

The home away from home. Either you love them or you hate them. If you get an el cheapo tent, you will probably learn to hate it real fast and wish that you spent a little more time and money to buy an easy-to-set-up, light, and durable tent. There are plenty of high quality tents out there and most are reasonably priced.

Tents now-a-days are made from nylon. Nylon is used because of its superior strength to weight ratio. There are two different types of nylons used. Taffeta ripstop, or a combination of both. Taffeta is just the plain weave nylon while ripstop is a reinforced nylon weave. These reinforcements allow the nylon to eliminate tears in the nylon from becoming larger and unrepairable, Mesh is also widely used in tent manufacturing because of it's ventilating factors. The mesh material is used on the doors and windows to allow for air flow while stopping insects from getting inside the tent, Finally, tents must have poles in order to give the tent a shape and structure.

Tent poles are usually made from either fiberglass or aluminum. Aluminum is lighter and more durable than those made from fiberglass. Fiberglass poles have a tendency to dryrot and will break after years of use usually while on a trip.

Tents come into two categories.. three season and four season. However, some of the manufactures have come out with convertible tents, which can be used in all situations. These tents are three season tents that can be converted for four season use. Four season tents were constructed to withstand high winds can handle snowy and will keep heat better(little ventilation) than a three season. These tents are usually heavier on the packer and billfold as well. After one use in rough conditions though the price is mineralized by the comfort achieved. Four season tents are primarily used for extreme winter and/or high-altitude conditions, Both conditions involve radical changes in weather that usually involve high winds. Because of the weather factor, manufactures attempt to build tents with optimum structural integrity, maximizing its ability to keep heat, be easily set-up, and be light weight and collectible. These are the main reasons why they are so expensive. However, even though these are exceptional tents they might not suit your needs!

Unless you are just an all around gear junkie or hardcore user three season tents will usually be sufficient. These tents are versatile, lighter weight, and less expensive than their counterpart. Many of the tent manufactures now understand that many three season users may experiment with winter camping and their tents will possess internal and external guiding points to increase the structural stability of the tent, NOTE: The three season tents with those features are only there for temporary use and should be used accordingly. If you decide to use the tent in extreme conditions on a regular basis it will definitely shorten the life of your convertible tent. Besides, if you really want to experiment, most gear shops will have a rental program and may have a four season tent available.

There are many considerations to be made with regards to the care you provide for a tent.

1 . You should seal all floor seams and those seams on the rainfly. This will make the tent waterproof. If the manufacturer already taped the seams get some seam sealer anyway and seal the corners. Better to be safe than sorry.

2. Always use a ground sheet with your tent. This will cut down on the wear and tear of your tent floor. Rocks are sharper than you think and over time will push right through that nylon. If you do not buy a ground sheet made specifically for your tent, buy a plastic sheet and cut it slightly smaller than the dimensions of your floor. This will keep water from accumulating between the sheet and the tent floor.

3 Always store your tent DRY. If it gets wet on your trip, don't worry. Set it up when you get home and it will dry in about 30 minutes. If you store it wet, mildew will accumulate in the nylon and destroy the material. There is no way to stop mildew after it is there. Always store your tent DRY.

4. Store your tent in a relatively cool place. If you leave it in a hot room or car the sealed seams will delaminate causing the tent to lose its waterproofness.