



## How To Build A Quinzhee



Quinzhee is the [Inuit](#) word for snow shelter. A quinzhee can keep you cozy in the brutal cold, freezing wind and heavy snow. They are built with loose snow as alternative to an igloo. They are a fun activity for Cubs, but overnight camping in a quinzhee is not recommended for this level of Scouting and constructing one requires utmost supervision. However building a quinzhee is a great and memorable day-time winter activity for Cubs.

Quinzhee huts can be made with very little available snow. Basically, you create a mound of snow, let it harden to gain strength, and dig in to it from below and hollow it out. Plan on the morning to build the mound, and the afternoon or next day to hollow it out. Be on the watch with the Cubs for signs of hypothermia.

The following are the steps to build this snowcraft structure:

- Trample out a circle in the snow and all the snow within that circle. This will be the size of your quinzhee hut.



Use your shovels, snowshoes or your hands to throw snow from the outside of your circle into the middle and create a mound. Throw as much snow into the center as you want your snow shelter to be big.

- Whack at the mound with skis, shovels or body, as it becomes bigger. The more you disturb the snow the stronger it will stabilize the quinzhee.
- Once you are satisfied with the pile of snow you have created let it rest for at least three to four hours.
- "Pin-cushion" the hut with sticks 8-12" long in various areas around the dome
- To begin hollowing out your quinzhee dig down and then in. Make sure the entrance is facing away from the wind. As you form a tunnel entrance to your shelter, make sure someone on the outside helps shovel away the snow as it comes out. (Also it's safer should something go wrong and your structure falls in on you!).



- Scoop out the ceiling. Use arcing strokes to create a dome shape inside. This will keep your snow structure strong. As you arch out the roof watch for the sticks to tell you when to stop digging. The more you shave snow away from the walls more light will come in. This is your key to know when to stop shoveling
- Use the interior snow to reinforce the sides of the hut or build up the entrance walls
- Important: carve in small air holes in the sides to ventilation
- Use a candle to heat the interior of the quinzhee and harden the walls and ceiling
- Have a set of dry clothes to put on once you are done.
- Get spray bottles containing water with food coloring and paint your quinzhee
- Destroy the quinzhee when you are finished with it. It could be a danger to others or to wildlife

For Leaders or Scout Assistants, sleeping in the quinzhee may take some preparation. Your bedroll should have the following components:

- A thick foam pad for insulation from the ground, as wide as your sleeping bag and long enough to support your head.
- A winter sleeping bag or two summer sleeping bags - with the zippers on opposite sides. If desired, add a blanket between the inner and outer bags, preferably fastened with safety pins.
- Within inner bag - sleeping wear: pyjamas, heavy socks, long underwear or jogging pants, hooded jacket or sweater with a toque. These clothes must remain dry and must not be worn during the day. Change into them right before you go to bed.
- Large sheet of polyethylene film wrapped around the bedroll and taped shut with duct tape to form a sheath that will protect the bedroll from the dripping of the ceiling in the quinzhee. A drip could cause a concentrated wet spot on the bedroll which would be extremely uncomfortable. Any plastic will do, use garbage bags as a last resort.
- Large plastic bag to keep the rolled up bedroll dry during transport.
- As in the daytime, "layering" is important to prevent perspiration. If you wake up feeling to warm, open your sleeping bag a bit or take off some clothing. When you cool off bundle up again.