

TEPEE DOGS

Using dogs to haul tepees was an impossibility.

The tepee, a large conical lodge made of heavy skins, came onto the Indian village scene after the arrival of the Spanish horse. Long poles attached to the sides of the horse formed the simple but effective travois, the ONLY suitable means for transporting the heavy tepee. However, dogs were used for carrying components of the wickiup, a much smaller dwelling used by many Indians.

Great Plains Indians were dependent on the buffalo for food, clothing and shelter (buffalo-skin tepees) before the arrival of the Spanish horse. A strong dog could drag as much as seventy-five (75) pounds on a travois, and a small tepee made of six (6) to eight (8) buffalo hides was the MAXIMUM load. With the arrival of the Spanish horse, able to haul three-hundred (300) pounds, the average size of a tepee grew larger, from twelve (12) to twenty (20) skins.

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