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***It's raining, it's pouring... someone tore the awning...***

Be it unwelcome wet weather, or rustling gusts and gales with relentless gusto – hold on to your hats for this week's episode of the Snowys Camping Show as Ben and Lauren detail the shelter options most ideal for winter.

From airtent technology and gazebo goals, to heavy-duty tarp and gumwood poles – it's time to huddle in as our outdoor experts cover off (literally) the better measures for wet-weather leisure.

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## **Mentioned in this Episode:**

### **Podcasts:**

[Ep4 – Packing Your Vehicle Like a Minimalist](#)  
[Ep7 – Gear You Don't Need for Camping](#)  
[Ep8 – Unexpected Wind & Rain with Camping](#)  
[Ep16 – Tent Waterhead Ratings with Zempire](#)  
[Ep38 – Awnings, Shelters, and Shades for Summer](#)  
[Ep40 – All About Air Tents with Zempire](#)  
[Ep58 – How to Camp Cosy](#)

### **Products:**

[Tents](#)  
[Tarps and Matting](#)  
[OZtrail Ultrarig Heavy Duty Poly Tarp](#)  
[Coleman Instant Up 6P Lighted Northstar Darkroom Tent](#)  
[Oztent RV-4 Canvas Touring Tent](#)  
[BlackWolf Turbo 300 Tent](#)  
[OZtrail Fast Frame Lumos Integrated Lighting 10-Person Tent](#)  
[Coleman Instant Up 4P Gold Evo Tent](#)

[Tent awnings](#)

[BlackWolf Turbo Plus 300 Tent](#)

[Gazebos](#)

[OZtrail Deluxe 3.0 Gazebo with Hydro Flow](#)

[Coleman Event 14 Sun Shelter + Sunwall](#)

[Zempire air shelters](#)

[Pegs](#)

[Guy ropes](#)

[Coleman Event 14 Deluxe Sun Shelter + Sunwall](#)

[23Zero Rear Tub Racks](#)

[Oztent Alloy Pole](#)

[Oztent Alloy Telescopic Spreader Pole](#)

[OZtrail Camper Fly](#)

[OZtrail Hiker Fly](#)

[Supa Peg Big Foot Aluminium Tent Poles](#)

[4WD awnings](#)

## Increasing Camping Space in Rainy Weather

While rain, hail, and wind have the potential to disrupt travel plans completely, a single day of heavy rain forecasted during a multi-day trip shouldn't warrant cancelled plans. In previous episodes, Ben and Lauren have covered [summer shelters](#), [waterhead ratings](#) with the Zempire team, [unexpected wind and rain](#) when camping, [how to keep cosy](#) outdoors in the cooler months.

In this episode, Ben and Lauren discuss potential shelter options from the view of knowing that rain is coming, and preparing specifically for it. Given the extent to which camper trailers and caravans provide shelter alone, this content is mainly directed to the [tent](#) campers who seek more cover beyond their vestibule!

## Planning Your Trip

Those with [smaller tents](#) are recommended to choose an area with an existing shelter, as well as bring an additional [tarp](#) for a DIY covering if and where necessary. This can be achieved by using the supporting poles of the shelter, and assists in blocking out excess rain from entering through open sides of the area.

That said, ensure your group isn't occupying the entire public space. Some campsite shelters will include tables and numerous barbeques or cooking facilities, enabling multiple groups of campers. Given this, be open to sharing your additional [tarp](#) shelter with others using the same space and experiencing the same benefits. Sharing a camp shelter can be good fun in encouraging our nomad neighbours to mingle and bond.

## Existing Tent Extensions and Awnings

Many tents include awnings for shade, which tend not to be suitable for heavy rain – unless they're pitched in a way that allows rain to run off and away. An example is the [Coleman](#)

Instant Up tents. If privy to heavy rain, water can pool – so it's wise not to rely on such tents in rainy conditions, and keep appropriate variations of set-up in mind.

The Oztent RV tent model includes extensions to fix to the sides, while the BlackWolf Turbo tents include extender awnings to allow for space at the front. The latter tend to offer more structure, including poles to create peaks for water to run down and off as opposed to pool. The awnings included with OZtrail Lumos and Coleman Instant Up tents are also used as vestibules and door flaps. If the weather is awful, we're likely to want to zip the flap closed entirely, and it isn't always practical to use it as an awning too. On the other hand, the BlackWolf Turbo tents include awnings separate to the sealed, waterproof doorway, as well as additional walls and flooring.

For those who wish to buy a tent for all-year-round use, it's wise to consider whether the awning will cater for substantial rainfall and how willing you'll be to disassemble it each night. While it may be possible to position the poles lower to allow for water to run off, this will reduce the headspace under the awning.

Ultimately, tents with a vestibule door or awning flap should be used for light rain and sun protection. In heavy rain, it's suggested to zip the flap closed entirely and integrate an additional sturdy, waterproof shelter into your set-up for cooking within.

## Gazebos and Air Shelters

While gazebos may be the obvious solution, Ben and Lauren referenced them in a previous episode, 'Gear You Don't Need for Camping'. That said, responses to the content indicated that Snowys listeners love their gazebos, which is applaudable given its heaviness, awkward size, and clumsy set-up process!

A gazebo may provide relief from rain – though it's wise to note that some aren't entirely *waterproof*. Lauren reminds us that not every brand of gazebo tests their canopies for waterproofing, despite constructing with waterproof or water-resistant fabrics. Testing for waterproofing means a brand can confidently provide a guarantee that their product is secure from rain and wet weather.

That said, as a gazebo isn't an enclosed space, it's possible there may be a hesitance from some brands to provide a waterproof guarantee. Despite the option of additional walls, the structure remains unsealed. This means that any potential claims against water making its way in can't necessarily be proven as that over a genuine product failure. While much of this involves common sense, there remains a grey area – and for that reason, it seems easier for manufacturers to simply avoid providing a waterproof claim altogether.

While the expectation is that a gazebo will protect campers from rain or sun (because what else?), Ben and Lauren recommend checking the waterhead rating. Concertina-style gazebos have a heavy, mostly metal construction, and if not pegged sufficiently can bend and subsequently prove difficult to pack away. Designed as a dome to shed water away more efficiently, the Coleman Event 14 gazebo serves as more of a beach shelter with both the fly and wall boasting a waterhead rating of 450 millimetres.

Better still are Zempire's range of air shelters – cleverly designed to resist wind, securely anchored by guy ropes, and featuring an exceptional waterhead rating. In a previous episode, Ben and Lauren detail airtents and the technology involved in their construction. Following this, they received feedback from listeners regarding their shelters that have folded in the

wind. While our gear gurus maintain that airtents are the most reliable option to tolerate winds, they remind us that – like most products – they’re not 100% foolproof.

To avoid an air shelter collapsing in the wind, a clever solution is to deflate as the wind begins to pick up (keeping it secured to the ground with guy ropes) and inflate again after the foul weather passes. This option takes into account common sense. While usually stable in the rain, a large structure with vast walls like the Zempire airtents are likely to catch the wind. Nonetheless, the Coleman Event 14 and Zempire air shelters provide roughly three-and-a-half to four square metres of space – perfect for outdoor family living. As well as waterhead ratings, simply be mindful of overall weight and size when considering a gazebo or air shelter, as some pack up to be a similar size and structure to a standard sleeping tent.

## Tarp Shelters

Like many old school gizmos and gadgets – tarp shelters are simple, rugged, and reliable. While a tarp shelter exists, sometimes attempting to find one instore is harder than simply making one from scratch... using a tarp! With no hard-and-fast method to do so, tarps are available as lightweight, heavy-duty, or custom-shaped to best repel water. Simply ensure the fabric is waterproof, establish eyelet points to fit the supporting poles, pack the pegs, and gather the guy ropes.

*When creating a tarp shelter from scratch, ensure the fabric is waterproof, establish eyelet points to fit the supporting poles, pack the pegs, and gather the guy ropes!*

With multiple variations of tarp shelter designs, there are many styles of tarp available too. Lauren uses a heavy-duty canvas material – heavy when folded into a square pancake-like shape, and tucked away in the back of her van. Given the weight of the canvas – designed for trucks, and purchased from a transport organisation – Lauren made the poles herself out of gumwood, and describes her handmade shelter as ‘bomb-proof’!

Having travelled with her on many family holidays in the past, Lauren’s tarp shelter comfortably fits five adults and roughly ten children when assembled, covering a massive 8 metres by 6 metres of space! On one occasion, perched on top of a cliff amid wild gusts and flailing gales, Lauren simply dropped the sides of the shelter and pegged them directly into the ground – proving its impressive strength and versatility.

Ben queries how its pack size and weight compare to the aforementioned Coleman Event 14 gazebo and Zempire air shelters. Bundling one long and four short wooden poles on the roof rack, galvanised steel brackets for the A-frame (each smaller than a basketball), guy ropes, shorter awning poles for the edge of the shelter, and the canvas tarp – Lauren’s tarp shelter comes to a relatively substantial weight. That said, she has designed it to offer a more ‘deluxe’ sheltering and packs it all year round for protection from both sun and rain.

The same design and structure can be applied to a lightweight tarp shelter option, beneficial for those who like to minimise weight throughout their camp tackle. Ben describes replacing the gumwood poles with six made of alloy, a poly tarp, and a spreader bar to help both create an obvious peak for more space and promote water run-off. The more poles, the better – for headspace and overall stability.

Another option is the OZtrail camper or hiker fly – lightweight, sturdy during rainy conditions, and pack small – coupled with aluminium awning poles and a spreader bar for forming a



peak.

All shelter options considered, the versatility of tarp shelters allows for easy, efficient adaptation of set-ups in a matter of minutes from a sudden change in weather – in Ben and Lauren’s humble opinion, proving them unbeatable. The benefits of owning a tarp extend further than just sheltering from wet weather, providing additional means for both a ground cover and windbreak too.

For a family of two to four people especially, a set-up with a peaked awning plus a four-metre by four-metre tarp provides ample space. With so many options and room to move – literally – the only reservation of a tarp shelter is ensuring there are enough hands at the campsite to help assemble it.

## Awnings

While awnings are an option for adding shelter to wet weather set-ups, Ben and Lauren are more inclined to cover alternatives useful for those who don’t have roof rack systems or large 4WD drives featuring awning systems. Plus, the ever-present gap between the awning and the vehicle itself means that rain can trickle through on that side of the awning.

For these reasons, Ben has removed the awning from his 4WD – and hasn’t missed it!

## Thanks for listening, tune in again for next week’s episode!

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If you have any questions for Ben and Lauren, make sure you head over to our Facebook group and let us know as we’d love to hear from you.

Catch you out there!