

# How to bring the Animal Crossing island life to your own home

There's never been a better time to want to escape to your own island paradise. Here's how to pretend you have.

Animal Crossing: New Horizons for the Nintendo Switch is upon us, bringing the sort of slow-paced, chilled-out island living we all sorely need right now. To help you feel super immersed in the beautiful shell-collecting, fish-capturing, river-hopping world, here's how you can bring the island life into your own home.



## Get the game

This one is obvious; make sure you actually have the game downloaded on your Switch and ready to go as soon as you have your home ready. Don't be tempted to fire it up and start your character creation -- you'll need to really have your head in the island game.

See at Nintendo



## Decorate your home

Looking at an island on your Switch or TV screen will only go so far -- as soon as you look away you'll remember you're still at home and the wonderful illusion will be shattered like a distressingly expensive wine glass knocked off a table by a cat (this analogy brought to you by my personal experience this weekend).

It was precisely this easy to make. <https://t.co/3LQXddqwCp> [pic.twitter.com/eZ6E929WEi](https://pic.twitter.com/eZ6E929WEi)  
— Andrew Lanxon Hoyle (@Batteryhq) March 20, 2020

I went with a mural option, because of course I did. To create this absolute stonking beauty, I got two rolls of yellow and blue paper I happened to have in my photo studio. I cut the yellow in a wavy fashion to give the effect of a shoreline. I taped this to my wall (careful if you do this, it might damage your wallpaper or paintwork) and then slid a large sheet of blue paper behind it.



I used more yellow paper to create a happy sun in the sky, used chalk-paint marker pens to create fluffy white clouds and a crab (Sebastian, natch) to sit on the sand.

Next came a moment of what I can only describe as pure, triple-distilled genius: I raided my garage for old cardboard boxes and found some packing paper from an Amazon delivery which had a crinkly texture that was perfect for creating a palm tree. "Pleased with myself" does not even come close to how I felt. I augmented the whole scene by taking the real shells my partner had beautifully arranged in our bathroom and taped them to the paper and scattered them around the TV.

I'd have loved to have found some inflatable flamingos, coconuts or pineapples to decorate more of my living room, but I didn't have them and wasn't prepared to risk an outside journey just to decorate my house like an island from a Nintendo game. It's possible, however, that you may have similar decorations lying around from a previous party. If so, crack them out and slap 'em around the place -- even if they don't quite follow the theme you'll still feel happy as a clam in saltwater when you see them, so don't hold back.



Also consider making a "Beach" sign using a piece of old cardboard box, using strips of paper to make a grass skirt and using more strips of paper to make paper garlands to string around the room. Got old copies of travel magazines? Maybe cut out some pictures of trees or beaches to decorate. You could also try putting a fan nearby to mimic the natural island breeze.

I considered ordering 50 pounds of builders' sand to spread around our living room to create a real beach feel, but I was told this was "impractical" and "ridiculous" and "Andy, are you OK?"

## Food and drink

It's not a time to be going out and buying specific island-themed foods so I hunted through my fridge and cupboards to see what could possibly add to the overall island-style evening I was trying to cobble together.

As it turned out, I didn't have much that fit the bill, so I put in a Deliveroo order for a Hawaiian pizza (don't get on me about pineapple on pizza -- it's delicious and that's all I'm prepared to say on the matter). Not only did it mean I had great, on-theme food to enjoy, but I also didn't have to make it myself, giving me more time to sink into the game.



I paired the pizza with a dessert of Cadbury Mini Eggs -- easily the best sugar-shelled chocolate it's possible to buy and completely within the theme as eggs come from *animals* and I was playing *Animal Crossing*. So we're good.

Drinks-wise I'd gone with two options. First off, I'd managed to get to a local shop and, among other essentials, I'd bought two cans of Goose Island beer (*animals* and island-themed). I'd also whipped up a tropical punch by throwing leftover frozen peach, pineapple, mango and orange juice into my Nutribullet, chucking in a healthy measure of gin and serving it with a colorful (paper) straw. All in all, I felt very festive.

## Settling down to Animal Crossing at last

With the room decorated, food taken care of and game downloaded, it was time to get things going. I wanted to fully immerse myself in the game and not be distracted by the real world, so I put my phone into flight mode, left my laptop in the other room and made sure the cat had plenty of food so as to not pester me while playing or trying to get my attention by destroying more of my fragile possessions.



I dimmed the light, made sure I had my favorite colorful t-shirt on and settled back to enjoy the game.

This might all sound a bit silly, and it totally is. You don't need to do any of this to enjoy Animal Crossing. It's glorious as it is. But when we're in difficult times I think a bit of silliness goes a long way and sitting in my living room, surrounded by various bits of island theming I'd made, a fruity slushy cocktail in hand, it really made for a super-chilled way of playing a super-chilled game.

If you've got kids, I'm sure crafting your own island scenes like I did would be a great way to enjoy a few hours, and the adults among you will, I'm sure, appreciate doing similar kitchen raids to see what boozy smoothies you can whip up for your own gaming sessions. Hit me up on Twitter to show me your results!

If you're also playing the game, be sure to check out our eight tips and tricks for Animal Crossing.

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