

# BUILD A 'MINI-YURT'

Different ethnic groups within China had their own unique building styles. For example, the nomadic Mongols often built yurts, which were rounded tents held up by a wooden pole framework. They were covered by skins and were easy to move.

Yurts were designed to be very portable and easy to build. Your "mini-yurt" might be a little too small to live in, but it should still give you a taste of what it was like to build one!

**1** Arrange two groups of eight toothpicks, each in an octagon shape, like a stop sign. Use the marshmallows to connect the toothpicks at each joint on each octagon.

**2** One of the octagons is your base. Take out another 8 toothpicks to be your "support posts." Connect them one by one to the marshmallows in the base so that they point upwards. Each support post should make a right angle with the base.

**3** Attach the second octagon to the tops of the posts by poking the tops of the toothpicks through the marshmallows.

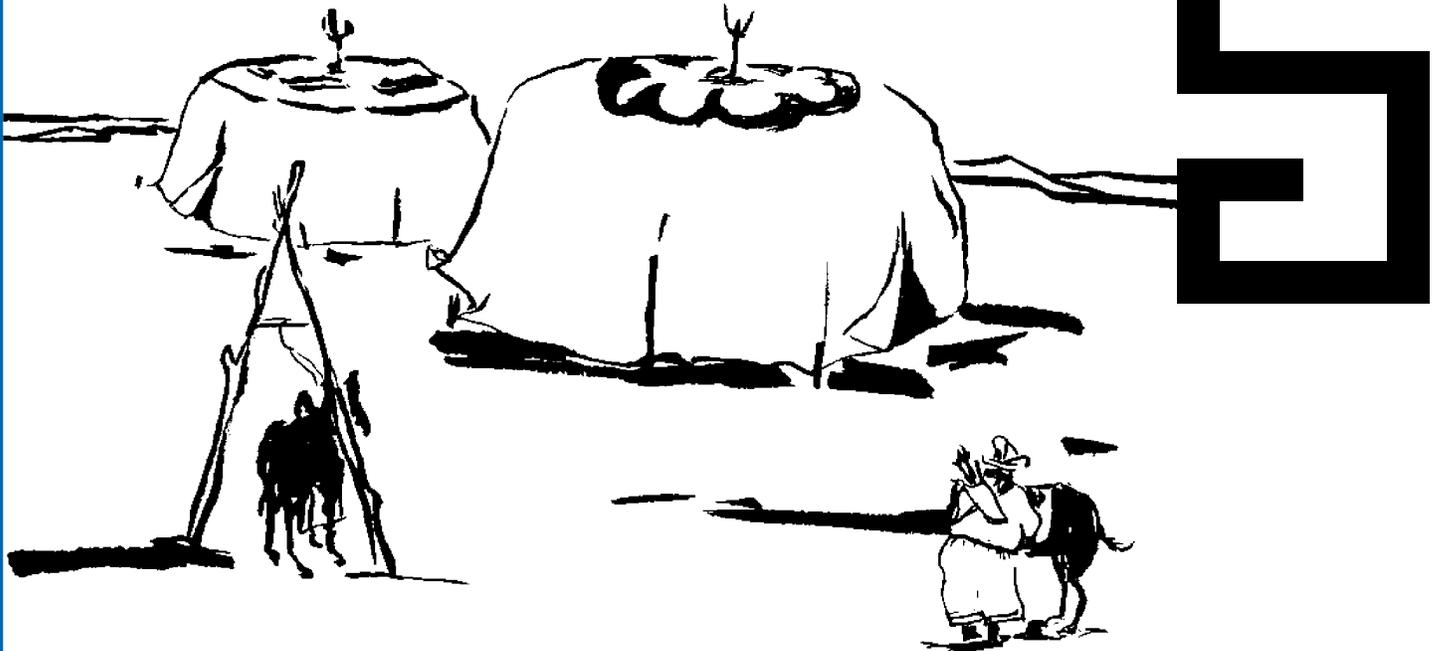
**4** Now here's the tricky part—making the roof. This was also the trickiest part when making a real yurt. Take out eight more toothpicks to form the roof frame. Each toothpick will need to be angled in towards the center of the yurt but also up. One-by-one, attach toothpicks to the top marshmallow joints of the upper octagon frame, pointing inwards. Don't worry if they sag down a little bit—the next step will fix this.

## SUPPLIES

box of toothpicks  
bag of marshmallows  
pen or pencil  
compass  
cereal box  
scissors  
sewing needle  
ruler  
construction paper  
colored pencils,  
crayons, or markers  
wood glue



## ACTIVITY!



- 5** Using your compass, measure out a circle with a  $3\frac{1}{2}$ -inch diameter on your cereal box. If you don't have a compass, it's okay to draw a circle by hand.
- 6** Cut out the circle. Then draw another circle inside the one you've just cut out, with a diameter of 3 inches. Cut out the inner circle, so you're left with a ring. Use the sewing needle to poke eight holes in the ring, spaced out equally.
- 7** Take the ring and hold it up in the middle of the yurt's roof. This will be the main support for the roof and will serve as the smokehole (though you won't be burning any firewood inside yours!). If you've measured everything out correctly, you should be able to attach the roof toothpicks directly into the holes in the cardboard ring.
- 8** Here's your chance to personalize your yurt. A traditional yurt would be covered with the wool taken from its owner's flock of sheep. But unless you have your own flock of sheep, you'll probably have to use something like construction paper for the yurt covering! Measure the dimensions of one of the open-side faces of the yurt structure. Measure out a rectangle on your construction paper fitting those same dimensions. Cut the corners so that it will fit around the marshmallows.
- 9** Apply a thin layer of glue to the edges of the construction paper cutout. Attach it directly to the outer side toothpicks, so that it forms an outside wall. Repeat this step for all of the open faces. But be sure to leave one of the side faces open, otherwise you'll have no way to get inside!