

Qammait

Houses built from sod, rocks, and whale bone or driftwood with hide roofs were first constructed in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut almost 3000 years ago.



Photo 1: Partially Reconstructed Qammaq Near Resolute, NU – www.arctic-photo.com

Many Qammait were partially underground, with the floor up to half a metre lower than ground level. Thule Qammait featured entrance passages; floors “paved” with flat stones, and raised sleeping platforms made from flat stones. A section in the entrance passage lower than the floor inside the qammaq helped to trap cold air and keep the interior warm. Heat and light were provided by a stone lamp (qulliq).

In some areas of Nunavut, Qammait were still in use as recently as the 1960’s near good fishing areas. In earlier times, these houses would have been occupied continuously and served as a “home base” for extended hunting and other trips.

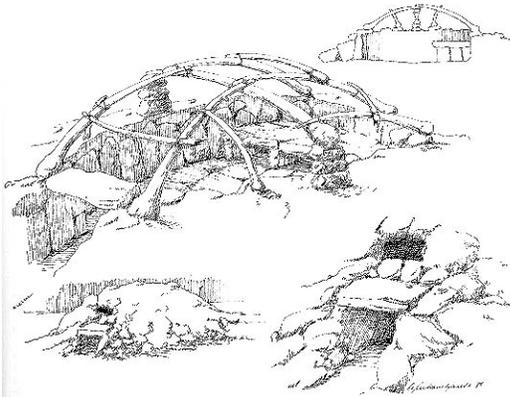


Figure 1: Qammait Structural Features

Qammait were used by the Dorset people and their successors, the Thule. Modern Inuit are considered to be direct descendents of the Thule.

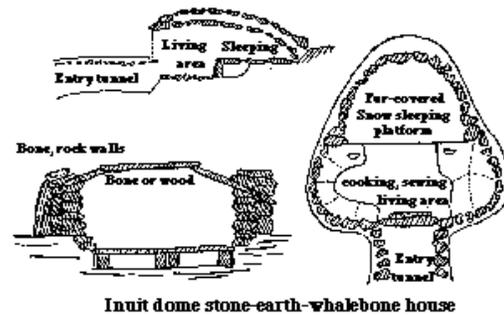


Figure 2: Qammaq Floor Plan and Cross Section - www.kstrom.net

Vocabulary Key

English	One	Two	Many
Hide Roofed House	qammaq	qammaaq	qammait
Person	Inuk	Inuuk	Inuit
Stone Lamp	qulliq	qulliiq	qullit

Igluvigait

The word iglu (or igloo) in English is used to describe a dome-shaped dwelling constructed from snow. In Inuktitut, the word iglu simply means “house, building, or any safe, protected space (such as a cave or overhanging rocks)”.



Photo 2: Iglu at Arctic Winter Games - Iqaluit, 2002

Igluvigait were first built by the Dorset Inuit over 2500 years ago. They are still used today as temporary shelters during winter hunting and camping trips.



Photo 3: Iglu Construction

To build an iglu, vertical blocks of snow are cut with a snow knife (pana). The blocks are placed in a circle around the builder. The first row of blocks is shaved to create a slope. Additional blocks are placed on top of the first row in a spiral.

Blocks are cut from one half of the interior only. The remaining snow forms a sleeping platform at the back of the iglu. A ventilation hole is carved near the top of the dome to provide fresh air. Igluvigait intended for longer occupation may include a sheltered entrance tunnel and a window of clear ice or seal gut.

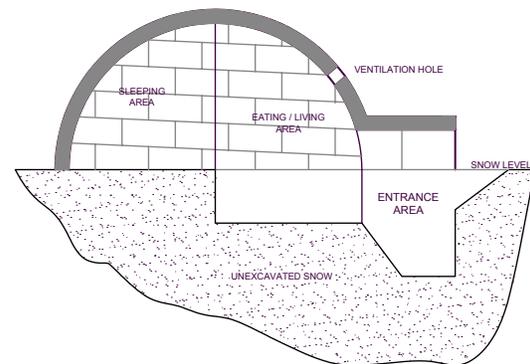


Figure 3: Iglu Cross-Section

A qulliq (seal oil lamp) provides heat and light for the iglu. With the qulliq and body heat, the temperature inside an iglu is maintained at 0- 5°C.

Vocabulary Key

English	One	Two	Many
House	iglu	igluvigaak	igluvigait
Snow Knife	pana	panaa	panait
Ice	siku	-	-

Make a Qulliq



Materials:

- ✿ Heavy Duty Aluminium Foil
- ✿ Cotton Balls
- ✿ Peanut or Vegetable Oil
- ✿ Soup Bowl
- ✿ Matches

How To:

1) Make the Qulliq

- ✿ Cut two squares of aluminium foil and stack them together.
- ✿ Fold the foil squares in half diagonally to form a triangle with four layers of foil.
- ✿ Turn the soup bowl upside down and place the foil triangle on top. The folded edge of the foil should be in the centre of the bowl.
- ✿ Press the edges of the foil down around the sides of the bowl.
- ✿ Fold the three corners of the foil back and squeeze them to form “legs” for the qulliq as shown in the photo. Add additional foil to the legs for stiffness if required.
- ✿ Turn the qulliq right side up (remove the bowl) and adjust the shape so it stands well on its legs.

2) Make the Wicks

- ✿ Unroll a cotton ball and separate the cotton into 10-12 pieces.

- ✿ Roll each piece of cotton between your fingers to form a wick.
 - ✿ Arrange the wicks along one edge of the qulliq.
- 3) **Add the Fuel**
- ✿ Pour a small amount of oil into the basin of the qulliq.
 - ✿ Adjust the wicks so one end of each wick is in the oil.
- 4) **Light the Qulliq**
- ✿ **** Before lighting, make sure the qulliq is not near any flammable materials. Keep a fire extinguisher or baking soda close by. Do not leave unattended! ****
 - ✿ Carefully light the wicks of your qulliq. Try toasting a marshmallow over the flames with a fondue fork or skewer!



Photo 4: Qulliq Lighting at 2002 Arctic Winter Games, Iqaluit – www.north.cbc.ca

Lighting and tending a qulliq is very important to Inuit. In traditional culture, a girl could not be married until she was able to maintain her own qulliq. Today, qulliq lighting ceremonies often mark the start of important events. Qulliqs are always lit and maintained by women.



Build a Model Igloo



Materials:

- ❖ 1-2 cups Miniature Marshmallows
- ❖ White icing
- ❖ Paper or cardboard for base
- ❖ Knife
- ❖ Pencil
- ❖ Compass or glass (for circle shape)
- ❖ Coconut (optional)

How To:

- ❖ Trace a 3" diameter circle on the paper base to act as an outline for the igloo. Mark a 1-1 ½" opening for the door.
- ❖ Cut 3 marshmallows lengthwise into two pieces each– one piece should be about 1/3 of the marshmallow and the other 2/3.
- ❖ Cut 3 marshmallows in half lengthwise.
- ❖ Arrange the marshmallows along the outline on the base. Start with the 1/3 pieces, followed by the ½ pieces, and the 2/3 pieces. Finish the circle with whole marshmallows placed sideways, then vertically. The circle should slope upward from start to finish.

- ❖ Add additional layers of marshmallows to the igloo. Use icing between the marshmallows to hold them in place.
- ❖ Don't forget to add the door!
- ❖ Sprinkle coconut on the igloo for a "fresh fallen snow" look.

Igloo and Qulliq Relay

Materials:

- ❖ Soup bowls (1 per team)
- ❖ Paper cut-out "flames" (1 per girl)
- ❖ Eight or more players
- ❖ Space to run

How To:

- ❖ Have participants line up in teams, relay-style at one end of the playing area.
- ❖ Give each player a flame.
- ❖ Place one bowl for each team at the opposite end of the playing area.
- ❖ At the "Go" signal (in Inuktitut say atii (ah-tee) – "Let's Go"), the player at the **back** of each team crawls to the front through the legs of the other players on her team, then runs to place her flame in the bowl (qulliq).
- ❖ When the first player has returned to stand at the front of her team's line, the next player (from the back) repeats the action.
- ❖ The first team to place all of their flames in the qulliq wins!