



AN ORIGINAL YOU CAN MAKE YOUR OWN

The Everyday Serving Tray

A straightforward tray for cups, small plates and the little rituals of the day. A plain plywood base, low wood rails and two ready-made pulls keep the build approachable.



20 in W x 14 in D x 3 in H

One 1x3 x 8 ft board, a small plywood base and two cabinet pulls.
Square corners; no routed hand holes or curved cuts.

Project visualization. Build to the [dimensioned drawings](#) and [cut list](#).

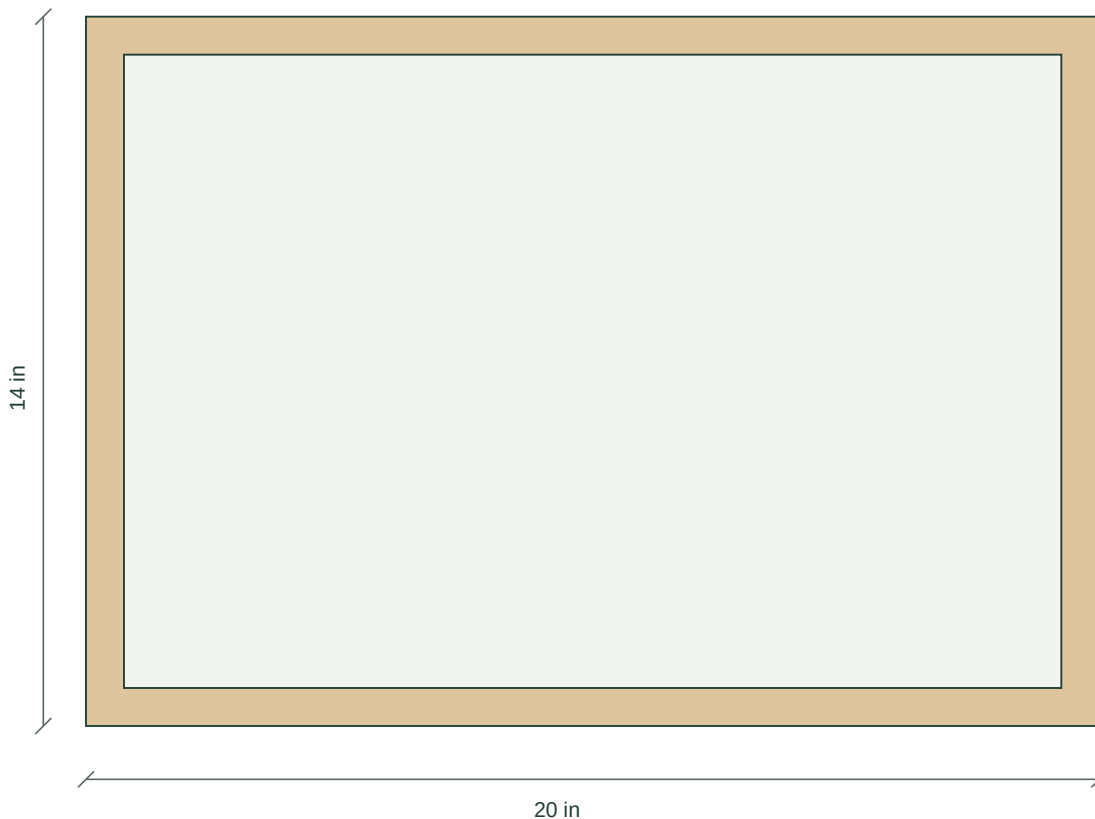


01 / DIMENSIONS

Simple parts. A different purpose.

Use the dimensions below to plan the build and its final position. Drawings are references; do not scale the page to mark cuts.

TOP / HANDLES ON SHORT ENDS



Overall

20 in W x 14 in D x approximately 3 in H, with a true 1/2 in base. Pulls project beyond the short ends.

Inside opening

18-1/2 x 12-1/2 in; 2-1/2 in rail height above the base.

Handles

One pull on each short end rail (E), not on the long rails. Hardware adds to the outside width.

Plan note: dimensions and stock layouts checked digitally; not physically built or load-tested. No weight capacity is specified.



02 / SHOPPING AND PARTS

Buy the stock. Label every part.

Common indoor pine or whitewood is suitable; no special species is required. Store sizes are nominal. Measure actual thickness and width before setting up the saw and joinery.

BUY	QUANTITY / NOTES
1x3 x 8 ft	1 board; actual 3/4 x 2-1/2 in.
1/2 in plywood	One flat piece at least 20 x 14 in; a 2 x 2 ft project panel is sufficient. Measure actual thickness.
Frame screws	8 x #8 x 1-1/4 in coarse-thread pocket screws for softwood, plus spares.
Base screws	12 x #6 x 1 in flathead wood screws, plus spares.
Handles (H)	2 cabinet pulls with 4 in hole centres, with their matching machine screws for a 3/4 in drawer front. Buy before drilling; do not mix thread types.
Other supplies	Interior wood glue, sandpaper and a suitable wipeable interior finish.

CUT LIST					FINISHED SIZES / INCHES	
ID	PART	QTY	STOCK	LENGTH	WIDTH	THICKNESS
A	Long rails	2	1x3	20	2-1/2	3/4
E	End rails	2	1x3	12-1/2	2-1/2	3/4
B	Overlay base	1	1/2 ply	20	14	1/2 nom.

Stock is the store label; **length, width and thickness** are the finished part sizes. Quantities are individual pieces. Allow for saw kerf and square the ends before measuring. Plywood thickness is nominal: measure the actual panel.

Tools

Tape, square, pencil, supported crosscut saw, drill/driver, clamps, sander, and suitable eye/hearing/dust protection. Pocket-hole jig and bits, countersink, a saw/guide for the plywood, and the handle maker's recommended clearance drill bit.



03 / CUT AND PREPARE

A clear layout before the first cut.

Each strip is a stock board. Labels show part ID and length in inches. Allow a 1/8 in kerf; square an end first and measure every cut from its new end.

1x3 x 96 in

A / 20	A / 20	E / 12-1/2	E / 12-1/2	
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B: cut a 20 x 14 in rectangle from the separate plywood panel, keeping it square. The strip above shows the solid-wood rails only.

1

Cut long rails (A), end rails (E) and base (B)

Cut the rails square. Cut B to 20 x 14 in with a supported saw/guide and check its diagonals match. A and E stand on B; E fits between the two A pieces. Mark inside faces and bottom edges.

2

Mark end rail (E) and handle (H) locations

For each E, mark its horizontal midpoint at 6-1/4 in and its vertical midpoint at 1-1/4 in above the lower rail edge. A true 4 in centre-to-centre pull places holes at 4-1/4 and 8-1/4 in along E. Confirm these marks against the ACTUAL pull before drilling.

3

Dry-fit rails (A/E) over base (B)

The rail frame outside size must be 20 x 14 in and the inside opening 18-1/2 x 12-1/2 in. Keep rail lower edges flat and coplanar; no glue is applied until the frame fits the base without forcing.



04 / JOINERY

Choose the fixing. Check the fit.

The enlarged sketch shows the relevant joint or hole locations. Use the labelled parts and actual stock thickness; test the fixing on matching scrap before assembly.

E / INSIDE FACE

H: 4 in hole centres.
Holes at 4-1/4 and 8-1/4 in along E,
centred at half its height.
Confirm actual hardware.

4

Drill pockets in end rails (E)

Use #8 x 1-1/4 in coarse-thread pocket screws for the specified softwood, with a head approved for the jig. Set jig and stop collar for the actual 3/4 in stock. Test on matching offcuts, clamp square and drive at low clutch torque; check for splitting, stripping and projecting tips. Put two pockets at each E end on its INSIDE face, centred 5/8 and 1-7/8 in above its lower edge. There are eight frame screws total. Drill the handle clearance holes from the confirmed template, backing the exit face with scrap to avoid tear-out.

5

Join long rails (A) and end rails (E)

Glue the E ends lightly, clamp E between A with all lower edges flush, then drive two pocket screws at each corner. Keep pocket holes inside the tray. Check matching frame diagonals before the glue cures.

[Pocket-screw selector](#)



05 / ASSEMBLE AND FINISH

Keep it square. Finish it simply.

Support the work while turning or clamping it. Keep parts on their marked reference faces, and follow glue and finish curing directions before installation or use.

6 Glue and screw base (B) under rails (A/E)

Mark the rail centre lines on B underside. Along each long rail use four base screws at 1-1/2, 7-1/8, 12-7/8 and 18-1/2 in from one end. Along each end rail use two at 3-1/2 and 10-1/2 in measured across the 14 in base depth. Drill clearance holes through B, pilot the rail edges, and countersink lightly. Glue, clamp and drive twelve #6 x 1 in screws upward into the rails; do not overdrive through the plywood.

7 Finish rails (A/E) and base (B)

Ease exposed edges lightly by hand, leaving joining faces square. Sand with 120 then 180 grit as appropriate and remove dust. Test the finish on an offcut. Follow its preparation, ventilation, application and full cure directions. Smooth the underside and make all base screw heads flush so they cannot scratch a table. Follow the finish maker's full cure directions before use. Serve dishes on the tray rather than unwrapped food directly on the wood.

8 Fit handles (H) to end rails (E)

Fit the matching machine screws from the tray interior into each external pull. Screws must clamp the 3/4 in rail without bottoming in the handle; use the pull maker's screw length and thread. Do not substitute longer screws blindly. Tighten evenly by hand and confirm there are no projecting tips or sharp heads.

Detail to keep in mind

Eight pocket screws make the rail frame. Twelve separate 1 in screws pass upward through B into the lower rail edges. Handle machine screws are a third fastener type supplied for the actual pulls. Keep all three types distinct.



06 / FINAL CHECK

Ready for its place in the room.

Check the completed project and its fixings before putting it into everyday use. Correct any loose, split or sharp part before loading.

9

Inspect handles (H), rails (A/E) and base (B)

Check every corner, the base bond and all fasteners. With the tray near a padded surface, test the empty tray by both handles, then with a small light load. Stop if anything moves, cracks or loosens. Correct defects before carrying items; keep loads balanced and do not carry hot liquids during an initial test.

Use and care

For light indoor serving use. Use both handles, balance the contents and keep the base dry. Do not immerse or put in a dishwasher, use as a cutting board or carry a load that flexes the base. Recheck handles and rail joints regularly; stop using if any part loosens or splits.

Part reminder

A - Long rails / **E** - End rails / **B** - Overlay base

Questions? service@grainbench.com