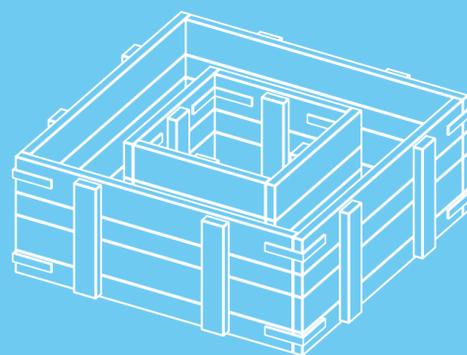
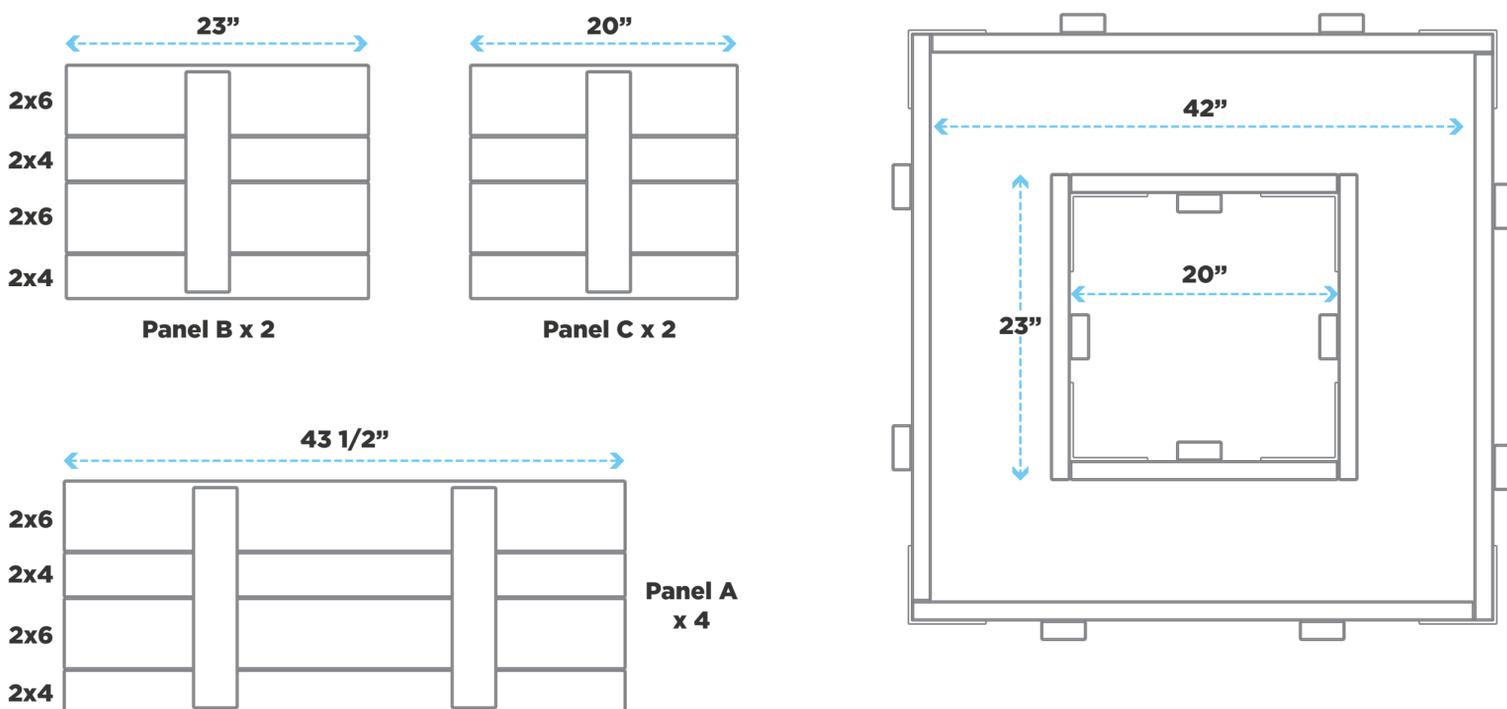


Concrete Fire Pit



Dimensions



Step-By-Step

Lava Rock

I used two 5 gallon buckets full of lava rock that I purchased from the masonry supply yard. The lava rock is heat-resistant and won't crack or shatter.



Concrete Pour #3

After letting the previous layer of concrete cure about 20 hours, I poured the final layer of concrete. I used a hoe to push the concrete down into all the corners and a wood dowel to vibrate the concrete by hand.

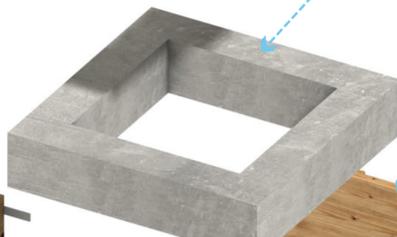


Concrete Pour #2

Once the mortar set, I mixed and poured another 5 inches of concrete. I could have poured it all at once, but mixing concrete by hand is exhausting. By doing it this way, I can remove any extra braces that could be in the way of screeding before doing a final pour.

SCREED THE TOP

I used a flat piece of wood to screed the top of the concrete. Work the screed back and forth to level the concrete.



Outer Wood Frame

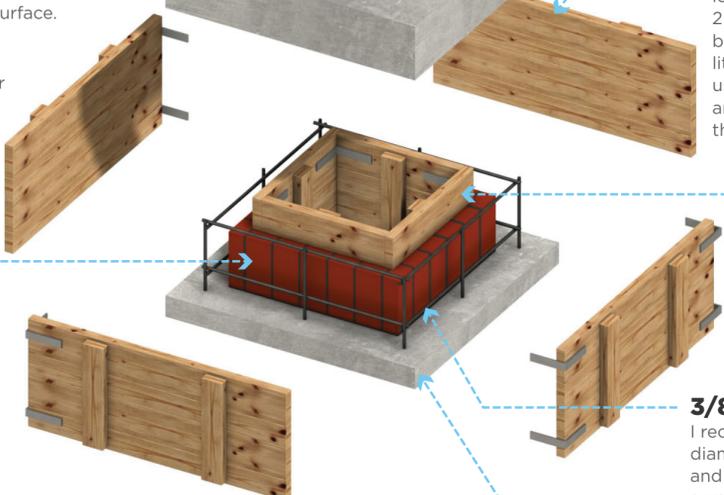
The outer frame is made of 4 panels that are 43.5" long. Each panel is made from 2 pieces of 2x4 and 2 pieces of 2x6. I used a circular saw to cut them, but a compound miter saw would make this task a little easier. If you use a circular saw, I recommend using a speed square to make sure your cuts are nice and straight. I used L-brackets to join the panels at the corners. I recommend 6" L-brackets.

USE A FLOAT

I let the concrete set about 30 minutes and then used a metal float to work the cream to the surface. I spent about 10-15 minutes working the surface.

STEEL TROWEL

After using the float, I waited about 1 hour and then used a steel trowel to finish the concrete. I did my best to get the surface as smooth and flat as possible. It isn't perfect but it looks great!



Inner Wood Frame

The inner frame is made from 2 panels that are 23" long and 2 panels that are 20" long. Make sure to place the L-brackets on the inside corners of the frame since the outside ones will be buried in concrete.

Fire Bricks

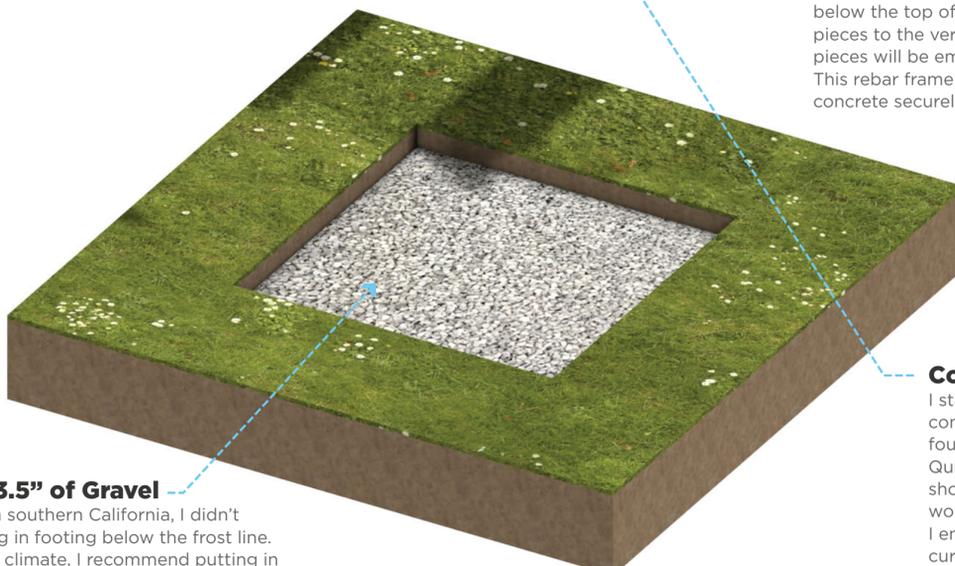
I used fire bricks from a local masonry supply yard. They're not the prettiest looking, but after a few fires they'll turn black from the soot. Fire bricks are heat-resistant and will protect the concrete from cracking. The bricks are held together with mortar mixed from a combination of Portland cement, mortar clay, and sand. I followed the directions that came on the mortar clay bag.

3/8" Rebar

I recommend using a combination of pre-cut 3/8" diameter rebar. Use 18" long pieces for the verticals and 36" long pieces for the horizontals. Make sure you drive the vertical pieces through the gravel and into the ground so that the ends are at least 3.5" below the top of the wood forms. Wire the horizontal pieces to the vertical pieces so that the horizontal pieces will be embedded in each layer of concrete. This rebar frame will keep the different layers of concrete securely bonded to each other.

8" Deep Hole with 3.5" of Gravel

Since I built this fireplace in southern California, I didn't have to worry about putting in footing below the frost line. If you are building in a cold climate, I recommend putting in footings that go beneath the frost line under each corner. I dug about 8 inches down and used a tamper to flatten and compact the soil at the bottom of the hole. I spread about 3.5" of Quikrete 3/4" gravel in the bottom of the hole and raked it as level as possible before stamping it down.



Concrete Pour #1

I started with a 3.5" deep pour of concrete that would serve as the foundation of the fire pit. I mixed the Quikrete 5000 in a wheelbarrow and shoveled it into place. Renting a mixer would have made this a lot easier, but I enjoyed the exercise. Let the concrete cure at least 20 hours before laying the brick.