

# THE LAVVU TENT



BY TOM "TOMAHAWK" MOORE

A while back, while working as an adjunct faculty at the Jack Mountain Bushcraft School (JMBS) ([www.jackmtn.com](http://www.jackmtn.com)) in Aroostook County, Maine, I purchased a cheap Odyssey brand tipi on eBay for \$150.00. I should have known better than to waste my money on it, but at the time I just figured what the heck. So, I shipped it up to Maine and started to set it up. After only a few minutes the first tear appeared. As it turned out, the grommet in the apex of this tent was completely ripped out. As a quick fix, I tied off the apex hole,

then stuck an old soup can on the end of the center pole and inserted it into the apex. Then, I tied the apex onto the pole and erected the tent. The cheap aluminum tent stakes provided were discarded and I made 12 wooden stakes from seasoned cedar. I staked it out and raised the apex. It was a similar set up to a Cree-style Ungava tent.



*The Odyssey tent that the author used to make a Lavvu Tent.*

Things went well until the first rain storm. After the rained ceased, I found the interior of the tent swimming in water with a large tear in the fabric, oh well! So much for buying cheap gear. Lesson learned. The tent fabric was light and fairly tough and very useful. It was the sewing on this tent that gave out NOT the fabric. So, I decided to make a tipi style tent (Lavvu) out of the fabric. These styles

of tents were used by the Laplander People of Finland, and by the Evenk People of Siberia.

I cut 12 poles from balsam fir and maple, and made 12 additional tent stakes, gathered several small round stones to use as points to tie my tent stakes to, gathered up some bailing twine and other cordage scraps, then I was set up to work. The first thing I did was to split the tipi straight up from one of the 2 doors. Next, I cut out the floor, then the apex. I left some of the nylon webbing attached to the apex intact to use as a means of securing the tipi fabric to the pole, so I could raise it in place. Then, I set up my tripod, raised it into place, laid some additional poles in the manner of setting up an American Indian Tipi, tied the fabric to the last pole and raised it into place at



*The tools used to make the Lavvu Tent.*



*The poles used for the Lavvu Tent.*



*The stone used to tie off the stakes.*

the back of my “Lavvu.”

The next step was to spread the fabric around the poles and secure it into place with some cordage scraps. I placed my small stones on the fabric from the inside of the tipi, gave them a twist and tied them into place. Starting at the doorway of my tipi, I secured the stakes in place by pounding them in using the back end of my Gerber hatchet. The only tools I used were my trusty Swiss Army knife and a Gerber hatchet.

Next, I gathered up all of my gear and moved in. I set up my army cot and wood burning stove, cut



*The wood stove that the author used inside the tent.*



*Time to move in!*

some fire wood, and I was in business. It's usually cold and rainy in the Maine North Woods, it was nice to be able to get a fire going in the stove to take the chill out of the air and brew some Chaga tea.

See you on the trail! *Tomahawk*

---

*Colonel Thomas D. “Tomahawk” Moore served 16 years as a pathfinder in the U.S. Army, and is a survival expert, author, adventurer, and was a co-host on the Discovery Channel Show titled “Dude, You’re Screwed”. You can find his books (including Wilderness Craft) for sale at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).*

