

Proposal for Emoji: HUT

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CLDR Short Name: HUT

CLDR Keywords: HOUSE | ROUNDHOUSE | RONDAVEL | YURT

Sort Location: in the Building category, after CASTLE

Reference Emoji: AMBULANCE



Credit: Aphelandra Messer/Emojination. Free for use in context of this proposal.

Abstract

This proposal requests the addition of the HUT emoji to the Unicode emoji library. Bungalow-style houses are currently the only symbol for homes or houses in the emoji library, but they are a Western architecture that is uncommon or even nonexistent in many parts of the world. Emojination advocates representing different cultures, including African and some Asian groups who are currently underrepresented. Adding a HUT emoji will increase representation for these cultures and, importantly, expand the ways users can express the idea of a home.

Introduction

Huts predate Western-style A-frame houses by many thousands of years, dating back to the Mesolithic era or even earlier.¹ In fact, in the British Isles, "roundhouses" were the standard housing unit all the way from the Bronze Age until Roman times. Today they are still being built as vacation homes and camping shelters.² Huts are even more common in modern-day Africa and some Asian countries: in 2013, 93% of the privately-owned homes in South Sudan were thatched-roof huts.³

¹ <http://blog.english-heritage.org.uk/ask-expert-cavemen-actually-live-caves/>

² [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roundhouse_\(dwelling\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roundhouse_(dwelling))

³ <http://sudantribune.com/spip.php?article46395>

The hut depicted in our proposed emoji can be found in Uganda, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Kenya, Indonesia, Bolivia, Spain, the UK and elsewhere, despite those countries having very different histories and natural resources.⁴⁵⁶ The hut is also visually similar to a yurt, the traditional dwelling of nomadic Central Asia and now a common sight in campgrounds around the world.⁷



A Celtic thatched-roof "roundhouse" in the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, UK. Photo [from Wikimedia Commons](#).

⁴ <https://www.compassionuk.org/blogs/25-different-types-of-houses-from-around-the-world/>

⁵ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palloza>

⁶ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roundhouse_\(dwelling\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roundhouse_(dwelling))

⁷ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yurt>



Traditional "honai" huts in Papua, Indonesia. Photo [from Compassion UK](#).



A "palloza" hut currently housing a bar and restaurant in Balboa, Spain. Photo [from Wikimedia Commons](#).



A yurt in the Gobi Gurvansaikhan National Park in Mongolia. Photo [from Wikimedia Commons](#).



Two "rondavel" huts in Mafeteng, Lesotho. Photo [from Wikimedia Commons](#).

The HUT is an important addition because Africa is under-represented in the current emoji library. In an opinion piece for Business Insider South Africa, Helena Wasserman ranked the hut at #3 for most-desired African emoji in the next iteration. "Even with the

157 new emoji [in 2018], we couldn't find many that specifically reflect life in Africa," she wrote.⁸

Absa, a banking group based in South Africa, started an "#AfricaEmoji hashtag in July 2018 that quickly turned into a way for African Twitter users to express their desire for more representation of Africa in general.⁹ "#AfricaEmoji is the start of a new narrative - the one told by us as Africans. It's a tiny symbol with massive clout – an emoji that lets us share our version of this continent with the rest of the world."

In 2017, an African-American entrepreneur launched Afrimoji, a third party app meant to bridge the gap left by the lack of African and Caribbean related emoji. The Afrimoji keyboard includes a "hut" similar to the one in our proposal.



Screenshots of the "hut" emoji as it appears on the [Afrimoji app](#).

Perhaps even more importantly, this hut emoji represents a home, albeit a home with different architecture than the ones in the current library. A home is an extremely deep and integral part of a culture and identity, and is often tied to deep feelings or emotions within a user.¹⁰ We believe that the emoji library should include more homes than just ones that recall mid-20th Century America.

Reference Emoji

We use "AMBULANCE" as the reference emoji below, under "Frequency."

⁸ <https://www.businessinsider.co.za/african-emoji-we-would-like-to-see-2018-9>

⁹ <https://tweetreach.com/reports/22387397>

¹⁰

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2011/12/the-psychology-of-home-why-where-you-live-means-so-much/249800/>

Selection Factors Inclusion

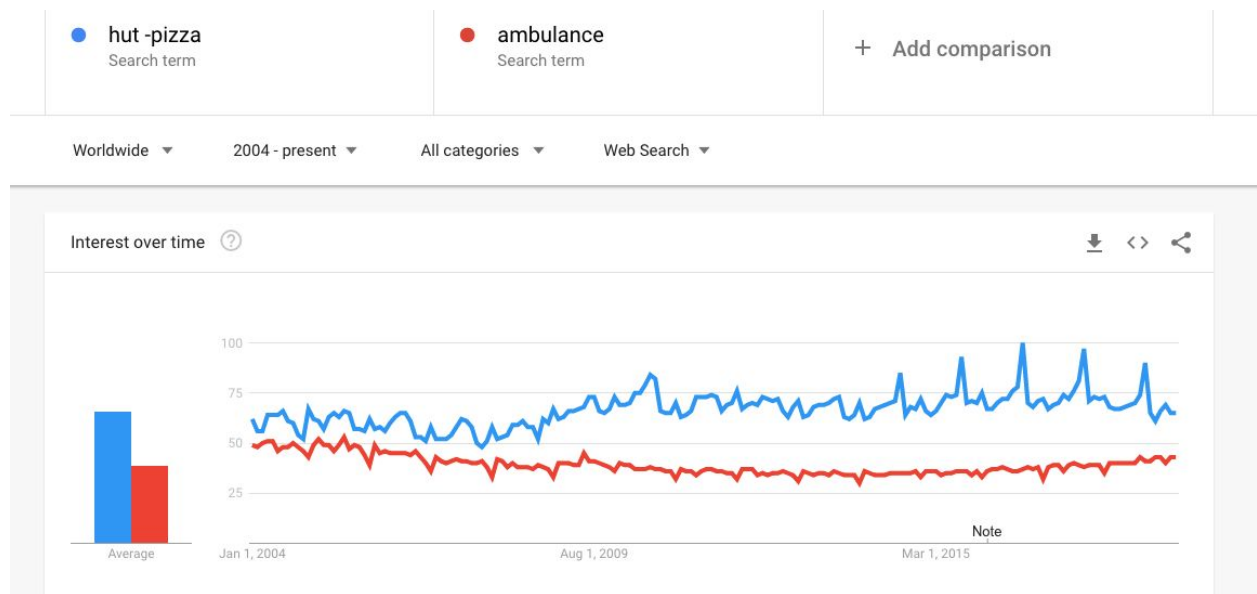
Compatibility

Expected Usage Level

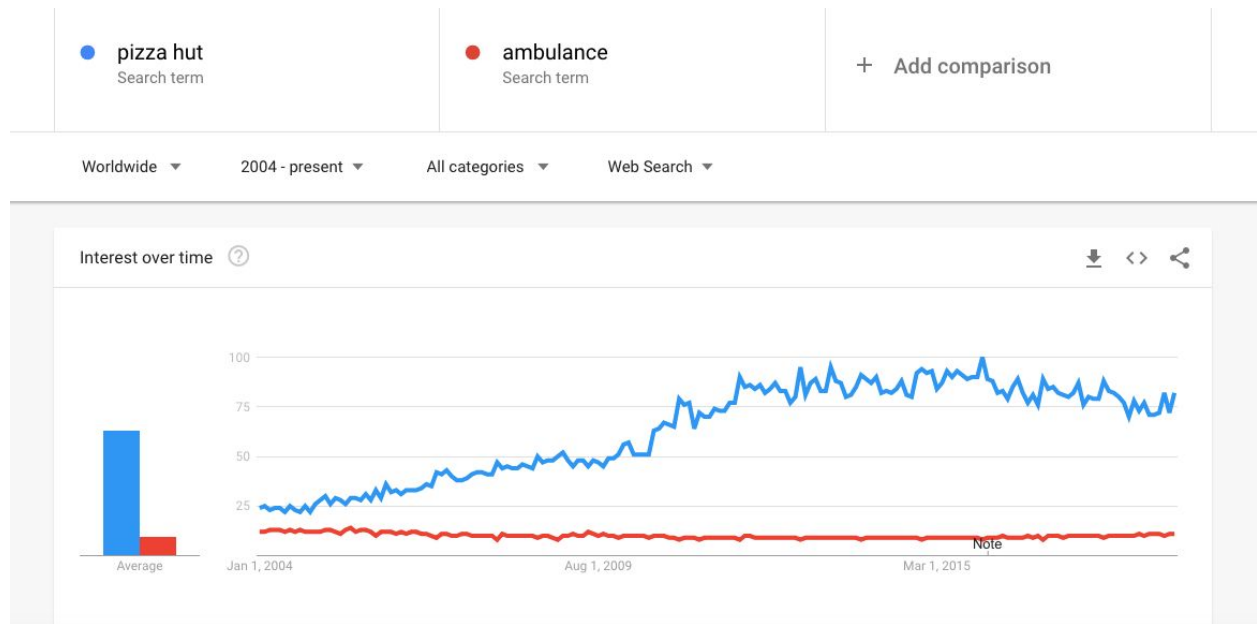
- Frequency

Google Trends: Web Search

Google Trends data indicates that searches for the word "hut" exceed searches for the word "ambulance," an emoji of median usage, worldwide since 2004. What's more, "hut" has only increased in popularity over the past several years, while "ambulance" has stayed the same.



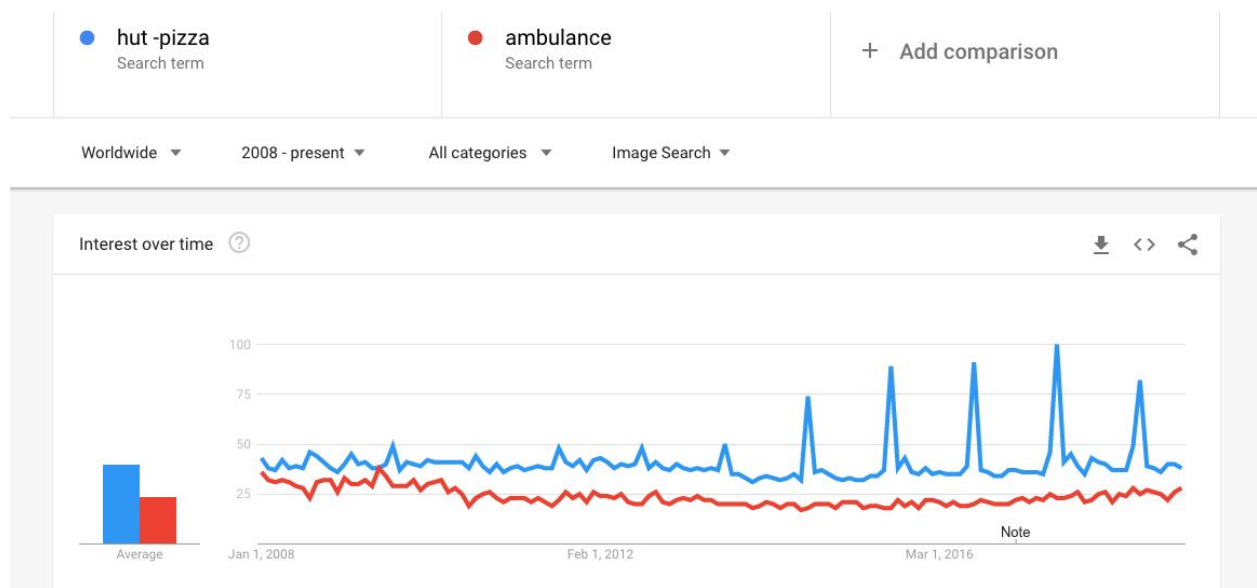
In the search above, the word "pizza" was omitted because many searches were for the restaurant Pizza Hut, as you can see here:



Even removing the word "pizza" from this comparison shows that "hut" is Googled far more often than "ambulance."

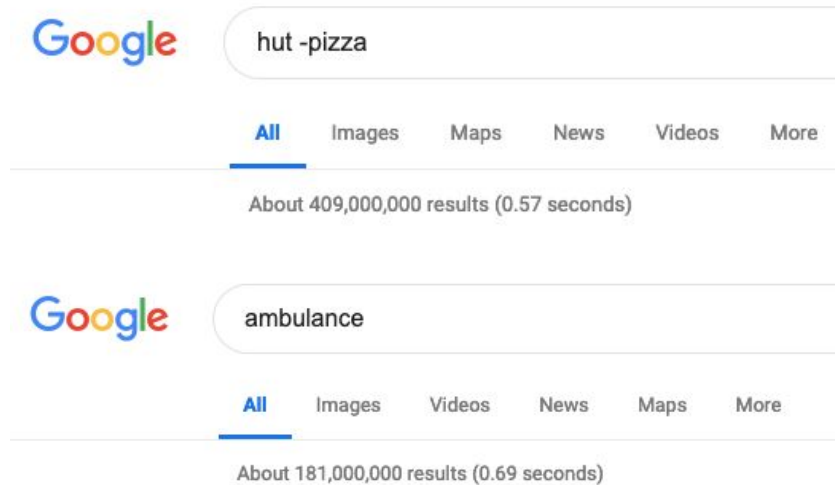
Google Trends: Image Search

The same is true for Google Images searches for "hut" and "ambulance", the median emoji, worldwide since 2008. Searches for "hut" images peak in August, most likely due to Indonesia's yearly independence celebration, which is abbreviated as "HUT RI."



Google Search

Google returns more than twice as many results for "hut" (omitting pizza) than it does for "ambulance."



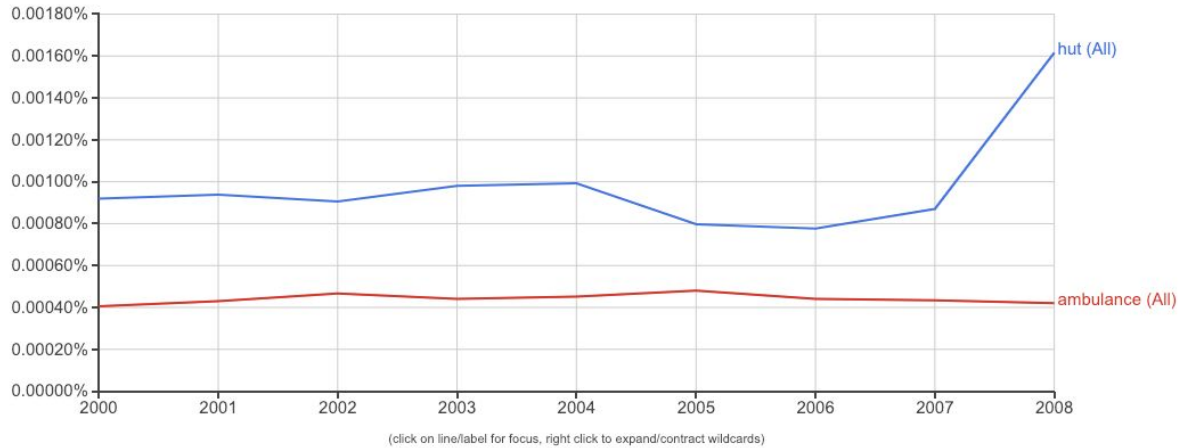
NGram Viewer

The Google Ngram Viewer shows that the term "hut" appeared far more often than "ambulance", the median emoji, in Google Books from 2000 to 2008. The data also shows a large spike in the use of the word "hut" in books indexed since 2006. There is no way to omit "pizza" from these results, although it is unlikely Pizza Hut was getting mentioned much in published books.

Google Books Ngram Viewer

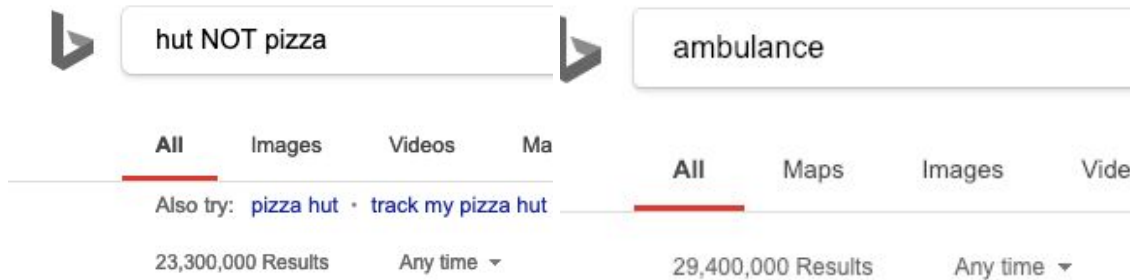
Graph these comma-separated phrases: ☒ case-insensitive

between and from the corpus with smoothing of [Search lots of books](#)



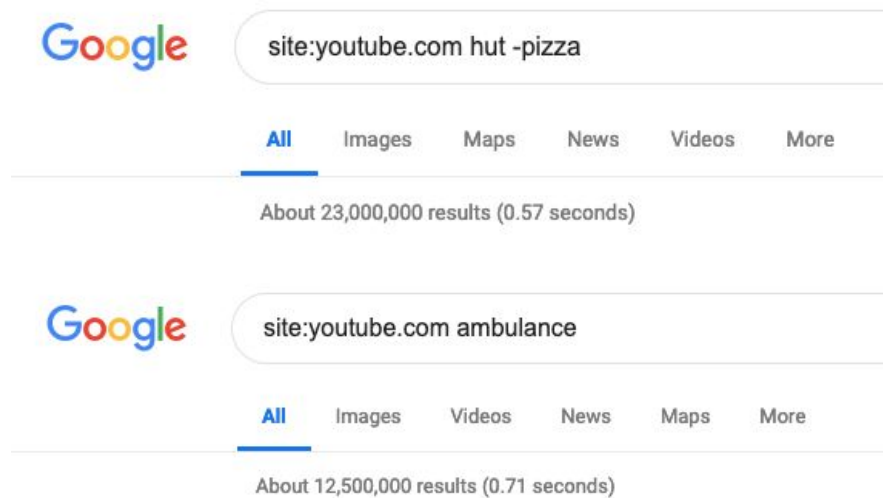
Bing Search

Bing returns 5 million fewer results for "hut" (omitting pizza) than it does for "ambulance", an emoji of median usage.



YouTube

On YouTube, almost twice as many videos use the word "hut" (and not the word "pizza") than the word "ambulance."



Other social media

Instagram and Pinterest also show that #hut is a more popular hashtag than #ambulance. "Yurt" and "roundhouse" also make for popular hashtags, though not as popular as "hut" or "ambulance." On Pinterest, posts tagged with #yurt actually exceed the ones tagged with #ambulance, probably due to the popularity of camping or glamping (glamorous camping).

Platform	Hashtag	Number of Posts	Source
Instagram	#hut	865,600	https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/hut/
Instagram	#ambulance	711,032	https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/ambulance/
Instagram	#yurt	289,966	https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/yurt/
Instagram	#roundhouse	195,745	https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/roundhouse/
Pinterest	#hut	22,700,000	https://www.google.com/search?q=site%3Apinterest.com+hut
Pinterest	#ambulance	6,870,000	https://www.google.com/search?&q=site%3Apinterest.com+%23ambulance
Pinterest	#yurt	10,900,000	https://www.google.com/search?q=site%3Apinterest.com+%23yurt
Pinterest	#roundhouse	1,500,000	https://www.google.com/search?q=site%3Apinterest.com+%23roundhouse

- Multiple Usages

Dozens of countries around the world utilize these huts as homes, gathering places and camping shelters. In addition, some stores use "hut" in their name, perhaps to suggest this idea of a gathering place. These include Pizza Hut, Sunglasses Hut and Phone Repair Hut.¹¹

- Use in sequences

The HUT in conjunction with other Africa-related emoji such as "zebra" (🦓) and "globe showing Europe and Africa" (🌐) might be used in messages pertaining to Africa, such as safaris.

"Pizza" (🍕) + "hut" could mean someone wants to go to Pizza Hut.

- Breaking New Ground

This emoji breaks new ground by introducing another form of dwelling to the place-building category, which for now is limited to Western-style A-frame houses and apartment buildings.

Image Distinctiveness

There is no other existing emoji that a user would confuse with the HUT, mainly because all the emoji in the place-building category come from Western backgrounds. While somewhat similar in shape to the CIRCUS TENT (🎪), the HUT is vastly different in color and detail, not to mention significance.

Completeness

N/A

Frequently Requested

The "hut" does not appear on any lists of most-requested emoji, but some social media users have expressed a desire one to use in various contexts.



Selection Factors Exclusion









Overly Specific

The hut emoji is not overly specific because it is used across so many cultures. A single graphic can represent the many variations.

Open Ended

The hut emoji is not open-ended because it encompasses many different styles of dwellings within one image - roundhouse, rondavel, yurt, maasai, palloza, honai, etc. There is also a limited number of the different kinds of dwellings humans have come up with over the years.

Already Representable

The HUT is definitely not represented, as all of the "house" emoji are Western-style bungalow or A-frame houses. These are "house" () , "house with garden" () , "houses" () , and "derelict house" () . No other emoji represent a home, unless you count the "tent" () . Non-Western-style architecture is represented in the "place" category, but it's almost exclusively religious in nature. These are the "shinto shrine" () , "kaaba" () , and "mosque" () . The only non-Western, non-religious building

emoji are the "Japanese castle" (🏯) and the "Tokyo tower" (🗼). While these do represent constructions from a non-Western culture, they are explicitly Japanese.

A "hut" emoji would increase representation for other cultures, especially African, in the structure or "home" category. It would give these cultures the opportunity to see themselves in a non-Western, non-religious setting.

Transient

Huts have been lived in for thousands of years, and are a popular form of domicile to this day. As such, they are unlikely to decline in popularity any time in the next hundred years.

Logos, brands, UI icons, signage, specific people, deities

Huts can be found in the names and logos of several companies, though a hut is not copyrighted or copyrightable. Many of these logos show a very stylized building consisting of a square base with a triangular top.



However, some of the more detailed ones depict a curved base and a thatched roof, similar to our proposed emoji.



"Hut" is also found in the names of some companies, like Sunglass Hut and Pizza Hut, whose current slogan is "No one out pizzas the Hut."¹²

Other Character Properties

The other character properties are suggested to be defined as follows.

General Category: So

Canonical Combining Class: 0

¹²

<https://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/ad-day-oddball-bragspeople-sing-pizza-huts-praises-first-ads-droga5-173657/>

Bidirectional Class: ON

Decomposition Type: Decomposition Mapping:

Numeric Type:

Numeric Value:

Bidirectional Mirrored: N Unicode 1 Name:

ISO Comment:

Simple Uppercase Mapping: Simple Lowercase Mapping: Simple Titlecase Mapping:

Bios

Samantha Sunne (samanthasunne@gmail.com) is an emoji enthusiast and freelance journalist who recently traveled to rural Africa, where she was honored to stay in a traditional Basotho hut.