Building Your Own Doomsday Retreat
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Dear reader,

It finally happens…

The disaster you've been expecting.

You've spent years preparing for this and now you're faced with it. You've got to get out of town before the rush starts; but wait... do you have someplace to go?

Is your doomsday retreat all ready and stocked for you? If not, then where are you going to go?

This is the problem that faces many of us today.

We're trying to be ready for anything, but we just can't seem to make it all come together. If we could do what we want, we'd have a nice little cabin in the woods, ready and waiting for us to bug out and ride out the storm.

But for most of us, that little cabin in the woods is just too darn expensive to fit into our budget. We're going to have to bug in, even though we realize that's dangerous, just because we can't afford someplace to bug out to.

There are a lot of preppers who seem to think that they're going to bug out to the wild when the time comes and live off the land. I wouldn't do that if I were you. Living off the land is much more difficult than survival instructors make it sound, especially if you've got to consider bugging out with your family.

I suppose you could be a complete cad and bug out without your family, abandoning them. But I'd have to say that anyone who did that is less than a man and deserves anything that happens to them.

No, bugging out has to mean bugging out with the family, and that means having someplace to bug out to.

Having that place to bug out to is a dream for many preppers…
Building Your Own Doomsday Retreat

Knowing that they have a safe place where they can take their family in the case of an emergency provides a level of security that preparing to shelter in place just can't provide.

It opens up options, as well as helping to ensure the family's survival. The only problem is that it costs more money that most preppers can’t afford.

What would you say if I told you that you could build that doomsday shelter in the wild for much less money than you thought you could? When most of us think of that cabin in the woods, we start seeing price tags of $30,000, $40,000, $50,000 or even more.

What if you could do it for somewhere between $5,000 and $10,000? Would that be possible, if you spread the expense over a couple of years?

Well, it is possible…

There are several different ways in which you can make yourself a doomsday retreat, without having to spend a lot of money. I'm going to give you some ideas in this report, telling you everything you need to do, so that you too can realize that dream.

1. You've Got to Start with the Land

Obviously, if you're going to build yourself a retreat, you have to have someplace to build it.

Without the necessary land, about the best you can build is a travel trailer.

While that might actually work out in a survival situation, you're better off if you can build a permanent shelter in a remote location.

One thing you need to consider is the location.

A survival retreat that's too far away from your home may not be usable to you, simply because of the difficulty in getting to it. You have to consider that you might not be able to get there in your vehicle. If that's the case, then it needs to be close enough to walk to. At the same time it has to be far enough away from your home that it won't fall prey to the same disaster your home is struck by.

Ideally, a doomsday retreat should be somewhere between 100 and 300 miles of your home.
The exception to that would be if you lived on the very edges of a suburb and you were able to buy land that was within about 50 miles, but was separated from your land by a mountain ridge.

That would be enough to prevent most disasters from hitting both places at once, while making sure that you can still reach your retreat.

There are several ways you can go about acquiring someplace to build, such as:

- Building on public land
- Building on a friend's land
- Buying some cheap land to build on

While building on public land is possible, it's technically illegal.

If you were to build a cabin on some land that is part of a natural forest and it was discovered, the cabin would be forfeit and you'd probably be fined for building it. You might be able to get away with that in the aftermath of a disaster, but probably not before.

If you have a friend or family member who lives out in the country, you may be able to build something on their land. You can either approach this as wanting to build a weekend retreat or wanting to build a survival shelter.

If you talk about building a survival shelter on their land, you will need to take them into your confidence and talk about making plans to survive together. Otherwise, when the disaster comes, you might not have much cooperation from them.

Of course, this option is cheaper than buying land. But somehow you've got to make it worthwhile for the people who own the land too. Maybe you can do some improvements on their land that will benefit them too, or perhaps you can put in a well that both families can use.

Regardless of what you do, you need to do something so that it doesn't seem like you're taking advantage of them, otherwise, they may turn on you at the wrong time.

My favorite option is to build the property on junk land. Junk land is land that is not commercially viable for any purpose. As such, it can be purchased very cheap.

The trick is finding this junk land. It is rarely advertised and what is advertised as junk land, although cheap, really isn't as cheap as you can get.
Building Your Own Doomsday Retreat

When I'm talking about junk land, I'm talking about land that can be purchased for somewhere around a thousand dollars an acre.

Why so cheap?

Because it's not very usable land.

Usually it's hard to get to, not near anything else of value, doesn't have water on it and doesn't have access to utilities. But if you think about it for a moment, other than the lack of water, those characteristics make it ideal for a doomsday retreat.

In order to find junk land, you'll probably have to advertise for it. You'll want to put an ad in the paper saying that you are seeking junk land in such-and-such an area and aren't willing to pay more than X number of dollars for it.

Let me warn you right now; you're going to get a lot of phone calls that are a waste of your time. Any real estate agent or landowner who has land for sale is going to contact you, even if their land is the farthest possible thing from what you need. Just tell them "no thank you" and be patient.

Hopefully, someone will see your ad, who has the land you are looking for.

You might also try doing some searching on the internet. I just ran a search for junk land in Texas and found a few lots that looked promising. A couple of them were even less than $1,000 an acre.

There are a couple of things you need to keep in mind when actually looking at the land…

The first is access.

While you want land where people aren't going to bother you, you also want to be sure that you can get to your land.

That means at least a dirt road that goes to the edge of your land.

If you have to cross someone else's land to access yours, you want to make sure that you have a written agreement, allowing you to cross their land, with any restrictions, before buying your land.
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The next thing you need to think about is water…

No matter what, you're going to need water.

That either means drilling for water on your land or bringing in water from outside. So, look around the area and determine where you can get water from. You'll want to make sure that it is within a reasonable distance and that you have the means to carry water from where it is, to where your property is, even if you can't get gasoline.

Finally, you want land that you can defend.

The land itself will probably not be all that defensible when you buy it, so you'll probably need to make some modifications. So, look at the land with a critical eye and start thinking about how you'll devise your defensive plan.

2. Planning Your Doomsday Retreat

Before you start thinking about building, you need to do a little planning. I mentioned planning your defenses a moment ago, but that's not all you need to plan.

For your retreat to be complete, you're going to need more than just a cabin in the woods. So you want to think about the other things that you need and how you are going to get them.

To start with, you're going to need water. Is drilling a well on your property realistic? In some places, you can drill a shallow well and encounter water within 20 or 30 feet. It might not be the best water there is, but it is usable. In others, you might have to go a couple of hundred feet to encounter water.

If you can't get water by drilling, how can you get it?

Look for signs of rainwater runoff on your land. Perhaps you can dam up an arroyo and make a pond. Perhaps you can capture rainwater from your roof. If nothing else, you'll need to haul water in to your property. In any of these cases, it would be a good idea to have a large storage tank for water, so that you can ensure that you always have enough on hand.

The next thing you need to think about is sewage.

The easiest solution to this is to dig a hole and build an outhouse.
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If there is water on your property or you are drilling a well, you want to make sure that your outhouse is at least 100 feet from your water source and not uphill of it. That way, the sewage won't contaminate the water.

You should also consider putting in a large vegetable garden.

That may require bringing in good topsoil or compost to use. If you are in an arid area, that will be especially important. However, it is worth the effort, considering that your food stocks will eventually run out.

One way to save on water is to use your grey water for watering your garden.

Grey water consists of everything used for washing, whether washing clothes, dishes or your bodies. The small amount of residual soap shouldn't be a problem for your garden, and using the grey water will reduce your overall water requirements. Watering at night will reduce them as well, as not as much of the water will evaporate before the plants can drink it.

One other thing you want to make sure you have is some means of producing electricity…

I'm going to assume that your doomsday retreat is going to be built in such a way that you can live without electricity. Nevertheless, you will probably want some electricity to power a radio, computer, phone or other device. If you have those devices, and they'll help you survive, there's no sense in not taking them with you to your retreat.

Finally, somewhere near your doomsday cabin, you'll want to have some sort of storage building, underground bunker, root cellar or storage container.

If this is where you're planning on going in the case of a disaster, then you'll want to stockpile the supplies and equipment you need, so that you and your family can survive.

That means having a secure place to store it, which can't be easily found or broken into. Shipping containers work well for storage containers. They are metal and are equipped with four latch bars over the doors.

You can add a padlock to each of those bars, giving the doors four locks. Between the metal construction and the locks, they are very hard to break into.
3. **Designing Your Doomsday Cabin**

Maybe you've got a cabin design in mind, which you've been dreaming about for years. If so, that's great; it's time to dust off those memories and put them on paper.

But it's much more likely that you've had nothing more than a vague idea that you wanted to do something. If that's the case, then it's time to come up with a design. Actually, you don't so much have to come up with a design, as you need to find a design.

Oh, you can make up your own design, that's no problem, but for most of us, it's much easier to find a design that we like, even if that means modifying something that we find.

Never be afraid to modify a design…

Just keep in mind that your modifications need to work. For that reason, it's always a good idea to draw it up, to scale, before committing your ideas to wood.

In fact, if you have trouble visualizing how things will look when they are done, you can increase your chances of success by making a scale model out of cardboard. I've even seen people make a full-sized kitchen layout out of cardboard, just to make sure that there's going to be enough space to work in.

It's a lot cheaper to make a model out of cardboard, than it is to make the real thing; especially when you consider that you can get all the cardboard you want from the trash can. Use a hot glue gun to stick it together, and you'll have a pretty good model of your cabin.

So, where can you find plans?

There are a lot of free or inexpensive plans for cabins on the Internet. All you have to do is do a little bit of searching around. Here are a few sites that I've found:

- This site has 30 free plans, plus links to others:  
  [http://www.todaysplans.net/free-cabin-plans.html](http://www.todaysplans.net/free-cabin-plans.html)

- This site sells plans for small cabins at a reasonable price:  
Building Your Own Doomsday Retreat

- This site has a set of plans for building a small cabin, along with detailed instructions for how to build it: http://www.theclassicarchives.com/how-to-guides/free-wood-cabin-plans

- This site has a number of different plans you can order, as well as one free one that you can download: http://www.cabinplans123.com/; the plans are a little more expensive

- This site has links to a number of cabin plans, both free and for sale: http://coolcabinplans.s3.amazonaws.com/index.html

- Here's a woodworker's site that has links to a number of free cabin plans: http://www.woodworkersworkshop.com/resources/index.php?cat=502


- This site has half a dozen plans by people who have done their own: http://relaxshacks.blogspot.com/2012/07/six-free-plan-sets-for-tiny.html

- Here are some plans in PDF format that you can download: http://www.thesurvivalistblog.net/free-small-cabin-plans/

- How about some shed plans? They can easily be adapted to make a small cabin: http://freebies.about.com/od/homegardenfreebies/tp/free-shed-plans.htm


- Or this site, which has 96 different shed plans, and pole barns, any of which can be adapted into a cabin: http://www.todaysplans.net/find-free-shed-plans.html

This is just a sampling of what I was able to find out there.

Obviously, if I could find this in ten minutes, there's a whole lot more available, which I didn't find. So, this could end up being about as much fun as looking over house plans for buying a house.
Building Your Own Doomsday Retreat

There's also a small house movement going on, where people are building homes that are 100 to 200 square feet.

Many of those are built on flatbed trailer chassis, in order to make it possible to move them from one location to another. However, the same designs could be used without the trailer, as a cabin.

One nice thing about the small homes is that they make very efficient use of space.

So, if you were to build something along that line, you would have a very efficient cabin to live in.

One thing you want to keep in mind as you're looking over cabin plans are your own limitations in building the cabin. Cost is a limiting factor, but so is your construction ability. You may not have any electrical power on site, other than bringing in a generator.

So, doing some prefab work in your garage or adjusting the design to minimize cutting may be a good idea.

It's easy to get carried away in building a cabin, trying to make it as big and as fancy as a house…

While that might be nice to do, it's very expensive. You would be better off building a small cabin, but designing it so that you could make additions in the future. That way, as you had funds and time available, you could add to your cabin.

The classic cabin design in the Old West was a one room log cabin, with a loft.

The kitchen might be in that main room or it might be a lean-to added to the side. The front part of the cabin would be the living room and dining table, and the couple's bed would be against the back wall, under the loft. The children would sleep in the loft, which was the warmest part of the home.

As the family grew wealthier, they would add to their cabin…

First, a bedroom would be added to one side or the back of the main room, for the parents to move into. Then when space was needed for grandma, another bedroom would be added on. An actual kitchen might be added on in the back of the home.
Building Your Own Doomsday Retreat

In this way, what started out as one single room, ultimately became a multi-room home. One of the most important considerations in the design of these cabins, which you should consider as well, is heating. They were originally all heated from a single fireplace, which later became a wood-burning stove. Wood-burning stoves are much more efficient, as they can radiate heat from all sides.

The best place to put a wood-burning stove, from a heating perspective, is right in the middle of the room. However, this is often inconvenient for just about everything else you do in the cabin. Ultimately, the location of the wood-burning stove is a compromise between locating it centrally and getting it out of the way of other activities. That usually means that it ends up being centered on the room the long way, and a few feet out from the wall, but not actually in the center of the room.

4. Building on a Budget

For most of us, cost is the biggest limiting factor in being able to build a doomsday retreat. We've already discussed how to get land cheap, now I want to talk about how to build your cabin cheap.

I keep seeing stories of people who have built themselves survival retreats for a song, so I'm always looking to see what they did, in order to save themselves money. That's what I'm going to share with you.

To start with, I want to reiterate something I said in the last section. That is, the bigger you build your cabin, the more it's going to cost you. Conversely, the smaller you can build it, and still meet your needs, the cheaper it's going to be to build. So, start off small and when you can, add to it.

Your biggest savings is going to come from doing the labor yourself. This can be a great learning experience if you don't know how to build, as well as a great opportunity to teach the kids.

Take the time to read a few books or to watch some videos on YouTube. You can find videos that will show you how to do everything that you're going to need to do. Just be sure to select quality videos that provide clear, understandable instruction.

Since you're building out in the middle of nowhere, you probably won't have to worry about building permits and building inspections. Check with the country offices in the country where you are building, but that is usually a municipal function, so if you are outside city limits, you shouldn't have a problem.
Building Your Own Doomsday Retreat

Not having to deal with a building permit gives you a lot of options you can utilize in the way you build. Since this is a cabin and not a permanent residence, you can take some shortcuts.

Just be careful when you are selecting those shortcuts that you aren't doing things in such a way as to make your cabin unsafe to live in.

Don't use thinner material for the floors, otherwise you might fall through. Don't make your roof too weak to support the snow load.

Don't make shortcuts on your electrical installation, like making connections that aren't in a box, as that can cause a fire hazard.

Try to use natural material whenever you can. If your property has trees on it, consider building a log cabin. If it has clay in the soil, maybe you can make it out of adobe.

I've seen a couple of different underground cabins that looked like hobbit holes. They had the terrain for it, so made their cabin using logs for beams and covered it with dirt; which makes for excellent insulation.

If you have a natural rock outcropping on your property or a natural cave, see if there is some way that you can utilize that in your design. Some of the greatest cabins I've seen have started out with a naturally occurring rock outcropping and went from there.

I distinctly remember one that was built between two huge boulders. That would be great for self-defense. Whoever owns that one doesn't have to worry about people shooting through those walls.

Don't worry about the interior finish and trim of your cabin…

This is a survival retreat; making it rustic makes sense.

You'd be amazed about how much of the time and money in a construction project goes into interior finish.

Do the things you need to and leave the fancy stuff for later. You can always do some more finish work at another time, if you have the funds available down the road.

The main thing you want at this point in time is to get your doomsday shelter finished.
Building Your Own Doomsday Retreat

Another great way of saving money is to scavenge materials. I've seen cabins built of 100% scavenged materials. Some of those were actually quite nice. There are a number of ways you can scavenge materials:

- Look for demolition projects and see what you can get from them. Sometimes, you can go in before they break everything down and remove doors, plumbing fixtures, floor covering, lighting and even structural materials.

- Check Craig's List. It's common for contractors to have leftover materials after a construction job. Unless they have an immediate need for those materials, they will usually try to get rid of them. Windows, doors, and plumbing fixtures are the most common materials you can find in this way. Craig's list has a category called "materials," which is where you'll find those things located.

- Keep an eye on construction sites. Many times, they will use materials for something temporarily and then they end up in the scrap pile. Always check with the supervisor before taking them though, as they might have other plans for those materials.

- Look for a Habitat for Humanity warehouse in your area. Habitat for Humanity builds shelters for people who don't have them. They often receive donated materials that they can't use. I've gotten floor covering, windows, doors, furniture, shingles, fence pickets and siding for a song from them.

Scavenging takes time, but it's time well spent.

It will probably take you some time to build your cabin anyway, so the time you spend scavenging won't really extend the timeline on your project all that much. But it will save you a bunch of money; making it well worth doing.

Building materials centers often have a scrap bin for materials that have gotten damaged in one way or another.

This might include warped or split dimensional lumber, sheetrock with broken corners or even a shower stall that's missing a piece. You can usually buy that "scrap" material very cheap. Make a few cuts or modifications and it's all ready to use.
Building Your Own Doomsday Retreat

Use your imagination about any materials you can find. I've seen whole cabins made out of wood salvaged from pallets. I know a guy who used six foot fence pickets for siding. Just because a type of material is normally used in a certain way, doesn't mean that you need to use it that way. Look at its form and determine function from there, not the other way around.

5. In Conclusion

What you end up with as your final doomsday retreat depends more upon your imagination than anything else...

Let your imagination run wild on the design, finding ways of using the space efficiently and of building in storage in otherwise unused areas. Use your imagination to determine how to get the most out of your materials. You can even use your imagination to come up with innovative construction techniques that will make your retreat fun to build and fun to live in, when the time comes.

Remember the purpose of your doomsday retreat.

This is a place for your family to get away, where you'll be protected in the case of a major disaster.

With that in mind, you want to make sure that it's easy to defend. Build yourself fighting positions and try to make your walls as impenetrable as possible. Create storage space that can't be easily broken into, so that you can store supplies, without having to worry about them being stolen.

As a survival retreat, it may not be gorgeous.

That's okay.

Your family will need something to do while you're living in it anyway. That would be a good time for everyone to take on projects to make your doomsday retreat into a true home.

To your freedoms…

CALEB LEE