



Planning an Outdoor Event?

Everything You Need to Know About Tents, Yurts, and Temporary Structures



There's something undeniably magical about hosting an event outdoors — fresh air, wide-open views, and the freedom to create a completely bespoke experience. Whether you're planning a wedding, private party, or corporate gathering, outdoor settings across the UK offer stunning backdrops — from rolling hills and stately gardens to charming riverside venues.

But unpredictable British weather means some form of shelter is essential — and that's where tents, yurts, marquees, and other temporary structures come in. They not only offer protection from the elements but can also elevate the entire atmosphere of your event.

So, how do you choose the right structure for your day? And what should you consider when planning an outdoor celebration?

Read on for tips to help guide your decision. If you are planning a wedding, private party, or corporate event, contact our team at Riverside Marquee for further advice. We will be happy to discuss your needs - we offer a beautiful riverside setting that accommodates a variety of outdoor structures and with our carefully curated partners, we can help you design the perfect setting and event.

Get in touch today to explore the possibilities.

One of the greatest advantages of outdoor events is the flexibility to mix and match different structures to suit your vision. Whether you're hosting a wedding, private party, or corporate retreat, combining multiple setups—like a central marquee with adjoining yurts, stretch tents, or pagodas—can create a dynamic flow and cater to different functions throughout the day.

For example:

- A main marquee for dining and speeches
- A yurt or tipi as a chill-out lounge or cocktail bar
- A stretch tent for live music or dancing
- Smaller gazebos or pagodas for breakout areas, kids' zones, or wellness corners

This modular approach allows you to tailor the layout to your guest count, theme, and activities—while offering shelter, style, and seamless transitions between spaces.

1. Marquees: Timeless Versatility



A classic for good reason, marquees remain one of the most popular choices for outdoor events in the UK. They're incredibly versatile, customisable, and come in a wide range of sizes and styles — from traditional pole marquees to sleek, modern clearspan structures.

Best for:

- Weddings
- Corporate events
- Garden parties
- Riverside venues with level lawns

Benefits:

- Completely customisable interiors (lighting, flooring, furniture, florals)
- Can be lined and heated for comfort year-round
- Seamlessly blends with both countryside and riverside surroundings

2. Yurts: Unique and Atmospheric



If you're after something with more character and charm, yurts are a fantastic option. These circular, canvas-covered structures (inspired by Mongolian designs) bring warmth and intimacy, especially for smaller or more bohemian-style events.

Best for:

- Festival-style weddings
- Relaxed private celebrations
- Creative workshops or wellness events

Benefits:

- Cosy and atmospheric
- Often come with wooden flooring and beautiful exposed beams
- Perfect for chill-out areas, bar lounges, or intimate ceremonies

They work particularly well on riverside meadows or tucked into woodland clearings for that “secret hideaway” feel.

3. Sailcloth Tents: Coastal Meets Countryside



If you're looking for a high-impact visual feature, sailcloth tents are worth exploring. With their peaked roofs, natural fabric, and open sides, they feel effortlessly elegant while blending beautifully into natural surroundings — particularly near water.

Best for:

- Stylish outdoor weddings
- Luxury celebrations
- Day-to-night parties

Benefits:

- Light, airy, and photogenic
- Let in lots of natural light during the day
- Create a dramatic silhouette at sunset

Riverside venues benefit especially from this open design, allowing guests to enjoy uninterrupted views of the water and surrounding landscape.

4. Tipis: Rustic and Romantic



Tipis (or teepees) bring a distinctive blend of rustic elegance and relaxed fun to any outdoor event. With their iconic conical shape, timber poles, and natural canvas, they make an immediate visual statement—perfect for those looking to create a setting that feels both grounded and imaginative.

Inside, tipis offer a warm, intimate atmosphere that's easily enhanced with soft lighting, fire pits, and layered textiles. Whether you're planning a laid-back celebration or a more styled affair, they provide a flexible canvas for creativity.

Best for:

- Rustic or festival-themed weddings
- Alternative corporate retreats
- Evening chill-out spaces

Benefits:

- Can be joined together to accommodate different guest numbers
- Work beautifully in natural settings like riversides, fields, or woodland
- Often available with rustic wooden tables and firepits as part of the package

5. Stretch Tents: Modern and Flexible



Stretch tents are the new kids on the block — modern, sculptural, and endlessly adaptable. These structures use tensioned fabric and can be styled in all sorts of creative ways, making them perfect for modern or unconventional events.

Best for:

- Contemporary weddings
- Pop-up bars or food events
- Corporate launches and brand activations

Benefits:

- Can be set up on uneven ground or around existing features
- Open-plan feel with excellent airflow
- Visually striking and easy to theme

Stretch tents work well in riverside venues where the landscape might be slightly irregular or when you want to frame a view of the water.

6. Things to Consider When Planning an Outdoor Event in the UK

Before choosing your structure, keep these key factors in mind:

- Weather Preparedness

Always plan for wind, rain, and colder temperatures. Opt for structures that can be fully enclosed and consider flooring, heating, and generator access.

- Ground Conditions

Make sure your venue has suitable space — flat, accessible, and well-drained. Many riverside venues, like The Riverside Marquee, have designated lawn areas built with temporary structures in mind.

- Permissions & Logistics

Work with your venue and supplier to handle permits, noise limits, power supply, and toilet access. Some venues offer in-house coordination or partnerships with trusted suppliers.

- Guest Comfort

Don't forget things like lighting, walkways, signage, and seating. If guests will be outside into the evening, heaters and blankets are always a good idea!

Why Venues Like Riverside Marquee Work So Well for Outdoor Structures

Riverside Marquee in Bray offers 16 acres of private land situated directly on the banks of the River Thames in a peaceful spot in the Berkshire countryside. Locations like this are few and far between and offer a unique balance: the beauty of the outdoors combined with a peaceful, elegant atmosphere, including:

- Easy access to flat areas with ample space to combine indoor and outdoor spaces
- Scenic outdoor areas to create a variety of settings
- Beautiful river and countryside views to frame your event
- River access (for showstopping entrances or river based activity)
- Ample on-site free parking

Whether you're setting up a yurt for a relaxed drinks reception or a full marquee for a luxury wedding breakfast, riverside venues allow you to create an event that feels truly immersive — without compromising on comfort.

Final Thoughts

Outdoor events are full of charm, freedom, and creativity — and with the right temporary structure, you can enjoy the best of both worlds: the magic of nature and the peace of mind of being covered, come rain or shine.

From classic marquees and atmospheric yurts to show-stopping stretch tents, there's a solution for every style and season.