

Home sweet tree-home

1 Is it possible to live a life that is self-sufficient and sustainable? This was the question that chef and set designer Nick Weston asked himself when he embarked on life as a 21st-century hunter-gatherer for a tree house he built in Sussex. After work became scarce in the recession, Nick felt that he had nothing to lose by trying to make a change so he scoured builders' skips, friends' garages and demolition yards to recycle the materials he needed to build a surprisingly comfortable tree house.



2 “This was not supposed to be an exercise in all-out survival. Life would go on as normal, except for my diet and living arrangements,” he explained. He timed his arboreal adventure to make the most of the wild larder in spring, summer and autumn and allowed himself a few staples (olive oil, flour, water, vinegar, tea, coffee, sugar, rice, yeast, salt and pepper) to help convert fresh produce into appetising meals. He also planned to fish and shoot for protein and kept a small vegetable patch.

3 Nick constructed his five by four-and-a-half metre studio-flat tree house mostly by himself. The shower, a compost loo and kitchen sink unit were constructed outside the structure. The inside, meanwhile, was far from bare with a double bed, a rabbit-pelt rug, table and chairs and a stove fashioned from a steel drum. “After foraging in the rain, firing her up with birch logs was the best way to get warmth and a singing kettle.”

Nick's book, The Tree House Diaries, is available to Country Living readers for a special price – visit www.allaboutyoubookshop.co.uk.

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