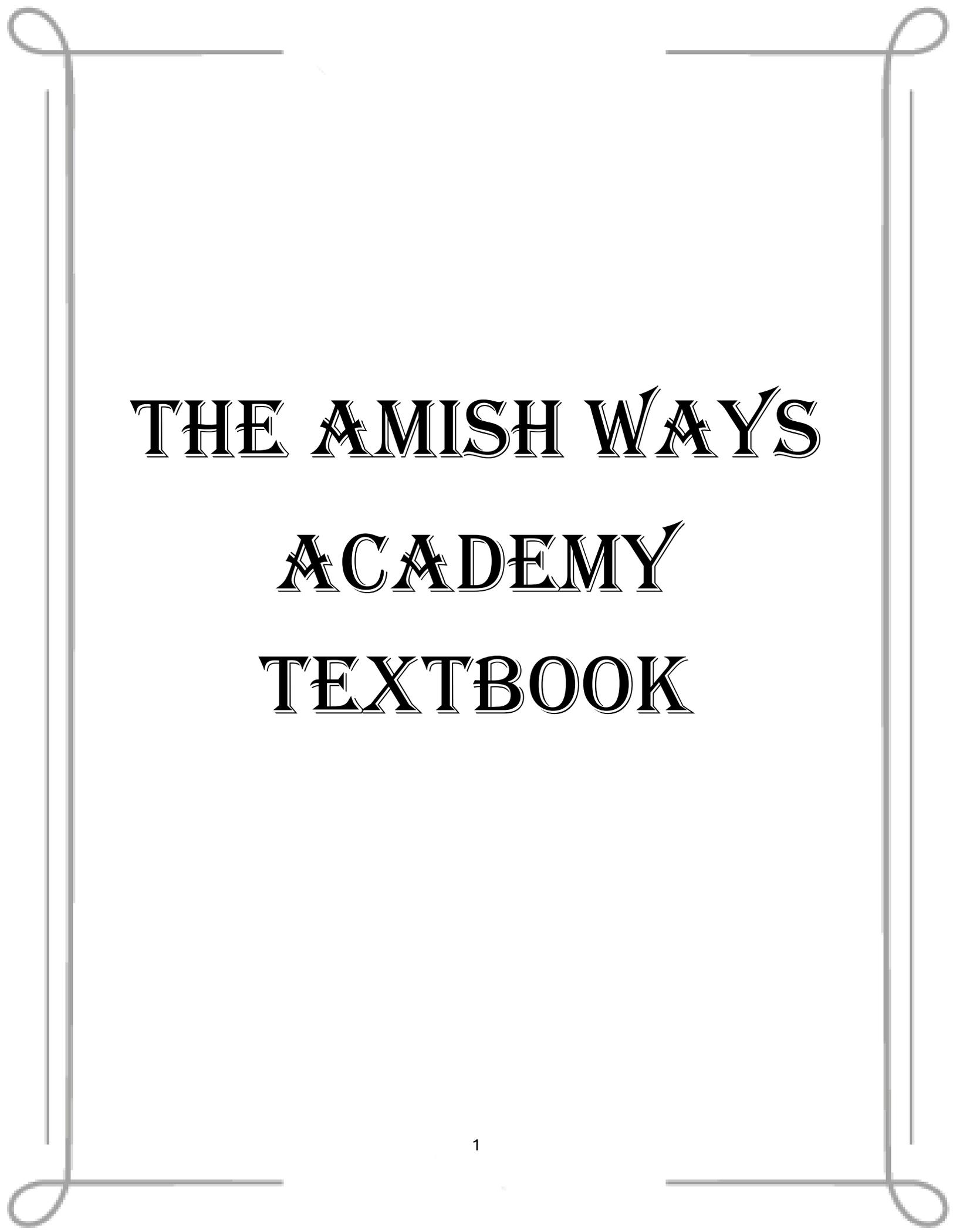




# THE AMISH WAYS

*Textbook*





THE AMISH WAYS

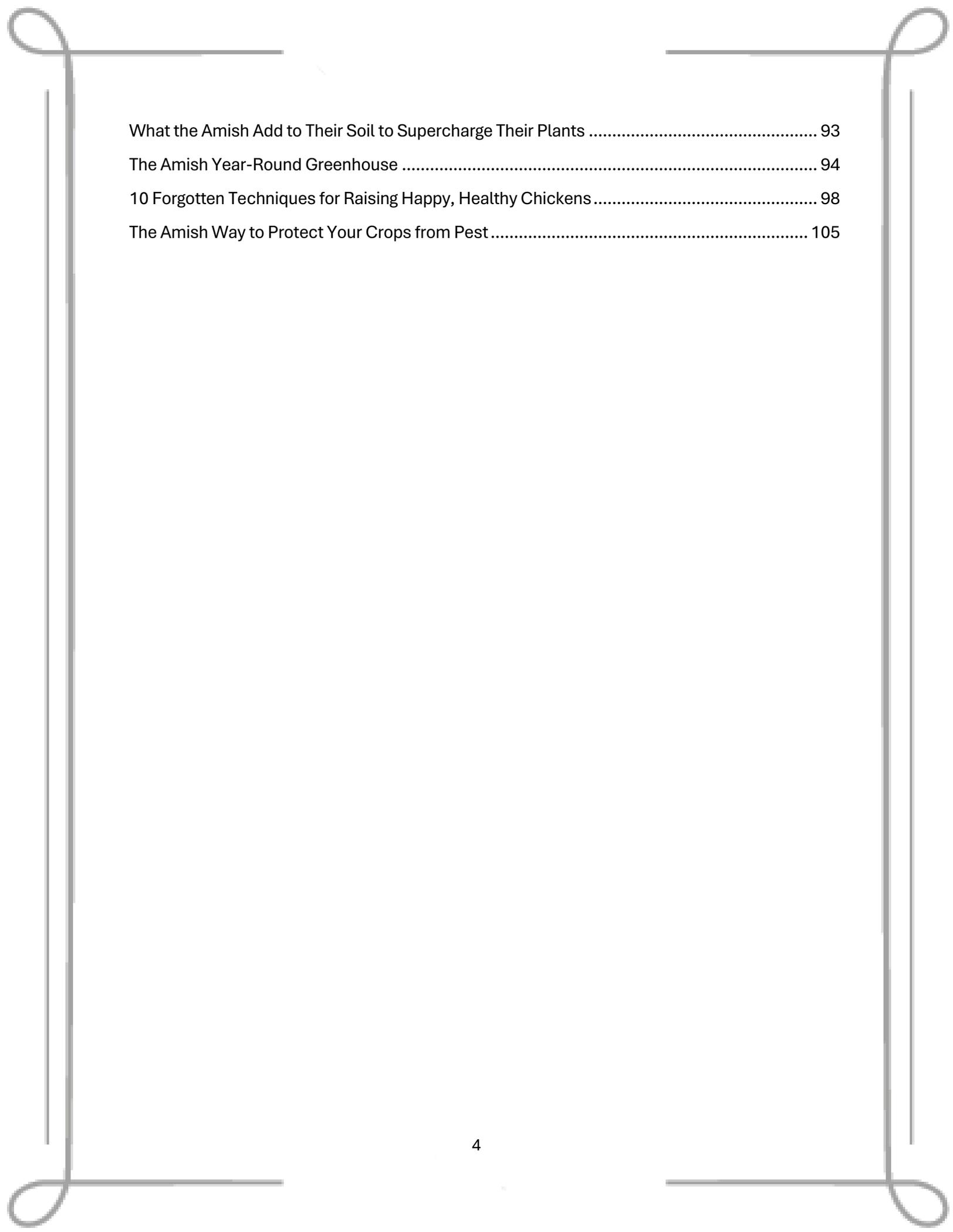
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TEXTBOOK

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# **DISCLAIMER**

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# INTRODUCTION

This academy will explore the life and customs of one of the oldest Amish communities, the Swartzentrubers, who live without electricity, modern technology, and many comforts of today.

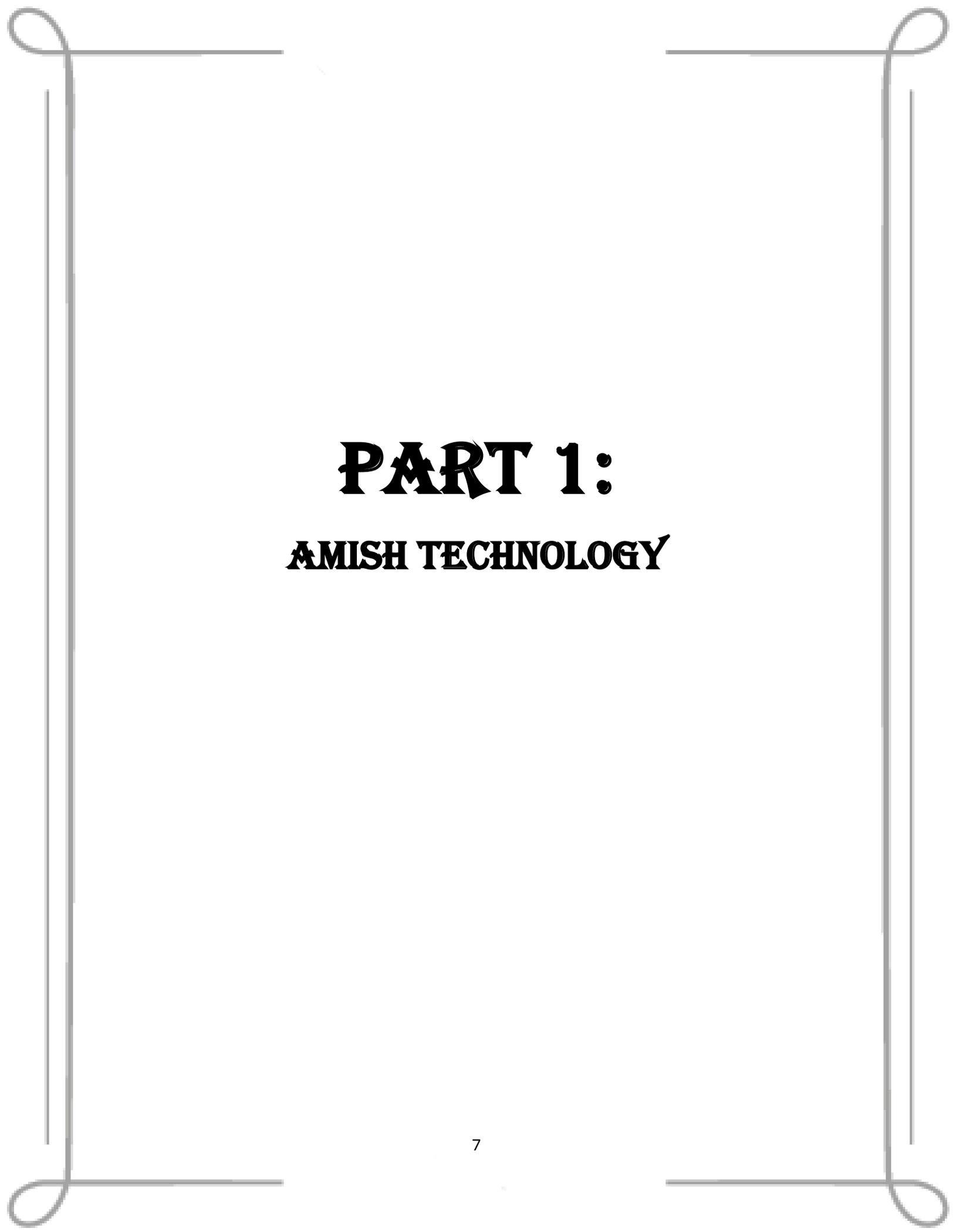
When thinking of the Amish, images of horse-drawn buggies, rolling farmlands, and a simple way of life often come to mind. However, beyond these scenes lies a wealth of wisdom that has remained largely hidden from the outside world.

The Amish community, with roots tracing back to 16<sup>th</sup>-century Europe, is grounded in principles of self-reliance, humility, and simplicity. Their lifestyle, shaped by religious beliefs and a deep respect for tradition, involves living without electricity and modern technology to avoid materialism and maintain their core values.

The Amish migrated to North America in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, settling in places like Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana, where they could practice their agricultural way of life. Their decision to distance themselves from modern conveniences, such as electricity, is a conscious choice to preserve their traditions and foster a strong sense of community. While some Amish communities have adapted certain technologies, like battery-powered tools and solar panels, they do so carefully to avoid reliance on external resources.

This academy was created to share the Amish community's unique knowledge and skills, which have allowed them to thrive independently of modern society.

The courses are designed for flexible learning, allowing you to start anywhere and progress at your own pace. This academy aims to equip you with skills that can enhance your self-sufficiency and preparedness.



**PART 1:**  
**AMISH TECHNOLOGY**

# Amish Tools You'll Need in a Crisis



"The daily grind" usually refers to the dissatisfaction of working jobs we dislike, but for the Amish, it has a very different meaning. Grinding flour to make daily bread may be repetitive, but it's a vital task that nourishes a family. In times when store-bought bread is unavailable, a manual grain mill becomes indispensable. High-quality mills are recommended, as they can last a lifetime and are often passed down through generations. Mills should be

securely bolted to a fixed surface, with cast iron being the preferred material. Quality mills, with a traditional design, can be found at many Amish stores, while brands like Country Living and Grain Maker also offer excellent options, though at a higher price point.

A manual grain mill is a reliable tool for making bread year-round, provided there's enough grain in stock. Whole grains, such as wheat, millet, sorghum, and rye, are best purchased in bulk. While growing your own grain is an option for those with ample land, most people will need to buy their supply. Whole grains, if stored correctly, have a much longer shelf life than flour, which can quickly go rancid or attract pests. Before grinding, it's important to sift through the grains to remove any foreign objects that could damage the mill.

Grinding flour manually requires effort, especially in the beginning, but over time, the process becomes easier. Each type of grain has a unique texture and sound during grinding, with some grains requiring more effort than others. Grinding enough flour for a loaf of bread or pancakes is time-consuming, but the tool is always ready to ensure fresh bread is available, even in emergency situations. However, it should be noted that whole grains are more expensive than commercially processed flour. The health benefits of unprocessed whole-grain bread, however, may outweigh the costs.

## **The Dry Sink**

A dry sink, a simple yet reliable tool in an Amish kitchen, consists of a long cabinet with two containers—one for washing dishes in hot water, provided free by the Pioneer Princess stove during cooking, and the other for rinsing in cold water. After rinsing, dishes are dried and placed on a rack before being stored away. This method is especially useful when running water isn't available.

## **Kerosene Oven**

The kerosene oven, a clever invention, features a side tank that feeds kerosene through a small opening into a tray, where wicks absorb it. To start the oven, the wick is lit, and it burns slowly, with a cover placed over the flame to regulate heat. The Amish prefer this oven in the summer because it

doesn't heat the room like the Pioneer Princess stove. To extinguish the flame, the wick is simply turned down. Lehman's is a good source for purchasing such an oven.

### **Plows**

One of the most iconic images of the Amish is their use of horse-drawn plows. This method of farming, still practiced today, compacts the soil less than modern machinery and allows for a deeper connection to the land. The Amish grow a variety of crops, including wheat, corn, tobacco, hay, soybeans, barley, and fodder for livestock, relying on traditional methods like crop rotation and livestock manure instead of chemical fertilizers. Their knowledge of seeds and soil is highly valued, and techniques such as using eggshells to provide calcium and deter slugs are examples of their practical gardening wisdom.

### **Seeders**

A manual garden seeder, a tool valued by the Amish, is easy to use and ensures seeds are planted evenly. These seeders, available online, are an investment worth considering for efficient planting.

### **Push Plow**

The Amish also use manual push plows for smaller gardens, such as those for medicinal plants. This tool, though labor-intensive, is effective for small-scale farming.

### **Scythe**

The scythe, a traditional tool for cutting grass, requires skill to master and is still used by some Amish, though horse-drawn bar mowers have largely replaced it.

### **Butter Churner**

The butter churner, a device for making butter from cream or milk, remains a cherished tool among the Amish. Churning butter by hand is a practice deeply rooted in their traditions.

### **Amish Dibble**

A dibble, a specialized tool for making holes in soil for seeds, is another important tool in Amish gardening. Dibbles can be individual tools or trays that make multiple holes at once. These tools are simple to make and highly useful.

### **Amish Sawmill**

Amish woodworking and furniture making are well-known, and their sawmills, powered by compressed air instead of electricity, are a testament to their ingenuity. In these mills, a system of belts and pulleys runs various machines, making them highly efficient and independent of the power grid. Tools like cant hooks, cutters, axe heads, hammers, scrapers, and sanders are essential for sawmill operations. The Amish's approach to working without electricity showcases their ability to maintain productivity while staying off the grid.

# The Amish Outhouse



Amish communities vary in their use of outhouses, with some even having indoor bathrooms with plumbing. However, in more conservative communities that avoid running water and electricity, traditional outhouses are still common.

These outhouses are typically wooden structures with a raised wooden shelf containing a hole, positioned above a pit. In some cases, there is an additional container where sewage ferments,

which is later used as compost for fertilizing crops.

Due to state health regulations, many Amish communities have had to either remove or modify their outhouses to comply with codes. A more advanced and compliant version involves connecting the outhouse to a leach field, which is a series of gravel-filled trenches with perforated pipes that direct waste into the ground.

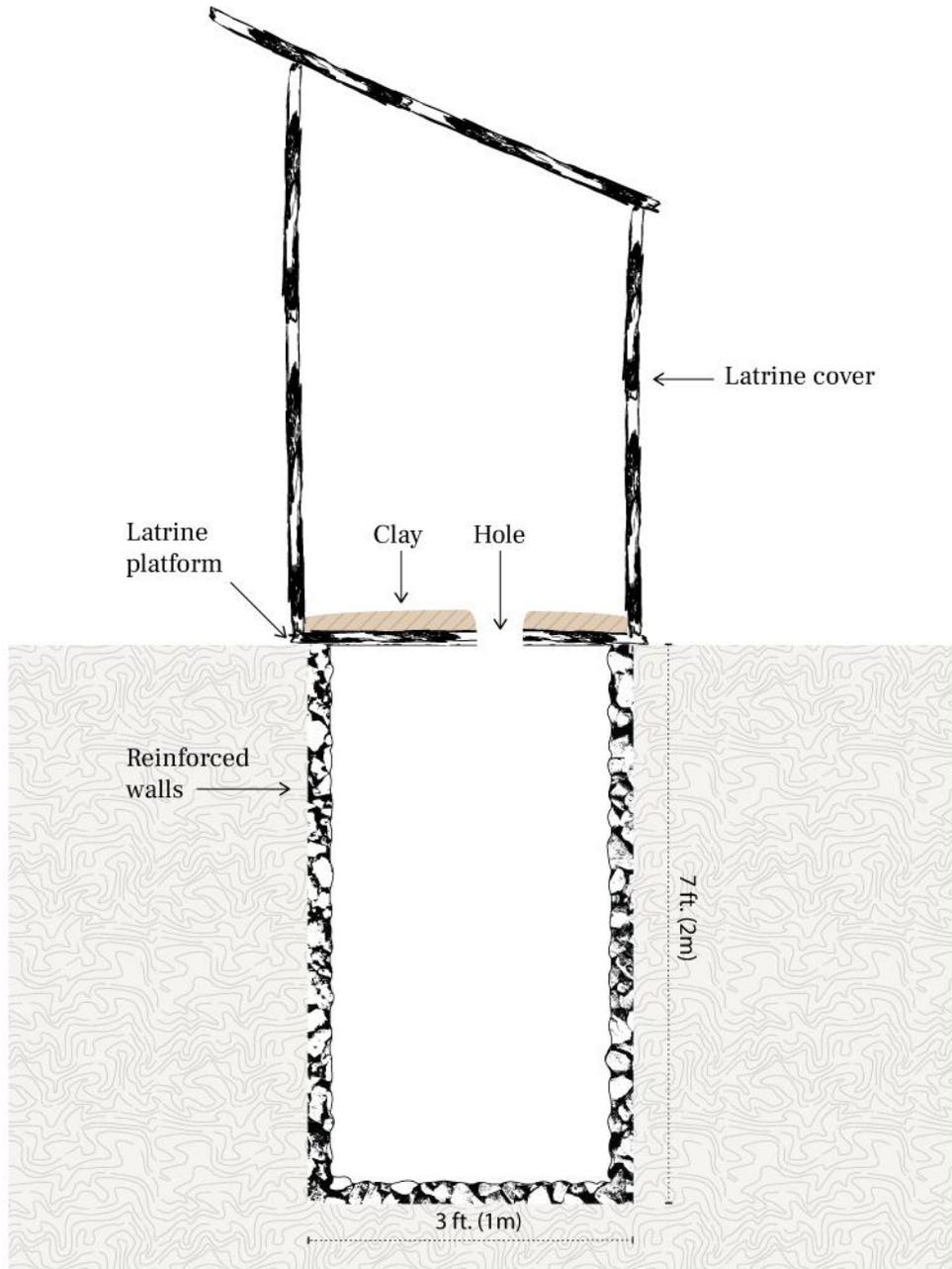
This system can benefit anyone dealing with nutrient-poor soil, providing a free and efficient setup for backyard use.

## Building the Outhouse

Choosing the right location for your outhouse is critical for both health and safety. Here are the key factors to consider:

1. **Distance from Your House:** Your outhouse should be far enough from your house so that you won't smell waste. Consider both the distance and wind direction to ensure that any odors are carried away. This will help keep your living area comfortable and hygienic.
2. **Suitable Terrain:** Choose a location that won't flood, which could carry waste away or cause contamination. Avoid sites prone to landslides, such as the side of a hill, as this could lead to the outhouse collapsing.
3. **Proximity to Water Sources:** Make sure your outhouse is positioned away from any water sources. If you use a well, the outhouse should not extend deeper than 7 feet (2 meters) above the water table. If you're drawing from a fresh source like a river or lake, the outhouse should be at least 330 feet (100 meters) away to avoid contamination.

4. **Soil Stability:** Ideally, select a location with stable soil to avoid the need for additional supports around the outhouse pit. If the soil is unstable, you may need to build brick or stone supports to keep the outhouse secure.

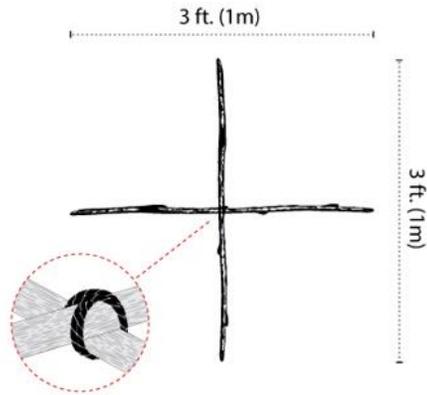


Once you have chosen the right spot, follow these steps to build your outhouse.

**Instructions:**

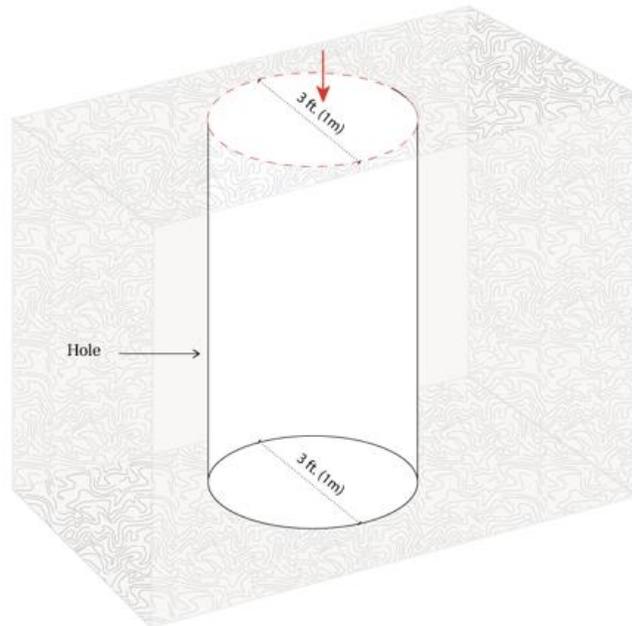
**1. Dig the Hole:**

- Start by measuring and digging a circular hole about 3 feet (1 meter) in diameter. This shape offers better stability for the outhouse walls.
- Use a simple measuring tool made from two 3-foot (1 meter) sticks lashed together in a cross shape. This tool helps ensure a consistent diameter as you dig down.



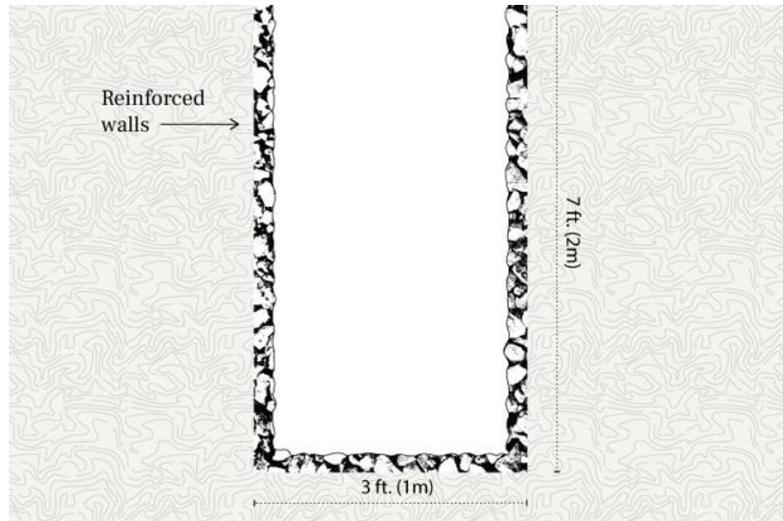
**2. Depth of the Hole:**

- Dig the hole at least 7 feet (2 meters) deep.



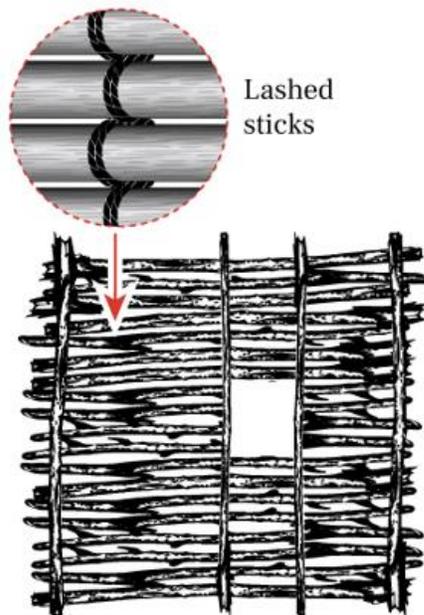
### 3. Support the Walls:

- If the soil is stable, support any weak sections with hardened clay bricks or stones. In fully unstable soil, build a retaining wall out of stones and clay to provide long-term strength.



### 4. Build the Platform:

- Create a cover with a strong platform that has a hole in the center for waste. You can build the platform by lashing sticks together tightly. Add side supports to help with stability while using the outhouse.



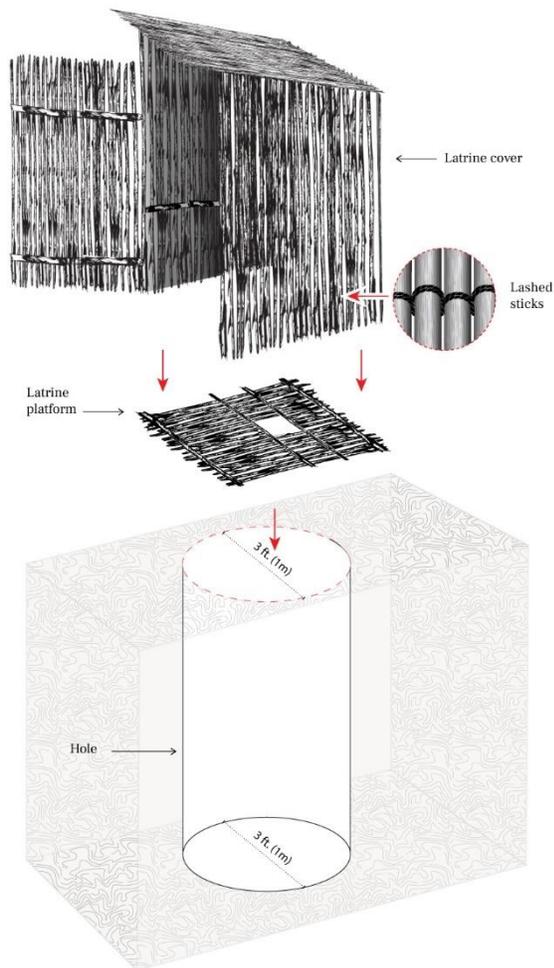
## Keeping the Outhouse Covered

Covering your outhouse is essential to control odors. Here's how to do it:

### 1. Build a Privacy Screen:

- Construct a simple structure around the outhouse using branches and leaves woven together. This offers privacy and helps keep the area secure from animals.

### 2. Create a Durable Cover:



- For a temporary cover, lash sticks together to make a larger frame, then fasten smaller branches and leaves to form a solid covering. This will help contain the scent and keep animals out.
- For a more permanent cover, lash long, straight logs tightly together and pack the top with clay and thick mud. This creates a mound over the outhouse with a small, carved-out space in the middle for use. This method is ideal for long-term use as it provides a durable and effective seal.

# Ingenious Amish Ways to Heat Your Home

This course explains how the Amish heat their homes without electricity and how you can adapt these methods to reduce dependence on the power grid and lower your heating costs.

## Wood Stoves

Wood stoves are the primary heating source in many Amish homes. A common example is the Pioneer Princess, a wood-burning stove designed by two Amish brothers in Ontario, Canada, in 1979. They created this stove to combine heating and cooking functions, allowing families to efficiently heat their homes and prepare meals using the same appliance. The stove is usually placed in the center of the house to ensure even heat distribution across all rooms. In some cases, additional stoves are installed in other rooms or the basement, where heat can rise through vents to warm the house.



One advantage of the Pioneer Princess and similar wood stoves is that they can also heat water, thanks to a tank attached to the back of the stove. As the stove is used for cooking, it simultaneously heats water, which can then be drawn from a spigot for various household needs.

## Kerosene Heaters

For rooms that the main wood stove doesn't reach, especially those upstairs, Amish families often use kerosene space heaters. These heaters operate similarly to large kerosene lamps, using a wick made of fiberglass and cotton to draw kerosene from a tank and burn it for warmth. The heat and soft light from these heaters contribute to a cozy atmosphere.



Some Amish communities, particularly more conservative ones like the Swartzenrubber Amish, rely almost exclusively on kerosene for heating and lighting. Kerosene heaters are also portable, making it easy to move them to different parts of the home as needed. This portability and ease of use make them a valuable asset during blackouts or harsh winters.

## Fireplaces

Amish fireplaces are more than just decorative; they serve as a practical heating source and a place for cooking certain foods. Unlike typical American fireplaces, Amish fireplaces are taller and equipped with features like hanging pots and grills, allowing families to cook meals directly over the

fire. These fireplaces also provide a central gathering place for families, fostering strong bonds as they spend evenings together around the warmth.

The Amish also use these fireplaces for food preservation, such as smoking meats inside the hearth. This multifunctional use of the fireplace highlights the Amish emphasis on self-sufficiency and practicality.

### **Radiant Floor Heating**



In more progressive Amish communities, radiant floor heating is used. This system involves laying hot water pipes directly beneath wooden floors, which are heated by a wood-burning boiler located outside the house. The water in the pipes circulates, warming the floors and creating a comfortable living environment. Depending on the outside temperature, the boiler needs to be fed with wood once or twice a day, sometimes more during extremely cold weather.

This system, though complex, is highly efficient and operates independently of the power grid, making it a reliable heating solution in the event of a disaster.

### **Pellet Stoves**

Some Amish families use pellet stoves, which burn wood pellets made from sawdust. These stoves are more efficient than traditional wood stoves, as they can run for up to 30 hours on a single load of pellets and produce minimal smoke.

However, most pellet stoves require electricity to operate, which is why they are less common among the Amish.

For those who do use pellet stoves, there are models available that can be started with propane instead of electricity, offering a solution that aligns with Amish values of self-sufficiency.



### **Preventing Heat Loss**

The Amish employ several methods to prevent heat loss in their homes, ensuring that the heat generated stays inside. For windows that are rarely used, a simple yet effective solution is to apply bubble wrap. The wrap is cut to size, sprayed with water on both sides, and pressed against the window, where it sticks and provides insulation.

To address drafts under doors, the Amish use products like the Cinch Door Seal, which attaches to the bottom of doors to block cold air from entering. They may also use additional seals on the sides and top of doors for extra insulation.



In addition to these measures, the Amish use natural materials for insulation. Straw bales are often stacked around the exterior of homes in the winter, providing excellent insulation due to their high R-value. Hemp wool is another popular choice, used for insulating walls, floors, and ceilings. This material, made from the fibers of the hemp plant, is both effective and environmentally friendly. For sheds or attics, the Amish use bubble foil insulation, which reflects heat back into the space and prevents moisture buildup.

### **Passive Solar Heating**

Another method employed by the Amish is passive solar heating, which involves capturing sunlight through south-facing windows and storing the heat in materials like bricks, concrete, or stone. These materials act as a thermal mass, slowly releasing the stored heat throughout the day and night.

For every square foot of window space, about two cubic feet of thermal mass is recommended to ensure adequate heat storage. Passive solar heating is an energy-efficient way to reduce heating costs, especially when combined with other methods. However, careful planning is needed to avoid overheating and to ensure that the home remains comfortable throughout the year.

The Amish heating methods covered in this course offer practical, low-cost solutions for keeping homes warm without relying on electricity. From wood stoves and kerosene heaters to passive solar heating and effective insulation techniques, these methods provide valuable insights into self-sufficient living. By adopting some of these strategies, you can reduce your energy costs, ensure warmth during power outages, and create a more sustainable and resilient home.

# Cooking without Electricity

Amish stoves serve multiple purposes, but this course focuses on using them to cook without electricity. It explores various types of stoves used in Amish households, including how they work, their advantages and disadvantages, and instructions on using each one.

The course also covers outdoor cooking methods such as using fire pits and outdoor kitchens. Information is provided on where to find these stoves if needed.



Starting with the **wood-burning stove**, particularly the well-known **Pioneer Princess**, the course explains its structure and operation. The stove features three compartments: an oven with a temperature gauge, a large firebox for holding wood, and an ash box that needs occasional emptying. Temperature control is managed via a knob on the side of the oven, with L and H markings for low and high heat. Additional controls include an airflow knob and a metal bar for shaking ash from the firebox.

The hottest part of the stove is directly above the firebox, ideal for high-temperature cooking. A fan can be added to the cooktop to circulate heat throughout the house.

The Pioneer Princess, made of steel and weighing several hundred pounds, is praised for its efficiency, especially in winter. However, its cooktop can rust when not in use, requiring cleaning before use. Despite this, wood cooking stoves like the Pioneer Princess are considered essential for self-sufficiency.

For summer cooking, the Amish often use **kerosene stoves**, which produce less heat than wood-burning stoves. Kerosene stoves feature a fuel tank on the side, with kerosene dripping into a tray and flowing through pipes to the burners. The stove is ignited by turning the wick up, and the flame is controlled by adjusting the wick height.

Summer kitchens, often separate from the main house, were historically used to keep cooking heat and smells out of the home. These kitchens often included an open-hearth fireplace and were used before electricity became widespread.

Some Amish communities also use **propane stoves**, which can be converted from gas stoves. Propane is stored in large underground tanks and used to power stoves, tools, and other machines. Operating a propane stove is similar to a gas stove, with a knob to control the flame and a butane lighter or match for ignition. Proper installation and regular purging of propane tanks are necessary for safe use.

**Coal ranges** are another option used by the Amish. These stoves generate even, consistent heat, making them ideal for cooking and heating in colder climates. Anthracite coal, preferred by the Amish, burns hotter, cleaner, and more cost-effectively than wood. While coal ranges require regular cleaning, they are valued for their long burn times and efficient heat production.



**Dutch ovens**, commonly used by the Amish, are made from cast iron and are versatile for various cooking methods, including baking. They can be used over an open fire or in a stove, and their thick walls allow for even heating.

Amish outdoor cooking also includes using wood or coal-fired stoves outside, often with Dutch ovens. Fire pits and grills are used for special occasions, with some Amish communities favoring propane or gas-fed barbecue grills. Large rotating grills are used for community gatherings, and the Big Green Egg grill is popular for its compliance with Amish practices.

Overall, the Amish have a wide range of cooking options that remain functional regardless of external circumstances. Adding one of these stoves to a home can offer similar benefits.

## The Amish Fridge

Amish refrigeration methods vary, relying on creativity rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. One effective method is the buried barrel fridge, or **Amish Fridge**, which uses the earth's stable temperature and ice slabs to keep food cool without electricity.

This method is useful for off-grid living, camping, or crisis preparedness, providing a sustainable way to preserve perishables. The barrel acts as insulation, slowing the melting of ice and extending its effectiveness even in warm weather. It also protects food from wildlife.



Below are the detailed instructions for building an Amish Fridge, including materials and tips.

### **Materials Needed:**

1. Barrel (sturdy and robust)
2. Insulating materials (such as Styrofoam, straw, or sawdust)
3. Ice slabs (harvested from frozen ponds)
4. Shading material (to protect from direct sunlight)
5. Optional: Metal panels (for a more durable construction)

### **Tools Required:**

1. Saw (for cutting materials to size)
2. Shovel (for burying the barrel)
3. Insulation cutter (if using Styrofoam)
4. Sealing materials (like caulk or sealant)
5. Measuring tape and markers

### **Instructions:**

#### **1. Prepare the Barrel:**

- Ensure the barrel is clean and sturdy.
- Consider adding any necessary reinforcements if using a metal barrel.

#### **2. Create Insulation Layers:**

- Line the interior of the barrel with up to two or three feet of insulating material.
- Ensure the insulation surrounds the barrel to prevent heat exchange.

#### **3. Place Ice Slabs:**

- Place harvested ice slabs inside the barrel.
- Arrange them to maximize contact with the barrel walls for efficient cooling.

#### **4. Positioning and Shading:**

- Bury the barrel partially underground in a shaded area.

- Ensure the barrel is stable and won't shift over time.

#### 5. **Maintenance and Usage:**

- Monitor the ice levels regularly, replenishing as necessary.
- Adjust insulation and shading as needed to maintain optimal cooling efficiency.

#### 6. **Additional Tips:**

- Use glass jars for storing food inside the Amish Fridge to maintain colder temperatures without freezing.
- Consider adding additional layers of insulation during extremely hot weather to prolong ice life.

Another method is building an **Ice House**, a larger-scale version of the Amish Fridge. Traditionally made of wood, but now often using metal panels, the key is to create a well-sealed and insulated space. Lining the walls with thick Styrofoam helps maintain freezing temperatures, preventing ice from melting quickly.

Ice can be purchased or harvested from ponds during winter, with some Amish communities holding Ice Harvest Parties. If properly insulated, the Ice House can keep food cold until the next harvest. Storing food in glass jars is recommended for better temperature preservation, though care should be taken to avoid freezing.



For those in mountainous areas, a **Stone Chill Bath** can be created by channeling an alpine stream into a stone basin where food in glass jars is stored. The cold water and stone keep food cool, making it ideal for items that need refrigeration but not freezing.

Lastly, the **Amish Root Cellar**, another effective preservation method, is covered in detail in a dedicated course, at page 23.

## Backyard Smokehouse



Smokehouses play a crucial role in the self-sufficient lifestyle of the Amish, serving multiple purposes, primarily for meat preservation. Without relying on electricity, smoking meat significantly extends its shelf life.

This method allows for the avoidance of artificial preservatives commonly used by large food corporations, providing greater control over food quality. Unlike high-heat cooking methods that lead to nutrient loss, smoking preserves essential vitamins and minerals. Additionally, the process enhances the flavor of the meat, infusing it with a unique smoky aroma from burning wood. The slow cooking also breaks down tough connective tissues, resulting in tender, succulent dishes.

Amish smokehouses are typically constructed from wood, with oak, maple, and hickory being popular choices for their ability to produce flavorful smoke. Stone and brick are often used for the walls and base, offering durability and effective heat retention. Metal racks are essential for hanging the meat, ensuring they are sturdy and heat-resistant to withstand the long smoking process.

The construction of a smokehouse is straightforward. The process involves building a fire, directing the smoke through a long pipe where it cools before reaching the meat at an optimal temperature of 85 to 125 degrees Fahrenheit.

To begin, select a flat area in the yard for the smokehouse and ensure adequate space between the pit and the structure. A wooden frame is constructed, with planks forming the walls and a simple pitched roof.

A door is installed to close tightly, keeping the smoke contained.

A small pit for the fire is dug 6-10 feet away from the smokehouse, with a trench connecting the two. A pipe is laid in the trench, sloping downward toward the smokehouse for proper airflow, and securely fitted to direct smoke inside.

The trench is then filled with soil to prevent smoke from escaping.

Grates are placed inside the smokehouse, a few inches above the ground, to hold the meat and allow smoke circulation.

Testing the smokehouse involves lighting a small fire in the pit to ensure smoke flows through the pipe and into the smokehouse.

Incorporating a smokehouse into a backyard offers significant savings by reducing reliance on commercial preservation methods and refrigeration.

## The Mini-Root Cellar You can Add to Your Backyard

Today's lesson is all about the Amish root cellar—a vital part of food preservation long before the days of electricity, refrigeration, and modern storage methods. Root cellars were essential for storing harvests, dairy products, and some meats, and they remain an important feature for the Amish today, who live without electricity or modern technology. Let's dive into how to build and use one!



### Materials and Tools Needed

- **Shovels and digging tools** for excavating the cellar
- **Wooden shelves** for storing produce
- **Sandbags** for insulation and erosion prevention
- **Digital thermometer** (optional, but recommended for monitoring temperature and humidity)
- **Metal pipes** for ventilation
- **Steel mesh** to cover ventilation openings and keep out pests
- **Containers or baskets** for storing fruits and vegetables
- **Wooden barrels** (if building a mini cellar)

### Step-by-Step Instructions:

#### Step 1: Choose the Location

Select a location for your root cellar that is on high ground to avoid flooding. Make sure the area gets good natural shade, which helps keep the cellar cool.

## **Step 2: Dig the Cellar**

Dig your cellar at least **10 feet deep**. This depth helps maintain a stable temperature between **32 and 40 degrees Fahrenheit**, which is ideal for preserving most types of food. Deeper cellars offer more consistent temperatures year-round.

## **Step 3: Insulate the Cellar**

Line the walls of the cellar with **sandbags** to insulate and prevent erosion. The sandbags will help keep the temperature consistent and protect the structure from water damage.

## **Step 4: Install Ventilation**

Proper ventilation is crucial to avoid mold buildup and to remove ethylene gas released by stored vegetables. Install **metal outtake pipes** that work like stove pipes, allowing air to circulate. Cover the openings with **steel mesh** to keep out small animals and insects.

## **Step 5: Set Up Shelving**

Build **wooden shelves** along the walls of your cellar. Wood is a great choice because it doesn't conduct heat, which helps keep your food cool. Be sure the shelves are sturdy enough to hold heavy produce and jars.

## **Step 6: Organize Your Food Storage**

Place your produce on the shelves. For foods that need to stay cooler, store them directly on the **bare earth floor** next to a wall where the temperature is cooler. Handle your vegetables carefully to avoid bruises, cuts, or nicks, as damaged produce won't store well.

## **Step 7: Monitor Temperature and Humidity**

Aim to keep the root cellar at a **humidity level between 90% and 95%**. A digital thermometer can help you monitor both temperature and humidity. The dark, humid environment will prevent moisture loss and keep your produce fresh for longer.

## **Step 8: Build a Mini Root Cellar (Optional)**

If you're short on space, consider building a **mini root cellar**. This can be done by burying a wooden barrel in the ground. The earth's natural temperature and the wood create a cool, moist environment, perfect for storing canned goods or a small harvest.

## **Step 9: Maintain Your Cellar**

Regularly check for any signs of mold or critters. Make sure the ventilation is working properly and the temperature remains stable. Rotate your stock to use older produce first and replace any items that show signs of spoilage.

## **Practical Tips for Using a Root Cellar**

- Store your canned food in the root cellar. In winter, the cellar will prevent them from freezing and breaking the seal, and in summer, it will keep them away from heat, which can also cause seals to break.

- For vegetables, like potatoes, onions, and carrots, ensure they are stored away from sunlight to prevent them from sprouting or rotting.
- Always handle your produce with care to avoid damage that could lead to spoilage.

### Inside the Root Cellar

Let's take a look inside! This root cellar is lined with **sandbags** for insulation and to prevent erosion. The **wooden shelves** are stocked with freshly harvested potatoes, onions, and carrots, which will stay fresh for a long time away from sunlight.

And if you have limited space, you can create a **mini root cellar** by burying a wooden barrel. The concept is similar to the Amish fridge (which uses ice) but without the ice. The barrel creates a perfect environment for storing canned goods and root vegetables.

That's all for today! Now, I'm heading to check on the other cellar down the hill where I keep my canned goods. See you all next time!



## The Amish Washing Machine You Can Use in a Blackout



This course will explore how the Amish approach laundry without relying on electricity.

In the event of a crisis, many household appliances become useless, including the washing machine. The Amish offer several off-the-grid solutions to keep clothes clean during a long-term blackout.

One basic method is using a **washboard**, similar to the one often seen in older homes. Clothes are soaked in hot, soapy water, then

rubbed against the ridged surface of the washboard to clean them. After rinsing, the clothes are left to dry. This method doesn't even require running water.

Another option is the traditional **wringer washer**, still widely used by Amish housewives. These washers feature two rolling pins that wring out water after clothes are washed in the basin below. Many wringer washers run on pneumatic power, with air compressed by a diesel engine as a compromise to avoid electricity use, though some models are entirely hand operated. For drying, clothes are typically hung outside to dry naturally.



There is also an Amish device known as a **spinner**, which speeds up the drying process by spinning out excess water, though the preferred method remains hanging clothes outdoors.

Almost all Amish homes have a **clothesline**. The common T-shaped clothesline allows for hanging clothes at eye level, but a notable Amish innovation is the spool. This is a long line of laundry that extends from a point near the home to a high point in a tree or on a barn. The combination of natural sunlight and fresh air tends to reduce wrinkles and odors while preserving fabric from the wear and tear associated with electric dryers.

This course also introduces the **Amish washing machine**, which combines traditional methods with modern convenience while adhering to Amish principles of simplicity and non-electricity. These machines are typically powered by a gasoline engine that drives the washing drum, ensuring they remain independent of the electrical grid.

The engine powers the agitator and sometimes the wringer, making the washing process efficient. These machines are robust, durable, and designed for heavy use, making them ideal for the large families common in Amish communities. They can be obtained through traditional Amish hardware stores or, occasionally, at flea markets.

# The Amish Device That Produces Water Out of Thin Air

This method explains how to create a solar still, ensuring access to clean water even if the tap runs dry.

## Tools needed:

- Saw (Table saw recommended)
- Drill with bits and drivers
- Tape measure
- Square
- Sharp knife

## Materials needed:

- Two sheets of ½" x 24" x 48" Plywood



- Sheet of glass or clear plastic (I used an 18"x 24" Clear Acrylic Sheet)

- 1" PVC pipe



- 1" PVC 90-degree elbow



- #8 x 1" Screws



- A regular door hinge



- Double Hinge Hasps



- 1/2" Rigid foam insulation



- Clear silicone



**Instructions:**

1. Determine the size of the solar still. There are a couple of ways to do this, one is to size the still based on the size of the trays that you will use to hold the dirty water, and the other is to size it based on the dimensions of the glass pane that you can source. In my case, I didn't want to cut the transparent sheet of plastic that I bought, so I sized the still based on its dimensions.



2. One of the still's essential aspects is that the glass is sloped down towards one end of the still. The angle of this slope is not critical and what I decided on was a 4" drop over the 24" length of the plastic sheet. I decided to make the back end of the still 12 inches tall, so I marked out 12 inches. I marked a point 8 inches up from the bottom and used the glass pane to mark where they would intersect.

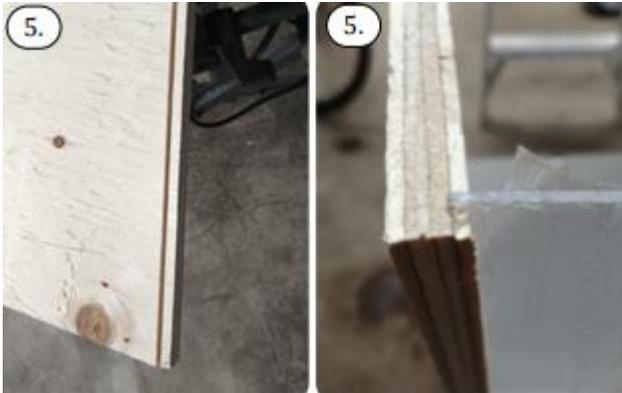


3. I then cut my two side pieces using a table saw.



4. Next, I set up my table saw to cut a groove into the plywood about 1/8" to 3/16" deep.
5. Cut a groove into the plywood on one side of the diagonal edge of the plywood side pieces.

This groove will hold the glass, so you may need to widen it depending on the thickness of the glass pane. Remember that these side pieces will be handed parts, and you need to consider which side is which when cutting.



6. Test fit the glass and measure for the bottom and the two end pieces.



7. Cut these parts.

8. Remove the glass and glue and screw the sides to the bottom. Secure the short end with glue and screws as well.



9. Temporarily secure the tall side with a screw or two.



10. Line the inside with foam insulation, keeping in mind that the tall end will be a hinged door.



11. Glue this insulation into place.
12. You can choose to paint the inside black with high-temperature paint, which may allow for greater heat absorption. Still, I cannot say whether there would be any contamination of the water vapor from the paint. Therefore, I decided not to paint my solar still. If you choose to paint yours, allow it to thoroughly dry and cure according to the manufacturer's directions.
13. Install a hinge and hasp on the tall piece and remove the temporary screws.



14. Drill a hole large enough to fit the 1" PVC pipe snugly. This hole should be positioned so that it is as close as practical to the glass top of the still.



15. Test fit the pipe and mark the point at which it enters the inside of the solar still.
16. Split the pipe in half only to the dimension equal to the inside dimension of the still. The goal is to have the section of pipe inside the still be open at the top.



17. Insert the pipe into the hole and position it so that there is enough slope that water will easily flow towards the outlet. Next, run a bead of silicone along the edges of the section of the pipe. Then slide the glass into place and run a bead of silicone around the perimeter of the glass.



18. Attach a 90-degree elbow to the outlet.



To use this solar still, all you need to do is place it in direct sunlight and then load trays of dirty water into the body of the Still.

As the water evaporates, it will condense on the glass and trickle down into the trough. The clean water will then flow down into the container placed by the outlet to collect the clean and distilled water.



# Amish Water Secrets



This course explores the methods used by the Amish to secure their water supply, even without access to water pipes or reliance on the water grid. In times of crisis, water can become more valuable than food, making it difficult to stockpile enough to meet basic needs. Drawing inspiration from the Amish, it's possible to establish multiple water sources that are not only useful in emergencies but also in daily life.

One basic method is rainwater collection, which captures water that would otherwise be wasted. While some states regulate this practice, these rules are likely to be overlooked in a disaster scenario.

A practical rainwater collection system can be created using a barrel with a faucet installed near the bottom. Inside the barrel, a layered filtration system of pebbles, sand, gravel, and charcoal can purify the rainwater, allowing it to be used for bathing or other purposes. Elevating the

barrel on a platform and using gravity to direct the water into additional storage tanks can increase the system's efficiency.

Another off-grid water source is a well. Two types of wells can be constructed: hand-dug and driven.

Hand-dug wells, one of the oldest methods, involve excavating the well shaft manually until water is reached, then lining the shaft with stones or barrels to prevent collapse. Water can be drawn using a bucket, and once the well is complete, bleach can be added to purify the water, though it's important to test the water quality before drinking.

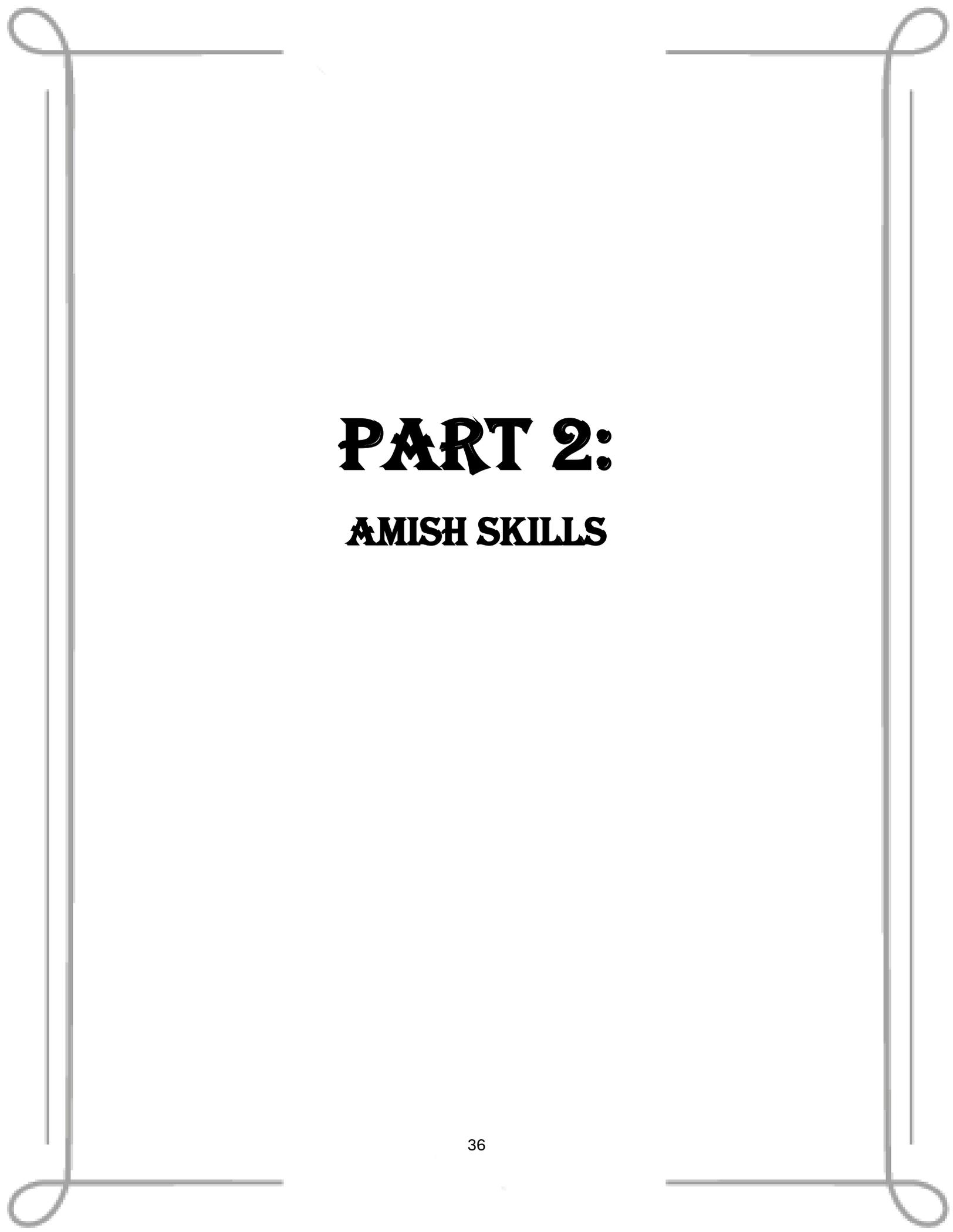


A driven well involves sinking a long pipe into the ground until the water table is reached. The process includes using a sledgehammer or maul to drive the pipe into a pre-dug hole and attaching a hand pump to access the water. While an electric pump can be used, a hand pump provides a reliable, off-grid option. Hand pumps, often made of cast iron, are durable and do not require electricity, relying only on manual operation to draw water.

The Amish community often digs wells as a collective effort, helping each other to become self-sufficient and independent. For those looking for a deeper, more reliable water source, drilled wells

powered by windmills or solar pumps can be considered, though they require professional tools and assistance.

Maintaining any well is crucial for ensuring a clean water supply. Regularly checking the well's structure and removing debris such as leaves, dirt, and rocks is essential. For those preparing for a crisis or seeking alternatives to the power grid, a combination of these water systems provides a reliable backup, ensuring access to water even if one system fails due to circumstances like drought.

A decorative border consisting of thin grey lines. It features a vertical line on each side, with horizontal lines at the top and bottom. Each of the four corners is finished with a small, elegant loop or flourish.

**PART 2:**  
**AMISH SKILLS**

# Scrap Rotation – What to Feed Your Plants to Grow Bigger, Faster and Tastier



This course focuses on how to repurpose scraps, a practice deeply ingrained in Amish life. The Amish are known for their resourcefulness, turning items typically discarded into valuable resources. This course will present various Amish techniques to help save money, increase self-sufficiency, and prepare for challenging times.

Begin with vegetable scraps, which can be composted or used to make homemade vegetable broth or stock. Another method is regrowing them to create a continuous supply of fresh produce at home. For example, lettuce, green onions, celery, and even carrots can be regrown from their scraps.

Several methods exist for regrowing from scraps. One approach is growing from seeds. When scooping seeds from squash or melon, save them. Clean the seeds, dry them on a paper towel, and store them for planting at the next optimal time. This method works well for members of the Gourd family, including melons, pumpkins, cucumbers, and zucchini.

Another method involves growing from cut tops. For instance, after cutting a beet, place the tops in a shallow dish of water, ensuring the base of the beet greens remains attached. Change the water regularly, and regrowth will occur. This technique is effective for most root crops such as radishes, turnips, carrots, and parsnips.

Stalks and fresh cuts can also be regrown. Save a piece of the stalk with roots from herbs, place it in a jar with the roots submerged in water, and place it in direct sunlight. New growth will develop on the stalks within a few days. After a week or so, plant the stalk with its new roots in a soil-rich garden bed or pot. This method is suitable for celery, scallions, shallots, and garlic. Regular water changes are essential.

Spuds, or sprouting potatoes, can also be planted. Allow the sprouts to grow to about one to two inches before planting them in rich soil. For sweet potatoes, cut an aging sweet potato in half, suspend it in a jar with only the uncut side submerged in water, and wait for roots and sprouts to develop. Once the sprouts and roots are a few inches long, plant the sweet potato in the garden.

Using scraps as fertilizer is another technique. For example, banana peels are rich in potassium, phosphorus, and calcium. Bury the peels directly in the soil around plants, cutting them into small pieces and covering them with soil. As they decompose, they provide nutrients to the plant roots. Alternatively, make banana peel tea by soaking peels in a bucket of water for a few days, then use the nutrient-rich liquid to water plants or spray it on leaves.

Banana peels can also deter pests. Place peels around plants to repel aphids, slugs, and snails due to the organic compounds in the peels.

Another method is burying fish heads in the garden. Fish heads, rich in nitrogen, phosphorus, calcium, and other minerals, provide excellent nutrients to plants. Bury the fish heads at least a foot deep to avoid attracting animals and to prevent unpleasant odors from rotting.

Eggshells can be used as mulch, pest control, and food supplements for birds. Crush eggshells and spread them as mulch to keep weeds at bay and protect the soil from frost. To deter pests, mix vinegar with water and spray the solution on infested plants. Ground eggshells can also be fed to birds for calcium. Bake the shells at 248°F for 10 minutes to ensure they are sterile.

Egg cartons are also reusable. They can be used to start seedlings by adding soil to the craters, planting seeds, and placing the cartons in a warm location. Alternatively, create a worm farm by placing shredded cardboard and egg cartons in a container, adding worms and kitchen scraps. The worms will turn the soil into nutrient-rich compost.

Wood ash should not be discarded. It can be used as fertilizer or to make soap. Combine boiling water with ash, strain it to create lye water, then concentrate the lye by boiling. Add lard or tallow to the concentrated lye, stir until it reaches a uniform golden-brown color, and pour into molds. After a week, the soap will be ready for use. Ash can also be spread in the corners of homes to deter pests or used to melt ice in winter. For preserving fruits and vegetables without a fridge, bury them in ash-filled holes, ensuring they do not touch each other or the ground.

The Amish approach to using scraps reflects a philosophy of resourcefulness and self-sufficiency. These techniques offer practical ways to extend the life of materials and prepare for difficult situations.

## **Secret Bartering Techniques That Actually Work**

The Amish are known for their farming, manual labor, and business acumen. They sell handmade goods, food, and other items outside their community and use cash, often through small local banks. Despite their humble lifestyle, some Amish individuals are millionaires or even multi-millionaires. Their reputation for hard work and Christian values makes them reliable business partners, sought after for trading and lending.

One notable Amish custom is bartering, which involves exchanging goods and services without money. This practice is central to the Amish economy, which operates on three main principles: make or do it oneself if possible, barter if making or doing isn't feasible, and use cash as a last resort. This approach contributes to the wealth of some Amish individuals.

Cash is generally used only when bartering is not an option. Items commonly bartered include handcrafted furniture, quilts, non-GMO produce, meat, baked goods, cheese, handmade clothing, baskets, and livestock. Skills such as carpentry, farming, metalwork, and cooking are also valuable for bartering.

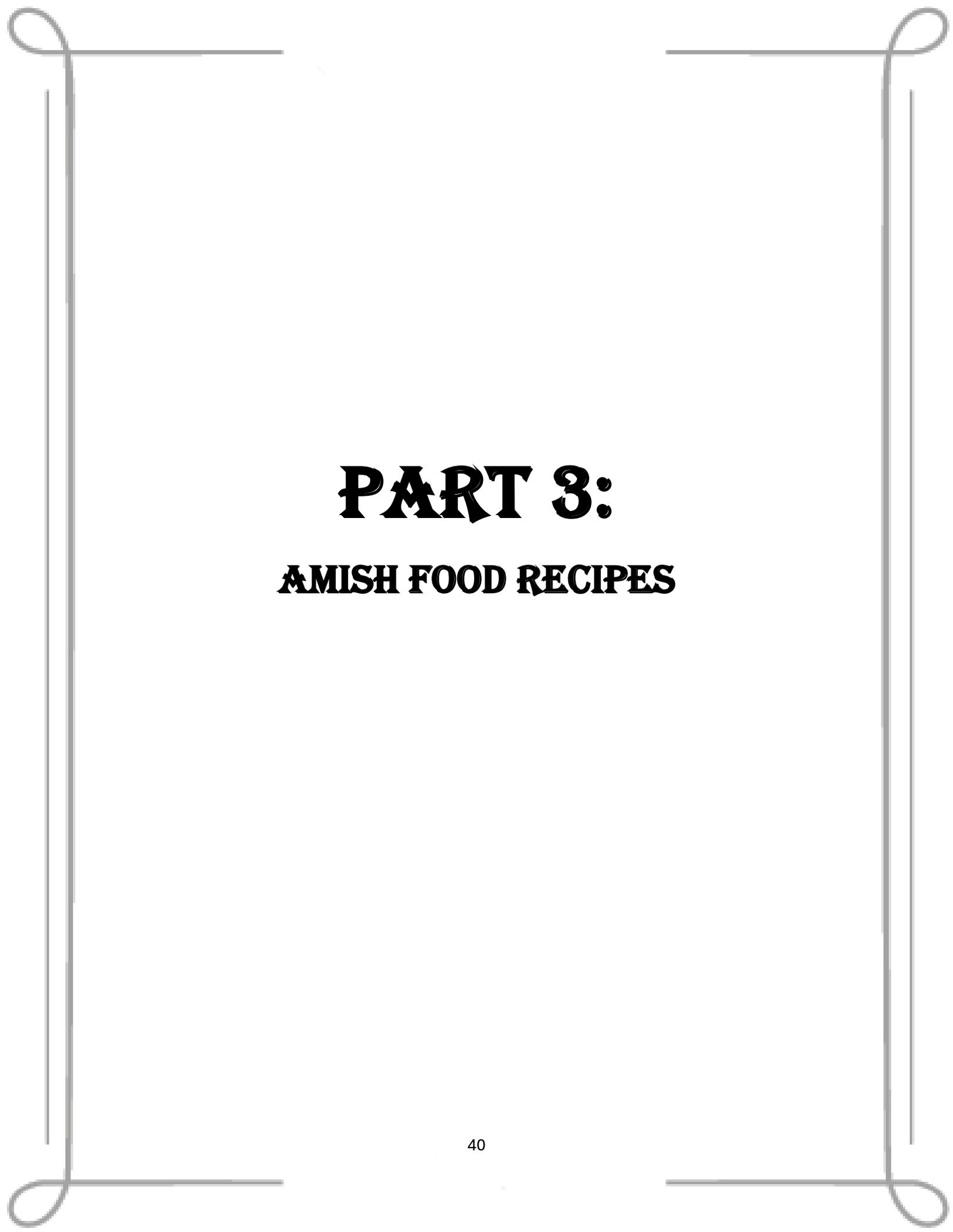
Bartering can also help avoid taxes, aligning with the Amish values of self-sufficiency and independence from government. In times of crisis, such as a grid-down situation, bartering becomes crucial as money loses its value. Having electricity-free tools available for trade can be beneficial, and these can be found in Amish shops or related courses.

The Amish sometimes barter for freezer space and other amenities with non-Amish individuals, especially if they run a shop or market. Living near an Amish community may present opportunities to obtain Amish items. The Amish are open to negotiating prices and services, aiming for mutual benefit rather than confrontation. Disputes are resolved through peaceful negotiation rather than legal means.

Two negotiating tactics can be employed. The first involves a friendly, respectful approach. Building a personal connection with the seller can lead to successful negotiations. For example, if an item is priced at \$120 but \$100 is desired, starting with a light-hearted offer of \$30 can lead to a middle ground, such as \$80.

The second tactic involves a more strategic approach. It requires enlisting friends to help with the negotiation. One friend offers \$60 for an item priced at \$120 and claims another store sells it for the same price. Another friend makes the same offer. Finally, the individual interested in the item makes an offer of \$70. This tactic leverages the initial offers to influence the final negotiation.

Maintaining honesty and upholding commitments are essential for building long-term business relationships.



**PART 3:**  
**AMISH FOOD RECIPES**

## Crisis-Proof Cookware

Amish cookware is renowned for its durability, with materials like cast iron, stainless steel, and hardwood making it both robust and long-lasting, often passed down through generations. Cast iron is particularly common in Amish kitchens due to its superior heat distribution and retention. It's ideal for use on wood or coal stoves, where maintaining a consistent cooking temperature can be difficult. Cast iron cookware is highly versatile, suitable for frying, sautéing, baking, and roasting, whether on a stove or inside it.



Even a rusty cast iron skillet found at a garage sale can be restored and used for years. A well-seasoned skillet develops a natural non-stick surface that improves with use. Proper care is crucial: cleaning after each use and occasional deep cleaning are recommended. To deep clean, use hot water and a sponge to remove food or rust, avoiding soap, which strips the protective oil layer. Dry the pan thoroughly, then reseason by applying a small amount of oil while the pan is still warm. Seasoning should be done regularly, three to four times a year, and the skillet should have a dark, semi-gloss finish with minimal sticking to indicate proper seasoning.

The Dutch oven is another essential item in Amish kitchens, often passed down as a family heirloom. Made of cast iron, it's perfect for cooking stews, casseroles, and more. Like cast iron skillets, Dutch ovens require seasoning and should never be washed with soap. These ovens can be used over an open fire or wood stove, indoors or outdoors, and are designed to withstand high direct heat. For outdoor cooking with a Dutch oven, tools like barbecue tongs and a whisk broom help manage coals and keep the cooking process clean.

A traditional Amish kitchen also includes a cast iron waffle iron and non-electric utensils like an egg beater, wooden spoons, spatulas, rolling pins, and dough whisks. Tinware is another favored material, particularly for baking sheets, pie pans, and cookie cutters, due to its lightweight and durable nature.

# The Long-Lasting Amish Stew

Welcome to this course on making traditional Amish Stew! This hearty beef stew is a staple in Amish households, especially on weekends. Each family has its own version, passed down through generations, and today, we'll be preparing a classic version and showing how to can it for long-term storage.



## Ingredients:

- 1 pound ground beef
- 4 medium potatoes, diced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 2 beef bouillon cubes
- 3 cups water
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon dried chives (or fresh if preferred)
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley (or fresh if preferred)
- Salt and pepper to taste

## Instructions:

### 1. Brown the Beef:

- In a Dutch oven, cook 1 pound of ground beef over medium heat until browned. Drain as much grease as possible.

### 2. Add Vegetables:

- Dice 4 medium potatoes, 2 carrots, and 1 yellow onion. Add these to the pot along with 1 can of diced tomatoes.

### 3. Prepare Broth:

- Dissolve 2 beef bouillon cubes in 3 cups of water. Pour this mixture into the pot with the other ingredients.

### 4. Season the Stew:

- Add 1 tablespoon of garlic powder, 1 tablespoon of dried chives, and 1 tablespoon of dried parsley to the pot. (Fresh herbs can be used instead if available.)

### 5. Simmer:

- Reduce the heat to low, cover the pot, and let the stew cook for about 3 hours.

#### 6. **Final Touches:**

- Once the stew is done, add salt and pepper to taste.

#### 7. **Canning for Preservation:**

- Fill a pressure canner with 3 inches of hot water. Place a rack at the bottom and add your jars. Ensure the stew is hot before filling the jars using jar tongs to avoid burns.
- Heat the pressure canner to high and seal the lid. When the vent starts steaming, set a timer for 10 minutes.
- After the venting period, place the weighted gauge on the canner. Reduce heat to low and let it process for 1.5 hours.
- Release the pressure, remove jars carefully, and let them cool. Check if the jars are sealed properly.

#### 8. **Storage:**

- Store the sealed jars in a cool, dark, dry place. Properly stored, they can last for 5 years or more. Adjust the recipe size based on your needs by doubling or tripling as required.

## Emergency Scrapple Rations

Scrapple is a traditional breakfast dish in Amish communities, often served with eggs like bacon or sausage. It's made using various pork scraps, creating a flavorful and hearty meatloaf. This recipe guides through making scrapple step by step, allowing for substitutions based on the available cuts.



#### **Ingredients:**

- 3 pounds pig head meat
- 1 pig heart
- 3 pounds pork hocks
- 2.5 pounds pork liver
- 2 gallons water

- 2 onions
- 1 teaspoon black peppercorn or ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon fresh ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon fresh ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon fresh ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon sage
- 3/4 cup cornmeal
- 1/2 cup buckwheat flour
- Salt to taste

**Instructions:**

**1. Prepare the Meat:**

In a large pot, combine 3 pounds of pig head meat, 1 pig heart, 3 pounds of pork hocks, and 2.5 pounds of pork liver. Cover the meat with 2 gallons of water and bring it to a boil. Skim off any debris that rises to the top.

**2. Add Onions and Pepper:**

Once the debris is skimmed, add 2 onions and 1 teaspoon of black peppercorns or ground black pepper to the pot. Continue boiling the mixture on medium-low heat for about 3 hours until the broth becomes milky.

**3. Strain and Reserve Broth:**

After boiling, remove the meat from the pot and strain the broth, reserving 5 cups for later use.

**4. Separate Meat from Bones:**

Allow the meat to cool slightly, then separate the bones from the meat. You should end up with one pile of bones and another of meat and organs.

**5. Blend the Meat:**

Cut the meat and organs into small pieces and blend them in a food processor or meat grinder. Add 1/4 teaspoon each of fresh ground nutmeg, cinnamon, and allspice, along with 1 teaspoon of sage.

**6. Cook Cornmeal and Buckwheat Flour:**

Bring the reserved broth to a boil and stir in 3/4 cup of cornmeal. Cook on medium heat for about 20 minutes, then add 1/2 cup of buckwheat flour. Continue cooking for another 10 minutes, stirring constantly.

**7. Combine Meat and Broth Mixture:**

Add the ground meat mixture back into the pot and season with salt to taste. Cook for an additional 10 to 20 minutes, or until the mixture thickens.

**8. Mold and Cool:**

Pour the thickened mixture into a mold, tray, or any other container. Let it cool, then refrigerate overnight.

9. **Serve:**

When ready to serve, slice the scrapple and fry it on medium heat for about 5 minutes on each side until golden brown.

Scrapple can be enjoyed fresh or stored for later. For longer storage, fry the scrapple before freezing—it can last up to 6 months in the freezer.

## Head Cheese – Affordable Crisis-Proof Food



Head cheese is a traditional Amish dish, rich in protein and collagen, made from pork scraps. It's a flavorful, budget-friendly option that can be prepared using various parts of the pig, such as the head, heart, spleen, tongue, and stomach. Here's how to make it at home.

**Ingredients:**

- 1 clean hog head, sawed in half (or substitute with heart, spleen, tongue, and stomach)
- Water (enough to cover the ingredients)
- Salt (to taste)
- Pepper (to taste)

**Instructions:**

1. **Prepare the Ingredients:**

- Place the hog head or pork scraps into a large pot.
- Add enough water to cover all the ingredients.

2. **Cook the Meat:**

- Cover the pot with a lid and bring it to a soft boil.
- Let it simmer for about 5 hours, until the meat is tender.

3. **Cool and Separate the Meat:**

- After cooking, allow the mixture to cool for about 20 minutes.
- Remove the meat from the bones and separate any larger chunks, like the cheeks, by shredding them.

4. **Strain the Broth:**

- Strain the broth through a sieve to remove any solid bits.
- Return the strained broth to the pot and bring it to a simmer for about 20 minutes, avoiding a full boil.

5. **Season and Assemble:**

- Season the shredded meat with salt and pepper to taste.
- Place the seasoned meat into a non-stick loaf pan.

- Pour the broth over the meat, ensuring it is fully covered.
6. **Optional: Use Stomach Lining:**
    - For a traditional touch, some Amish communities use pork stomach lining as an outer coating. This gives the head cheese a sausage-like form and helps with storage.
  7. **Chill and Set:**
    - Place the loaf pan in the refrigerator (or Amish fridge) and leave it overnight.
  8. **Serve:**
    - By morning, the head cheese will be set and ready to enjoy. Slice and serve as desired.

## Scalloped Corn - a Simple, Cheap Survival Staple

This Scalloped Corn Casserole is a classic Amish dish that has been passed down through generations. It combines sweet corn with a rich, creamy mixture and a crunchy, cheesy topping, making it a perfect side dish for any meal. The secret ingredient? Buttered saltine crackers, which add a delightful crunch to the casserole.



### Ingredients:

- 15 ounces of canned corn, drained
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 cup melted butter
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 cup crushed saltine crackers
- 1/4 cup melted butter (for topping)
- 1 cup shredded cheese
- Sliced green onions (for garnish)

### Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C).
2. Prepare a baking dish by lining it with nonstick cooking spray.
3. In a medium-sized bowl, combine the drained corn, beaten eggs, heavy cream, melted butter, and black pepper. Mix well.
4. Pour the mixture into the prepared baking dish and set it aside.
5. In a small bowl, mix the crushed saltine crackers with the remaining melted butter.

6. Sprinkle the buttered crackers over the corn mixture in the baking dish.
7. Top the casserole with a layer of shredded cheese.
8. Place the baking dish in the preheated oven and bake for about 40 minutes, or until the cheese is fully melted and the top is golden brown.
9. Remove the casserole from the oven and garnish with sliced green onions.
10. Serve warm and enjoy the creamy, crunchy goodness of this traditional Amish Scalloped Corn Casserole.

## Molasses Pie – Calorie Rich Food for Lean Times

Molasses Pie is a classic Amish dessert known for its rich, gooey bottom layer and crumbly, cakey top. This recipe is a beloved staple in Amish communities and is sure to become a favorite. Below are the ingredients and step-by-step instructions to create this delicious treat.

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons butter
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup corn syrup
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup molasses
- 1 egg, beaten
- Pinch of cinnamon
- Grated nutmeg, to taste
- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon baking soda
- 1 unbaked pie shell
- Optional: walnuts or pecans for topping

### Instructions:

1. **Preheat the oven** to 350°F (175°C).
2. **Prepare the crumble mixture:**
  - In a bowl, mix 1 cup of flour and  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of brown sugar.
  - Cut in 3 tablespoons of butter using a fork or pastry blender until the mixture becomes crumbly.
  - Set aside half of this mixture for later use.



**3. Prepare the molasses batter:**

- To the remaining crumble mixture in the bowl, add ¼ cup of corn syrup, ¾ cup of molasses, a pinch of cinnamon, and a few grates of nutmeg.
- Stir in 1 beaten egg and mix until well combined. The batter will be slightly lumpy, but this is normal.

**4. Prepare the baking soda mixture:**

- In a small saucepan, heat 1 cup of water until it reaches a boil.
- Add 1 tablespoon of baking soda and stir until dissolved.

**5. Combine and mix:**

- Pour the hot baking soda water into the molasses batter and mix thoroughly until well incorporated.

**6. Assemble the pie:**

- Pour the molasses batter into the unbaked pie shell.
- Evenly sprinkle the reserved crumble mixture over the top of the batter.

**7. Bake the pie:**

- Place the pie in the preheated oven and bake for 45 minutes, or until the center is set and firm to the touch.

**8. Cool and serve:**

- Remove the pie from the oven and allow it to cool completely.
- For a traditional Amish touch, serve the pie plain, or for added flavor and texture, top it with chopped walnuts or pecans.

## The No-Waste Cornmeal Mush Recipe

Cornmeal Mush is a classic Amish breakfast staple that's budget-friendly and easy to make. With just three simple ingredients—cornmeal, salt, and water—this dish offers a warm, hearty meal that can be served with a variety of toppings. It's perfect as a side dish to eggs and sausage or topped with butter and maple syrup for a sweet treat. The main ingredient, cornmeal, has an impressive shelf life of up to



15 years when stored properly, making this dish a great addition to any food stockpile. Follow these steps to make your own delicious cornmeal mush.

**Ingredients:**

- 3 cups of cornmeal
- 1 tablespoon of salt
- 10 cups of water (divided: 8 cups for boiling, 2 cups for mixing)

**Equipment:**

- Large cooking pot with a lid
- Mixing bowl
- Two bread loaf pans
- Non-stick frying pan

**Instructions:**

**1. Boil the Water:**

- In a large cooking pot, bring 8 cups of water to a boil.

**2. Prepare the Cornmeal Mixture:**

- In a mixing bowl, combine 3 cups of cornmeal, 1 tablespoon of salt, and 2 cups of water. Stir until the mixture reaches the consistency of cake batter. Adjust the water as needed.

**3. Cook the Mush:**

- Once the water in the pot reaches a boil, reduce it to a simmer.
- Gradually pour the cornmeal mixture into the simmering water while stirring constantly.
- Cover the pot with a lid and let the mush cook on low heat for about 45 minutes. Stir occasionally to maintain a smooth consistency.

**4. Tip for Stirring:**

- To prevent the mush from splattering while stirring, briefly remove the pot from the heat before stirring, especially in the beginning.

**5. Cool and Solidify:**

- After cooking, pour the mush into two bread loaf pans and allow it to cool.
- Wrap the pans with a cloth to prevent the mush from drying out as it solidifies. Let it chill for 4 to 5 hours.

**6. Fry the Mush:**

- Once solidified, slice the mush into pieces.

- Heat a non-stick frying pan and add butter, lard, or olive oil according to preference.
- Fry the mush slices on both sides until they are golden brown and crispy on the edges.

**7. Serve:**

- Serve the fried cornmeal mush with your choice of toppings. For a sweet version, add honey, maple syrup, fresh yogurt, or fruits. For a savory option, pair it with gravy, eggs, or meat.

## The Amish Friendship Bread

Amish Friendship Bread is a classic treat that brings back memories of home and warmth. This recipe is perfect for sharing with family, and it has a unique flavor and texture, thanks to its special starter. Making the starter is a 10-day process, but it's well worth the effort. Once prepared, this starter can be kept indefinitely and used for other recipes as long as it's regularly fed.

**Ingredients:**

**For the Starter (10-Day Process):**

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1/4 cup warm water (for yeast)
- 1 packet (or 2 1/4 tsp) active dry yeast

**For the Bread:**

- 1 cup Amish Friendship Bread starter
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 cups milk
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup chopped walnuts or other nuts (optional)
- 1 cup raisins (optional)



**For the Cinnamon-Sugar Coating:**

- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

## **Instructions:**

### **1. Prepare the Starter (Over 10 Days):**

- **Day 1:** In a ceramic bowl, combine 1 cup of flour, 1 cup of sugar, and 1 cup of water. In a separate cup, dissolve the yeast in 1/4 cup of warm water, then add it to the flour mixture. Stir with a wooden spatula and leave the mixture uncovered for the rest of the day.
- **Days 2-4:** Stir the mixture daily, then cover it loosely.
- **Day 5:** Feed the starter with an additional 1 cup of flour, 1 cup of sugar, and 1 cup of water. Stir well.
- **Days 6-9:** Stir the mixture daily.
- **Day 10:** Feed the starter again with 1 cup of flour, 1 cup of sugar, and 1 cup of water. Stir well. Measure out 1 cup of starter to use for the bread recipe. The remaining starter can be stored and fed to keep it alive for future use.

### **2. Prepare the Bread:**

- Preheat the oven to 325°F (163°C).
- In a large bowl, mix together 1 cup of the starter, eggs, oil, milk, sugar, vanilla, cinnamon, baking powder, salt, baking soda, and flour. If desired, fold in the chopped nuts and raisins.
- Grease two large loaf pans and dust them with the cinnamon-sugar mixture (combine 1/2 cup of sugar and 1/2 teaspoon of cinnamon).
- Pour the batter evenly into the prepared loaf pans and sprinkle the remaining cinnamon-sugar mixture on top.

### **3. Bake the Bread:**

- Bake for 1 hour, or until the bread pulls away from the sides of the pan and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.
- Let the bread cool in the pans for a few minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

This bread will fill your home with the warm scent of cinnamon. Once cooled, it can be wrapped and stored for several weeks or frozen for up to a year. Enjoy it fresh, toasted, or even diced into bread pudding once it starts to go stale. This simple, no-knead recipe is sure to become a family favorite.

# The Amish Poor Man's Steak

Welcome to the Amish Ways Academy! Today's recipe is a comforting classic: Amish Poor Man's Steak. This simple yet hearty dish is perfect for a satisfying homemade meal on a budget. Plus, it can be preserved for long-term storage, making it a great choice for emergency preparedness.



## Ingredients:

- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 2 celery stalks, finely chopped
- 2 green onions, finely chopped
- 3 cups crushed saltines
- 3 cups milk
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 tablespoon ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 6 pounds ground beef
- 3 cans mushroom soup
- 3 cups milk (for the gravy)
- 2 tablespoons flour
- Cooking oil or fat (for the roux)

## Instructions:

### 1. Prepare the Mixture:

- Finely chop the onions, celery, and green onions.
- In a large bowl, combine the chopped vegetables with crushed saltines, 3 cups of milk, salt, black pepper, garlic powder, and ground beef. Mix well until all ingredients are fully incorporated.

### 2. Form the Patties:

- Shape the mixture into patties. Use a wide mouth rim and lid to ensure they fit into jars if you plan to can them.

### 3. Bake the Patties:

- Place the patties on a baking sheet and bake at 350°F (175°C) for 50-55 minutes.

### 4. Prepare the Gravy:

- While the patties are baking, heat 3 cans of mushroom soup with 3 cups of milk in a pot until warm.

- In a skillet, make a roux by combining 2 tablespoons of flour with a few drops of cooking oil or fat. Stir for a few minutes until the roux is well mixed.
- Add the roux to the warm soup mixture, stirring until the gravy thickens.

**5. Serve or Can:**

- For immediate serving: Plate the patties with gravy, mashed potatoes, and greens for a delicious meal.
- For preservation: Pack the cooked patties into jars. Fill each jar with gravy, leaving about 1 inch from the top. Screw on the lids and boil the jars in a water bath for about 20 minutes. Allow the jars to cool, then store them in a cool, dark place. Properly canned, the steaks can last for about a year or more. When ready to eat, simply heat the contents for a meal that tastes as fresh as the day it was made.

## Survival Probiotic Sauerkraut

Discover the art of making homemade sauerkraut—a tangy and nutritious fermented cabbage that serves as a fantastic side dish or topping. This traditional Amish recipe is not only delicious but also offers numerous health benefits, from gut health to immune support. Plus, it’s easy to prepare and can be stored for months.



**Ingredients:**

- Cabbage heads (as many as can fit into your container)
- Non-iodized salt
- Water

**Instructions:**

**1. Prepare the Container:**

- Use a large container with a lid, such as a blue barrel. Ensure it has enough space to hold all the cabbage heads, leaving about 5 inches of headspace.

**2. Prepare the Cabbage:**

- Remove the outer leaves from the cabbage heads.
- With a sharp knife, cut around the stem of each cabbage and carve out a hollow space.

**3. Add Salt:**

- Fill the hollow space in each cabbage with non-iodized salt.

**4. Prepare the Brine:**

- In a separate container, mix water with one tablespoon of non-iodized salt for every 32 ounces of water.
- Pour the brine over the cabbage heads in the container until they are completely submerged. Use a plastic bottle filled with water if needed to weigh the cabbages down and prevent them from floating.

**5. Seal and Store:**

- Seal the container with the lid and store it in a dark, cool place.

**6. Monitor Fermentation:**

- After 4 days, check the water level. The cabbage will have absorbed some of the water. Refill the container with more brine to ensure the cabbages remain submerged and reseal the container.

**7. Fermentation Period:**

- Allow the sauerkraut to ferment for 40 days.

**8. Final Steps:**

- Once fermentation is complete, remove the cabbage heads, chop the leaves, and transfer them to a jar.
- Sauerkraut can be enjoyed immediately or pressure canned for long-term storage.

**9. Optional:**

- The sour juice left behind is also nutrient-rich and can be used as a health tonic or hangover remedy.

Enjoy this flavorful, probiotic-packed sauerkraut as a healthy side dish or topping for hot dogs.

# The Amish Great Depression Broth

Bone broth has become a popular superfood in recent years, praised for its numerous health benefits. However, it has long been a staple of Amish cuisine, particularly during tough times like the Great Depression. This nutrient-rich broth, packed with essential vitamins and minerals, helped the Amish stay healthy and strong when food was scarce. Now, it's time to learn how to make this nourishing broth at home.



## Ingredients:

- Leftover roasted bones (from free-range, hormone-free chicken, beef, or pork)
- 1 whole unpeeled onion
- 4 whole unpeeled garlic cloves
- 3 large carrots, halved
- 3 celery ribs, halved
- 1 bay leaf
- 10 peppercorns
- 10 parsley sprigs
- 10 cups of water

## Instructions:

### 1. Prepare the Ingredients:

- If using roasted bones, gather them from your previous meals. If using raw bones, roasting them first will add more flavor to the broth.

### 2. Combine Ingredients:

- Place the bones in a large pot. Add the unpeeled onion, garlic cloves, halved carrots, halved celery ribs, bay leaf, peppercorns, parsley sprigs, and 10 cups of water.

### 3. Bring to a Boil:

- Turn the heat to high and bring the water to a boil.

### 4. Simmer:

- Once boiling, reduce the heat to a simmer. Let the broth simmer for a minimum of 4 hours to extract nutrients. For a more nutrient-dense broth, simmer for up to 12 hours. If needed, add more water during the simmering process.

### 5. Cool and Strain:

- After simmering, remove the pot from heat and allow the broth to cool slightly. Strain the contents into a smaller pot, discarding the solids.

**6. Refrigerate:**

- Cover the strained broth and place it in the refrigerator overnight.

**7. Serve or Store:**

- By morning, the broth will be ready. To serve, add two spoonfuls to hot water or use it as a base for soups. The broth can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 5 days, or frozen for up to 9 months.

## Pennsylvania Dutch Chow Chow Recipe

Chow Chow is a traditional pickled relish enjoyed by Amish communities, with each region adding its own unique twist. This recipe for Pennsylvania Dutch Chow Chow is a popular version, known for its sweet and tangy dressing and variety of vegetables. It's typically served as a side dish during late summer and early fall, when fresh vegetables are abundant. This recipe not only preserves the flavors of the harvest season but also showcases the Amish expertise in canning.

**Ingredients:**

- 2 cups green beans, chopped
- 2 cups lima beans
- 2 cups bell peppers, diced
- 2 cups cucumber, diced
- 2 cups carrots, sliced
- 2 cups cauliflower, florets
- 2 cups corn kernels
- 2 ½ cups water
- 2 ½ cups vinegar
- 4 cups sugar
- 2 tablespoons mustard seeds
- 1 tablespoon celery seeds
- 1 tablespoon turmeric powder
- 2 tablespoons salt

**Instructions:**

**1. Prepare the Vegetables:**

- Wash all vegetables thoroughly and cut them into small, bite-sized pieces.
- In a large pot, boil the vegetables in a small amount of water until they are tender but still firm. Avoid overcooking to prevent them from becoming mushy.

**2. Fill the Jars:**

- Prepare clean jars for canning by washing them thoroughly.
- Fill the jars with the boiled vegetables, leaving enough space for the brine. Do not pack the vegetables too tightly.

### 3. **Make the Brine:**

- In a large cooking pot, combine 2 ½ cups of water with 2 ½ cups of vinegar.
- Add 4 cups of sugar, 2 tablespoons of mustard seeds, 1 tablespoon of celery seeds, 1 tablespoon of turmeric powder, and 2 tablespoons of salt.
- Mix well and bring the mixture to a rolling boil.

### 4. **Fill the Jars with Brine:**

- Once the brine has cooled slightly, pour it over the vegetables in the jars, ensuring that all the vegetables are evenly covered.
- This recipe should yield enough brine to fill about four 24-ounce jars.

### 5. **Wait and Enjoy:**

- Let the Chow Chow sit for about 24 hours before serving to allow the flavors to develop.
- For long-term storage, follow the canning instructions below.

### 6. **Canning for Preservation (Optional):**

- Inspect the jars for any cracks or imperfections, especially around the rims, which could prevent a proper seal.
- Boil the jars and lids in a water bath canner to sterilize them.
- Fill the sterilized jars with the Chow Chow, leaving about a quarter inch of headspace. Use a thin knife to remove any air bubbles.
- Wipe the rims clean with a cloth, place the flat lids on top, and screw on the rings until they are just finger-tight.
- Place the jars in the canner, ensuring they are covered by 1 to 2 inches of water. Bring the water to a rolling boil and process for about 15 minutes.
- After processing, let the jars cool in the water for about 5 minutes before removing them. Allow the jars to rest undisturbed for 12 hours.
- Check the seals by pressing on the center of the lids. A properly sealed lid will be concave and will not move when pressed.
- Store the sealed jars in a cool, dry place. Properly canned Chow Chow can last up to 2 years, making it a valuable addition to any food stockpile.

# Amish Dried Beef Recipe

This recipe is for making Amish-style dried beef, a traditional type of jerky that is long-lasting and rich in flavor. Perfect for snacking on during long days or for keeping as a reliable protein source in your food stockpile, dried beef was a crucial part of the diet during hard times like the Great Depression. Follow the steps below to create your own batch of this durable and tasty treat.

## Ingredients:

- 2-3 pounds of meat (top round, bottom round, sirloin, or flank)
- 20 grams of salt per pound of meat
- Black pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- Optional: Chili powder for spice, 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- Vinegar (enough to slightly cover the meat in a container, brown vinegar preferred)
- Airtight container for marinating

## Instructions:

### 1. Prepare the Meat:

- Select long cuts of meat about 1 to 2 inches thick. For a softer jerky, choose a fattier cut like special trim from the pectoral region or tenderloin.

### 2. Slice and Season:

- Cut the meat into thin strips.
- Season the meat with salt (about 20 grams per pound) and pepper. Mix in brown sugar. Add chili powder if a spicier flavor is desired. Optionally, add garlic powder to enhance the flavor and help with preservation.

### 3. Marinate:

- Place the seasoned meat strips into an airtight container.
- Pour vinegar over the meat until it is slightly covered.
- Seal the container and turn it occasionally to ensure all the meat is evenly marinated.
- Marinate for 4 to 24 hours depending on the thickness of the meat strips (4 hours for thin cuts, 24 hours for thicker cuts).

### 4. Dry the Meat:

- Hang the marinated meat strips or lay them on a wire grid to dry. Ensure the drying area is protected from insects and rodents.

- Drying time can range from 2 days to 3 weeks, depending on factors like temperature, humidity, and the thickness of the meat. The meat is fully dried when it cracks when bent but does not break in half.

#### 5. **Store the Dried Beef:**

- Once dried, store the beef in airtight containers, Mason jars, or vacuum-sealed bags to retain moisture.
- Check for mold periodically. If mold appears, brush it off with vinegar and dry the meat again.

#### 6. **Shelf Life:**

- Properly stored dried beef can last between 3 to 12 months. Over time, the meat may turn brown, then yellowish, and eventually pale. Thicker pieces may become very hard but can still be safe to eat as long as there is no rancid odor or other signs of spoilage.

## Chipped Beef Gravy Recipe

Chipped Beef Gravy is a classic dish with deep roots, originally popularized during World War I for its simplicity, affordability, and ability to provide a hearty source of protein. Often referred to as "SOS" by soldiers, this dish has since become a comfort food staple, traditionally served over toast. Below are the ingredients and step-by-step instructions to make this dish.

### **Ingredients:**

For the Chipped Beef:

- 2 ½ cups water
- 4 teaspoons salt
- 5 teaspoons sugar
- Beef rounds, trimmed of fat and connective tissue

For the Gravy:

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 ½ cups warm milk
- 8 ounces chipped beef
- 1 pinch cayenne pepper
- Toast, for serving

### **Instructions:**

#### **1. Prepare the Chipped Beef:**

- Create a brine by mixing 2 ½ cups of water with 4 teaspoons of salt and 5 teaspoons of sugar.

- Trim all fat and connective tissue from the beef rounds.
- Inject the beef rounds with the brine and then submerge them in the remaining brine.
- Store the beef in the refrigerator for 10 days.

## **2. Dry the Beef:**

- After 10 days, remove the beef from the brine and drain it in a colander for a few hours at room temperature.
- Preheat the oven to the lowest possible setting.
- Place the beef rounds on a rack with a baking pan underneath to catch any drippings.
- Dry the beef in the oven for 4 to 6 hours.
- Let the beef cool and dry further at room temperature for at least 24 hours.
- Once fully dried, slice the beef as thinly as possible. It can be stored in the refrigerator for about 2 weeks, or longer in the freezer.

## **3. Make the Gravy:**

- In a skillet, melt 2 tablespoons of butter over low heat.
- Add 2 tablespoons of all-purpose flour and stir to create a roux.
- Gradually add 1 ½ cups of warm milk, stirring constantly until the mixture thickens, about 5 minutes.
- Stir in 8 ounces of chipped beef and a pinch of cayenne pepper.
- Cook for a few more minutes until heated through.

## **4. Serve:**

- Serve the chipped beef gravy over toast and enjoy this comforting dish.

## Foraging 5 Weeds



This class will explore five common plants often dismissed as weeds, but they are actually nutrient-rich and valuable for survival during a crisis. Foraging is a traditional Amish skill passed down through generations, and it plays a crucial role in their lives. This class will cover how to identify these plants, the nutrients they contain, their culinary uses, and ways to incorporate them into meals.

The first plant to consider is **Dandelion**, recognizable by its bright

yellow flowers and jagged, toothed leaves growing in a rosette pattern close to the ground. The flowers eventually turn into white, fluffy seed heads. Dandelion leaves are rich in vitamins A, C, and K, offering more vitamin A per serving than carrots. They also provide calcium, iron, and potassium. The roots, often roasted and ground by the Amish, are used for their inulin content, which promotes gut health. Dandelion can be added to salads, soups, and stews, while the flowers are used to make wine or jelly.

**Chickweed** is another plant that commonly grows near Dandelion. The Amish identify it by its small, white star-shaped flowers and oval, opposite leaves. It often forms dense, mat-like growths in gardens and lawns. Chickweed contains vitamins A, C, and E, as well as essential minerals like magnesium, iron, calcium, potassium, and zinc. It is also a good source of protein and fiber, providing energy and helping with inflammation and cholesterol levels. Chickweed can be eaten raw in salads or cooked in soups, stews, and sautés, offering a mild flavor.

**Purslane** is another favored plant, identified by its fleshy, succulent leaves and stems with small yellow flowers. The leaves are paddle-shaped and grow in clusters. Purslane is high in omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins A, C, and E, and minerals such as magnesium, calcium, potassium, and iron. It also contains antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds. Purslane can be eaten raw in salads or cooked in soups, stews, and stir-fries, adding a slightly sour and salty flavor to dishes.

**Lamb's Quarters**, often referred to as "wild spinach," is another valuable plant. It is identified by its diamond-shaped leaves with a whitish, powdery coating on the underside. The plant grows upright and can reach up to 5 feet tall. Lamb's Quarters are rich in vitamins A, C, and K, and contain calcium, potassium, magnesium, and a notable amount of protein for a leafy green. The leaves and young shoots can be used in salads, soups, or as a cooked green, similar to spinach.

Finally, **Plantain** is a popular plant within the Amish community. It is identified by its broad, oval leaves with prominent veins, growing in a rosette pattern, and producing tall, slender flower spikes. Plantain is valued for its high fiber content, especially the soluble fiber found in its seeds, which aids digestion and provides a feeling of fullness. The leaves have anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial

properties and can be used in salads, soups, and stews. The seeds can also be ground into flour or used as a thickening agent.

These plants, often considered nuisances in gardens, are actually valuable additions to meals and could be crucial for survival in a crisis. Learning to identify and utilize them can be a lifesaving skill.

## The Killer Tree You Should Cut Down from Your Property

If you've ever had a garden that just didn't thrive—tomatoes wilting, potatoes stunted, or your apple trees looking half-dead—there might be a silent culprit lurking nearby: **the Black Walnut tree (*Juglans nigra*)**. It's known for its beautiful, dark wood and tasty nuts, but make no mistake—this tree has a dark side that can turn your garden into a graveyard.

With roots that can stretch over 50 feet wide, the Black Walnut is like a giant underground spider, spreading out beneath your lawn or garden. But it's not just the roots that you should be worried about. This tree is a natural-born killer, producing a powerful chemical weapon called juglone. Found in every part of the Black Walnut—its roots, bark, leaves, and even the nuts—juglone is a toxic compound that acts like a slow poison to many other plants. It seeps into the soil, creating a hostile environment for anything unlucky enough to grow nearby.

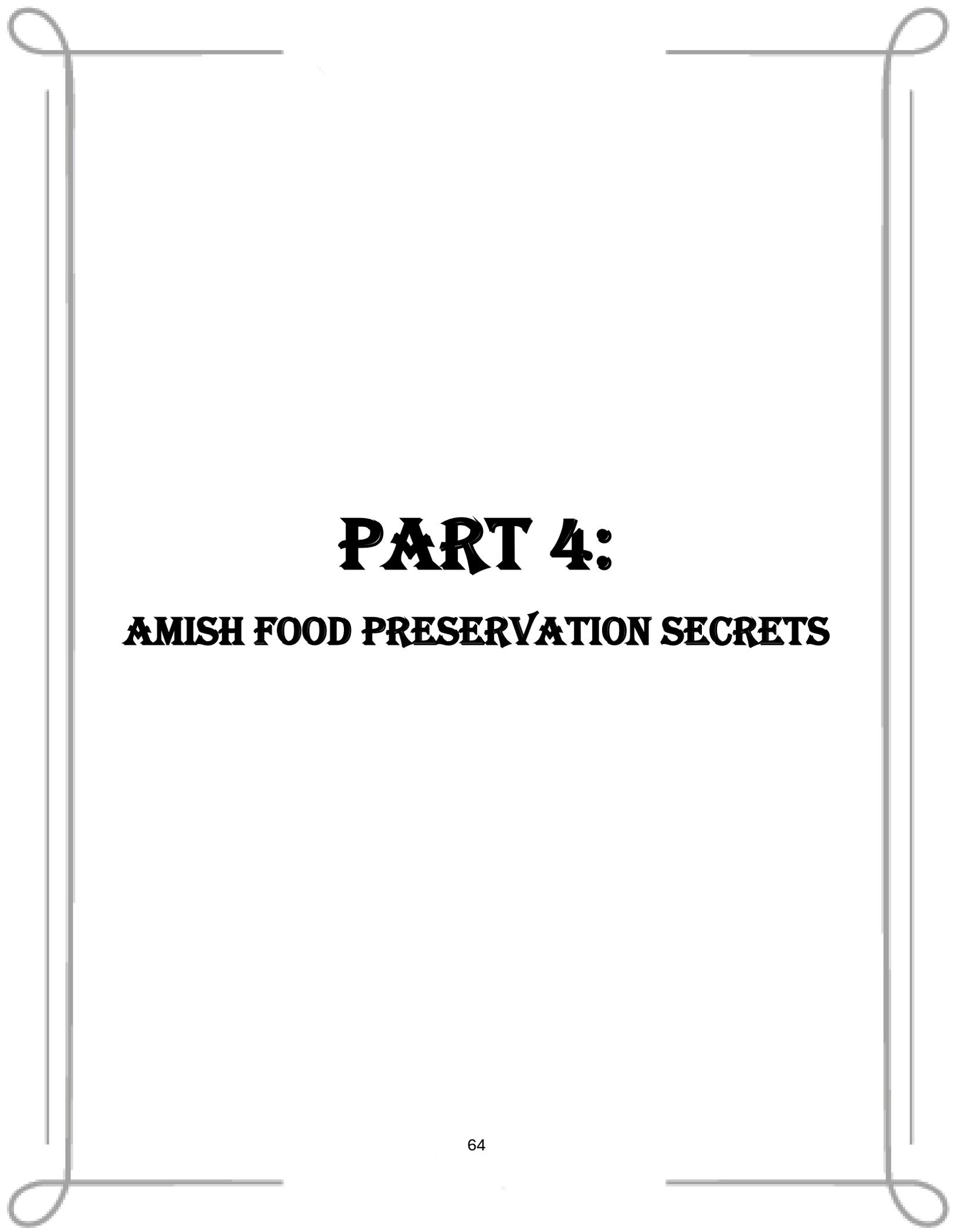
Juglone (5-hydroxy-1,4-naphthoquinone) is a natural herbicide, and it's one of the most effective plant killers you'll find in nature. Unlike typical garden herbicides, you can't just wash this one away. It's in the tree's DNA, a defensive mechanism that keeps its territory free from competitors. The moment juglone gets into the soil, it starts working its toxic magic. Sensitive plants can't absorb water or nutrients properly, leading to yellowing leaves, wilting, stunted growth, and eventually, death. It's like a silent assassin in your garden, striking without warning.

If you're trying to grow tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, or any other member of the nightshade family, a Black Walnut nearby could spell disaster. Many fruit trees like apples and cherries, and even berries like raspberries and blackberries, struggle to survive near a Black Walnut. And it's not just fruits and vegetables—popular garden flowers such as azaleas, rhododendrons, and hydrangeas are also highly susceptible. These plants won't just look sick; they will likely die if they're exposed to juglone for too long.

### How to Handle a Black Walnut Tree on Your Property

So, what should you do if you have a Black Walnut tree on your property? The answer depends on your gardening goals. If you're a fan of fresh home-grown tomatoes or love your flower beds bursting with color, you might want to consider removing the tree altogether. Here's why:

1. **Cut It Down:** The simplest solution is to remove the tree. This may sound extreme, but it's the most effective way to eliminate the problem. Remember that even after the tree is gone, juglone can remain in the soil for several years, so it might take some time before you can grow sensitive plants in that area.
2. **Create a Juglone-Free Zone:** If you can't bring yourself to cut down the tree, establish a clear buffer zone of at least 50 to 60 feet from the tree's dripline (the outer edge of its canopy) when planting juglone-sensitive plants.
3. **Plant in Raised Beds or Containers:** Raised beds with fresh, uncontaminated soil or containers are a great way to grow plants that juglone would otherwise kill. This keeps the plants isolated from juglone-laden soil.
4. **Improve Soil Drainage:** Juglone is less potent in well-drained soils. Adding organic matter and ensuring good drainage can help mitigate its effects somewhat, but it's not a foolproof solution.



**PART 4:**  
**AMISH FOOD PRESERVATION SECRETS**

## How to Can Like the Amish

This course focuses on canning and long-term food preservation, a traditional practice that has been perfected by the Amish for generations. Canning is one of the most popular methods they use to preserve their harvests for the winter months. Unfortunately, the practice is fading in modern society as more people rely on store-bought foods containing artificial preservatives. While these chemicals may extend shelf life, they come with potential health risks. The Amish, in contrast, consume only natural foods, which may contribute to their communities having lower rates of chronic illnesses.



Canning not only promotes healthier eating but can also be cost-effective, reducing waste and ensuring food availability for months or even years. In times of crisis, a pantry stocked with canned foods can be invaluable. Almost any type of food can be preserved through canning if done correctly.

Before beginning, it's crucial to disinfect jars and lids to prevent serious illnesses like botulism. Boil jars and lids before use to ensure they are properly sanitized.

There are three main methods of canning: hot water, steam, and pressure canning. Each method is suited to different types of food, depending on their acidity levels. In Amish communities, the hot water method is most popular. This technique uses boiling water to create a safe seal for jars, making it ideal for high-acid foods like fruits, beets, tomatoes, cabbage, pickles, jams, and jellies. To use this method, jars should be sealed to a finger-tight level and then submerged in boiling water with about two inches of water above the lids to prevent overflow. For most recipes, 20 minutes of boiling is sufficient to create a seal. After boiling, jars should be removed with a jar remover and allowed to rest overnight. The metal lids should be concave, indicating a proper vacuum seal.

The steam canning method is similar to the hot water method and can be performed using the same equipment if the proper rack is available. Steam canning is also suitable for high-acid foods and should not be used for low-acid foods. In this process, jars are placed above boiling water, and the steam creates the seal. The time required varies by recipe but generally does not exceed 45 minutes. The main advantage of steam canning is that it requires less water and energy than the boiling water method.

Pressure canning is more complex and requires a specialized canner. It is the safest method for preserving low-acid foods such as vegetables, meat, and seafood. In this method, sealed jars are placed in about three inches of water and heated to at least 240 degrees Fahrenheit, a temperature achievable only with a pressure canner. This method is essential for safely preserving low-acid foods.

When done properly, all three methods can provide a shelf life of at least one year. Highly acidic foods like fruits can last about 18 months, while low-acid foods such as vegetables and meats can last anywhere from 2 to 5 years.

One important food to preserve during a long-term crisis is meat, as it provides essential proteins, vitamins, and amino acids. To extend the shelf life of meat, pressure canning is the recommended method. For this demonstration, a store-bought pressure cooker that reaches at least 240 degrees Fahrenheit is suitable. Red lean meats, such as beef top sirloin, are ideal as the muscle fibers tenderize under pressure. After disinfecting jars and lids, cut the meat into 1.5-inch cubes, season with garlic powder, black pepper, and salt, and pack the meat into jars, leaving space at the top. Finger-tighten the lids and follow the canner's instructions to maintain 10 pounds of pressure for 1.5 hours. Once the process is complete, depressurize the canner, remove the jars, and let them rest for 24 hours. Properly sealed jars should be kept in a cool, dark place for a shelf life of 2 to 5 years.

Always inspect jars before use; discard any with a rancid smell, unsealed lids, rust, or cracks.

Maintaining a stockpile of canned foods is a wise decision, providing food security and peace of mind in uncertain times.

## Amish Butter

Amish butter is known for its rich flavor and creamy texture, thanks to a higher butterfat content compared to store-bought varieties. With a simple process, you can create this delicious butter at home.



### Ingredients:

- 2 cups of freshly skimmed cream (or heavy cream with at least 25% fat content)
- Pinch of salt (optional)

### Instructions:

#### 1. Prepare the Cream:

- If using raw milk: Let it sit in the refrigerator for 24 to 48 hours to allow the cream to rise to the top. Skim off the cream; you'll need about 4 gallons of milk to get 2 ½ cups of cream.
- If using store-bought cream: Ensure it's heavy cream with at least 25% fat content.

#### 2. Churn the Cream:

- Pour 2 cups of cream into a butter churner.
- Start churning the cream. After 10-15 minutes, the cream will begin to thicken.

- Continue churning until the butterfat separates from the buttermilk, which usually takes 20-30 minutes. You'll see clumps of butter forming and liquid buttermilk separating.

### 3. **Separate and Rinse:**

- Once the butter has formed, pour out the buttermilk. Save the buttermilk for baking or other uses.
- Rinse the butter in cold water to solidify it and to prevent quick spoilage.

### 4. **Knead the Butter:**

- Transfer the butter to a bowl and knead it with a wooden spoon or butter paddle. This step helps remove any remaining buttermilk and ensures a smoother texture.
- Add a pinch of salt if desired, and continue kneading until smooth.

### 5. **Shape and Store:**

- Shape the butter into a log or press it into a butter mold.
- Wrap the butter in baking paper and store it in the refrigerator. It will last for about 2-3 weeks, or it can be frozen for longer storage.

For those interested in traditional preservation methods, consider burying the butter in a peat bog, a method used long before refrigeration to extend its shelf life. This technique, known as "bog butter," preserves the butter for several years and imparts a unique, earthy flavor.

## **How to Make Lard and Tallow the Amish Way**

This recipe will guide you through making Amish lard and tallow, two traditional fats used to preserve food and add flavor. Lard is rendered pork fat, while tallow is rendered beef fat. Both are versatile and can be used in cooking, baking, or for preserving meats.

### **Ingredients:**

- 5 pounds of high-quality pork fat (for lard) or beef fat (for tallow)
- A small amount of water
- Salt (optional, for seasoning)

### **Instructions:**



### **Making Lard:**

1. **Prepare the Fat:** Cut the pork fat into cubes and place them in a large pot. Add a little water to the bottom of the pot to prevent the fat from browning too much during rendering.
2. **Render the Fat:** Heat the pot over low heat, allowing the fat to slowly melt. This process should take about 2 hours. Stir occasionally, and don't rush the process.
3. **Strain the Lard:** Once the fat has fully melted and the cubes have turned golden brown and hardened, remove the pot from the heat. Strain the melted fat through a fine sieve into a clean container.
4. **Store the Lard:** Let the lard cool before storing it. For long-term storage, place the lard in an airtight container. It can be kept at room temperature for a few months, refrigerated for up to a year, or frozen indefinitely.

### **Making Tallow:**

1. **Repeat the Same Steps:** Follow the same process as above, using beef fat instead of pork fat. The result is tallow, which has a slightly firmer texture when cooled, similar to butter.

### **Preserving Meat with Lard or Tallow:**

1. **Prepare the Container:** Clean and sterilize the container you'll use for storage.
2. **Cook the Meat:** Heat the lard or tallow until it's melted. Cook your meat thoroughly, seasoning it as desired.
3. **Layer the Meat:** In the sterilized container, create layers of cooked meat and melted lard or tallow. Ensure that each layer is fully covered with fat to prevent air and moisture from reaching the meat.
4. **Seal and Store:** Add a generous layer of lard or tallow on top of the final layer of meat. Once the fat has solidified, cover it with wax paper to create an additional seal. Cover the container and store it in a dark, cool place.

When ready to eat, simply heat the preserved meat and enjoy.

# Amish Burger in a Jar

This recipe provides a traditional method for preserving hamburgers using Amish techniques. Canning burgers is a practical way to store beef long-term, locking in current prices and ensuring a ready-to-eat meal that can last for years. The result is a delicious, shelf-stable burger, along with a nutritious broth for added versatility.



## Ingredients:

- 2 lbs ground beef (85-90% lean)
- 1/3 cup quick oats
- 1 tsp garlic salt (or 1 tsp table salt + 1/2 tsp garlic powder)
- 1/2 tsp onion powder
- 1/2 - 3/4 tsp black pepper
- 1 egg
- Beef broth, water, or stock (for canning)

## Instructions:

### 1. Prepare the Burger Mixture:

- In a large bowl, combine the ground beef, quick oats, garlic salt, onion powder, black pepper, and egg.
- Mix all ingredients thoroughly.
- Form the mixture into 1-inch patties and place them on a baking sheet.

### 2. Bake the Patties:

- Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C).
- Bake the patties for 30 minutes until fully cooked.

### 3. Prepare for Canning:

- Ensure all mason jars are clean and sanitized.
- While the patties are still warm, stack 4-5 burgers into each jar.
- Fill the jars with beef broth, water, or stock, leaving about 1.5 inches of headspace.
- Press down on the burgers with a wooden spoon to remove any air bubbles.

- Wipe the rims of the jars before sealing them with lids.

#### 4. **Pressure Canning:**

- Place about 2 inches of water in the bottom of the pressure canner and set it over medium-high heat.
- Once the water begins to boil, add the jars to the canner and seal the lid.
- When pressure steam rises from the valve, place the weight on it.
- Once the overpressure plug pops up, monitor the pressure gauge.
- Adjust the stove to maintain 10 lbs of pressure and process the jars for 90 minutes. (If over 1,000 feet above sea level, use 15 lbs of pressure.)

#### 5. **Cool and Store:**

- Let the jars cool on the counter overnight.
- Store the canned burgers in a cool, dark place. They have a shelf life of 3-5 years, though they may be edible beyond that with some degradation in texture.

#### **Serving Suggestions:**

- **Grilled Burgers:** Grill the canned burgers for under a minute on each side to add a grilled flavor before serving on a bun with favorite toppings.
- **Hamburger Steak with Onions:** Sauté chopped onions in a pan, then add the burgers and broth, simmering until warm. Thicken the broth with cornstarch or arrowroot.
- **Mini Meatloaves:** Warm the burgers in their gravy, top with sweet tomato meatloaf topping, and bake at 350°F (175°C) for 15 minutes. Serve with roasted potatoes or root vegetables.

This canning method not only preserves beef for long-term use but also provides a convenient, ready-to-eat meal option, perfect for self-sufficiency and emergency preparedness.

## **20+ Electricity Free Ways to Preserve Eggs**

This recipe showcases the Amish method for pickling eggs, a traditional way to preserve them for the colder months. Pickling is a simple yet effective way to extend the shelf life of eggs, infusing them with a tangy flavor that's perfect for snacking or adding to salads.

## Ingredients:

- 6 medium eggs, hard-cooked and peeled
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1 cup beet liquid (from canned beets)
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon canning salt (such as Morton)
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 3 whole garlic cloves

## Instructions:

### 1. Prepare the Eggs:

- Peel the hard-cooked eggs. Save the eggshells for your garden, as they are high in calcium and can help deter snails.

### 2. Sterilize the Jar:

- Before adding the eggs, sterilize a large mason jar by boiling it in water. This step ensures that the jar is clean and safe for food storage.

### 3. Make the Pickling Brine:

- In a saucepan, combine the apple cider vinegar, beet liquid, sugar, canning salt, chopped onion, and whole garlic cloves.
- Bring the mixture to a boil, stirring until the sugar dissolves completely.

### 4. Pickle the Eggs:

- Place the peeled eggs into the sterilized mason jar.
- Pour the hot pickling brine over the eggs, ensuring they are fully submerged.
- Let the jar sit uncovered until the liquid cools slightly.

### 5. Refrigerate:

- Once the brine has cooled, cover the jar with an airtight lid and refrigerate for at least 48 hours. This allows the beet juice to penetrate the egg whites.
- For best results, let small eggs pickle for one week and medium to large eggs for two to four weeks.

### 6. Storage Tips:

- Ensure that the eggs are intact with no cuts or holes. Damaged eggs should be discarded to prevent bacterial contamination.



# Long-Lasting Cheese Preservation

In this course we will explore effective methods for making cheese last a long time. Preserving cheese was crucial in the past, especially when large quantities were purchased at once. Here are four tried-and-true methods for extending the shelf life of cheese:

## Ingredients:

### 1. Salting:

- 1 gallon of water
- 10 ounces of non-iodized salt

### 2. Canning:

- Cheese (cut into cubes)
- Sterilized jars with lids

### 3. Larding:

- Lard
- Cheese blocks
- Cheesecloth or muslin

### 4. Waxing:

- Hard cheese (e.g., cheddar)
- 1 to 1.5 pounds of red cheese wax, paraffin, or beeswax

## Instructions:

### 1. Salting:

1. Heat 1 gallon of water slightly.
2. Add 10 ounces of non-iodized salt and stir until fully dissolved.
3. Allow the brine solution to cool.
4. Place cubed cheese into jars and cover with the cooled brine.
5. Ensure cheese is fully submerged in brine.
6. Store the jars where the cheese can be kept submerged for 6 to 9 months. Make additional brine as needed.

### 2. Canning:

1. Cut cheese into cubes small enough to fit into sterilized jars.
2. Arrange the jars on a baking sheet with lids off.
3. Heat in an oven at 250°F until the cheese melts.
4. Remove the jars, put the lids on, and process in a water bath for 20 minutes.

5. Cool the jars and store them in a dry, dark place. Cheese preserved this way can last up to 2 years.

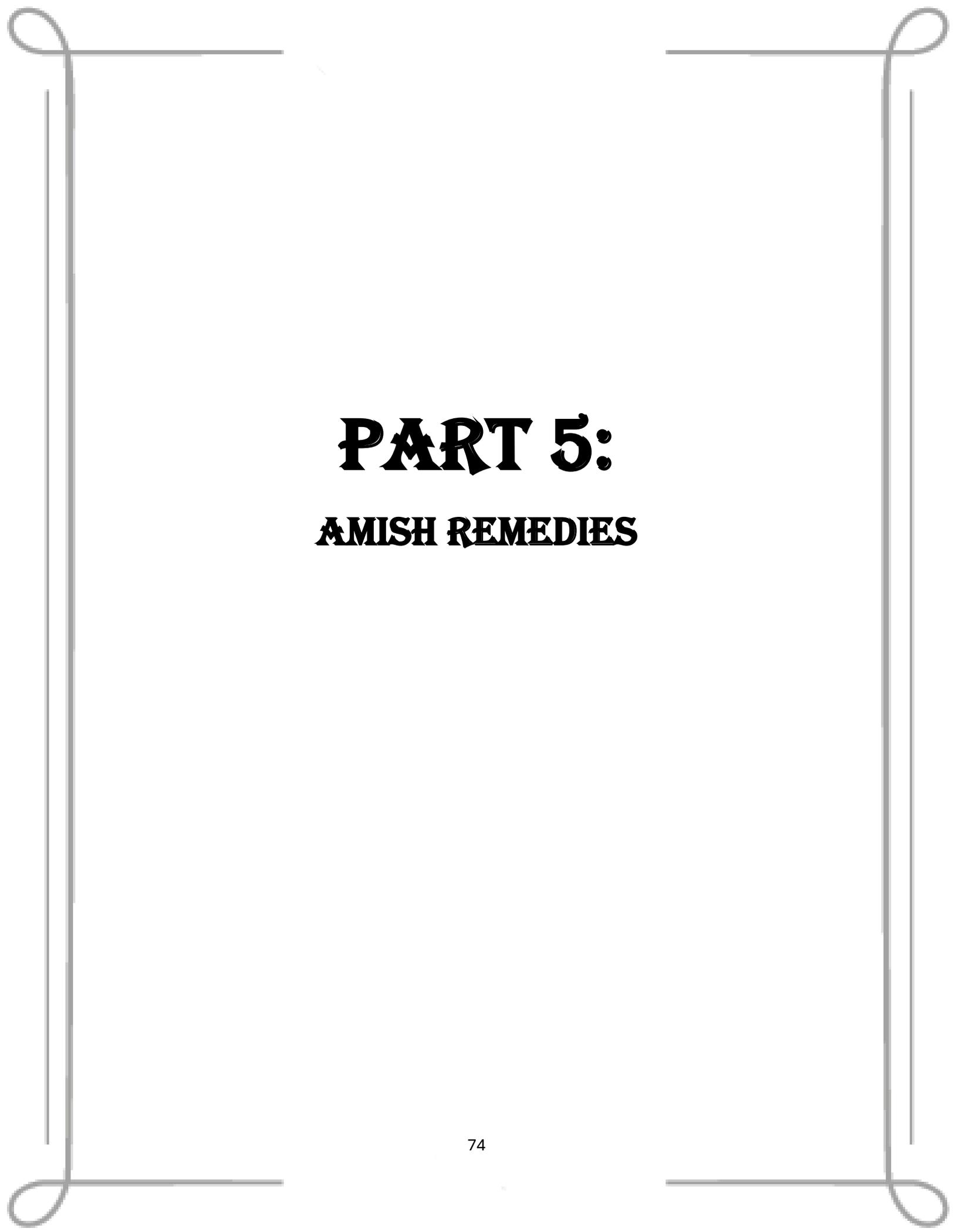
### 3. **Larding:**

1. Coat cheese blocks with a thin, even layer of lard using a brush or hands.
2. Wrap the coated cheese in cheesecloth or muslin.
3. Store in a cool, humid environment, such as a cellar.
4. Turn the cheese regularly every few days and reapply lard if cracks appear.

### 4. **Waxing:**

1. Ensure the cheese is clean and dry. Wipe off any excess moisture.
2. Melt 1 to 1.5 pounds of cheese wax in a double boiler, heating to 180-200°F.
3. Use tongs to dip the cheese into the melted wax. Allow the first coat to set (about 30 seconds), then dip again for an even, thick coating.
4. Apply two or three layers of wax.
5. Let the wax cool and harden completely, which can take a few hours.
6. Store the waxed cheese in a cool, dry place away from sunlight. Check periodically for any cracks and reapply wax as needed.

Each of these methods offers a reliable way to preserve cheese for extended periods, allowing you to enjoy it long after it's been made.



**PART 5:**  
**AMISH REMEDIES**

## The Amish Medicinal Garden



The Amish community is distinct from the mainstream in many aspects, particularly in healthcare. They are among the last groups that still predominantly rely on herbal remedies and traditional practices to treat their ailments. This section of the Academy will explore the reasons behind their unique approach and guide the preparation of some of the most common remedies.

Contrary to popular belief, the Amish do not suffer from poor healthcare due to their avoidance of modern technology and medicine. Their average lifespan is nearly the same as the general American population—72 years. However, unlike most Americans, the Amish rarely take medication or visit doctors. Their approach is deeply rooted in a religious belief that God is the ultimate healer, and that nature provides all necessary remedies for their health, allowing them to live in harmony with the natural world and rely on the time-tested remedies passed down through generations.

Before the advent of modern medicine and even family-owned apothecaries, communities relied heavily on plants and herbs for healing. The Amish have preserved these traditions, preparing remedies from plants grown in their gardens or foraged from nearby forests. Their preference for these remedies over pharmaceutical drugs stems from a firsthand experience of their effectiveness, as well as a skepticism towards the side effects and long-term consequences of synthetic medications. Herbal remedies are also more affordable and accessible, which is important for a community that values frugality and often lives in rural areas.

Not all Amish communities reject modern healthcare entirely; some accept hospital visits and medical interventions, when necessary, but they often refuse vaccines. Without health insurance or social security, the community collectively funds hospital bills, especially for major medical expenses like organ transplants or extended illness treatments, often through donations or church funds.

The Amish have advanced remedies for various conditions, including solutions for hearing loss and natural baby formulas made from goat milk. Health-conscious behaviors are the norm, with alcohol and tobacco prohibited in most communities, contributing to their overall well-being. Despite the broader trend of increased life expectancy in the U.S., the Amish maintain superior late-life health, with lower rates of cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and other ailments.

The following are some of the plants commonly grown in Amish gardens for medicinal purposes:

- **Chicory:** High in inulin, which supports gut health and digestion, Chicory is also beneficial for liver detoxification and has anti-inflammatory properties that can alleviate arthritis symptoms and support heart health.
- **Chamomile:** Known for its calming and anti-inflammatory properties, Chamomile is used for digestive issues and minor skin irritations like wounds, eczema, and pinkeye.
- **Yarrow:** This plant can stop bleeding quickly and is effective for digestive problems, fever, flu, and improving circulation. It is also used as a mosquito repellent.
- **California Poppy:** A natural sedative that aids in sleep and anxiety without significant side effects, California Poppy is used to calm the nervous system and address stomach issues.
- **Marshmallow:** Known for its mucilage content, Marshmallow coats the digestive tract with a protective layer, making it effective for leaky gut, stomach ulcers, heartburn, and other gastrointestinal issues.
- **Lavender:** Aromatic and versatile, Lavender is used for insomnia, depression, anxiety, minor burns, insect bites, and skin irritations, promoting relaxation and reducing stress.
- **Evening Primrose:** Historically used for wounds and bruises, Evening Primrose is now a common ingredient in topical creams for eczema and rheumatoid arthritis.
- **Echinacea:** Known for boosting immunity, Echinacea is used to alleviate symptoms of the common cold and respiratory infections, with antiviral and antioxidant effects.
- **Calendula:** Valued for its wound healing and anti-inflammatory properties, Calendula is used in salves and tinctures to treat wounds and detoxify the lymphatic system.
- **Feverfew:** Often referred to as "Amish Ibuprofen," Feverfew is effective for lowering fevers, treating colds, migraines, and providing pain relief for arthritis and other inflammatory conditions.

These plants are easy to grow and can thrive in various environments, whether in backyards or pots indoors. They require minimal care and can be a valuable addition to any medicinal cabinet. For those without access to an Amish market, a medicinal garden kit with these seeds and instructions is available for purchase, along with a guide for making remedies.

# The Amish Aspirin

To make a natural remedy known as Amish Aspirin, the process begins with harvesting bark from a willow tree, known for its medicinal properties. The smaller branches of the tree are most effective, so these should be the focus when gathering materials.



## 1. Harvesting the Bark:

- Use a knife to carefully peel the bark from the smaller branches and larger twigs of the willow tree.
- Peel the bark similar to how a potato is peeled, taking care not to go too deep.
- The goal is to access the inner layer of the bark, which has a greenish color. This inner layer contains the medicinal compounds. The outer layer of bark and the whiter wood beneath should be discarded.

## 2. Preparing the Bark:

- Once the bark is peeled, cut it into smaller pieces using scissors. The pieces should be small enough to fit onto a tablespoon for easy measuring.

## 3. Using the Bark:

- The bark can be consumed in various forms: as a tea, in powder form (which can be placed in capsules), or as a tincture using glycerin or alcohol for a more concentrated solution.

## 4. Making Willow Bark Tea:

- Begin by boiling two cups of water.
- Once the water reaches a boil, add two tablespoons of the cut willow bark.
- Boil the bark for ten minutes, then remove the pot from heat and allow it to steep for another ten minutes or more.
- After steeping, strain the tea to remove the bark pieces.

## 5. Consumption Guidelines:

- The tea has a slightly bitter taste, though it is generally mild.
- It is recommended to limit intake to 3-4 cups per day.
- Avoid consuming willow bark tea if there are existing liver or kidney problems, and it should not be taken before surgery, as it can prevent blood from coagulating, similar to aspirin.

This step-by-step guide outlines the process of creating Amish Aspirin from willow bark, offering a natural remedy with traditional roots.

# The Amish Energy Drink



A self-sufficient lifestyle, such as that of the Amish, demands a significant amount of physical effort. With early mornings and long days spent working the land, construction, or tending to gardens, maintaining energy and focus is essential.

The Amish have a traditional drink that helps them stay energized and alert throughout the day. Known as "The Amish Redbull," "Switchel," or "The Haymaker's Punch," this beverage is packed with the nutrition and electrolytes needed for sustained physical work. Its origins date back to the 1600s in America, where it was initially called "switchy" or "ginger water." The drink is a simple combination of ginger, molasses (or maple syrup or honey), and apple cider

vinegar.

This drink was historically used by colonial farmers to quench their thirst during strenuous tasks like haying, earning it the name "Haymaker's Punch." Its effectiveness and health benefits far surpass those of modern store-bought energy drinks.

## Ingredients and Benefits:

1. **Ginger:** Reduces inflammation and aids muscle recovery.
2. **Apple Cider Vinegar:** Contains potassium, antioxidants, and amino acids.
3. **Molasses:** Rich in Vitamin B6, which the body uses to convert sugar into energy and produce serotonin. Molasses also provides potassium and manganese, both essential for energy production.

## Instructions:

1. Thinly slice a 1-inch block of ginger.
2. Slice 1 cup of strawberries.
3. Combine the ginger and strawberries with 1/2 cup of molasses and 1/2 cup of apple cider vinegar.
4. Add 6-8 cups of water to the mixture.
5. Stir well to blend all ingredients.

This simple recipe creates a homemade energy drink that is flavorful, nutritious, and much healthier than commercial alternatives.

# The Amish Flu Shot

The Amish Flu Shot is a natural, immune-boosting remedy that differs significantly from the traditional flu shot. Unlike standard flu vaccines, this remedy is a gelatinous treat packed with ingredients known for their health benefits. It helps fend off infections, and when colds and flu do occur, it may reduce their severity and duration.



The key ingredient in this recipe is Echinacea, a powerful herb with a well-earned reputation for enhancing the immune system. It's recommended to grow Echinacea at home, following Amish practices, to ensure the freshest and most potent source.

The gelatinous texture of this remedy is achieved using agar agar, a plant-based gelatin substitute derived from seaweed. Agar agar is typically sourced from Amish Markets, known for their wide variety of natural products. It sets similarly to regular gelatin, making it a suitable ingredient for this recipe.

## Step-by-Step Instructions:

### 1. Prepare the Agar Agar Mixture:

- In a small saucepan, combine 1 tablespoon of agar agar flakes with half a cup of Echinacea tea. Allow the mixture to sit for a few minutes, letting the agar agar soften.

### 2. Heat and Dissolve:

- Place the saucepan over medium heat and stir continuously until the agar agar flakes dissolve completely, which should take about 5 to 7 minutes. The mixture will thicken as it heats.

### 3. Add the Juice:

- Once the agar agar is fully dissolved, remove the saucepan from the heat and stir in freshly squeezed apple-carrot juice.

### 4. Mold and Sweeten:

- Pour the mixture into silicone molds or a glass dish. For added benefits, honey can be stirred in at this stage. Honey is a natural remedy for sore throats and coughs, but to preserve its beneficial enzymes, ensure the gelatin mixture is not boiling when adding it.

### 5. Set the Mixture:

- Refrigerate the mixture until it sets, typically within 1 to 2 hours. For an authentic approach, the Amish often store it in a root cellar for the same duration.

**Usage:**

Once set, these gelatinous health bombs can be consumed whenever a cold or flu is on the horizon. The combination of Echinacea, agar agar, and honey provides a natural defense against illness, making this remedy a favorite among those who prefer traditional, natural treatments.

## The Amish Cough Syrup

The Amish tradition includes a homemade cough syrup known for its ability to calm coughs, soothe sore throats, and relieve congestion. The following is a step-by-step guide to preparing and storing this remedy.

**Ingredients:**

- 2 onions, sliced
- 3 lemons, sliced
- Honey (enough to cover the layers)
- 1 pint of peppermint schnapps
- 1 pint of blackberry brandy

**Instructions:**

1. **Prepare the Ingredients:** Begin by slicing 2 onions and 3 lemons.
2. **Layer the Ingredients:** In an air-tight glass container, create alternating layers of onion and lemon slices.
3. **Add the Honey:** Pour honey over the layers until they are fully covered.
4. **Add Alcohol:** Pour in 1 pint of peppermint schnapps and 1 pint of blackberry brandy.
5. **Seal and Store:** Close the container tightly and let it sit at room temperature for 3 days. After this period, the cough syrup will be ready for use.

**Optional Modifications:**

- **Alcohol-Free Version:** For a milder version, consider reducing the alcohol content by half and replacing the peppermint schnapps with crushed peppermint candy. Use about one cup of crushed candy to retain the benefits of menthol.
- **Alternative Flavors:** If mint isn't preferred, substitute the peppermint schnapps or candy with horehound candy. Horehound has a slightly bitter taste, similar to a blend of root beer and black licorice, and offers similar respiratory and digestive benefits.

**Storage:**

- Store the cough syrup in a small, airtight container to minimize air exposure.

- After the initial fermentation at room temperature, keep the syrup in a cool, dark place or refrigerate it if preferred cold.
- When stored properly, the syrup will last for 6 to 12 months.

**Dosage:**

- For relief, take 1 tablespoon of the Amish Cough Syrup every 4 to 6 hours as needed.

**Additional Tip:**

- For a more potent remedy, consider adding Ceylon cinnamon and oregano sprigs, as some Amish elders do, to create a version known as the "Super Tonic." This variation is said to have powerful flu-preventing properties.

## Throat Drops Recipe

This guide provides a step-by-step process for making Amish throat drops, a remedy commonly kept in Amish households to soothe sore throats and respiratory issues. The following steps outline the preparation, ingredients, and storage methods for creating these herbal throat drops at home.

**Ingredients and Herbs:**

- Rosemary and fenugreek for soothing sore throats
- Juniper berry, peppermint, thyme, and oregano for their antibacterial properties
- Licorice for respiratory support
- Ginger, peppermint, and lemon peels for their anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving qualities

**Instructions:**

**Step 1: Prepare the Water**

- Heat 1 cup of water in a kettle until it reaches a boiling point.

**Step 2: Prepare the Herbs**

- Measure out all the herbs and place them in a tea ball, cloth, or infuser pot.
- Lightly crush the juniper berries to release their beneficial properties.
- Set aside the honey in a separate container.

**Step 3: Steep the Herbs**

- Place the herbs in a glass container. Once the water boils, pour it over the herbs.
- Allow the herbs to steep for 10 minutes.

**Step 4: Combine with Honey**

- Pour the honey into a saucepan and add the herbal tea mixture, squeezing out every drop from the tea bag or ball.
- Heat the mixture on medium-low, stirring frequently.

### Step 5: Cook the Mixture

- Continue cooking the mixture until it reaches 300 degrees Fahrenheit, using a candy thermometer to monitor the temperature. This process typically takes around 40 minutes.
- If a candy thermometer is unavailable, use the cold water test: drop a small amount of the mixture into a bowl of ice water. If it forms a hard ball, the mixture is ready.

### Step 6: Cool and Prepare the Drops

- Allow the mixture to cool for about five minutes. Meanwhile, prepare a non-stick surface such as a mat or parchment paper, greased lightly with coconut oil, and place it in a pan to prevent overflow.
- Pour the mixture onto the center of the prepared surface and let it cool until it can be handled.

### Step 7: Form the Drops

- Once the mixture is cool enough to handle, pull small chunks from the edges, where it cools faster, and roll them into small balls or chunks.
- Place the formed drops on the non-stick surface to cool completely.

### Step 8: Dust and Store

- After cooling, dust the drops with tapioca starch or arrowroot powder to prevent sticking.
- Wrap each drop individually for storage. Options for wrapping include candy wrappers, parchment paper, or any other suitable material.

### Storage:

- Store the drops in the refrigerator, where they will last for a few weeks. For longer storage, keep them in the freezer. However, due to their honey-flavored herbal taffy-like taste, these drops are often consumed quickly.

All necessary ingredients and tools are listed in the description accompanying this video. This recipe is intended to provide relief from throat discomfort and can be a valuable addition to home remedies.

## DIY Elixir for Pain Management

The Painkilling Elixir is a widely used remedy within the Amish community, known for its effectiveness in managing pain and inflammation. The following steps outline how to prepare this elixir using simple, natural ingredients.

### Step 1: Gather Ingredients

- **Dandelion:** Often mistaken for a common weed, dandelion is the first ingredient in



the elixir, valued for its anti-inflammatory properties.

- **Rosemary:** This herb is a potent anti-inflammatory and analgesic, beneficial for conditions like arthritis, muscle aches, and joint pain. It also improves circulation, which can help reduce pain from poor blood flow, such as headaches or migraines.
- **Apple Cider Vinegar (ACV):** The Amish typically make their own ACV, rich in acetic acid, which has strong antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties. For maximum benefits, use ACV with “the mother,” a natural bacterium that enhances its medicinal properties.

### **Step 2: Prepare the Ingredients**

- If using dried herbs, measure out half a cup of dried dandelion flowers and a quarter cup of dried rosemary leaves. For fresh herbs, double the quantities, ensuring they are sourced from an area free of pesticides.

### **Step 3: Combine Ingredients**

- Place the dried dandelion flowers and rosemary leaves into a glass jar.
- Pour 2 cups of raw apple cider vinegar over the herbs, ensuring they are fully submerged.
- Seal the jar with a tight-fitting lid. If the jar has a metal lid, cover the jar with plastic wrap or baking paper before screwing on the lid to prevent the vinegar from corroding the metal.

### **Step 4: Infusion Process**

- Store the jar in a cool, dark place or in the refrigerator for 2 weeks. Shake the jar daily, or every few days, to mix the contents. Check after two days to ensure the herbs are still submerged, and add more ACV if needed.
- During this period, the dandelion and rosemary will infuse their healing properties into the vinegar.

### **Step 5: Strain and Store**

- After 2 weeks, strain the mixture through cheesecloth or a fine mesh strainer, squeezing out as much liquid as possible.
- Transfer the strained elixir into a dark glass bottle with a plastic lid for storage, protecting it from sunlight.
- The elixir can be stored in a dark, cool location, or in the refrigerator. When using fresh herbs, the elixir will last about a year; with dried herbs, it will last closer to two years.

### **Step 6: Application Methods**

- **Topical Use:** Apply the elixir directly to painful areas using a clean cloth, cotton ball, or fingertips. For increased potency, warm the elixir slightly before application and use it as a warm compress to enhance blood flow and reduce inflammation.
- **Bath Soak:** Add 1 cup of the elixir to a warm bath and soak for at least 20 minutes to relieve widespread pain or stiffness.
- **Internal Use:** To manage internal inflammation, mix 1-2 teaspoons of the elixir with water or herbal tea and consume up to three times daily. This can also support digestive health.

- **Massage Oil:** Combine the elixir with a carrier oil, such as coconut or olive oil, in a 1:3 ratio to create a soothing massage oil. Apply to affected areas to alleviate pain and inflammation.

Regular use of this Painkilling Elixir can make a significant difference in managing pain and improving overall well-being.

## The Fever Plaster



Raising the body's internal temperature is one method of fighting infection. This natural response, known as a fever, helps to eliminate bacteria or viruses. The Amish have long understood this and use a mustard plaster to mimic the heat of a fever, an old remedy that can help draw out a cough or chest infection. This plaster decongests phlegm, clears the airways, and improves blood flow due to the heat generated by the mustard.

### Materials Needed:

- 3 tablespoons of flour
- 2 teaspoons of dried mustard powder
- 2 tablespoons of water
- A zip-lock bag or an old towel/cloth

### Instructions:

1. **Prepare the Ingredients:** Combine 3 tablespoons of flour with 2 teaspoons of dried mustard powder in a bowl. Gradually add 2 tablespoons of water, mixing until the mixture forms a paste with the consistency of pancake batter.
2. **Create a Barrier:** It's crucial not to apply the mustard paste directly to the skin, as it can cause irritation or burns. Pour the paste into a zip-lock bag to create a protective barrier. Alternatively, the paste can be spread on an old towel or cloth, but this method may be messier.
3. **Apply the Plaster:** Place the prepared mustard paste on the chest and/or back. Then, wrap the body in blankets to encourage sweating. Leave the plaster in place for approximately 10 minutes, monitoring the skin to ensure it does not become too red or irritated.
4. **Remove the Plaster:** After 10 minutes or if the heat becomes too intense, remove the plaster. Take a warm shower to wash off the sweat produced by the remedy.
5. **Aftercare:** Wash hands thoroughly after handling the mustard plaster. If the plaster produces excessive heat, dilute the mixture with an additional tablespoon of flour, which is particularly advisable for children with sensitive skin.

**Additional Notes:**

This Amish fever plaster is simple to make and uses ingredients commonly found in most kitchens. Drinking plenty of water during this treatment is essential to replace fluids lost through sweating. The mustard plaster is just one of many natural remedies employed by the Amish to ease coughs and congestion, promoting both comfort and recovery.

## The Liquid Antibiotic

This course details how the Amish prepare their traditional Liquid Antibiotic, a natural remedy made from Usnea lichen, commonly known as “Old Man’s Beard” or “The Lungs of The Forest.” Usnea grows on dead trees in low-pollution areas, particularly near Amish communities. It’s crucial to correctly identify Usnea, as it should not be confused with Oak Moss or other tree lichens. The distinguishing feature of Usnea is its long, stretchy, grey-green strands that hang from tree branches or trunks. The lichen’s outer layer is green or grey-green, and underneath it, there is a whitish central filament. If the central core is not whitish, it is likely not Usnea. Strands of Usnea can grow to be several inches or even feet long.



When foraging for Usnea, it is essential to harvest it from unpolluted or low-pollution areas, as this lichen easily absorbs environmental pollutants, including heavy metals. Usnea contains usnic acid, a compound with antibiotic properties effective against over a dozen gram-positive bacteria, including streptococcus, staphylococcus, pneumococcus, and mycobacteria. The usnic acid works by disrupting the metabolic function of bacteria, effectively starving them of energy. While the Amish may not fully understand the science behind it, they continue to use this remedy because of its proven effectiveness over generations.

**Instructions:****1. Preparation:**

- Chop 1 ounce of dried or fresh Usnea lichen.
- Place the chopped lichen in a stainless-steel pot.

**2. Simmering:**

- Add about 4 ounces of water to the pot.
- Bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce the heat.
- Cover the pot with a lid and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes.

- The water volume should reduce to about 2.5 ounces (74 milliliters).
- 3. Cooling:**
    - Remove the pot from the heat and uncover it.
    - Allow the mixture to cool for several minutes.
  - 4. Combining with Alcohol:**
    - Pour the cooled mixture into a jar.
    - Add 5 ounces of grain or pure, organic cane alcohol to the jar.
    - Mix well.
  - 5. Infusion Process:**
    - Cover the jar and label it clearly.
    - Place the jar in a dark, warm place for 2 weeks.
    - Shake the jar daily to ensure proper infusion.
  - 6. Straining and Bottling:**
    - After 2 weeks, strain the liquid to remove any solid particles.
    - Pour the liquid into a dropper bottle.
    - Place the cap on the bottle and label it appropriately.
  - 7. Usage and Storage:**
    - The Amish never directly ingest alcoholic tinctures without dilution, as it can irritate the gastric system. The dosage may vary depending on age and health conditions.
    - The Liquid Antibiotic does not require refrigeration. When stored in a cool, dark place, it has an almost indefinite shelf life.

This traditional remedy could prove invaluable, especially in situations where conventional antibiotics are unavailable.

## The Black Drawing Salve

This course outlines the process of creating and using the Amish Black Drawing Salve, a traditional remedy known for its effectiveness in treating wounds and infections. In times of crisis, when access to commercial antibiotic creams may be limited, this homemade salve can prove invaluable.

The Amish Black Drawing Salve is a well-regarded topical remedy within the Amish community. It is particularly useful for drawing out infections, neutralizing toxins, and easing out splinters, thorns, insect stings, and other foreign objects



from the skin. The salve gets its distinctive black color from activated charcoal, which plays a crucial role in its effectiveness.

### **Ingredients and Their Uses:**

1. **Activated Charcoal:** This is the primary "drawing agent" in the salve, known for its ability to pull out toxins and impurities from wounds. It also has multiple other uses, such as filtering water, making toothpaste, and even cooking.
2. **Herbal Oils (e.g., St. John's Wort):** Many Amish communities prefer using St. John's Wort due to its pain-relieving properties. Other herbal oils, such as comfrey-infused oil, can also be used depending on the desired effects.
3. **Castor Oil:** With antimicrobial properties, castor oil enhances the salve's ability to fight infections. It is also a versatile item used in various home remedies, including as a treatment for constipation.
4. **Beeswax:** Beeswax acts as a binder, helping to mix the ingredients together and giving the salve its solid form. It also has antimicrobial properties and is commonly used in Amish households for making candles, preserving wood, and sealing food for long-term storage.
5. **Bentonite Clay:** This clay, derived from volcanic rock, works in conjunction with charcoal to draw out bacteria and impurities from the skin.
6. **Essential Oils (optional):** Essential oils like lavender or clove oil can be added for fragrance and additional therapeutic benefits.

### **Instructions:**

1. **Prepare the Base:**
  - In a double boiler, combine 1/3 cup of herbal-infused oil (such as St. John's Wort), 1 tablespoon of castor oil, and 3 teaspoons of beeswax.
  - Heat the mixture gently, stirring until the beeswax is fully melted and incorporated into the oils.
2. **Add the Drawing Agents:**
  - Once the beeswax is melted, add 1 tablespoon of activated charcoal and 1 tablespoon of bentonite clay to the mixture.
  - Stir thoroughly to ensure the charcoal and clay are evenly distributed.
3. **Optional Enhancements:**
  - If desired, add a few drops of essential oil for fragrance. Mix well to integrate the oils into the salve.

#### 4. Finalizing the Salve:

- Pour the mixture into a glass jar, allowing it to set and harden naturally as it cools. The salve will solidify as the beeswax cools and the oils are absorbed by the charcoal and clay.

**Storage and Shelf Life:** Store the salve in a cool, dry place to extend its shelf life. It is advisable not to make large quantities at once, as the salve is best used fresh.

Having this traditional Amish remedy on hand can be a lifesaver in times of need. Properly stored, the salve will be ready for use whenever required.

## The Amish Sleeping Pills

The Amish community does use sleeping aids, though not in the conventional sense. They rely on natural plants, which can be prepared as herbal pills, teas, or tinctures to improve sleep. Here's a guide to understanding the plants used and how to prepare herbal sleeping pills.



#### Key Plants and Their Benefits:

1. **Hop Flowers:** Known for their sedative properties, hop flowers are commonly used to treat anxiety, restlessness, and insomnia.
2. **Valerian Root:** Often compared to diazepam for its sedative effects, valerian root is considered a safe sleeping aid after consistent use for about two weeks.
3. **Lemon Balm:** Effective in decreasing sleep disturbances, lemon balm can be safely used for up to eight weeks.
4. **Chamomile:** A well-known relaxant within the Amish community, chamomile is used to enhance sleep quality.
5. **Passionflower:** This plant is noted for improving both the quality and duration of sleep. When combined with hop flowers and valerian, it has effects comparable to the insomnia drug Zolpidem.
6. **Pansy:** With a tranquilizing effect, pansy is known to increase sleep duration.
7. **St. John's Wort:** At low doses, it has an anti-anxiety effect, while at higher doses, it acts as a sedative.

#### Preparation of Herbal Sleeping Pills:

1. **Gather and Grind:** Collect equal quantities of each of the mentioned plants. Use an herb grinder or a mortar and pestle to grind them into a fine powder.

2. **Mix Thoroughly:** Ensure all the ground herbs are mixed well to create a consistent blend.
3. **Fill Capsules:** Use size 00 pill capsules to fill with the herbal mixture. This ensures the appropriate dosage.
4. **Store Properly:** Keep the filled capsules in an airtight container to maintain freshness and potency.
5. **Dosage:** Take two pills right before bed to help with falling and staying asleep.

The Amish often experiment with different quantities of these plants to find the most effective personal formula. Once a suitable combination is found, they typically stick with it for consistency and optimal results.

## The Smoking Blend Mix

The Amish Smoking Blend is a traditional remedy used within the community to relieve pain and manage respiratory issues. Although smoking is generally frowned upon by the Old Order Amish church, some Amish men still partake in smoking, including cigarettes, cigars, or pipes, even within conservative groups. The primary reason many Amish avoid smoking is its cost, as frugality is highly valued.



This blend differs from regular tobacco cigarettes, focusing instead on herbal, medicinal ingredients. Medicinal herbs are often consumed, steeped as tea, or made into tinctures and salves, but smoking them is another way to harness their benefits. When heated to the point of combustion, these herbs can break the blood-brain barrier in less than 10 seconds, making smoking the second-fastest method for pain relief, after intravenous injections.

### Instructions:

1. **Select a Base Herb**

Begin by choosing a base herb that complements the remedy without having an overpowering flavor. Mullein is an excellent choice, particularly for respiratory issues. The base herb should make up approximately 40-50% of the mixture.

- Measure 1 tablespoon of mullein leaves.
- Shred the leaves into tiny pieces.

## 2. **Add Specific Herbs**

Next, add herbs that target specific symptoms or conditions. These should account for another 40-45% of the blend. Consider herbs like skullcap and St. John's Wort to ease anxiety and pain.

- Add ½ tablespoon of wormwood, which is effective for muscle cramps, headaches, and rheumatism.
- Include a ¼ teaspoon of peppermint leaves for a refreshing flavor, which can also aid digestion.

## 3. **Enhance Flavor**

Since not all herbs taste pleasant, adding a flavor-enhancing herb can improve the experience. Options include peppermint for a refreshing taste, lavender for a calming effect, or anise to aid digestion. Wormwood, with its pleasant flavor, also contributes to the overall taste of the blend.

## 4. **Moisten the Herbs**

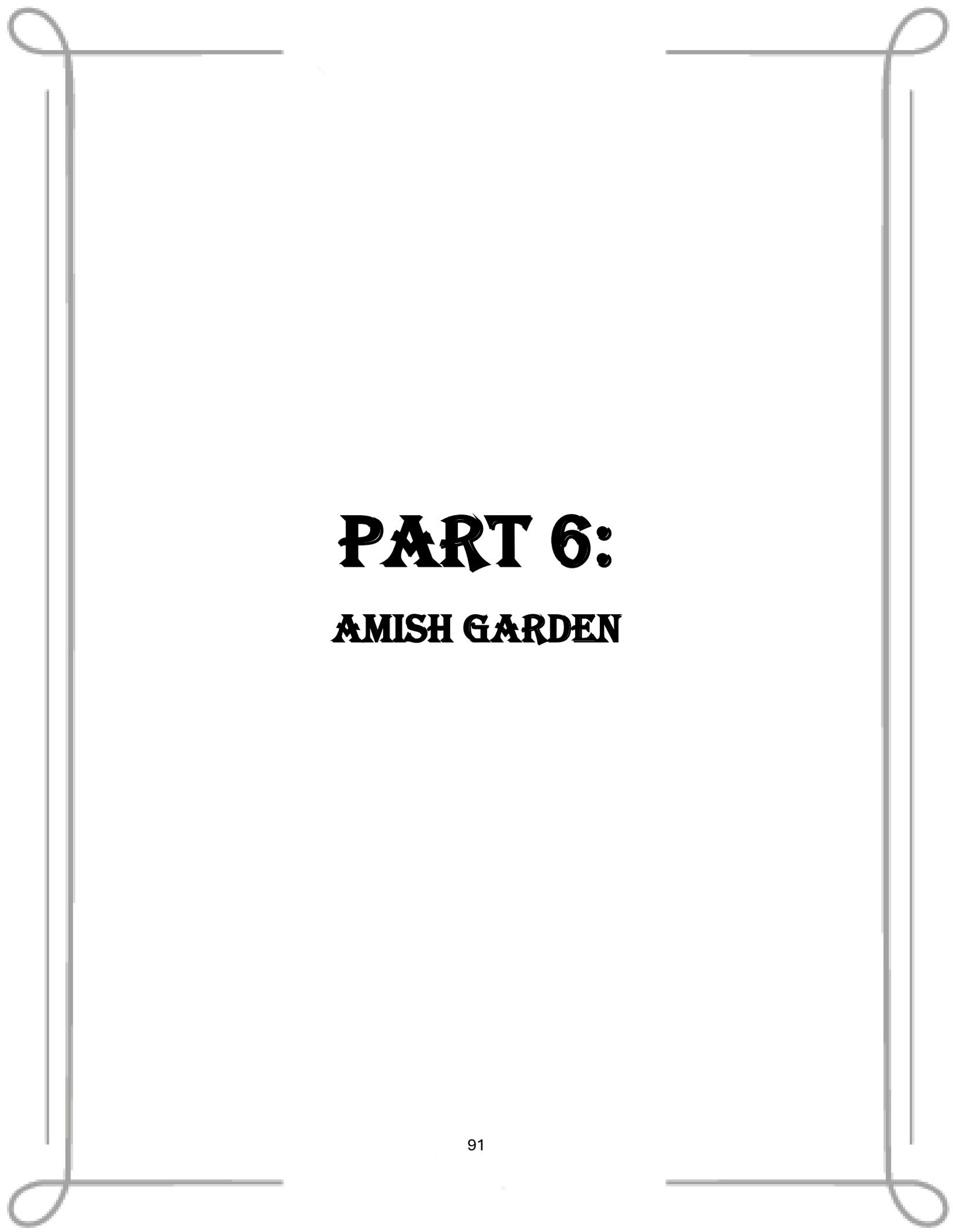
Over-dried herbs can be harsh and unpleasant to smoke. Lightly spritz the herbs with water and rub the leaves together to moisten them slightly. This will result in a more enjoyable and soothing smoking experience.

- Alternatively, add a piece of citrus peel to the container when packaging the mix. This not only rehydrates the herbs but also imparts a pleasant flavor.

## 5. **Prepare for Use**

Once the blend is ready, it can be smoked in a rolling paper or a pipe. This traditional method of using medicinal herbs offers quick relief, particularly for those struggling with pain or respiratory issues.

This Amish Smoking Blend showcases a unique approach to herbal remedies, leveraging the power of medicinal herbs in a way that is both effective and deeply rooted in Amish tradition.

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**PART 6:**  
**AMISH GARDEN**

# Amish Gardening Techniques That May Double Your Yield

The Amish community is renowned for its mastery of traditional farming methods, passed down through generations. Their approach relies on horse-drawn plows, hand-held tools, and hard work to cultivate and harvest their land. In this course, traditional Amish gardening techniques are explored, highlighting how these methods can be applied in small-scale gardening.



One example is the Amish raised bed, which involves creating a wooden crate above ground level. This method is easier on the knees, reduces soil compaction, and helps manage weeds and pests. To construct one, find a sunny spot with good drainage, clear the area of grass and weeds, and level the ground. Use untreated wood to form a rectangle, secure the corners, fill it with garden soil and compost, and plant vegetables.

Another technique is lasagna gardening, a no-dig organic method ideal for difficult soil. It involves layering organic materials directly on the garden site, which decompose into rich soil. Begin by laying down a thick layer of newspaper or cardboard to smother weeds, then add alternating layers of green (kitchen scraps, grass clippings) and brown (leaves, straw) materials. Build up to about 2 feet, water each layer, cover with compost or topsoil, and plant directly into this layer.

Straw bale gardening is another interesting method. It involves growing plants directly in straw bales, which serve as both container and growing medium. This method is especially useful in areas with poor soil. To set it up, place straw bales in a sunny spot, water them thoroughly for several days, add natural fertilizer, create planting holes, fill with compost or potting soil, and plant seeds or seedlings.

Weed control in Amish gardening relies on organic methods. Besides manual removal, organic mulch made from materials like straw, leaves, or wood chips is used to block sunlight and suppress weed growth. Cover crops like clover, rye, or buckwheat are also planted to prevent weeds from taking hold.

Crop rotation is another key technique, involving the rotation of different types of crops in the same area season by season. This method maintains soil fertility and helps control pests and plant diseases. For example, legumes like beans and peas fix nitrogen in the soil, benefiting nitrogen-consuming crops like corn. By rotating crops, the life cycle of pests specific to certain crops is disrupted, reducing their impact.

Companion planting is a cornerstone of Amish gardening, where certain crops are planted together to naturally deter pests. For instance, marigolds are planted alongside tomatoes to repel root-knot nematodes. The "three sisters" method is another common practice, where corn, beans, and squash are planted together for mutual benefit.

Composting is another vital aspect of Amish gardening, utilizing organic scraps to enrich the soil. In a large backyard bin, add vegetable and fruit peels, coffee grounds, eggshells, animal manure, crop residue, and other organic materials. Regularly turn the compost to introduce oxygen and speed up decomposition. The compost is ready when it becomes dark, crumbly, and smells earthy. It can be used to enrich garden soil or made into compost tea for watering plants.

Manure is also extensively used in Amish gardening, providing essential nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium for plant growth.

Soil testing is another important step in preparing for gardening. A simple test using a mason jar can help determine soil type. By filling a jar halfway with soil, adding water, and shaking it, the soil will settle into layers of sand, silt, and clay.

Loam, the ideal soil, is a balanced mix of these components: 40% sand, 40% silt, and 20% clay. Based on the results, adjustments can be made to improve soil quality, such as adding compost or manure to sandy soil or using cocopeat, perlite, and compost for silty or clay soil.

All these methods are integral to Amish gardening, where nothing is wasted, and everything is transformed into nutrient-rich food that sustains life.

## **What the Amish Add to Their Soil to Supercharge Their Plants**

Amish gardening techniques are effective largely due to well-prepared soil. Each season, Amish gardeners carefully tend to their soil to ensure rich crops year-round. These methods are applicable not only for outdoor gardens but also for indoor plants.

Growing up in rural Minnesota, which is known for its loamy soil, there was an advantage as this type of soil retains water and nutrients well. However, the techniques used to enhance soil are effective for drier or more challenging soils as well. Composting is a key practice, and adding powdered milk can boost compost efficiency by speeding up decomposition and adding calcium to the soil. Homemade powdered milk, made by drying milk at 135°F for about 12 hours, is preferable to avoid artificial additives. Goat milk, being richer, is better for very lean soils.

Another surprising addition is cinnamon, which the Amish use to combat soil fungal diseases. Sprinkling cinnamon on the ground and mixing it in, or using it as a spray mixed with water, can be effective. Apple cider vinegar is also used; mixing one tablespoon of apple cider vinegar with a gallon of water and spraying the soil weekly can help with fungal issues.

Mulch is commonly used by the Amish to repel pests and weeds, and it also retains moisture by reducing evaporation. This helps keep soil cool in summer and warm in winter, reducing garden maintenance. The Back to Eden Layering Method is a specific technique employed by the Amish. It involves covering the garden with newspapers or cardboard to suppress weeds, followed by a layer of compost and wood chips. As the wood chips decompose, they enrich the soil with organic matter. Adding manure on top can further benefit the soil. This method may take a year or two to fully improve soil quality, particularly for sandy soils. It is important to avoid applying it too early in spring to prevent hindering the growth of emerging perennials and to ensure that no old mulch or compost remains before applying new layers.

Nitrogen is another crucial element that the Amish pay attention to. Adequate nitrogen is necessary for plant growth and a good harvest. Coffee grounds and grass clippings are commonly used to add nitrogen to the soil. Despite assumptions, the Amish do consume coffee, and the grounds can be sprinkled around plants or mixed into the soil, with a recommended amount of 2-3 pounds per 100 square feet. Grass clippings are also a nitrogen-rich additive but should be allowed to dry and should not come from lawns treated with herbicides or chemicals, which could harm plants.

This course will cover these practices in detail, ensuring the application of Amish techniques for effective soil enrichment.

## The Amish Year-Round Greenhouse



nutrients.

This discussion focuses on two types of Amish greenhouses: an underground greenhouse and a traditional above-ground greenhouse. For the Amish, the greenhouse serves as a vital space, often referred to as a nursery, reflecting their values of responsibility, community, and teamwork. This is where seeds are nurtured, which will later grow into plants that provide essential

The primary benefits of using a greenhouse include the ability to start seeds early, extend the growing season, and protect plants from pests such as bugs, birds, and other critters. The controlled environment also allows for adjustments in temperature, humidity, and lighting to create an optimal microclimate for the plants being cultivated.

The underground greenhouse offers a unique advantage in cold weather by utilizing the earth's natural heat to keep plants warm. A few feet below the surface, the ground maintains a consistent temperature above freezing, which helps young plants survive through the winter. These greenhouses are typically made from pressure-treated wood, like southern yellow pine, known for

its resistance to rot and termites. However, more affordable options, such as treated wooden pallets, can also be used. The greenhouse is dug about three feet below ground to maximize heat retention, and insulating material is used to trap warmth.

An alternative is the above-ground greenhouse, which is cheaper and easier to build. While it may not maintain warmth as effectively as the underground version, it still offers protection against pests and harsh weather conditions. This structure is made from PVC piping, wooden beams, and plastic wrapping. Heavy wood is recommended for the foundation to prevent the greenhouse from being blown over by strong winds, and metal stakes can be used to anchor it securely.

These greenhouse structures offer the advantage of year-round growing, enabling more than one crop cycle annually and the ability to cultivate plants not native to the local climate. These options can significantly enhance agricultural yield.

Here are the lists of materials, tools, and step-by-step instructions to build the **underground greenhouse** and **above-ground greenhouse**:

### **Underground Greenhouse (Amish Style)**

#### **Materials:**

- Pressure-treated wood (Southern yellow pine or similar rot-resistant wood)
- Alternative: Wooden pallets treated for resistance
- Insulating material (like reflective insulation or foam boards)
- Plastic sheeting or clear panels (for covering the greenhouse)
- Screws, nails, or brackets (for fastening the wood together)
- Gravel (for drainage at the bottom of the greenhouse)
- Topsoil or garden soil (to fill planting beds inside the greenhouse)
- Ventilation system (optional, but recommended for airflow)

#### **Tools:**

- Shovel (for digging the ground)
- Hammer
- Saw (to cut the wood to size)
- Power drill

- Measuring tape
- Level (to ensure walls are straight)
- Staple gun (to attach the insulation or plastic sheeting)
- Wheelbarrow (for moving soil and gravel)

#### **Instructions:**

1. **Choose the location:** Pick a flat area with good sun exposure and minimal shade.
2. **Dig the foundation:** Dig 3 feet below the ground surface, ensuring the space is wide and long enough for your desired greenhouse size.
3. **Lay the base:** Cover the bottom of the hole with a layer of gravel for drainage.
4. **Build the frame:** Use pressure-treated wood or wooden pallets to build the walls of the greenhouse inside the hole. Secure the pieces with screws or nails.
5. **Insulate the walls:** Wrap the structure with insulating material to trap heat inside.
6. **Cover the greenhouse:** Use plastic sheeting or clear panels to cover the top of the greenhouse. This will allow sunlight to pass through while keeping the warmth inside.
7. **Ventilation:** If needed, add a small vent or adjustable window to control airflow during warmer days.
8. **Plant beds:** Add topsoil or garden soil for planting beds inside the greenhouse.
9. **Optional heating:** In colder climates, you can add a heating element or use compost to generate additional heat.

### **Above-Ground Greenhouse (PVC Structure)**

#### **Materials:**

- PVC pipes (for the frame)
- Wooden beams (for the foundation)
- Plastic sheeting (heavy-duty clear plastic for covering)
- Metal stakes or rebar (for anchoring the greenhouse to the ground)
- Zip ties or PVC pipe connectors (to secure the pipes)

- Screws or nails (for attaching the wood foundation)

#### **Tools:**

- Hammer
- Saw (to cut the wooden beams to size)
- Power drill
- Measuring tape
- PVC pipe cutter (to cut the PVC to the desired lengths)
- Mallet (to secure stakes into the ground)
- Staple gun (to attach plastic sheeting)
- Level (to ensure the frame is even)

#### **Instructions:**

1. **Select the location:** Choose a flat, sunny area for your greenhouse.
2. **Build the wooden foundation:** Cut and assemble wooden beams to form the base. Secure the beams with nails or screws.
3. **Anchor the foundation:** Use metal stakes or rebar to secure the wooden beams to the ground, ensuring the structure won't blow over in high winds.
4. **Construct the PVC frame:** Cut PVC pipes to size and use connectors to form arches over the wooden foundation. Secure the PVC to the base using screws or brackets.
5. **Reinforce the frame:** Ensure the PVC frame is sturdy by adding crossbars and securing joints with zip ties or pipe connectors.
6. **Cover with plastic sheeting:** Drape the plastic sheeting over the frame, ensuring it's taut. Staple or secure the plastic to the wooden foundation.
7. **Ventilation:** Cut small flaps in the plastic for airflow or install a small door or window for easy access and ventilation.
8. **Optional extras:** Add shelving or planting beds inside for easy access to plants.

Both greenhouses offer unique advantages depending on your climate and resources. The **underground greenhouse** is ideal for colder regions, while the **above-ground PVC greenhouse** is a simpler, budget-friendly option suitable for year-round planting in most areas.

# 10 Forgotten Techniques for Raising Happy, Healthy Chickens

The Amish are skilled poultry farmers, guided by their Christian belief in the responsibility of caring for all living things. They uphold high standards, emphasizing sustainable practices and the ethical treatment of animals, unlike factory farms. The Amish allow their chickens to roam freely, feeding on natural prey like worms and grubs, which leads to more nutritious eggs with noticeably orange yolks.

Amish chickens are housed in simple wooden coops where they can roam during the day and are secured at night to protect them from predators and harsh weather. Chickens naturally roost at night, conserving heat by huddling together. A typical Amish coop can house over 30 birds, though beginners are advised to start with smaller coops. For egg production, each hen requires at least 2 feet of space.

The coop floor is often lined with straw, which insulates and absorbs moisture and odor. To keep chickens active, some Amish use a "chicken gym," such as a cabbage hung from a rope, to entertain the birds. The Amish feed their chickens a diet of grass, corn, wheat, and kitchen scraps, supplemented by insects and small animals. Regular monitoring of droppings is recommended to detect any signs of disease.

For those new to raising chickens for eggs, it's important to note that a hen typically lays one egg per day, though the process of forming an egg takes about 26 hours, causing each egg to be laid later in the day than the previous one. Eggshells can also be ground up and added to gardens as calcium-rich compost.

Chickens are a staple on almost every Amish farm due to their ease of care and minimal space requirements. They provide a steady supply of nutritious eggs and meat. For those uncomfortable with butchering, a local butcher can be hired. The Amish typically process chickens by beheading them, dipping them in hot water with baking soda to ease feather removal, and singeing any remaining fluff. The chicken is then gutted, with organs like the heart, gizzard, and liver kept for cooking, along with the head, neck, and feet for soup. Shell-less eggs found inside the hen are also considered edible and sometimes a delicacy. The chicken is then cut up for immediate use or stored for later.

Chicken feathers, though not ideal, can also be used for filling pillows. Chickens are valued members of the Amish farm, providing consistent benefits to those who care for them.

These are the 10 Forgotten Techniques for Raising Happy, Healthy Chickens:

## 1. Take Care of The Coop

The first thing you need to look at is their living space – a comfortable living space will help raise healthy chicken, which in turn results in lots of delicious eggs. Keep in mind the seasons, and if you have a severe winter, make sure the coop stays warm, and well-ventilated.

Keep the coop clean- you should make sure the coop is cleaned every day, but at least do it three times per week. Chicken poop can have an overbearing smell and being confined in the coop surrounded with the smell of ammonia would be unpleasant for your birds.

The winters would be more crucial, and if the coop is not ventilated well, make sure it is cleaned every day.

If you have very short winter days, you could install artificial lighting to increase the “daylight” your chickens are exposed to. This would give them the impression of longer days, thus giving you more eggs!

## **2. Arrange the Nest Boxes**

Nooks can be created close to the perches where chickens typically lay eggs. It is important to ensure these areas are separate from their nighttime sleeping space, which helps prevent chickens from developing the habit of sitting on their eggs. This arrangement also makes daily egg collection easier.

Nesting boxes can be made from crates, baskets, or any upcycled containers. These should be kept cozy, clean, and free from distractions to encourage healthy egg-laying behavior.

## **3. Keep a Healthy Diet**

To get a regular supply of tasty eggs, it is crucial that your chickens have a healthy diet.

Once the chickens are old enough to lay eggs, they would need a higher intake of protein and calcium in their diet. Make sure their meal contains about 15% protein and include some high protein treats in their diet.

The source of protein could be seeds, worms, or even scrambled eggs. Free ranging chickens would have the added advantage of being able to forage for their food, giving them access to insects and worms from the ground. A varied diet helps them stay healthier, and my observation is that the eggs have a beautiful orange yolk.

To make sure the eggshells are not too thin, ensure that there is adequate calcium intake. Chickens like to peck on oyster shells, or even crushed eggshells. Free ranging chickens would know how to access calcium sourced from insect shells, or even from the dirt. They’re smart and would know how much their body needs – they’ll only eat as much as they need, so do not mix the calcium with their food or they may end up eating too much calcium!

Make sure your chickens have access to clean water – and be sure to refill the water frequently, especially in the summer.

Overall, a diverse diet is great for their health, so feel free to give them vegetable scraps from your kitchen and ends of fruit. They will eat what they like, and the rest converts into compost.

Since the hens roam free, they need to feel safe when they nest, so their nesting baskets should be placed in isolated corners where they would be safe from predators, kids, dogs or any other distractions. It helps to have a lot of dry herbs in the nesting box – rosemary, peppermint, lavender, parsley, marigold.

This keeps the nesting box smelling nice, and a lot of these herbs have repellent properties, keeping mites and fleas away. Make sure you have at least one nesting box for every 2-3 chickens, so that you do not run out of space.

#### **4. Their Daily Routine**

Like all pets, a routine is important to keep them healthy. If you have a run for your chickens, let them out regularly so that they get exercised. The more space they have generally results in better health and more less stress. Stress-free chickens will lay more eggs.

Make sure they feel secure, safe from predators, and they aren't chased by dogs or kids. Other factors that could stress them would be injury, illness or an imbalanced or insufficient diet.

The routine is just important for you as well – follow a schedule with their food and activity. And make sure you collect eggs regularly, preferably twice a day, to make sure they don't eat their own eggs.

#### **5. Choosing Your Brood**

Despite all best practices, the egg yield depends on the type of chicken you keep.

Choose an egg laying breed that typically lays 300+ eggs per year. And plan the size of your brood to make sure you have enough eggs to provide you with a steady supply. Some extra yield is always appreciated by grateful neighbors!

Think about whether you would like to include a rooster in your brood.

They are noisy and can be fierce, but I have personally liked waking up to their morning crowing and find they're better watchmen than the dogs I have kept! The hens seem happier with a rooster around them too – so it would be worth exploring if it is an option for you.

The best way to get going with a backyard production of eggs is to simply begin. There may be a few mistakes or a few heart breaks along the way, but overall this is a wholesome experience, providing you with the perfect every day breakfast!

#### **6. Predator Proof Your Coop**

Predator attacks are awful, especially when you can't avoid them. A lot of newbie chicken raisers fail to put the necessary precautions in place and can lose an entire flock overnight with one attack. The best way to protect your chickens is to predator-proof your coop. Here are some tips:

- don't use chicken wire because it doesn't keep out small predators like weasels. Hardware cloth is the most effective way to predator-proof your coop.
- do your best to close all small gaps because rats and weasels are known to squeeze through holes the size of an adult thumb.
- at night close all doors and windows and latch them.
- cover the roof on the chicken run.
- place hardware cloth on the bottom of the chicken run if you have dirt floors to prevent digging predators from coming in.
- get a well-trained dog, it will scare any predators and provide your chickens with around-the-clock protection.
- your presence in the yard during the free-range time will scare off any predators. But it is not advised to stand outside for long periods of time during the winter months.

## **7. Don't Feed Chickens the Wrong Food**

Chickens are omnivores, which means they like eating all types of foods including dairy, meat, fruit, and vegetables. Although chickens enjoy variety, there are some foods they should not eat, here are some of them:

- Processed foods
- Junk foods
- Uncooked rice, pasta, beans
- Fried foods
- Onions
- Citrus fruits
- Leaves from rhubarb, potato plants, and tomato plants
- Sweets, desserts, chocolate, candy

## **8. Keep the Right Temperature in the Chick Brooder**

When first-time chicken rearers bring their basket of furry chicks home, they make the mistake of keeping the brooder too hot or too cold. The wrong temperature can be dangerous and can cause permanent damage to your chickens; therefore, be sure to keep it at around 95 degrees F. Check the temperature often using an infrared thermometer and adjust it, if required.

## **9. Prepare for Extreme Weather**

Chickens adapt quickly to weather changes, but extreme weather can be a problem. Since the weather can be unpredictable, it is advised that you are prepared for the summer and winter seasons. During the winter, protect your chickens from the cold, wind, and snow by insulating the coop with horse blankets, and adding extra bedding. When it's really cold, feed your chickens hot oatmeal, and check for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.

## **10. Use the Right Bedding**

A lot of first-time chicken rearers assume any bedding will do for their little ones as long as it's comfortable. But it's important that you use the right bedding because anything else can damage your chickens. Don't line the brooder box with newspaper for two reasons. First, it doesn't absorb liquid, and second, but most important, it's slippery. Without traction, chicken legs will splay which can cause spraddle legs. You should also avoid using cedar bedding because it is known to cause respiratory problems.

The best bedding to use for newborn chicks is paper towels; after a few weeks, start using pine shavings. They are easy to clean and very absorbent.

This is how you can build your own wooden coop:

### **Materials:**

#### **1. Wood for framing and walls:**

- 4x4 treated lumber (for the base)
- 2x4 untreated lumber (for the frame)
- Plywood sheets (for walls and roof)
- Wooden planks (optional for flooring)

#### **2. Roofing materials:**

- Corrugated metal roofing sheets or shingles
- Waterproof underlayment or tar paper

#### **3. Wire mesh or chicken wire:**

- 1/2-inch gauge galvanized wire mesh (for the run and ventilation)

#### **4. Doors and hinges:**

- A wooden or metal door (small for access to chickens)
- Hinges and locks

5. **Nesting boxes:**
  - Wooden crates or plywood to build 2-3 nesting boxes
6. **Perches/Roosting bars:**
  - 2x2 wooden dowels or branches (for chickens to perch at night)
7. **Bedding material:**
  - Straw or wood shavings (for floor insulation and moisture control)
8. **Latches and handles:**
  - For securing the doors and egg access points
9. **Screws, nails, and brackets:**
  - For assembling the frame and walls
10. **Paint or wood sealer:**
  - For protecting the wood from moisture and weathering
11. **Waterer and feeder:**
  - Plastic or metal containers (placed inside the coop or run)
12. **Cabbage and rope (optional):**
  - For a chicken “gym” to keep your birds active

**Tools:**

1. **Measuring tape:** To ensure accurate dimensions
2. **Saw:** To cut the wood to size
3. **Drill:** For drilling holes and screwing in the fasteners
4. **Hammer:** For driving nails
5. **Wire cutters:** To trim the wire mesh
6. **Screwdriver or impact driver:** To tighten screws
7. **Level:** To ensure the coop is properly aligned
8. **Pencil or chalk:** For marking measurements
9. **Staple gun or nails:** For attaching wire mesh to the frame
10. **Paintbrush or roller:** For applying wood sealer or paint

## **Step-by-Step Instructions:**

### **1. Build the base:**

- Cut your 4x4 treated lumber to form a rectangular frame that will serve as the coop's base.
- Secure the pieces with screws or nails, ensuring the base is level.
- Optionally, add a wooden plank floor for the coop, or you can place the coop directly on the ground with bedding for insulation.

### **2. Frame the coop:**

- Cut 2x4 pieces to create the vertical posts and top rails. Build a rectangular frame with space for the door and windows.
- Use brackets or screws to secure the frame to the base.

### **3. Install the walls:**

- Cut plywood sheets to fit the sides and back of the coop.
- Leave openings for ventilation, which you'll cover with wire mesh later. Use screws to attach the plywood to the frame.

### **4. Install the roof:**

- Attach roofing beams (2x4 lumber) at an angle for water runoff.
- Cover the roof with plywood or wooden planks and then install the corrugated metal sheets or shingles. Ensure the roof overhangs slightly to protect the walls from rain.

### **5. Add the wire mesh:**

- Staple galvanized wire mesh over the ventilation openings and around the outside run area if you're including a run. Ensure the mesh is securely attached to keep predators out.

### **6. Create access points:**

- Build or install a small door for yourself to clean the coop and for the chickens to enter. Attach with hinges and secure with latches.
- Install an egg access door by creating a small hinged panel near the nesting boxes so you can easily collect eggs.

### **7. Install roosting bars and nesting boxes:**

- Place the roosting bars (2x2 wooden dowels) horizontally across the coop about 2-3 feet off the ground, where chickens will sleep at night.
- Build or install nesting boxes with plywood or use wooden crates, making sure they're positioned lower than the roosting bars.

#### **8. Add bedding and perches:**

- Line the floor with straw or wood shavings to insulate and absorb moisture.
- Place bedding in the nesting boxes and ensure they're comfortable for the chickens to lay eggs in.

#### **9. Secure the door and lock:**

- Ensure that all access points—both the main door and egg door—are secure with latches or locks to prevent predators from entering the coop.

#### **10. Add a chicken run (optional):**

- If you want to give your chickens a safe outdoor space, use wire mesh and wooden posts to create an enclosed run attached to the coop.

#### **11. Paint or seal the coop:**

- Apply a waterproof wood sealer or paint to protect the wood from rain and sun exposure, extending the life of the coop.

#### **12. Add feeders, waterers, and enrichment:**

- Place a water container and feeder inside the coop or in the run.
- Hang a cabbage using a rope as a simple activity for the chickens to peck at.

## **The Amish Way to Protect Your Crops from Pest**

The Amish employ a natural and holistic approach to protecting their gardens from common pests, avoiding the use of artificial pesticides. This practice not only helps prevent the chronic ailments often associated with chemical use but also contributes to the high demand for Amish-grown produce among the English. Many common household items, combined with Amish ingenuity, effectively repel garden critters.

One example is an Amish recipe for a garden spray that deters insects, rabbits, rodents, and other pests. The spray is effective because the strong odor overwhelms the heightened sense of smell in these animals. To make this spray, blend 1 onion, 4 cloves of garlic, 20 drops of peppermint essential oil, and 2 tablespoons of cayenne pepper powder. The Amish mix these ingredients with a mortar and pestle rather than a blender. After letting the mixture steep for about an hour, strain it using a fine strainer to prevent clogging the spray bottle. Combine the strained mixture with a gallon of water and add 2 tablespoons of castile soap or vegan dish soap. The Amish typically use vegetable glycerin, a common ingredient in hand and dish soaps. After thoroughly shaking the mixture, it can be poured into a spray bottle and applied to plants once or twice a week, or after rain, avoiding the edible parts when possible.

Additionally, green two-liter plastic bottles, often seen hanging from trees on Amish farms, serve as DIY bug traps. Filled with water, sugar, and vinegar, these traps attract and catch mosquitos, flies, and other insects. A makeshift funnel can be added to the top of the bottle to increase effectiveness. The traps are hung from lower branches, away from areas of human activity.

To further reduce mosquito populations, the Amish encourage bats to roost near their homes. Bat houses, often made of cedar, are available in most Amish goods stores or online. These bats provide long-lasting, sustainable pest control.

Plant diseases, especially those caused by fungal pathogens, pose another challenge. Fungal infections, spread by wind, insects, or contaminated soil, can quickly destroy a garden. Along with healthy gardening practices like mulching, crop rotation, and soil maintenance, the Amish use a natural fungicide spray to protect plants. A popular recipe includes blending a garlic bulb, 2 tablespoons of canola oil, 4 hot peppers, and the juice from one lemon. After letting the mixture steep overnight, it is strained and added to a gallon of water. This fungicide can be used as soon as an infection is suspected or as a preventive measure by spraying plants every two weeks, ensuring both the top and bottom of the leaves are covered.

By employing these natural methods, the Amish maintain healthy gardens, which in turn yield abundant harvests.