

Although igloos are often associated with all Inuit and Eskimo peoples, they were traditionally used only by the people of Canada's Central Arctic and Greenland's Thule area. The Inuit language word iglu (plural igluit) can be used for a house or home built of any material,[1] and is not restricted exclusively to snowhouses (called specifically iglujiaq, plural iglujiait), but includes traditional tents, sod houses, homes constructed of driftwood and modern buildings.[3][4] Several dialects throughout the Canadian Arctic (Siglitun, Inuinnaqtun, Natsilingmiutut, Kivalliq, North Baffin) use iglu for all buildings, including snowhouses, and it is the term used by the Government of Nunavut.[1][5][6] An exception to this is the dialect used in the Igloodik region. Using this shape, the stresses of snow as it ages and compresses are less likely to cause it to buckle because in an inverted paraboloid or catenoid the pressures are nearer to being exclusively compressive. Outside Inuit culture, however, igloo refers exclusively to shelters constructed from blocks of compacted snow, generally in the form of a dome. Iglu is used for other buildings, while iglujiaq,[7] (plural iglujiait, Inuktitut syllabics: ??????) is specifically used for a snowhouse. On rare occasions these are built and used during hunting trips, often on open sea ice.[9] *

Intermediate-sized igloos were for semi-permanent, family dwelling.