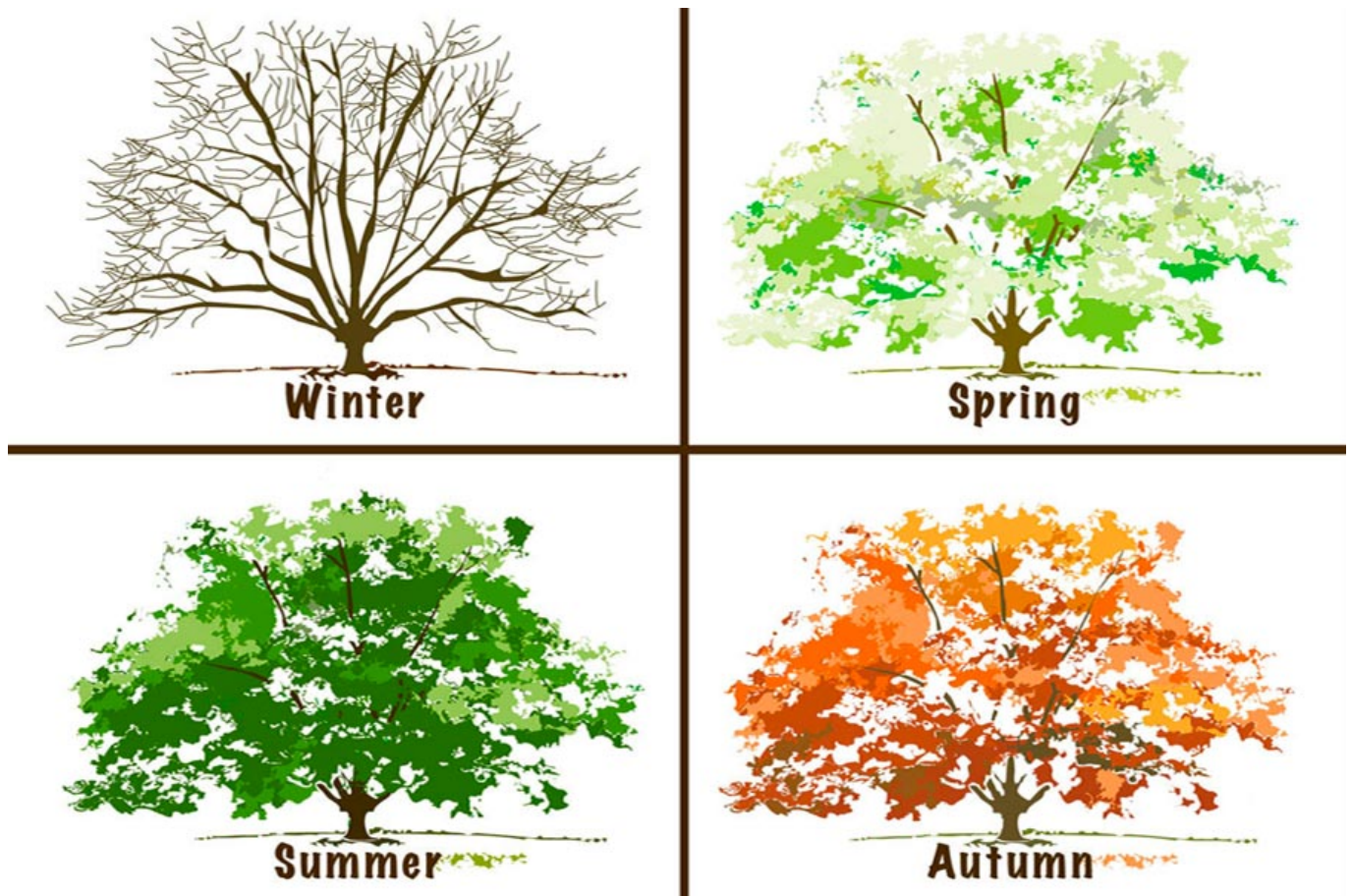




Unfortunately, there is no “black and white” answer to tent classification. When it comes to season ratings and tent types there is a lot of crossover, and it can become a little confusing when choosing a tent for the first time.

Use this guide to narrow your choice before you get bogged down in small details like number of rooms, awnings, accessories and fabrics.

**First, let's talk about the seasons!**



Tents have a season rating, these ratings are not stamped on the tent according to standards or guidelines, they are just a guide.

This is how [Wikipedia](#) explains it, and I think they are pretty spot on. They did miss a two-season description which is suitable for spring/autumn use.

*“A one-season tent is generally for summer use only, and may only be capable of coping with light showers.*

*A three-season tent is for spring/summer/autumn and should be capable of withstanding fairly heavy rain, or very light snow.*

*A four-season tent should be suitable for winter camping in all but the most extreme conditions.*

*An expedition tent (for mountain conditions) should be strong enough to cope with heavy snow, strong winds, as well as heavy rain.”*

*Source: Wikipedia, 2015*

For the most part, a 3 season tent is suitable for a majority of campers, and family tents are in almost all cases a 3 season tent.



## Dome Tents

Aptly named on account of their simplistic dome-like appearance, dome tents usually feature two poles that cross diagonally from tent corner to tent corner.

There are variations with extra poles to create storage vestibules and to increase interior space. Some even have 'quick pitch' or 'instant pitch' frames. But at the end of the day, they are identified by their characteristic dome shape.

## Quick Pitch Touring Tents

With the daily set-up and pack-down routine of touring holidays, comes the need for tents that pitch and pack away easily and quickly.

Touring tents generally feature an all-in-one design that incorporates an inner attached to a frame that snaps, clicks, locks or extends easily into place, leaving you with just a few pegs and guy ropes to deal with.

There are many types of tents in this category, utilising both heavy duty canvas and light weight materials. They are usually more 'boxy' in appearance than dome tents. But their main point of identification is their 'quick pitch' all-in-one construction.

## Family Tents

The biggest selling category for Snowys, and whilst some touring tents can also be labelled family tents, these are generally quite affordable and feature room dividers, large vestibules and often extendable awnings to create a comfortable living space for family holidays.

Pole structures vary from a large dome style configurations to various designs normally utilising flexible fibreglass poles.

## Cabin Tents

Big and heavy yet spacious and sturdy, cabin tents are usually made of heavy-duty materials, feature strong steel frames, and have, as its name suggests, a cabin-like appearance with multiple rooms and living spaces.

Cabin tents are most suited to long stays in caravan parks and family-friendly campsites. They offer roomy and comfortable living areas, almost like a mini house.

## Hiking Tents and Bivvies

Weight and pack size are important here, a hiking tent needs to fit into a rucksack, bike pannier or kayak and weigh in at around 2kg or less. They usually offer enough space for 1-2 people plus a little bit of gear.



This category is where season ratings are most relevant. This is because they're used as a primary source of shelter in areas of weather extremes.

A bivvy bag is an ultra-lightweight one person shelter, often carried for emergency protection. They are simply a waterproof sack that one user can crawl into to stay dry when caught out in unexpected weather changes.

Often used for mountaineering where climbers sleep on exposed ledges too small for tents.

## Swags and Stretcher Tents

The humble swag, an image of which has represented camping and the outdoors for hundreds of years, is one of the most popular ways to 'rough it' in the bush.

Made with canvas, a simple mattress, all rolled up with your bedding inside and secured with a couple of straps, the swag is a no-fuss approach to camping.

Nowadays there are dome swags with features such as poles, multiple entrances, insect mesh and storage pockets. However the traditional envelope swag is still preferred for those who like to keep it simple.

Recently, some smart cookies came up with the idea of combining a swag with a stretcher and created the stretcher tent.

In a nutshell, these are swags with a metal, folding pole structure that gets you up off the ground. These are popular for campers who want to add a little extra comfort to their swag setup.



## So what should you take from this guide?

There is no right or wrong when it comes to tent choice, only what's right for your circumstances.

Common sense prevails in some instances. You won't want to take a cabin tent on an expedition to Patagonia for instance. But at the end of the day, your tent choice comes down to how, when and where you will be using your shelter, and what is going to achieve your desired outcomes.

***Still got questions? Contact us at Snowys on 1300 914 007 or ask us a question in the comments section below.***