

YOU WILL NEED

- 1.5 metres of lightweight interfacing (to draft your pattern)
- 5.5 metres of 140cm fabric
- 5 x 16mm P/C (powder/coated) rod 150cm in white or ivory
- Large spool of thread to match fabric
- Iron
- Sewing machine
- Drill
- Sticky tape
- Sewing needle
- Ribbon to tie your tee-pee to the poles, and to close the front flaps (if required)

DIFFICULTY ● ● ●

STAGE 1 -

Drafting your pattern (5 pieces needed)

Fold your interfacing in half lengthways so there is a 45cm section that is doubled over. Pin lightly in place. Mark out a vertical line 44cm high. Measure sideways from this line a distance of 130cm and mark out another line that is 6cm high. Join these two lines, and cut carefully through both layers of interfacing to make your first pattern piece (Main teepee panel – you will need to cut 4 of these in your fabric, being careful that they all point the same way).

Open out your interfacing again, and in the remainder mark out a narrower shape. Mark one vertical line 51cm high, measure sideways from this line a distance of 130cm and mark out another line that is 10cm high. Join these two lines, and cut carefully to make your second pattern piece (Teepee front flaps – you will need to cut 2 of these in your fabric, being careful that they mirror each other).

Cut all pieces carefully and write on the centre of each one how many are needed from the fabric and their purpose.

STAGE 2

Cut out your fabric pieces, being careful to ensure that if your fabric has a directional print, that all parts of the teepee body are pointing the same way. We cut out the 4 largest ones first (one at a time) – keeping to the right side of the fabric, and ensuring the grain was straight. The front flap pieces were then able to be cut from the left side of the fabric. Remember that these front flaps need to mirror each other – so turn the pattern over to cut the second piece.

STAGE 3 - Sewing the teepee

Our teepee is created using sleeves that hold the poles firmly in place. These are created with a variation of the French seam, so don't worry that there seem to be raw edges showing in the first step – they will be hidden by the end.

Step 1 – preparation

Zig zag all edges of the teepee body.

Take one of your front flaps, and a main body piece. Keeping the narrow edges of all pieces together, pin the wrong sides together, and stitch a 1.5cm seam along the angled edge. Take your next piece and join in the same way. Keep going until all body pieces are joined with the seams pointing outwards to the right side of the fabric and finishing with the mirrored front flap.

At this point a good ironing will make your job easier. Iron along each seam to flatten it out, and when finished, iron and pin a narrow hem along the top and the bottom edges.

Use a decorative stitch – or zig-zag if you prefer, sew all hems in place.

Step 2 – joining the front

Take your teepee back to the ironing board and turn inside-out. Pin the front flaps together and join 3cm in from the edge from the top down for 30cm. Sew this seam, and hem the remaining open length of the flaps.

Step 3 – sewing the pole sleeves

You must be precise about these seams as they need to be the right size to hold the poles snugly, but not so small that the poles can't go in without a struggle. Because fabrics come in different thicknesses, you will need to experiment on a scrap piece of fabric to find out how wide to make this sleeve.

To do this – do a seam the same size as your others with your scrap fabric. Wrap the fabric around the pole and mark where it meets. Fold it flat and measure how wide the sleeve should be when it is folded.

When you have this measurement, mark this distance to the right of the needle on your sewing machine table, and record that with a length of sticky tape as a marker. Use this line as a guide when sewing and your seams will be the right width (eg – a seam that is marked at 3cm will give you a 6cm sleeve).

With the teepee inside-out, fold each panel flat, iron the seam, and pin down the length approx 3cm from the edge. The raw edges should be well and truly hidden in these seams. Using the guide marked on your sewing machine table, sew a seam (approx. 3cm from the edge) for each adjoining panel making sure to reinforce the beginning and end of each seam to protect them from wear. When all 5 sleeves are completed, turn the teepee right side out.

Step 4 – making the fastenings

Sew a length of ribbon to the top end of each sleeve, and to the front of the teepee where you would like to be able to close the teepee.

Drill a hole right through approx 5cm from the top of each curtain rod.

STAGE 4 - assembling the teepee

With the teepee right side out (so sleeves are to the inside), insert each pole, being careful not to damage the fabric as you go. You may find it easiest to do this on the floor as it takes a bit of fiddling once a few poles are in place.

Thread the ribbon at the top of each sleeve through the drilled hole in the curtain rod and tie into a double bow.

Stand the teepee up, and start to fan out the base. You will need to adjust the poles at the top to get it standing correctly. Enjoy.