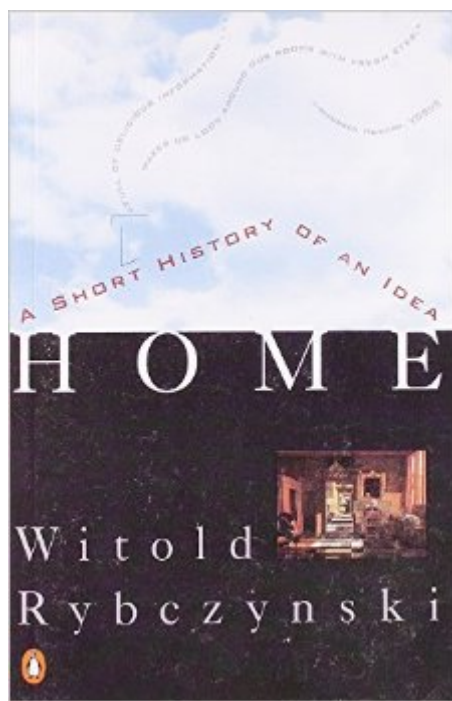


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# Home: A Short History Of An Idea



## Synopsis

Walk through five centuries of homes both great and small; from the smoke-filled manor halls of the Middle Ages to today's Ralph Lauren-designed environments; on a house tour like no other, one that delightfully explicates the very idea of "home." You'll see how social and cultural changes influenced styles of decoration and furnishing, learn the connection between wall-hung religious tapestries and wall-to-wall carpeting, discover how some of our most welcome luxuries were born of architectural necessity, and much more. Most of all, *Home* opens a rare window into our private lives; and how we really want to live.

## Book Information

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: Penguin Books; Reprint edition (July 7, 1987)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0140102310

ISBN-13: 978-0140102314

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.7 x 7.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (38 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

This book is an exploration into the meaning of the word "comfort" and its place in the home. Rybczynski begins the volume with an examination of the Sixteenth Century painting by Durer "Saint Jerome in His Study". He describes each of the objects and furnishings visible in the painting in turn, noting that they are not particularly conducive to comfort or reflective of individuality. Rybczynski goes on to describe how this painting may be representative of the era in which it was painted, how houses at the time had many occupants and were spaces where people lived communally, but not necessarily as a family in the present sense of the term. He argues that in the Sixteenth Century, the nuclear family as a residential unit was non-existent, since children were sent away to live and work with others at a young age, and households always included many unrelated servants or apprentices. It was only later, as the concept of the nuclear family became more

established that the need for privacy came to the fore, and private and public spaces began to be differentiated within the house. Later developments in technology, especially plumbing, ventilation, and lighting also came to influence housing design. One of the themes of the book is how the field of interior design has often been faced with the conflict between what looks good and what feels good. Rybcynski stresses that often the style of a design wins out, leaving the residents with the very least in comfort (to the point of having to carry their toothbrushes to and from the bathroom for lack of proper storage there, for instance).

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