

The history of the tent is widely varied and depends entirely upon the area in which you look. Different tents made appearances in Asia, Europe, the Roman Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and the Americas. As we progress into modern tent design and our globalized culture, however, the construction becomes more standardized. The first tent is extremely hard to place because the definition of a tent is hard to pin down; however, some of the first tents can be dated back to 40,000 B.C.E. Early tents were predominantly used by nomadic tribes that needed temporary structures that were both easy to construct and easily mobile. Some of the earliest tents whose use and construction can be determined date back to the second century C.E. These tents were made predominantly of hides and wooden supports, making use of the most readily available materials. They were used as dwellings and as religious temples, especially by the



Bedouins in the Middle East, whose tribes thrived on trading between the various regions in and around the area. Their tents, called beiths, were as large as twelve square meters, and were divided into private and public sections. In Asia, the Mongol tribes used a tent known as the yurt. These round-sided tents were typically designed to house four to five people, and they could be as tall as three meters. The yurt persisted for centuries in Asia, and can be traced through to the

reign of Genghis Khan. The American Indians had their own style of tent known as the tepee.



The tepee was typically made of buffalo hide that was placed over a collection of poles that were tied together at one end. There was usually a hole at the top through which smoke could pass and which would allow air to circulate through the tent. Each of these tents were designed with the same purpose. They were easy to set up, easy to break down, and easy to move. They provided shelter that was well suited to a nomadic lifestyle.

Other people who greatly influenced the history of tents were armies on the march. Permanent constructions are not suited to housing an army that may need to march up to twenty miles a day. The

Roman Legions were one of the main armies that marched and formed organized camps



composed entirely of tents. The tents were typically still made of hide during the Roman era, but later armies, such as the American Revolutionary forces, would use tents made of hemp or canvas. These camps could become somewhat like small cities of tents, with streets and even clusters of legion followers forming something similar to a modern suburb. The legionaries' accommodations generally matched their rank, and there were extra tents for command

structures, dining, and other necessary activities of a functioning army.

Tents used today bear little resemblance to their roots. Their primary use is no longer to house nomads or soldiers, but recreation. The Industrial Revolution and resulting changes helped to create free time for many people, and these people became interested in exploring the great outdoors. Newer materials allowed for further advancement in poles, tent shapes, and resistance to the elements. Fiberglass or aluminum alloy poles and nylon siding allowed tents to become extremely lightweight and easily transported. Tent sides are either a single wall, where one layer covers all necessary things such as waterproofing and wind resistance, or double wall, in which a rain fly waterproofs and the inner wall is breathable. Fiberglass poles are being phased out because they are heavier and weaker than alloyed poles. Tents such as what are seen today allow recreational backpacking to be enjoyed by everyone, rather than only those who are fit enough to carry extremely heavy packs.

Footwear is a necessity for anyone who intends to walk a significant distance outdoors. For a very long time, shoes were simply made to prevent foot injury while walking around. They were not designed to be light or comfortable, merely to protect the foot. This began to change in 1906 with the manufacture of arch support to help increase the comfort and effectiveness of a shoe. As the years continued, shoes became more specialized. In the 1960s and 1970s, podiatrists began to get involved. The podiatrists began to make adjustments to the manufacture of shoes, introducing many new technologies to shoe manufacturers. As recreational hiking gained popularity across the world in the later portion of the 20th century, shoe companies began to make boots and shoes that were specifically dedicated to this purpose. The shoes at the time, however, were still made predominantly from leather, which is neither lightweight nor waterproof. The biggest advancement that addressed these issues was the invention of GORE-

TEX. Invented in 1978, GORE-TEX revolutionized the world of recreational hiking boots. Both lightweight and waterproof, it is a perfect material for hiking boots. Today, almost all boots are made with GORE-TEX. Hiking boots have remained relatively constant throughout the years, but with the surge of ultra lightweight backpackers, companies have been forced to seek an alternative to the heavy boot of before. To appease those who begrudge every additional ounce to carry, shoe manufacturers created the hiking shoe, a smaller, lighter weight version of the boot. The hiking shoe tends to be made of less stiff material and has a profile that runs below the ankle, whereas the boot tends to be more rigid and



has an ankle collar. The boot's stiffer material and high ankle collar will provide much more ankle support, but tends to be more expensive. The shoe is lighter and cheaper, but does not support the ankle as well. Additionally, a hiking shoe is likely to last only one season, while a hiking boot should last for years. Each style of footwear has its various advantages and disadvantages, and it is simply up to the preference of the hiker as to which is better

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