

Mud Kitchen Plan

Printable Build Sheet - take it out to the garden

A simple, sturdy freestanding mud kitchen: worktop at child height, a drop-in bowl sink, a lower storage shelf and a backboard for hooks. Every cut is a straight line. Build time: about 4-6 hours across a weekend.

Bought-timber cost: roughly GBP 40-80 / US\$50-100. Pallet version: roughly GBP 10-25 / US\$15-30.

Finished Size

Part	Dimension
Overall width	120 cm (about 4 ft)
Overall depth	55 cm (about 22 in)
Overall height (top of backboard)	110 cm (about 43 in)
Worktop height - toddlers (18 months-3 years)	40-50 cm (16-20 in)
Worktop height - older kids (4-7 years)	55-60 cm (22-24 in)
Lower shelf height	15 cm (6 in) off the ground

Picking a worktop height: measure your child standing, floor to just below the elbow. Somewhere in that range is where they will happily stir and pour without hunching.

Cut List

Frame - 38 x 63 mm construction timber (or similar)

Piece	Qty	Cut length
Legs	4	Your worktop height (e.g. 50 cm)
Long side rails	2	120 cm
Short side rails	2	45 cm
Shelf bearers	2	45 cm

Worktop, shelf & backboard - decking boards, approx. 120 x 28 mm

Piece	Qty	Cut length
Worktop boards	5	120 cm
Lower shelf boards	4	120 cm
Backboard boards	4	110 cm (run vertically)

Using pallets? You will need two sound pallets for boards, plus separate timber for the legs. Choose clean, dry, heat-treated (HT stamped) pallets and remove every nail.

Shopping & Tools

Materials List

- ☐ Timber as per the cut list (decking boards + construction timber)
- ☐ Exterior wood screws: 4 x 40 mm and 4 x 60 mm (a mixed box covers the build)
- ☐ 1 large washing-up bowl or stainless mixing bowl, 30-36 cm across the rim - this is your sink
- ☐ Exterior wood glue (optional, but makes joints noticeably more solid)
- ☐ Sandpaper: 80 grit for rough spots, 120 grit for finishing
- ☐ Child-safe, non-toxic outdoor wood finish (water-based, labelled non-toxic once dry)
- ☐ 4-6 hooks for utensils (stainless or coated, so they don't rust)
- ☐ Optional: a small piece of chalkboard or painted board for a menu sign

Buy the bowl BEFORE you cut anything.

The sink hole is traced from the bowl's rim - its size decides the cut.

Tools You'll Need

- ☐ Tape measure and pencil
- ☐ Saw (a handsaw works fine; a mitre or circular saw speeds things up)
- ☐ Drill/driver with drill bits and a countersink bit
- ☐ Jigsaw - only for the sink cut-out
- ☐ Spirit level
- ☐ Square (for checking corners)
- ☐ Clamps (two is plenty)
- ☐ Safety glasses, and gloves for handling rough pallet wood

No power tools? Every cut is straight, so a sharp handsaw does the job - and most DIY stores will make the straight cuts for you if you take the cut list in.

Build Steps

Tick each step off as you go. One cutting session, then one building session.

- ☐ **Step 1 - Cut everything first**
Cut all frame pieces and boards to the cut list before assembling anything. Sort pallet wood and reject anything split or rotten.
- ☐ **Step 2 - Build the two side frames**
Two legs joined by a short rail at the top and a shelf bearer about 15 cm from the bottom. Pre-drill, screw from outside the leg, check square.
- ☐ **Step 3 - Join the frames**
Connect the side frames with the two 120 cm long rails (back of the worktop line, and front under the worktop edge). Check it stands level.
- ☐ **Step 4 - Fit the lower shelf**
Lay the four shelf boards across the bearers with pencil-width gaps for drainage. Screw down into the bearers.
- ☐ **Step 5 - Fit the worktop**
Five boards across the top, flush at the back. Leave the middle board unscrewed if the sink sits centrally - the hole is easier to cut on a bench.
- ☐ **Step 6 - Cut the sink hole**
Trace the bowl rim, draw a second line 1-1.5 cm inside it and cut that line with a jigsaw. Sand the edge; the bowl should sit on its rim and lift out easily.
- ☐ **Step 7 - Add the backboard**
Fix the four backboard boards to the back legs, from the worktop up to the full 110 cm height, with narrow gaps between boards.
- ☐ **Step 8 - Hooks and a small shelf**
Screw 4-6 hooks into the backboard at a height your child can reach. An offcut of decking makes a handy shelf for cups and ingredients.
- ☐ **Step 9 - Sand everything, properly**
80 grit, then 120 grit - worktop edges, the sink cut-out, board ends. Run a bare palm over it: anywhere that catches skin would catch theirs.
- ☐ **Step 10 - Apply the finish**
Two thin coats of non-toxic outdoor finish beat one thick one. Let it cure for the full time on the tin before the first play session.

Safety Notes

- Sloping ground or keen climbers? Secure the back legs to a fence, wall or ground stakes so it cannot tip.
- Empty the sink bowl every evening, rinse, and refill fresh each day - standing water grows things fast.
- Let finishes cure fully before play, and re-sand any spot that roughens over the seasons.
- Toddlers need the usual outdoor supervision around water, soil and small found objects.

Full guide, variations (double sink, toddler height, adding a water container) and FAQs: bestmudkitchen.com/mud-kitchen-plans-pdf/