

BUILD YOUR CABIN IN 12 MONTHS

A phase-by-phase construction checklist
from groundbreaking to move-in day

[CABINCALCULATOR.COM](https://cabincalculator.com)

ABOUT THIS CHECKLIST

This checklist provides a comprehensive 12-month timeline for constructing a DIY log cabin. It walks you through every major phase of the project, from initial planning and site preparation to final interior finishes and inspections. Following this schedule will help keep your project organized, on budget, and on time.

For a detailed cost estimate and budget tracking, pair this with the Cabin Calculator Cost Estimator Spreadsheet. Both are part of the DIY Cabin Builder Bundle, which also includes a full Planning Guide, Materials Estimator, Foundation Calculator, and Septic + Well Cost Estimator.

Want the Complete Planning System?

This checklist is one piece of a bigger toolkit built to work together. Get every tool in one bundle.

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Every task below has a checkbox — print this out, or check items off digitally as you go.

PHASE 1

Months 1-2: Planning & Preparation

The initial phase is dedicated to thorough planning and due diligence. Proper preparation at this stage is critical to a smooth construction process and will prevent costly delays and mistakes down the road.

	Task	Notes
☐	Define Project Scope & Budget	Use the Cabin Calculator Cost Estimator to set a realistic budget.
☐	Secure Financing	Obtain pre-approval for a construction loan if needed.
☐	Select & Purchase Land	Ensure the property is suitable for your cabin design and has legal access.
☐	Conduct Land Survey & Soil Tests	Order a boundary survey and a percolation test for the septic system.
☐	Finalize Cabin Design & Floor Plan	Work with an architect or designer, or browse ready-made cabin plans.
☐	Select Log Provider & Kit	Place your order early — lead times can run several months.
☐	Hire General Contractor (if applicable)	Vet and sign a contract with a reputable builder.

PHASE 2

Months 3-4: Site Work & Foundation

With plans finalized, the focus shifts to preparing the physical site. This phase involves heavy machinery and foundational work, which must be completed before the log package arrives.

	Task	Notes
☐	Obtain Building Permits	Submit your final plans to the local building department for approval.
☐	Clear the Building Site	Remove trees, rocks, and other obstacles from the construction area.
☐	Construct Driveway & Access Roads	Ensure a stable path for delivery trucks and equipment.
☐	Excavate for Foundation & Utilities	Dig for the foundation, basement, and utility trenches.
☐	Install Temporary Utilities	Set up temporary power and water for the construction crew.
☐	Pour Foundation & Cure Concrete	Build the foundation and allow it to cure properly.
☐	Install Sub-floor & Decking	Build the initial floor system to provide a working platform.

PHASE 3

Months 5-6: Log Shell Assembly

The cabin structure begins to take shape as the log package arrives and walls are erected. Precision and careful adherence to the manufacturer's instructions are essential for a sound, weather-tight shell.

	Task	Notes
☐	Receive & Inventory Log Package	Check materials against the packing list and inspect for damage.
☐	Stack Log Walls	Assemble log walls according to the provided plans, course by course.
☐	Install Gaskets, Sealants & Fasteners	Apply sealant and fasteners between each course of logs.
☐	Set Girders, Floor Joists & Rafters	Install structural supports for the second floor and roof.
☐	Frame Interior Walls	Build the non-load-bearing interior walls that define the rooms.
☐	Install Windows & Exterior Doors	Set and seal all window and door units to weatherproof the shell.

PHASE 4

Months 7-8: Drying-In & Exterior Finishes

Once the shell is assembled, dry-in the cabin and complete exterior finishes to protect the structure from the elements while giving it its finished appearance.

	Task	Notes
☐	Install Roof Sheathing & Underlayment	Apply plywood/OSB, then ice-and-water shield and felt.
☐	Install Roofing Material	Lay shingles, metal roofing, or your chosen material.
☐	Apply Exterior Stain/Preservative	Protect the logs from UV, moisture, and insects.
☐	Construct Porches & Decks	Build exterior living spaces, including railings.
☐	Install Gutters & Downspouts	Manage rainwater runoff away from the foundation.
☐	Complete Exterior Chinking/Caulking	Seal remaining gaps between logs for energy efficiency.

PHASE 5

Months 9-10: Rough-Ins & Interior Framing

With the exterior sealed, work moves inside to install plumbing, electrical, and HVAC — the rough-ins — and finalize interior wall layouts before insulation.

	Task	Notes
☐	Plumbing Rough-in	Install all water supply and drain lines within walls and floors.
☐	Electrical Rough-in	Run all wiring, install electrical boxes, and set up the main panel.
☐	HVAC System Installation	Install heating, ventilation, and A/C units and ductwork, if applicable.
☐	Install Water Heater	Set up the water heating system.
☐	Rough-in Inspections	Schedule and pass all necessary plumbing, electrical, and HVAC inspections.
☐	Insulate Walls, Floors & Ceilings	Install appropriate insulation for energy efficiency.

PHASE 6

Months 11-12: Interior Finishing & Final Touches

The final phase brings the cabin to life with interior finishes, fixtures, and final inspections. Attention to detail here ensures a comfortable, move-in-ready space.

	Task	Notes
☐	Install Interior Wall Coverings	Apply drywall, tongue and groove, or other chosen finishes.
☐	Install Flooring	Lay hardwood, tile, carpet, or other flooring materials.
☐	Install Interior Doors & Trim	Hang interior doors, baseboards, and window/door casings.
☐	Paint & Stain Interior Surfaces	Apply finishes to walls, trim, and other interior elements.
☐	Install Kitchen & Bathroom Cabinets	Mount all cabinetry in kitchen and bathrooms.
☐	Install Countertops, Sinks & Faucets	Complete kitchen and bathroom plumbing fixtures.
☐	Install Appliances	Set up major kitchen and laundry appliances.
☐	Install Lighting Fixtures	Mount all interior and exterior light fixtures.
☐	Final Inspections & Occupancy Permit	Schedule and pass all final building inspections.
☐	Clean Up & Move In!	Enjoy your new log cabin.

ADDENDUM

Off-Grid Specific Tasks

If you're building an off-grid cabin, integrate these tasks into the relevant months above — particularly during the rough-in and exterior finishing phases.

	Task	Notes
☐	Install Well Drilling & Pump	Establish your independent water source.
☐	Install Septic System / Composting Toilet	Implement your waste management solution.
☐	Install Solar Panels & Racking	Mount photovoltaic panels on the roof or ground.
☐	Install Battery Storage & Inverter	Set up energy storage and power conversion systems.
☐	Install Backup Generator	Connect a generator for supplemental power.
☐	Install Propane System	Set up tanks and lines for heating and cooking.

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