



# Barrel Sauna Installation & Owner's Manual



In addition to reading this manual through to the end before proceeding with assembly  
you may find our instruction video helpful.

You can find it at: [youtube.com/user/almosthevensauna](https://www.youtube.com/user/almosthevensauna)





# ALMOST HEAVEN SAUNAS<sup>®</sup>

**Read this entire manual through to the end before proceeding with the assembly.**

Congratulations on your purchase of an Almost Heaven barrel sauna! The barrel sauna is unique to Almost Heaven, and has been our most popular product for over 40 years. We are delighted you have decided to partake in the sauna tradition!

## A WORD ABOUT BARREL SAUNAS

While there are various barrel sauna models with different features, this manual is designed for all Almost Heaven barrel saunas. The overall installation instructions are the same for all classic and canopy barrel saunas, and even though specific details may vary, we note where these details differ. Our sauna kits are designed for ease of assembly by the customer, and every attempt has been made to make assembly information as clear as possible.

For further guidance on assembly, please visit our YouTube channel at [youtube.com/user/almostheavensauna](https://www.youtube.com/user/almostheavensauna).

If you have any questions about assembly, please do not hesitate to call us at **888-355-3050**, or send us an email at [sales@almostheaven.com](mailto:sales@almostheaven.com).

Thank you again for choosing Almost Heaven. We are grateful for your business and know you will have many years of enjoyment in your barrel sauna!

Your Almost Heaven barrel is designed for outdoor use although it is perfectly fine to use it indoors. The lumber is naturally resistant to the elements. Rain and sun will not damage the wood, although natural weathering and coloring of the wood will occur over time. To preserve the initial look of the sauna, you may choose to stain the exterior with a UV inhibiting stain. Consult your local paint store for their recommendations on a particular stain for your sauna. We do not recommend that you paint or varnish your sauna.

Properly assembled, you should not experience water dripping in the sauna. You may experience water seepage, particularly on the top and sides of the sauna. This is due to the porous nature of softwoods as well as the tongue and groove design of the staves.

Water seepage or leakage will NOT harm the sauna and in most cases will evaporate quickly in the hot, dry interior. If you wish to completely waterproof your sauna, we suggest covering it with a shelter or structure with a roof. Alternately, you may purchase an Almost Heaven rain jacket, which covers the top of your barrel sauna.

Your barrel sauna will include the following:

- One full box of staves
- Drain stave
- Filler stave
- Six barrel end sections (three per barrel end panel)
- Heater and mounting hardware, which are found in the heater box enclosed in the bag containing plaques
- Stones
- Hardware bag
- Doorknob assembly
- Two benches
- Two backrests
- Banding assembly\*
- Cradles\*
- Exterior bench assembly\*\*

\*Quantity varies by model

\*\*Canopied barrel saunas only

## ELECTRICAL REQUIREMENTS

All electrical wiring must be performed by A QUALIFIED LICENSED ELECTRICIAN. Costs of an electrician can vary greatly depending on several factors, including your sauna's distance from your electrical service box, where you live and cost of materials. We always recommend you get quotes from two to three different licensed electricians before you begin installation in order to get the best possible service and price.

Use copper wire with 90C insulation. Do not use aluminum wire to make the connection. Consult with an electrician so you can determine the requirements for your particular situation. All wiring must conform to all national, state and local codes and regulations.

For further information and instruction on your heater installation and operation, please consult the provided heater manual.

## LOCATING THE SAUNA

Because the traditional sauna experience involves a heating-cooling-resting regimen, it is important to plan ahead before installing your sauna. Our method of construction allows you to place your barrel sauna in a wide variety of settings.

Be sure the surface is firm and level, and can support the weight of the sauna and its users (1,000+ lbs). A deck or concrete slab is certainly an option, but if your sauna sits directly on the ground, be sure the cradle supports rest on paver stones or something similar to prevent the cradles from settling into the ground.

## BASIC TOOLS

These tools are helpful in the assembly of your barrel sauna:

- Cordless drill
- Rubber mallet
- Hammer
- Framing square
- Screwdrivers (Phillips and flathead)
- Utility knife
- Level
- Wrench

## FIRST CONSIDERATIONS

Before beginning assembly, ensure that the installation surface is level. Many garage, basement or deck floors are sloped for drainage. A slight slope will not be an issue, but a more pronounced slope will require shimming to make the sauna level. An uneven installation surface can result in poor-fitting staves leading to poor sauna function. Also, if the site might receive heavy winds, it is recommended extra precautions are taken to ensure the door does not blow open. In most situations, this factor will not be a concern.

Unpack all staves. Identify the drain stave (it will have one or more drainage holes bored into it). This will be the bottommost and first stave used.



## FLOOR ASSEMBLY

Begin assembly by placing the cradles on the ground (1). For optimal assembly, it is important that the cradles are parallel to each other. Fasten the drain stave directly in the center of the cradles using 2" screws so the stave extends over the end cradles by approximately 4" (2-4). (For barrel saunas with more than two cradles, space the remaining cradle(s) evenly between the two end cradles. Secure the staves into these cradles as well.) Make sure the stave sits perpendicular to the cradles before continuing (5). Continue adding staves to each side of the center stave, tapping each into place with a rubber mallet (6-7). As you are adding staves, fasten every other stave to each cradle making sure each notch lines up with the others and that each stave is perpendicular to the cradles (8-10).

**Note:** While cradle placement is the same for both canopy and classic barrel saunas, you may move the front cradle back slightly for canopy barrel saunas. While unnecessary, it will provide extra support for the door panel.



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4



Image 5



Image 6



Image 7



Image 8

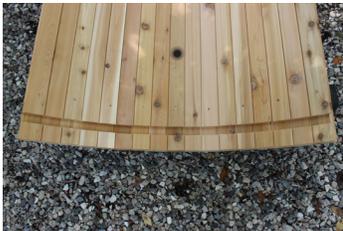


Image 9



Image 10



## ROOM ASSEMBLY

It is now time to assemble the barrel ends. Take the three front end pieces, including the door and two side pieces, and line them up so so that the A stickers align with each other, and the B stickers align with each other (11-13). Gently position the two wing sections into place on either side of the door panel - you may use a rubber mallet to achieve a snug fit. Secure the wings to the door section with 2" screws through the predrilled holes on the horizontal support beam (image 14).

**Note:** the images below show the barrel end being assembled on the ground, but you may choose to assemble it once the door is positioned into the croze of the floor.

Next, take the three back end pieces and line them up so the C stickers align with each other, and the D stickers align with each other. Gently tap the two side pieces into the center piece, securing them together using the predrilled holes in the horizontal support beams. (Images 15-16)

Position the front and back ends in the notches, with the horizontal support boards facing the inside of the sauna. **Note: the metal vents are to be on the bottom on the back end, and the vent holes are to be on the top on the door end (17).**

Place a level on the uppermost horizontal support boards on the front and back ends to ensure each end is level (18). Adjust as necessary. Image (19) shows what your assembly should look like at this point of the installation process.

You will find it helpful to place a temporary stave at the top, connecting the two ends. This will align and stabilize the two ends while you continue adding staves to your sauna (20).



Image 11



Image 12



Image 13



Image 14



Image 15



Image 16



Image 17



Image 18



Image 19



Image 20



## ROOM ASSEMBLY continued

With the front and back pieces level and placed, begin placing staves up the sides of the sauna. Tap each board with a rubber mallet (21). Hammer a 2" nail through every second or third stave into the front and back end panels to keep them from falling out (22). The fewer nails you use, the easier disassembly will be should you ever need to take down the sauna. Stop using nails about halfway up the sides (23-24).

**Note:** If you have access to a pneumatic nailer this process will go faster.



Image 21



Image 22



Image 23



Image 24

## BENCHES AND SUPPORTS

**Note:** You may choose to install benches and supports after the entire room has been assembled, but you may find installation easier with the space and light afforded at this point.

Each barrel sauna includes two pre-assembled benches that are side specific. Be sure the shorter bench slat is in front and against the doorframe (25). Lay the benches on the lower cleats, which are mounted on each end panel (26). Fasten the benches into the cleats using the predrilled holes (27). Be sure to countersink the fasteners slightly below the surface of the wood. For 6' and larger barrel saunas, position the provided center support so that it connects the bench to the floor of the barrel. Secure using 2" screws through the pre-drilled holes. (28-29)

Mount the backrests at the level most comfortable to you, typically 8-12" above the bench. Use a level while fastening to ensure an even installation (30-31).



Image 25



Image 26



Image 27



Image 28



Image 29



Image 30



Image 31



## ROOM ASSEMBLY...CONTINUED

**Note: at this point in the installation, you may find it helpful to tie a loose rope or strap around your sauna. (32)**



Image 32

Continue placing staves, tapping them in place with a rubber mallet (33-34). **Do not nail the remaining staves in place.**



Image 33



Image 34

When you arrive to the point of closing the room, you may find that the remaining space will not accommodate a full-size staff (35). We have provided a set of filler staves cut into various widths (36). Choose the necessary combination of filler staves to provide the tightest fit. Install the filler staves by tilting the adjacent staves up, insert and mallet in the filler staves, and push them all back into place (37). It is important that you use as many staves and fillers as you can prior to tightening the stainless-steel bands in order to ensure the tightest seal possible. It is recommended that you insert enough filler staves so that some of the staves between the 10 – 2 position actually “lift off” the front and rear end panels. In other words, the radius of that the staves create will actually be slightly larger than the radius of the barrel end panels (38). This will ensure the tightest seal possible when the bands are tightened.



Image 35



Image 36



Image 37



Image 38

## BAND ASSEMBLY

Each band assembly includes the following components:

- Stainless steel band w/brackets
- 1/2" nuts (2)
- Threaded rod
- Black vinyl caps

Position the bands around your sauna, evenly spaced (39). (On non-canopied barrel saunas the two end bands should cover the nails used to hold the lower staves in place. On canopy models, evenly spaced bands won't cover the front nails.) Insert the threaded rod through the bracket and tighten the nuts by hand evenly until no longer able (40). Before continuing to tighten, verify the bands are evenly spaced and align or stagger the bracket placement along the side of the sauna according to personal preference. Tighten nuts evenly and place vinyl caps over the threaded rod (41-42).



Image 39



Image 40



Image 41



Image 42



### Band requirements:

- 4' and 5' barrel saunas require two bands
- 6' barrel saunas require three bands
- 8' saunas require four bands
- Grandview and Lewisburg saunas require five bands

### LED LIGHT

Locate the LED mounting brackets and mount them on the lower horizontal 2x4 brace on the back wall using the provided 2" screws. (43) Space them approximately 20" apart (44) and clip the LED light into place so that it sits snug and centered on the lower brace.

Using the provided screws, mount your waterproof power supply where it is most convenient on the exterior of the back sauna panel (45). Run the female end of the power connection through the panel and connect the two (46). Plug the power source into a standard 110V outlet either directly or with an extension cord. You may also wish to have your electrician hardwire the light to a 110V circuit.



Image 43



Image 44



Image 45



Image 46

Install door handle (47-48) **Note:** Door handles may vary.



Image 47



Image 48

Optional accessories for your sauna, including a back rest, robe hook and much more are available at [almostheaven.com/sauna-accessories/](http://almostheaven.com/sauna-accessories/).

### BENCH ASSEMBLY

**For canopied models only:** Locate the exterior bench cleat with pre-drilled holes. For +1, measure vertically 17.5" from the bottom of the door frame and make a pencil mark; for +2 measure vertically 10" (49) At this mark, for +1, measure horizontally approximately 3.75" and make a mark. For +2, measure 2.5" (50). This will be the upper and interior corner of the exterior bench cleat. Position the described corner at this mark. Using a level to make sure the cleat is sitting horizontal, secure the cleat to the front wall of the barrel using 2" screws through the pre-drilled holes. There should be approximately 1/4" gap between the angled cut of the cleat and the curved wall of the barrel.

Next, find the support with one predrilled hole and place the edge 2-2.25" from stave end. Using a level, make sure this support is level with the cleat attached in the previous step and secure using 2" screw through predrilled hole (51-52). Find the support with two predrilled holes and place it upright under the support. With the level on both upper supports, position the upright support so they are level. Attach the upright support to the barrel staves using 2" screws through predrilled holes at its base (53). Using 2" screw, fasten flat and upright supports together (54). Rest bench on top of the cleat and the support assembly and secure each using 2" screws through the predrilled holes (55). Repeat for the opposite side.



Image 49



Image 50



Image 51



Image 52



Image 53



Image 54



Image 55



## OPTIONAL HEATER FENCE ASSEMBLY

The heater fence kit will come banded in stretch wrap, remove the wrap and place the three pieces on your working surface (56-57). Match the front piece, and one side as shown below (58).



Image 56



Image 57



Image 58

Turn over matched pieces so the long section is face down. Ensure the boards are flush in the top corner for optimal fitment (59). Attach the two pieces together using the two predrilled holes and remaining screws from your sauna hardware kit (60). It is recommended to keep pressure on the two square boards during fastening for easier assembly. Then repeat process for other side. See below for finished heater fence (61). To install heater fence into sauna, use the four predrilled holes and screws from sauna hardware kit (62-63). Place fence around heater and fasten into barrel end (64).



Image 59



Image 60



Image 61



Image 62



Image 63



Image 64

## FINAL THINGS

Once assembly is complete, sweep and vacuum the inside of the sauna. Wipe down the entire interior with a damp cloth to remove any remaining dirt, dust and debris.

**Note:** If the sauna has absorbed moisture in storage, the staves may shrink as the high heat evaporates that moisture. This may require you to tighten the bands even further. If your sauna is left in the open rain, this will cause the staves to expand again resulting in an even tighter seal.

**HEATER - *Please see heater manual.***

## TRADITIONAL SAUNA USE

Congratulations! You are ready to enjoy your barrel sauna! You may use your sauna in a wet or dry fashion. Dry, meaning you do not sprinkle any water onto the stones; wet, meaning you increase the humidity of the room by sprinkling water on the stones. Please note, not much water is needed to achieve a wet sauna experience.

The sauna as we know it originates in Finland. The typical sauna experience follows the steps below, but you may enjoy your sauna in any way you like!

- Set your heater so your sauna achieves the desired temperature. This is typically 160 -185+ degrees F. Novice sauna users should begin at the lower end of that range and increase their high temperature over time.
- Take a quick shower or a quick dip in a hot tub or pool.
- Step into the sauna and enjoy for 5-15 minutes, bringing a towel to sit or lay on. Leave the sauna once you are perspiring freely.
- Take a plunge in a pool, shower, snowbank, lake - anything that will cool you down! After that, relax and cool down for 10-20 minutes.
- Step into the sauna again. During this visit, you may wish to sprinkle small amounts of water onto the stones to create bursts of steam. If water spills through the heater to the floor, you are using too much water, though this will not hurt the heater or the sauna.
- Continue repeating this process. After your final visit to your sauna, relax for at least 20 minutes. Shower with warm water initially, finishing with cool water to close your skin pores.
- Prepare to feel refreshed for the day or to have an amazing night's sleep!

Whatever your sauna routine, it is imperative that you **STAY HYDRATED!**