



Woodland hideaways



Woodland hideaways

Before you go:

Research how early people made shelters? How do people around the world use local materials (mud huts, log cabins, igloos). Discuss the requirements for their dens and what is important when choosing a site - sloping or level ground, drainage and wind direction. Consider health, safety and ecological impact.

What do you need?

This could include; string, rope, twine, tarps of different sizes, old sheets or blankets. If the leader is trained in tool use, then introduce and use tools like, loppers, penknives and mallets.

Activity

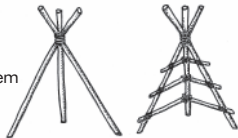
Building a den from fallen branches, leaves and twigs is an exciting and satisfying activity. The builders can relax in the finished shelters with a sense of achievement, ownership and pride.

It can be adapted for all ages – even young children can enjoy gathering ferns or lying branches to cover a basic lean-to frame. Teenagers will enjoy designing and constructing more elaborate structures.

Children can work in groups or individually with or without adults. Each group selects a site and plans their design in detail. Encourage the use of existing trees.

Den 1 – wigwam style

Mark out a suitable sized circle. Collect long stems and push them into the ground leaving a gap for the doorway.



Tie the tops together using twine.

Weave more flexible stems such as willow in as horizontals. Diagonals woven in also help to brace the structure.

Finally, lay twiggy leafed branches over the frame in an overlapping style to help shed water and provide shelter from wind. Use a groundsheet or tarpaulin for the floor.

Den 2 – tent style



Follow-up

Discuss how simple dens could be developed to create more weatherproof options or adding "furniture" for comfort. What else do we **need** for survival apart form shelter? Do animals have shelters? How do they make them? What is the impact on the woodland of us building a shelter? Can we minimise the impact? What is the impact of animals building a shelter?