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Haven't you heard? Homes made of steel shipping containers are all the rage these days. Well, maybe they're not quite that popular (yet), but they certainly make headlines as eco-friendly and affordable alternatives to traditional housing - usually costing just half the price. They can be built quickly and you can even buy one on Amazon. Here we will share the basics of living in a container house, including the cost (p. 5). We will hear from a real-life couple who have built their own container house (p. 4) and we will see where there is an actual city, composed solely of these recycled steel boxes (p. 8).

1. That they are houses made from real shipping containers. | Johannes Eisele/AFP/Getty Images Homes made of steel boxes Simply put, these houses are built with real shipping containers that are made of steel. They can be purchased new or used, and they can be located and connected in almost any shape and layout. The containers are 8 feet by 20 feet in size and eight and a half feet high. Next: Whose idea was it? 2. Their history of idea was put into practice in 1987. | Kenneth Taylor/iStock/Getty Images The year container delivery home idea was patented: 1987 Modern containers are the brainchild of Malcolm Purcell McLean, a trucker from North Carolina. He came up with the idea of delivering large cargo boxes in 1937. Two decades later, his idea was finally realized. Someone first decided to make one into the house in 1987. Philip Clark filed a patent for converting one or more steel containers into a habitable building. Today there are thousands of these houses from surplus containers that have sat on docks all over the world. Next: How are they made in houses? Construction construction is obviously the most laborious aspect. | Smithy Container Home via Instagram Price Steel Shipping Container: \$1,400-\$4,000 Truck usually delivers containers to a construction site. The crane or loader then puts them in place, often side by side. Then the crew can remove all but the exterior panels in order to create an open interior space. They then cut holes into the outer walls for doors and windows. The house is located on the traditional foundation of a concrete block reinforced with steel to ensure the safety of cargo containers. The crew welds the containers and welds them together, and then installs the roof and floor. Next: A Missouri couple built their container house themselves. 4. A real example of their home allows them to live mortgage free. | Smithy Container Home via Instagram One of things, St. Charles, Missouri couple Zack and Brie Smithy love about their 3,100-foot container home that allows them to live mortgage free. We chose the container house because it gave us the most bang for our dollar, Bree said. This allowed us to use recycled materials, which was important to us. They built their house with eight containers, each with ceilings, each costing about \$2,000 delivered. As soon as the containers arrived, the couple laid them down with a crane. They did all the construction themselves, working 12-hour workdays without days off, for a year and 14 days. Next: What is the average price? 5. They are a low-cost couple managed to create a designer house for a fraction of the price. | Smithy Container Home via Instagram Average Price of a large shipping container home: \$150,000-\$175,000 The cost of one of these homes is about half the price per square foot of a conventional home. The survey found that most people said they would live in a shipping container back home because of availability. Some people have even been able to build such a house on their own for less than \$100,000. Next: How good they are for the environment 6. They're eco-friendly. | Jack-sooksan/iStock/Getty Images Proper insulation can passively heat or cool a house to save money. Shipping containers at home are gaining popularity as eco-friendly practices are becoming more mainstream. And owners can recycle materials in the future by taking them elsewhere. For climate control, some owners install insulated panels and radiators. During construction, some owners spray insulation coatings on both sides of the walls to save on heating and cooling. We had an open day one day when it was 85 or 90 degrees, and the air was at least 10 to 20 degrees cooler inside, said Shannon Locklair, project manager for shipping container homes. That was before we even installed the windows. Next: Are there any drawbacks in owning these homes? 7. Potential flaws Make sure you are able to get permission. | Johannes Eisele/AFP/Getty Images Building Codes can travel you. If you are seriously considering building one of these unconventional homes, find out early on if you can get permission to build one in your city or city. As with any design, you need to make sure that your new home meets different local codes. This is one of the hardest parts of a shipping container home building, reports say. Another possible trap is recycled containers may have been sprayed with harmful chemicals either in the form of pesticides or paint. You can contact the original manufacturer to find out if this is the case. Toxic materials can then be removed or treated. Next: See the whole city made of shipping containers. 8. Container City in Mexico There is a container city near Mexico City. | Vladimix/Wikimedia Commons City has 50 recycled shipping containers. Entire cities were made from container houses in places like London and Mexico. Not far from Mexico City, the colorfully painted cities of these steel structures have sprung up. In addition to living quarters, the community also houses restaurants, spaces, bars and shops. Appropriately named Container City, the tourist attraction has about 50 recycled shipping containers in all. It even offers an open ping pong tables and music lounge. Wi-Fi is provided in the corridors between the containers. Check out the Cheat sheet on Facebook! Container shipping began in its current form in 1956, when Malcolm McLean patented the first container ship. In 1961, the International Organization for Standardization began setting standard sizes for all containers. Prior to standardized container shipping, the manufacturer packed its goods onto the ship. These goods were then unpacked from the ship and packed into a train or truck. Container shipments are essential to world trade. If you are buying tennis shoes from China or leather goods from Australia, having an economical way to ship these items is necessary. This is where container services come into play. Container shipping uses standard containers measuring 20 feet (6.09 meters), 40 feet (12.18 meters), 45 feet (14.6 meters) and 53 feet (16.15 meters). The 20 foot equivalent unit (TEU) is a standard measure. The containers are built to international standards, making them interchangeable between shipping companies and rail or freight companies. Different types of containers include open, open, open top, half height, flat rack, refrigerated, liquid assembly (tank), modular and standard dry cargo. With the help of standardized containers, ships, trains and trailers can be loaded and unloaded efficiently. This makes goods more affordable than if the containers were loaded and unloaded at each stop along the route. When choosing a container service, keep in mind that you are having a drink. There is more to choose from than the bottom line price. Are you delivering fruit, chocolate or seafood? If so, you want to choose a service that uses specialized refrigerated containers where temperature control is possible. If you're building equipment or odd equipment, you need a service that uses open upper or flat rack containers. They make it easier to process a product that doesn't fit in a standard closed container. Open-top containers are ideal for magazines, machines and odd-sized items. Flat racks are ideal for boats, vehicles, machinery and industrial equipment. Open-side containers are ideal for vegetables such as onions and potatoes. Tanks are used for chemicals, wine, vegetable oil. There are several modes of transport for cargo containers. These include: Cargo ships: A shipping liner is transported by ocean ships that travel a set of routes on fixed schedules. According to the World Shipping Council, there are about 400 liners. Airfreight: Planes are faster, but haul much less cargo. They are therefore more expensive and less environmentally friendly. Rail freight: rail is an effective way to transport goods from seaport to destination throughout the country. The containers are moved by crane from ship to wagon. Cargo transport: The container can be loaded directly from a cargo ship or rail car to a tractor-trailer tractor-trailer physically touching the product. Goods transported by the vessel can be loaded and sealed directly from the manufacturer and remain so until they arrive at the buyer's warehouse. The manufacturer works with freight carriers to organize transportation from manufacturers. The trucking company comes to the manufacturer and loads the product into a standardized container. Customs is the only company that can open an airtight container for inspection until the container reaches its final destination. Cargo forward decides the most profitable port from which will be shipped. Pricing will always be a key component in the choice of container shipping services. In addition to the cost, it is important to choose a service that has a reputation for successfully delivering the type of product you are delivering. 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