

SNOW HUT SPECIAL & HOW TO MAKE A SNOW HUT

From: Terry

Date: Sat, 13 Jan 96 16:43:08 -800

Subject: Info on snow huts

Hi:

Found your page while searching for info on winter camping. We saw a Discovery special with a description of snow huts, built by shoveling/piling snow until it reaches the height desired, then you tunnel out the inside. It appeared to be a great winter-camping shelter, especially when one doesn't want to pack a tent.

Does your book contain any info on such a structure? We live in rural Maine and we have plenty of snow in the yard. We are trying to "build" one of these structures and could use more info. Thanks - Terry Hayes terry@megalink.net

Hi Richard:

Thanks for your quick reply. We forged ahead on our own - and so far all has turned out well. We shoveled the snow into a mole hill, about 7 feet high with a diameter of 20 feet. We let it set for about an hour and then started to tunnel our way in. After about 20 minutes, the "structure" collapsed. Still undaunted, we took to the shovels again and rebuilt the pile. Only this time, we let it set overnight. Now, I realize that this part of our strategy wouldn't be replicated in the Maine woods - but it worked well in our yard!

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We went out this morning and tunneled our way into a neat snow hut. The final structure is tall enough for our 9 year old to stand up in the center. We figure there's easily sleeping room for four. In fact, Steve and the boys are preparing to spend the night in it. Because there's work tomorrow they've run an extension cord for the alarm clock....so much for roughing it!

We have added no water and no reinforcement. The floor was leveled with snow and then covered with a tarp. They'll sleep in winter bags on top of Thermarest mattresses. I'm a bit too chicken-livered to join them. I figure living in rural Maine with only wood heat is a close to winter camping as I plan to get.

I'll get Steve to send you a note in the morning with details on their little adventure. We'll continue to search for information on the "right" way to built such a structure.

Terry

Dear Richard:

The snow hut was a success! The key appears to be packing the snow as it is shoveled into the pile. In fact, having one person whose job it is to pack it down seems best. If we had more closely packed the hill the first time, it would not have needed to set over night before we tunneled it out. It is also important to poke several air holes through the roof and sides to allow for proper ventilation.

Steve and the boys (Harry - age 9 and Danny - age 7) slept out last night with the dog. They reported it to be quiet and reasonably warm. There was no wind inside the hut, but enough of a draft to circulate the air.

A neighbor's cat wandered in about 11:00 pm which sent the dog on a tear

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- but he wandered back before too long. The boys found this event to be the highlight of the night.

If our experience can help others, feel free to use it, names and all. They are all quite proud of their structure and their adventure. Thanks for your interest. Terry Hayes terry@megalink.net

END 16/1/1996