-bale, earthship, whatever), this is your primer. The author has done his homework and presents the description, pros/cons and pitfalls of each type of construction. He is very honest about just how "do-it-yourself" each type can be, and how much it will cost you. He also covers passive and active solar design, natural water capture and other alternative technologies to go with your natural home. This is an excellent overview on all these subjects.The best thing about this book is that he refers you to other sources for more detail - books, videos, newsletters and organizations that will support you, give you a workshop or just give you more detailed information than belonged in this primer book.I highly recommend this as the first book you read on the subject. Once you know which type of house you are interested in, you can pick up some of the other books he suggests on that building type.

We are in the process of determining how to best build a home in our region that is earth and human friendly and requires the least amount of non-renewable resource possible. This book provides an excellent overview of techniques, processes, principles and products and offers many references to further your knowledge in a particular topic. I’m most impressed that the author is not afraid to share his opinions based on experience as well as known facts. Highly recommend!

Written so it is so understandable, It just all makes sense. Please do read an insert and see for yourself. It’s one of those have to have, can’t put it down books. I congratulate Mr. Chiras on the book so well written, it’s almost like you are in a conservation, so much information compiled. IT IS SO INFORMATIVE

best book on off grid home building I have

Great info. This book has a lot more in it than just cob and earthen building...



The Natural House: A Complete Guide to Healthy, Energy-Efficient, Environmental Homes Tiny Houses: MinimalistÃ¢ ¬â„¢s Tiny House Living (Floor Plans Included) (tiny house construction,tiny homes,tiny house design,small houses,small homes,tiny house building,tiny house lifestyle,micro homes) Shipping Container Homes: Shipping Container Homes 101, Shipping Container Homes for Beginners, Everything You Need to Know About, Tiny House Living, and...Container Home, Tiny House Living Books Green Homes: An Everyman's Guide to Energy-Efficient Design and Renewable Technologies Energy Efficient Homes for Dummies Prefabulous World: Energy-Efficient and Sustainable Homes Around the Globe Homes Around World River and Sea Homes Macmillan Library (Homes Around the World - Macmillan Library) Musings of an Energy Nerd: Toward an Energy-Efficient Home Green from the Ground Up: Sustainable, Healthy, and Energy-Efficient Home Construction (Builder's Guide) Green from the Ground Up: A Builder's Guide to Sustainable, Healthy, and Energy-Efficient Home Construction House Plants: A Guide to Keeping Plants in Your Home (House Plants Care, House Plants for Dummies, House Plants for Beginners, Keeping Plants in Your Home, DIY House Plants Book 1) Reiki: The Healing Energy of Reiki - BeginnerÃ¢ ¬â„¢s Guide for Reiki Energy and Spiritual Healing: Reiki: Easy and Simple Energy Healing Techniques Using the ... Energy Healing for Beginners Book 1) Tiny Houses: The Ultimate Beginner's Guide! : 20 Space Hacks for Living Big in Your Tiny House (Tiny Homes, Small Home, Tiny House Plans, Tiny House Living Book 1) Low Calorie & Fat: Healthy Breakfast Recipes! Discover New Healthy Breakfast Ideas. Healthy Muffin Recipes, Healthy Smoothies, Healthy Egg Recipes and ... Only! (Low Calorie & Fat Recipes Book 1) Energy for the 21st Century: Opportunities and Challenges for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) (New Horizons in Environmental and Energy Law series) Tiny Houses: Everything You Need to Know before Buying a Tiny House (Tiny Houses, Tiny House Living, Tiny Homes, Tiny House) Shipping Container Homes: The Step-By-Step Guide to Shipping Container Homes and Tiny house living, Including Examples of Plans and Designs Trim Healthy Mama's Trim Healthy Table: More Than 300 All-New Healthy and Delicious Recipes from Our Homes to Yours Shipping Container Homes: The complete guide to building shipping container homes, including plans, FAQS, cool ideas, and more! Better Homes and Gardens Complete Canning Guide: Freezing, Preserving, Drying (Better Homes and Gardens Cooking)

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