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The Barefoot Architect



Synopsis

A former UN worker and prominent architect, Johan van Lengen has seen firsthand the desperate need for a "greener" approach to housing in impoverished tropical climates. This comprehensive book clearly explains every aspect of this endeavor, including design (siting, orientation, climate consideration), materials (sisal, cactus, bamboo, earth), and implementation. The author emphasizes throughout the book what is inexpensive and sustainable. Included are sections discussing urban planning, small-scale energy production, cleaning and storing drinking water, and dealing with septic waste, and all information is applied to three distinct tropical regions: humid areas, temperate areas, and desert climates. Hundreds of explanatory drawings by van Lengen allow even novice builders to get started.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Exceptional book on vernacular architecture and practical building. This "how to" approach addresses the 2nd and 3rd world's building practices from the direct perspective of someone who understands building in the tropics. A vital and useful book for any interested student of the best practices for 1000 aspects of the diy community building in impoverished areas of the world. Completely practical and honest, and vitally up-to-date for building anywhere but the hideously code-infested wealthy Western world. Truly a gem.

If you plan on ever building in the third world (or off the grid in the developed world) this book is filled

with tips and techniques that are used by traditional builders the world over. There is a section on everything from jungle construction to all the various forms of waste management in the world.

This is the English version of the original Spanish only book. The Barefoot Architect is a single volume book that covers every aspect of how to plan and construct rural central American (and South American) towns. From town planning, where to site buildings, how to build a house, or public toilets, a water powered wheel, or build a wheel barrow out of a 55 gallon drum, this book has it all. I'd bought the Spanish version years ago in a small bookstore in Mexico and was REALLY HAPPY to find it in English (as my Spanish isn't at all good). Dimensions all remain in metric, which is fine. A great gift for anyone into these topics!

Excellent inspirational ideas, would work better in a country without building codes. Also-- less information about cold climates than what I was expecting.

This book was built for indigenous folks to make comfortable economical shelter in their respective third world countries but is a treasure chest for expats who want to live in those places in a sensible fashion. I've not been so excited since the first "Whole Earth Catalog"! Put this in your luggage and find spot on the globe and go build a village.

Great as a reference book or to read. Green sustainable design that incorporates basic principles and concepts of construction. Too many of the ideas in this book have been forgotten in contemporary design and construction.

well the book arrived in a couple days. its mostly pictures very thick and arrived with out damage. this book was written in 1982 in mexico and later translated. it's very interesting but if you plan to build within the building codes in the US or any where that has building codes this book is not going to get you too far with your inspector. on the other hand it should be in every library and in every ecovillage. Survivalists and preppers, i would highly recommend this book to you.

This is a fabulous book. It is filled with a real sense of hope and empowerment about one's place in the world. And with clear diagrams and drawings for constructing energy-efficient, locally sustainable habitation. My only complaint (talk about 1st world problems...) is that it's written for a Southern Hemisphere audience, so directives about solar gain can become confusing, e.g. the

north wall in this book is the south wall to me.

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