

Episode Overview:

As we translate this podcast episode into written form, the frustrating yet all-too-familiar jagged red line scribbles itself across the pages, underscoring the same word: ‘swent’. Grammarly suggests alternatives like ‘sweet’, ‘sent’, and ‘went’, only twisting the knife further into the somewhat sensitive discussion that surrounds whether the combination of a swag and a tent has an official name.

In the most *in-tents* episode of the Snowys Camping Show to date, Lauren and Ben bivvy down on some of the vague distinctions between tent-like swags and swag-like tents. Is there such a product as a ‘swent’, or is that canvas sack with poles just pretending to be something it’s not?

Listen to the full episode here:

Or watch the video version here:

Short Cuts:

00:00 – Intro
 02:15 – ‘Swents’
 03:03 – Swags Defined
 06:24 – Tents Defined
 09:04 – ‘Swents’...Defined?
 15:34 – The Grey Area
 25:52 – Mattresses in Swags

Mentioned in this Episode:

Blogs:

[Best Camping Swags for 2022](#)

Snowys Pages:

[Swags](#)

[Tents](#)

[Sleeping Mats](#)

Products:

[Darche ‘dome’ swag](#)

[Freestanding tent](#)

[Large tent](#)

[One-person hiking tent](#)

[Coleman Instant Swagger 3P Tent](#)

[Coleman Instant-Up tent](#)

[OZtrail Stretcher Tent](#)

[Oztent RS-1 Series swag](#)
[OZtrail Biker Expedition Swag](#)
[Darche Nebula 1550](#)
[Darche Safari 260 Touring Tent](#)
[10-centimetre sleeping mat](#)
[Thin hiking mat](#)
[Sea to Summit Ultralight Sleeping Mats](#)

‘Swent’

The Urban Dictionary is an online resource that houses definitions for slang, made-up terms, or simply words that didn’t quite make it into the Oxford. Examples include ‘premad’ (becoming angry before having a reason to do so), ‘no fry zone’ (the hazardous area beyond a drive-thru restaurant’s exit point where drivers typically delve into their fries instead of pay attention to the road), and ‘swent’. According to the Urban Dictionary, a ‘swent’ is a hybrid temporary dwelling – the cross between a tent and a swag. The item is typically utilised for short-term camping trips that last a night or two.

Swags Defined

In Lauren’s mind, swags are essentially an all-in-one bedroom and shelter. They allow for campers to roll them out, curl them back up, and carry them to and from campsites in a convenient, compact manner.

Envelope-style swags simply include a top material flap, possibly an apex, maybe a screen of mosquito mesh, and a mattress. On the other hand, Darche introduced the ‘dome’ swag as an initial step towards a tent-like design, with the intended feel of swag but the structural features of a tent.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition of a swag describes a portable sleeping unit, or a bundle of belongings rolled in a traditional fashion and carried by a foot traveller in the Australian bush. Before modes of transport, foot travel along extensive distances was essential for agricultural purposes. A swag could also be referred to as a ‘backpack bed’ or ‘bed-roll’, carried by shearers, miners, and the unemployed. Such groups were labelled as ‘swagmen’.

Tents Defined

Loosley, a tent can be described as a single or dual-skin fabric held in place by some sort of structure or frame. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a tent as a shelter consisting of sheets of fabric or material draped over or attached to a frame of poles with supporting ropes. A tent doesn’t necessarily include a base or floor as much as it does the shelter-like component, and will often also include a fly sheet over the top for wet weather protection too.

Usually larger than swags, tents aren’t solely for sleeping or resting – they also offer a place for a family or groups to gather for social activities. Smaller tents can be freestanding and pegged to the ground, while larger models are typically anchored with guy ropes tied to

stakes or tent pegs. Where some tents can fit up to 18 people, others can expand to larger than a small house! Smaller, one-person hiking tents are also on the market – though some styles are constructed with canvas, which is where categorising a product as either a swag or a tent can often signpost to a grey area instead.

Lauren firmly states that a tent – unlike a swag – isn’t necessarily an all-in-one structure. Its design lacks the bedding features that swags typically include, instead enabling a sheltered space for other activities. First used as transient homes by nomads, tents are now commonly used for recreational camping or temporary shelters.

‘Swents’ ...Defined?

In Lauren’s opinion, ‘swents’ don’t exist!

So...is it possible to define a word that describes an inanimate object?

To elaborate, Lauren’s thoughts are that everything falls into either a swag or tent category. The debate stems from a recent Snowys blog article, Best Camping Swags for 2022. Ben clarifies that this article was based on sales data, within which Snowys identified and selected the ten most sold swags. For this reason, the results reflected in the article were purely community-driven.

With the Coleman Instant Swagger Tent at number one, Lauren was livid! While she highly recommends the product and owns two herself, the reason behind her rage is that it was deemed a swag – and a highly ranked swag at that. Lauren maintains that the Swagger Tent is – as the name suggests – a tent, and even fails to align with compromising titles like ‘swag alternative’. The only feature that differentiates the Swagger Tent from the Coleman Traveller 3-Person Tent, or a small Instant-Up tent design, is the use of the term ‘swag alternative’ throughout Coleman’s marketing. That aside, there are very few to no differences – and to Lauren, there isn’t a single brand of ‘swent’ that can’t be placed in one category or the other.

Ben agrees that the Swagger Tent, by definition, isn’t a swag. To him, a swag is simply a canvas envelope with an integrated sleeping mat, without additional poles or structural components alike. While he can settle on this, he doesn’t believe it falls entirely into the tent department either.

Ultimately, Ben likes the idea of challenging the norm. If it wasn’t the Instant Swagger Tent, Coleman could have introduced yet another three- or four-person tent and watched it become lost among the others – like white noise, or more kindling on the campfire.

The Instant Swagger Tent offers an alternative to a swag for campers who seek a smaller, swag-sized shell. If Snowys decided not to include it in the article, customers seeking this solution wouldn’t have the option to explore it. In Ben’s mind, a ‘swent’ is for someone who requires a product more heavy-duty than a small, two-person tent in which to integrate a sleeping mat, without the bulk or style-simplicity of a swag.

Still, Lauren’s question remains: when does a ‘swent’ end and a swag begin?



The Coleman Instant Swagger Tent was ranked #1 in Snowys Best Camping Swags for 2022. Credit: Coleman

The Grey Area

At this point, Ben and Lauren have unpacked their respective opinions on ‘swents’. With Lauren’s message received loud and clear, Ben decides to dig a little deeper.

Oztent’s DS-1 and DS-2 model swags are fitted with features from vestibules to storage crannies, as well as the standard inclusion of a foam mattress. While Ben suggests that their dual-skin construction and fly nudges them tentatively into the tent department, Lauren maintains that these should still be deemed swags given they fit the criteria of bedding and shelter rolled into one. On that, and speaking from experience, she confirms that the Swagger Tent cannot physically be packed away with a mat or bedding inside due to its structural design and shape differing from that of a standard swag.

Ben stands his ground like a tent stake, rebutting that many shelters that Lauren would call swags have dual-skin set-ups and vestibules – surely presenting a grey area. To him, if a camper seeks a heavier-duty alternative to a one-person tent without choosing a swag, the ‘swent’ is a clear-cut solution.

Still, Lauren sees only black and white: just stick with a one-person tent! After reiterating her opinion on the difference between a swag and a tent, she agrees that the [OZtrail Stretcher Tent](#) is a hybrid given it cannot be packed with a mattress or bedding left inside. Similarly, if the [Oztent RS-1 Series swag](#) fails to pack down adequately with the mattress inside, Lauren wouldn’t label this a swag either. On the other hand, while the [Oztent Ultralight Single swag](#) lacks an included mattress it still allows secure and compact packing with a separately purchased mat left inside. Ultimately, Lauren decides that if there’s no mattress, it’s not a bed – or, by extension, a swag.

All considered, Lauren accepts that there is indeed a middle-ground category that ticks the boxes describing a fusion of a swag and a tent – but a ‘swent’ isn’t it. The [Darche Nebula 1550](#) is a swag, given it offers both bedding and shelter. However, purchasing a small tent that lacks space to keep bedding packed inside has campers transporting multiple items of equipment instead: a tent, a mattress, and a swag. This negates the convenience of utilising swags solely as they are. Often, the packing space of a ‘swent’ that consequently requires separately-stowed bedding is likely the same as many standard tents – just with a little less canvas-caused bulk.

On that, Lauren recommends the [Darche Safari 260 Touring Tent](#) to those who deem space important in their sleep set-ups, as it provides enough space for standing up and storing adequate bedding.

Ultimately – Ben and Lauren conclude that while their opinions somewhat clash, there is nonetheless a grey area between the traditional definition of a swag and that of a tent.

Mattresses in Swags

Some suppliers are beginning to eradicate mattresses as a standard inclusion with swags. Ben and Lauren tend to agree that if a manufacturer decides to incorporate a mat, they should be of a quality more sufficient than simply a layer of foam. Some swag brands also stock self-inflating mats, which Lauren claims should be paired with the appropriate, respective swags from the beginning.

Darche offer a BYO model, where campers can purchase a canvas skin to encase their

mattress depending on how compactly they wish to roll it. For example, a 10-centimetre mattress will roll tightly with a little muscle, while a thinner hiking mat packs away easier still. Lauren reminds us that products falling in the ‘swent’ category would include a foam mat specific to the footprint of that particular model. As self-inflating mats generally don’t fit the shell’s shape, this intricacy can make it difficult to upgrade.

In summary, Ben agrees with most of what Lauren claims – though maintains that this particular discourse isn’t as black and white as she thinks. If it isn’t a necessity to fit all bedding in one tight, compact package, a tent is an appropriate substitute, potentially paired with an Ultralight Sleeping Mat by Sea to Summit.

As for Lauren’s conclusion? By all means, call it a grey area – just don’t call it a ‘swent’!

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

Thanks for tuning in to this week’s episode of the Snowys Camping Show Podcast. Don’t forget to subscribe to us on YouTube, Spotify, iTunes, Amazon Music, iHeartRadio, Pocket Casts, Podcast Addict, or Stitcher so you never miss an upload.

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!