



LITTLE FOOT YURTS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHO MAKES YOUR YURTS ?

We (Alex and Selene Cole) have been building yurts for seven years and are co-owners of Little Foot Yurts, which started in 2005. Our yurt building days stemmed from an interest in natural building when we moved to an eco arts center called Coed Hills Rural Artspace, in Wales. <http://www.coedhills.co.uk/>. The center inspired us to start Little Foot Yurts and provided a knowledge and understanding of permaculture and coppicing, which provide the basis for our sustainable business ethics and practices.

Selene tailors all of the canvas coverings for the yurts and tipis, and has wide experience in pattern design and working with natural materials such as canvas and felt. Previously, Selene was employed at the Sierra Club of Canada-Atlantic Chapter as climate change program coordinator. She fundraised and designed a workplace emission reduction program for two years. She has over six years experience in organizing and facilitating community workshops and programs. Selene has a certificate through Dalhousie College of Continuing Education in Non-Profit Management.

Alex builds the yurt frames and has designed the Palace Yurt, and two story yurt which is rented out for weddings, festivals and community events. He has been pioneering natural build projects as well as yurt building for more than seven years in Wales and England, and more recently in Nova Scotia. Alex has a catering background of 12 years, and has been an owner/manager of two previous small businesses: patisserie and café. He has a degree in Hotel and Catering Management, from Manchester University, England.

WHAT IS COPPICE –THE METHOD OF FORESTRY YOU USE?

Coppice is an ancient form of silver culture which has been tried and tested for thousands of years in Europe. The idea is to harvest the limbs from the re-growth of hardwood stools (tree stump). By this method the tree stays alive and can yield low cost lumber for hundreds of years. Coppice also prolongs the life of the tree and enhances the local fauna and flora of the woodland. For more information on this topic, a great book to read is Coppiced Woodlands, Their Management for Wildlife by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee of England.

WHY ARE YOUR YURTS GENERALLY MORE EXPENSIVE COMPARED TO MODERN YURT COMPANIES?

Our production methods and techniques are very different from modern style yurts, which use sawn wood for the entire frame, aircraft cable for the tension band and laminated components. Traditional style yurts have an organic look and in the building processes do require a lot more labour, which reflects the higher price we charge compared to modern style yurts. Each roof pole is cut by hand, drawknifed, tapered, dried, sanded and finished with linseed oil. Our sales prices are comparable to traditional yurt companies in England and Wales.

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HOW LONG DOES A YURT LAST?

The wooden frame of a yurt is built to last indefinitely. We use a treated cotton canvas which will last between ten to fifteen years, possibly 20 years depending on how you care for it (for example: regular brushing to remove debris will prolong its life) Using a breathable membrane such as cotton combined with felt panels and wood stove provides a healthy, warm and easy to maintain shelter. The traditional simplicity of our design allows our yurt components to be easily replaced as needed.

CAN YOUR YURTS BE USED YEAR-ROUND?

Yes! To make your yurt a four season shelter and provide complete protection in heavy rain we offer a double roof cover. A double cover also ensures that one of the canvases stays clean and stain free. Yurts can be as simple or as modernized as you like depending on the level of luxury you choose. For example, building a platform can make yurt living more comfortable and also allows for additional shortage.

CAN YURTS BE ADEQUATELY HEATED?

Yes, because of the low roof and circular shape the yurt is easily heated with a small wood stove. We run our yurt building workshops in our 17 ft yurts in -20 conditions and have been very warm. Throughout Central Asia millions of people live in yurts in some of the harshest climates on Earth. A wood stove chimney fitting can be added to your yurt made from non-combustible weld cloth.

HOW CAN A WOOD STOVE BE INSTALLED AND USED SAFELY?

We make a wood burner flange for the chimney on the side of the yurt, or provide you with a second roof hat with a chimney flange fitted, which would be for a central chimney. Using a wood stove in a yurt is not risky provided you follow the safe distances for combustibles regarding your chimney and stove. This means utilising steel insulated chimneys (Selkirk style) and non combustible fibre board on your floor and behind the stove. We provide a non combustible flange with flap cover to allow your insulated chimney to pass through the wall. It is advisable to have your installation checked by a certified chimney and stove installer. (WET installer)

Four Dog Wood Stove www.fourdog.com is a small family business in MN, USA which makes portable lightweight stoves perfect for yurts. You can even get water jacket and an oven.

HOW DO YOU RECOMMEND INSULATING THE YURTS?

We provide locally made felt panels which are the traditional felt covering of yurts in Central Asia. Each panel is hemmed with jute edging. Extremely durable and hardwearing they provide an natural, breathable insulation. The felt panels are enclosed by the cotton canvas to protect it from the weather. We charge \$8 per sq foot for our panels. We can also recommend layering up wool blankets between the trellis and the canvas. This will make a natural, breathable insulation that is easy to acquire from second hand shops.

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SNOW, WIND AND STORM

Our yurts have performed excellently in both snow and windstorms. Our 17 foot yurts and large 28 ft yurts have comfortably withstood 80 kilometre winds and supported three feet of snow on their roofs. Extra tie-downs can be purchased to ensure effective anchoring. To make your yurt a four season shelter and provide complete protection in heavy weather we offer a double cover on the roof section. Rather than use a very heavy weight canvas, which is impractical to move around and harder to pitch, a double skin provides a weather strong four-season shelter and also ensures that one of the canvases stays clean and stain free.

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO COOL THE YURT?

There are a variety of ways to cool the yurt. The dome skylight allows fresh air to be pulled into the yurt to aid in natural convection cooling. In addition, a canvas wall can be removed to enhance ventilation and viewing.

WHAT ABOUT FLOORING?

We supply coconut husk herringbone weave flooring, which is tailored to fit. This flooring is really great if you are planning to place the yurt on ground level. The flooring we use is a natural product which is made from coconut husk fibres. It is densely woven with a herringbone weave. It is naturally anti-bacterial and is extremely hardwearing. The flooring is tailored to fit your yurt and edged with jute trim. Dirt and dust is easily removed by taking the flooring out periodically and banging with a broom, alternatively you can brush out debris with a long bristled brush. The flooring price includes a tailored tarp to put underneath.

DO YOU PROVIDE WOODEN FLOORING?

No, however a wooden platform is a good idea to keep your yurt high and dry and provides an opportunity to install permanent fixtures such as electricity or plumbing. A platform also allows for additional storage.

CAN I HAVE WINDOWS IN MY YURT?

Yes, we can sew in windows into the canvas walls. Each window includes super clear plastic and a removable screen. (window size: approx. 40"*36") All Little Foot Yurts include an eight pointed star roof hat. You can choose from a variety of colours and it has a super clear plastic window to allow you to see the stars and is easily removable in hot weather.

WHAT SIZE OF YURT IS IDEAL FOR A FAMILY OF FOUR OR SMALL GUESTHOUSE?

We would recommend a 17-20 ft yurt. These sizes of yurts will provide ample space for up to a family of four, and will be easy to maintain and heat.

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HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO PUT UP A LITTLE FOOT YURT?

A twelve-foot yurt takes about 30 minutes to erect. A 17ft yurt takes an hour and a half, a 20 ft yurt takes two hours and a 28 ft yurt takes 6-7 hours to erect.

WHAT KIND OF SECURITY DOES A YURT OFFER?

You can add a solid wood door to your purchase with a high quality residential lockset carrying a lifetime warranty. The yurt also has a continuous lattice wall that spans from one side of the door frame to the other, even through the windows. This means the only way to enter is through the doorway.

WHAT KIND OF COVERINGS DO YOU USE?

We use an Egyptian cotton canvas called Sunforger, which is tested to CPAI 84 and S109 ULC for fire retardency (Canadian standard for public access event spaces). It is a treated canvas, which is rot, mildew, water and UV resistant. This canvas provides an excellent weather resistant covering that is both natural and breathable, allowing condensation to escape whilst keeping the harshest of weathers out. The benefits of a breathable natural membrane such as canvas instead of vinyl plastic are as follows: significantly less condensation, no off gassing, more aesthetically pleasing, lighter, and easier to repair.

CAN ELECTRICITY BE INSTALLED?

Electrical wiring in a yurt is typically done through the floor. Outlets can be mounted flush in the floor of the yurt or on short support posts around the perimeter of the wall. We recommend having a local professional install the electrical wiring. If electrical service is not available at your site you might consider photovoltaic (solar) systems or propane systems (lights, refrigeration, heating, cook stoves, etc).

HOW DO I ADD LIGHTING?

Virtually any type of lighting can be used in a Little Foot Yurt. Customers have installed overhead lights to the center ring, used floor or table lamps and LED tube lighting.

HOW CAN I BEST CARE FOR MY YURT?

Our yurts are made from almost all natural materials, so the wood needs to be oiled two to three times a year and the canvas must be stored properly. A maintenance package is available if you want Little Foot Yurts to assemble, take down, and maintain your yurt over a period of time. An accumulation of dirt or soiling can create an ideal environment for bacteria to grow and can cause staining of the fabric. It is important that this be removed by regular brushing to maintain appearance and longevity of the fabric.

To protect both the frame and the canvas we tailor in a foot of Top Gun (heavy duty vinyl-coated canvas) at the bottom of the wall, which gets tucked under the frame so that the wood and canvas never touch the ground.

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DO YOU NEED A PERMIT TO USE A YURT?

If you set up your yurt as a permanent structure (for example, with fixed electrical & plumbing) then you should inquire with your local planning office. Using the yurt as a portable temporary structure and taking it down several times a year should enable you to go permit free.

YURTS AS A PUBLIC ACCESS EVENT SPACE

Our commercial sized yurts have 6 and half foot high walls for extra headroom, and have a 7 ft high, 4 ft wide door, which is wheelchair accessible, and is built to comply with public access regulations. Our canvas is tested to CPAI 84 and S109 ULC for fire retardency (Canadian standard for public access event spaces). If you use a yurt for a public access space like us (for yurt rentals) you must follow the codes and regulations for that purpose, including entrance signage and fire coded materials.

BUILDING TIMES

All of our yurts that will be built for spring each year, must have the deposit paid and be ordered before the end of February. This is because of the cyclical nature of our harvesting techniques; the forestry component of our work (which occurs in the winter) precedes each build.

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