

How To Use HAYBOXES

The beauty of the haybox is its simplicity and versatility. The method is very straightforward: food is brought to a boil, and with a lid on is placed into the haybox, for approximately one and a half times the period that it would take to cook on the hob. Any food with a high liquid content will cook well in a haybox.

Examples of uses:

- The haybox is great for stews, soups, milk puddings, preserves, etc. Simply bring to the boil on the hob, cover, then put in the box. Foods which normally lose a lot of liquid through steam when cooked on a stove need less water when cooked in a haybox.
- Rice cooks beautifully in a haybox – again, just bring to the boil, cover, and put in the box. Hard-boiled eggs, boiled potatoes, etc, work in the same way.
- You can pre-cook beans and pulses in the haybox before adding to other ingredients for chilli, etc. Some beans and pulses - kidney beans, for example - must be boiled for at least 10-15 minutes before they are placed into the haybox to ensure that toxins are eliminated.
- In cold weather, hayboxes are useful for proving bread dough, putting a mug of hot water in with it to give the warmth required.
- The haybox is also ideal for keeping food warm or cold until serving. With ice inside, hayboxes are great for ensuring plentiful supplies of cold beers and juices at parties!

FURTHER INFORMATION

Sunseed Desert Technology aims to develop, demonstrate and communicate accessible, low-tech methods of living sustainably in a semi-arid environment. Sunseed Desert Technology is the Spanish project of the Sunseed Trust Ltd (UK reg. charity 1098353) and a registered Spanish Association (no. 162660). We also practice organic gardening and are a field trial site for low-tech research into tree nurseries and soil regeneration. Hundreds of people work with us as paying volunteers every year.

Further information, including volunteering opportunities at Sunseed, can be obtained from the following addresses:

Sunseed Desert Technology (SDT)
Apdo. 9, 04270 Sorbas, Almería, Spain

Sunseed Web-Site:
www.sunseed.org.uk

email: sunseedspain@arrakis.es

tel. (00 34) 950 52 57 70

Sunseed Tanzania Web-site:
www.sunseedtanzania.org

As a registered charity, donations are always appreciated, especially if requesting further information.

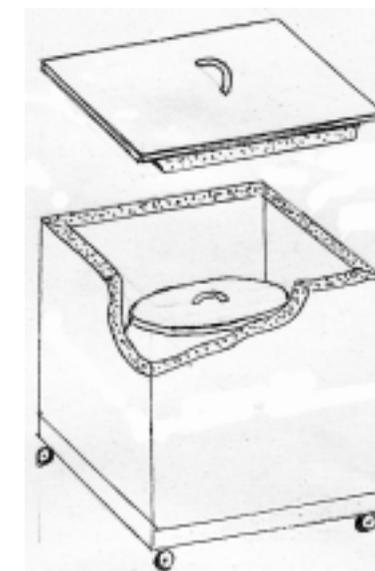
Thank you for your interest.

SDT.MP.02(E): November 2004



**Sunseed
Desert
Technology**

www.sunseed.org.uk



HAYBOXES

**A simple way of saving
energy in your kitchen**

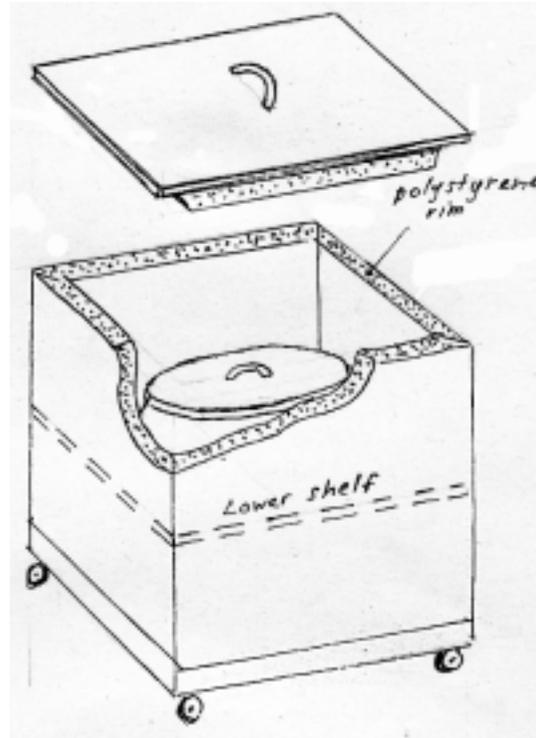
INTRODUCTION

The haybox, a basic necessity in the kitchen years ago, has been all but forgotten in the western world today. As its use reduces energy consumption considerably, it is one of the many innovative pieces of very simple technology that we use and promote at Sunseed Desert Technology.

Working on the principle of insulation, the temperature of whatever you put inside is maintained. When boiled or partially cooked food is placed inside the haybox, while still hot, the heat is retained within the box and will continue to cook the food passively. Food cooks thoroughly without ever burning or overcooking. The haybox can also keep food cool if a lower temperature is sustained.

HAYBOXES AT SUNSEED

The hayboxes we use at Sunseed are of a very simple design. Polystyrene, rather than hay, acts as the insulator – polystyrene is a more effective insulator; reclaimed material can be used (which is great, given that polystyrene takes many years to break down); it is more hygienic than hay; and more durable (it does not get damp, and spills can be wiped clean). 3 inch thick sheets of polystyrene are attached to the 4 sides and base of a large (50x60x70 cm) wooden box on casters. Silver plastic film covers the polystyrene – this reflects heat back to cooking pots, and can also be wiped clean. The lid also has polystyrene fixed to it, to make a tight-fitting seal with the rim. A lift-out shelf is fitted halfway down the box, to double the space available.



The Sunseed Tanzania Trust has also worked with local groups to develop a haybasket. This works on the same principle as the haybox and in this case matches its name: a hand-held wicker basket is lined with dried grass, with a dip in the middle in which to place a pan, and a material lining is sewn on top.

A cushion, also fitted with dried grass, is placed on top to complete the insulation of pans placed inside.

Having no air gap – pans fit snugly into the haybasket – makes for effective insulation. Although it fits less in, the small size and lightness of the haybasket make it portable and versatile.



BUILDING YOUR OWN HAYBOX

Using a haybox is a simple way of reducing your energy consumption and making your kitchen greener, and they are easy to make. If constructing a wooden box proves tricky, an old tea chest is ideal, or simply a large cardboard box.

The most important thing is to line it well, including the base and lid, so that maximum heat is retained. Polystyrene has all the advantages mentioned earlier, and can also be cut neatly to size for boxes and be covered with silver plastic film (or aluminium foil – easier to obtain, though not as durable).

You could also use one smaller cardboard box covered with silver film/foil inside another, larger one, and fill the gap with insulating material such as dried grass, newspaper, foam, or old material – an old sleeping bag would be ideal, for example. Or you could line an old dustbin with any of these materials, and place pans directly inside, with more material on top. It is important to ensure, however, that any materials that come into direct contact with very hot pans can stand up to the initial temperatures.