

Planning Your Igloo

You should be able to get a good idea of what kind of igloo you want to build from the descriptions above. It's a good idea to make your first igloo a smaller type so you can get a feel for the construction and the building methodology. Then you can try the larger types with confidence and a better, safer understanding of how to achieve the desired results.

What is its purpose? Plan the size of your igloo based on need and factor in the time available. Is it simply for recreation in your yard, a local field or park? Is it for winter excursions? Or is it for emergency survival purposes? How long do you want or need your igloo to last? How many people do you want to house and will you be using it for sleeping? How well do the people who will be sleeping in it know each other and how much space do they need to feel comfortable? Once you answer these questions you can decide how big you want it to be. Then you can make other considerations such as whether you want a window or split-level floorplan inside.

The location of the igloo is very important and site selection should be done with care. If you are in an area with deep snow you may want to probe the snow to determine the type available. The snow should be hard packed but not so hard that it will not cut if you are not using a form to create the blocks. If you are using a form to create the blocks then soft snow is fine. If you are making the blocks without a form you want to try to find snow that is even and without layers or streaks of ice that might cause the blocks to break while handling them, a nice uniform consistency is best. Make sure before you start that you have enough snow at the desired location to complete the igloo.

It is common practice in the Great Frozen North to begin construction by starting with the entrance tunnel foundation walls. This is done because the snow to build the igloo will ideally all come from the area that will be inside the igloo itself when it is complete. The entrance tunnel will slope down into the lower area inside the igloo where the blocks were lifted to form this passageway. This section inside the dome will be the lower area. The higher area inside the dome is used as the sleeping area and it will be warmer due to the warm air inside the dome rising to the higher level.

An igloo can be lined with hides on the inside to increase the inside temperature. If this is done, the difference in the inside temperature can be quite dramatic, but it is not necessary and most igloos do not have this feature.

MADE IN CANADA

...Where Igloos Were Invented