



Sometimes, the ingenuity that the human mind is capable of leaves us stunned. Read how people have solved their personal housing problems with some of the most uncanny solutions you would ever have imagined.

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You Live Where?!

10 Homes in the Strangest Places



Everyone knows what three main factors decide the value of a home or a piece of real estate: location, location, location. The highest priority when searching for a home is that it must be near the places where the homeowner spends his or her time. That means it must be near work, shopping and friends. Some people want a quiet location or one near the sea. In our communities, it may be near the appropriate yeshivah, kollel or shul.

Well, meet Walter Cecil. The home of his dreams is not near his family or his job. He was fed up with the sky-high prices in his hometown, San Francisco, so he decided to move into... the desert. Yes, Walter Cecil lives in the middle of the desert. And Fred Flintstone couldn't afford a home altogether, so he moved into a cave in Festus, Missouri.

Not that those two are necessarily unique. There is an architect in Germany who lives in a home built over a Nazi bunker. There are people in Italy who live in a bridge. In Florida there are people living in a home built over the ocean. And in England a fellow moved

into a 200-year-old castle that was built to prevent Napoleon from invading the island.

When it comes to choosing homes for themselves, some people have made rather odd decisions. Sometimes it is out of necessity, but at other times it is out of personal choice. **Zman** takes you on a tour around the world to visit some of the globe's most oddly-placed homes.

Living in the Desert

Tucson, Arizona

Walter Cecil is a dealer of historic artwork and tapestries. For years he searched his hometown of San Francisco for a decent home. He was constantly frustrated by the unreasonably high cost of real estate in the city. After years of fruitless searching, he finally settled on the perfect spot: the Sonoran Desert. There, Cecil was able to purchase an 8.3-acre property outside of Tucson that carried a price tag of just \$250,000.

Speaking of the Desert...

The Sonoran Desert is one of the largest and hottest deserts in all of North America. This desert covers an area of 120,000 square miles in southwestern Arizona, southeastern California and northwestern Mexico.

In fact, the western edge of the US-Mexican borders runs through the Sonoran Desert. Thousands of Mexicans risk their lives each year attempting to enter America through this inhospitable region. The sheer vastness of the desert's area makes it difficult for the US Border Patrol to keep the border sealed. Although the desert crossing is very dangerous, life in Mexico has become so intolerable that many people decide it's worth the risk.

Various humanitarian groups have responded to the human catastrophe that has resulted by erecting stations at frequent intervals along the border. There refugees can stop for a cold drink and other basic amenities. These shelters have literally saved the lives of many illegal immigrants who could not have survived the harsh conditions in the desert without them. And that's precisely why activists who protest the illegal immigrants are so infuriated by them.



Cecil's three desert cabins that together made up his dream home.

Cecil calls his new location a "Desert Nomad Home." It actually consists of three rusted steel boxes that are connected by a stony path. One room serves as the kitchen, another houses sleeping quarters, while the third and smallest is Cecil's home office and guest room. Each room has a single, large window that offers a unique panoramic view of the stunning desert landscape outside.

To protect the residents from snakes, scorpions and other dangerous creatures in the desert, the three rooms are built on stilts. On the rare occasion when it rains, the water can run beneath the buildings.

After spending seven years in his unique desert home, the demands of his business forced Cecil to return to San Francisco. He is prepared to sell his dream home in the desert for the nominal sum of \$875,000. (The house was originally listed for \$975,000 in February, 2011, but has taken a \$100,000 price drop since then.) Only serious buyers need apply...

Life atop a World War II Bunker

Hamm, Germany

The next home we'll look at offers all the amenities and comforts of a typical urban



The floor-to-ceiling glass window-wall offers a stunning view from the desert home.

residence. The only thing that sets it apart is that it is built above a five-story bunker. In fact, its German name translates as "Penthouse on the High-Rise Bunker."

The original bunker as built during the Nazi era was designed to include nine stories. It was to provide shelter for city residents during the Allied air raids that flattened much of Germany. However, the war ended before the bunker was completed, and so its last four stories never came into being. Although the bunker did take direct hits from Allied bombs that left permanent marks, its structure remained essentially intact.

The empty bunker remained uninhabited for over 50 years. Years ago a German company named Amort Architektur bought