

Design notes for a Haybox Stool

Introduction

What is a haybox? It's basically an insulated box in which you place your partly cooked food. The heat energy held in the pot and the food completes the cooking process without any external heat input. Haybox cookers are so called because the early versions used hay as insulation. It is also referred to as fireless cooking or retained heat cooking.

There are many ways to construct a haybox. A box with a lid and some cushions can be used to cook food by the retained heat method. However a haybox that doubles up as a piece of furniture has more chance of being retained in a home and used frequently. The plans below show how to make a haybox that would double up as a stool or a low table in the kitchen.

The size of the haybox stool is based on a pot size of approximately 25 cm diameter and 14 cm high and good quality insulation. If a bigger pot is going to be used or crunched up newspaper is going to be used as insulation, then the sizes will have to be increased.

Materials and tools for the haybox stool

Vertical struts: 4 x 35 cm long planed timber (34 x 34 mm)

Horizontal struts: 8 x 34 cm long planed timber (34 x 34 mm)

Side panels: 2 x 41cm x 30cm ply or MDF (9mm thick)

Side panels: 2 x 43cm x 30cm ply or MDF (9mm thick)

Base and Lid: 2 x 43cm x 43cm ply or MDF (9mm thick)

Lid fixing: 4 square wooden blocks 8cm x 8cm (9mm ply or MDF)

Fixing screws, wood glue

Paint (optional)

Cushion: Material, insulation

Tools required: Electric jig saw, drill, workbench, screwdriver, and sewing machine

Instructions

Step 1



Build a frame for the stool using 34 x 34 mm smooth planed timber. The 4 vertical pieces are 35 cm long and the 8 horizontal struts are 34 cm long. They are screwed together as shown here. The 4 lower horizontal struts are fixed 5 cm from the end to form the feet for the stool. Only 1 screw is used for each joint as the whole structure tightens up when the side panels are fixed.

Step 2



Use 9mm ply or MDF board for the sides. Two of the sides were 41 cm (W) x 30 cm (H) and the other two were 43 cm (W) x 30 cm (H). These are shown fixed in the image below. Each side panel is fixed using 4 screws.

Step 3



Use 9mm ply or MDF board for the base. This is 43 x 43 cm with 4 cut-outs for the legs as shown below. This is held in place by 8 screws, 2 screws each into the four horizontal struts at the base.

Step 4



The lid for the haybox stool is made from 9 mm ply or MDF board 43 x 43 cm in size. Four wooden blocks are glued in position as shown below to keep the lid in place.

Step 5 - optional

Paint the outside of the haybox to make it attractive. The lid could have rounded corners. A cushion cover could be attached to the lid to make a comfortable seat.

Step 6

Make 2 cushion covers – one of size 80 x 80 cm and the other 50 x 50 cm. They should both have zips, Velcro or poppers to allow the insulation to be topped up or taken out for washing the cushion covers. Straw, coconut fibre, Kapok or polystyrene all provide suitable insulation.

Half fill the big cushion with insulation and use this to line the base of the haybox. Fully fill the smaller cushion which is then used to cover the pot.



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