

# Inflatable structure

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***Bouncy castle** redirects here, for the cryptography software see **Bouncy castle (cryptography)**.*

**Inflatable structures** are large cold air inflatables that people (usually children) can enter and bounce around on. They have been marketed under a variety of names: **moonwalk** or **moon bounce** in the US, **bouncy castle** or **inflatable castle** in the UK and parts of Australia, and as **jumping castles** and **party castles** in Australia. They are often in the shape of a castle but can be made into a variety of designs. The walls and floor are both bouncy, like a trampoline.



A bouncy castle

The original inflatable structure was designed in 1959 by John Scurlock. He was experimenting with inflatable covers for tennis courts when he noticed his employees enjoyed jumping on the covers. He started the Space Walk company to market them for children and called them Space Walks. He started out with a large air mattress. In 1967-1968, he decided to add walls. The windows were made of solid clear plastic and were enclosed like a bubble- one fan inflated the base while another inflated the bubble and circulated air for the riders.



An inflatable shaped like an elephant

Inflatable structures were also designed by university students in England around 1961 for a fundraising event.

The surfaces are typically composed of thick, strong PVC or vinyl and nylon, and the castle is inflated using an electric or petrol-powered fan, known as a *blower*.

The term "moonwalk" has evolved as the generic term for enclosed inflatable trampolines in the US. Modern moonwalks in the US are typically supported by inflatable columns and enclosed with netting to allow air to pass through. The netting also allows for proper supervision as adults can see in from all sides.

UK and Australian bouncy castles have different specifications calling for fully inflated walls on 3 sides with an open front and foam "crash mats" to catch children who may jump or fall out of the structure.

Inflatables are most commonly rented for private functions, school and church festivals and village fetes. Although they are aimed at children, adult castles can be hired in the UK. Because of liability concerns moonwalks are rarely rented to adults in the US. They are often used to wrestle, bounce or rumble.

The growth in popularity of standard moonwalks has led to an entire inflatable amusement industry which includes inflatable slides, obstacle courses, games, and more. Inflatables are ideal for portable amusements because they are relatively easy to transport and store but make a big impact when fully inflated.

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