



Cee's Tee Pee

A simple play tent, not too big to use inside, easy to set up and pack away, and straightforward to make. The overall footprint fits within a 1.4m diameter circle- large enough to fit 2 or 3 toddlers, or a toddler plus one medium sized adult.

Materials:

- 3.4m of 1.4m wide fabric- a medium weight canvas (not too heavy or stiff).
- Large scraps of fabric for bindings and front closures, such as quilting fabrics or printed medium weight cotton.
- Strips of fabric, trims or ribbons around 3cm wide, for the zig zags and trim along the top of the door.
- about 6 cm of 15 to 20mm wide Velcro
- Scraps of iron on interfacing.
- Six 1.8m long broomsticks 25mm diameter (you can substitute plastic tubes or bamboo poles, but may need to adjust the casing width)
- Six 25mm diameter rubber chair leg stoppers, or same size to match your broomsticks (optional)
- About 1m of cord to tie the broomsticks together.

Tools:

- Sewing Machine
- Drill
- Pencil, long ruler and grid paper or set square for drawing up the pattern.

Tips:

I pre-washed all the fabrics so that I can wash the tee pee if ever needed, without fear of shrinkage or dye running.

To draw up the pattern, I drew up one of the side pieces directly on the canvas. I cut this piece out and used it as a pattern to cut another 4 side pieces, and as a basis for the front pieces.

Aside from the top binding, the other bindings and trims have raw edges, which will fray a bit, but simplifies the construction and gives the tee pee a less precious feel.

How to....

Prepare the bindings:

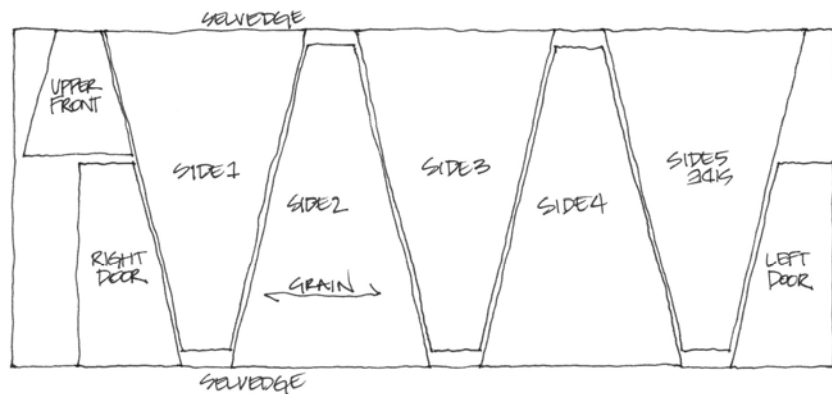
From the fabric scraps, cut a pile of strips 7cm wide and sew together to create a 7cm wide strip about 8m long. Press the seams open. This will be used for the facings on the front opening edges, and bindings on the top and bottom edges. If you don't want to bind the bottom edge, you can reduce the quantity of binding strip to about 3m

Prepare the closures:

For the closure tabs on the front door cut three pieces 12cmx6cm wide from the fabric scraps and the interfacing.

Apply the interfacing, then fold in half and sew 1cm seams along the two side edges to form a pocket. Turn right side out and press.

Cut the Velcro into three pieces and sew the loop sections onto the tabs, positioning them away from the open end (the hook sections will get sewn onto the door).



Prepare the main pieces:

Cut the following pieces from the canvas fabric, as shown on the pattern diagram and cutting diagram (above).

- Five x side
- Two x front door
- One x upper front

Mark the zig zag placement onto the side pieces (I just used a pencil as this gets covered over and won't be seen).

Pin the 3cm wide fabric strips or trims along the zig zag lines and topstitch. Don't to be too precise - it's a play tent after all!

Make the front:

Pin the three closure tabs 25cm apart on left door (as shown on the pattern diagram) with the open end on the fabric edge, and the Velcro side against the right side of the door.

Cut two lengths of the binding 84cm long for the door facings. With right sides together, pin and stitch a 1.5cm seam along the opening edges of both door pieces. Fold and press the facings to the wrong side of the doors along the seam line and top stitch. Fold and press under 1cm along the other side of the facings and top stitch in place along the fold edge.

Align the two doors next to each other with the opening edges abutting. Mark and sew the Velcro hook pieces onto the right door facing to match the left door closures.

With the *wrong* sides together, pin the top edges of the doors to the lower edge of the upper front, and sew a 1.5cm seam (It's a good idea at this point to check that the overall size of the front matches the main side pieces).

Press the seam allowances towards the upper front. Pin a 3cm fabric strip or trim over the seam with the bottom edge along the seam stitching. Topstitch in place close to the top and bottom edges.

The front is now complete.



Assemble the canvas:

With the wrong sides together, pin and stitch a 1cm seam along the side seams, joining all the sides and the front together into a big six sided pyramid with a hole at the top. Overlock or zigzag the edges.

With the remaining binding, fold and press lengthwise to form a long folded strip. Sandwich the folded strip over the bottom edge of the tepee and top stitch through all the layers, folding the ends in at the front opening edges to give a neat finish.

On the top opening edge, form a double fold binding by pinning the raw edges of the binding strip to the right side of the opening edge. Sew a 1cm seam, press the binding up and fold it over to the wrong side. Top stitch close to the seam line through all the layers to catch the binding in place. Don't worry about it looking perfect!

With the right sides together, make the pole casings by stitching a line 5cm from the side seams.

Tip 1: I placed a piece of masking tape on the sewing machine to mark the line. Tip 2: After you've stitched one casing, insert one of the poles to make sure that the size is OK. It should be snug but not impossible to thread through. Tip 3: Make sure you backstitch at the start and finish.



Erecting the tee pee:

Place the rubber stops on the bottom of the poles (if using). Insert all the poles into the casings. With a helper, stand the tee pee up and, while the helper holds the poles close to the top opening, spread them out at the base. Cheer because it looks great, and then grab a tape measure and work out how far from the top of the poles you want to drill the holes for the tie cord.

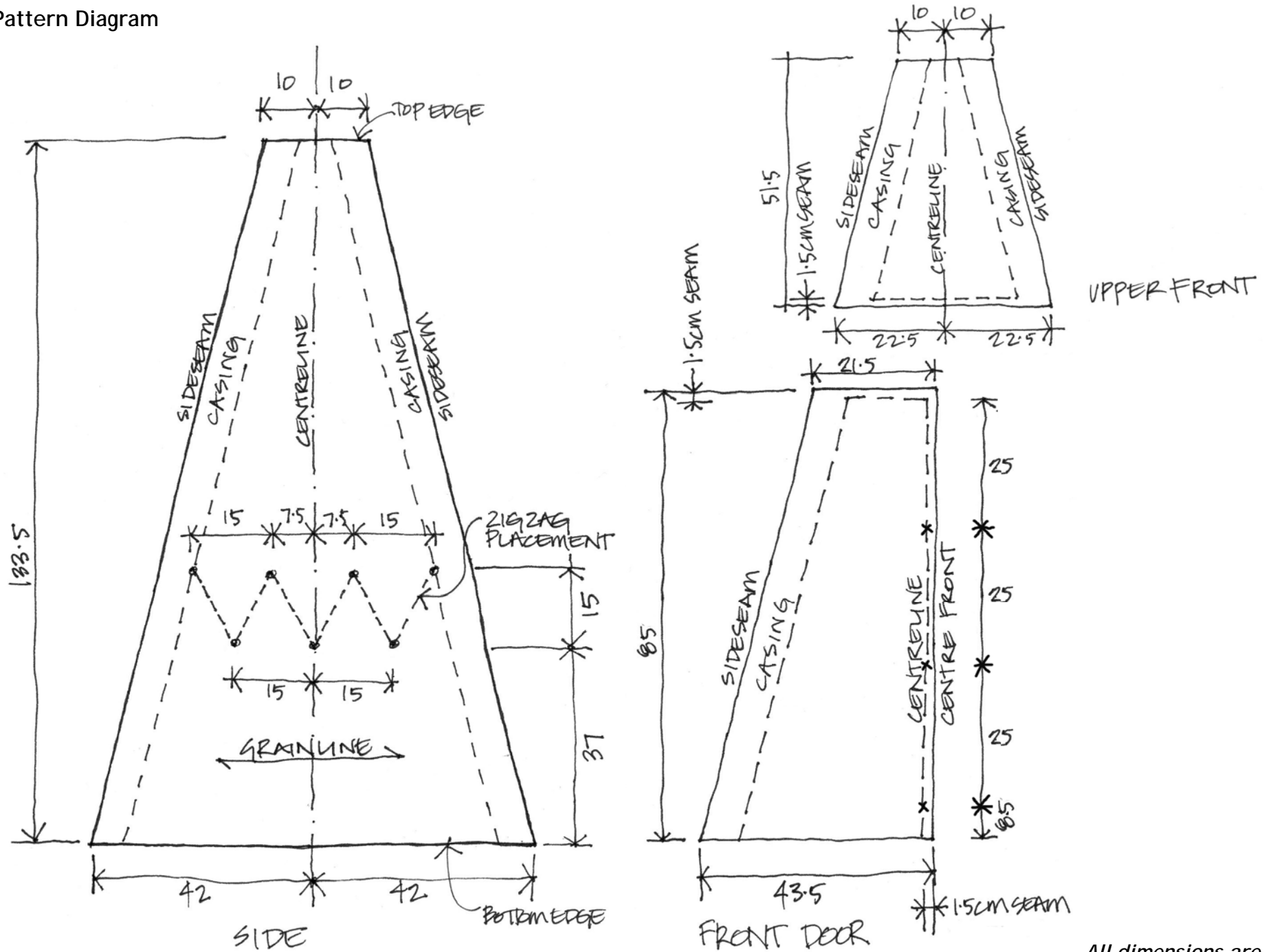
Taking appropriate safety precautions so you don't drill through something important, drill a suitably sized hole into each broomstick to thread your cord through. (I politely asked the man about the house to do this bit for me). You might need to use a bit of sandpaper or wood file to smooth up the edges of the holes and take off any splintery bits.

Then re-insert the broomsticks (if you took them out) and thread the cord through. Loosely tie, and then stand up your tee pee again. Once you have it standing, adjust the position of the tie on the cord and tie it securely with a double knot or bow. Cut off or knot the ends at a reasonable length. You can tie some decorative ribbon trims to this and let them dangle inside the tee pee if you want to.

Have fun playing!

A note on playing safely:

Note that you shouldn't leave toddlers and children unsupervised when playing with the tee pee. As the legs aren't fixed in position it is possible for them to be pushed in or moved during play, and potentially, for the tee pee pushed over. Keep an eye on things, especially if they get a little boisterous.



All dimensions are in cm!