

HOGMANAY WINTER SKILLS EXTRAVAGANZA (Grade 3*)

The unique challenges & unrivalled rewards of the winter mountains cannot be beaten. This is to see them at their finest. Why not make the most of the Christmas and New Year holiday by combining it with a truly rewarding learning experience?

Learn how to use an ice axe & crampons. Snow quickly evolves, recognise the dangers and know how to cross it safely and efficiently. Mountain weather is as varied as the snow & ice it creates: blizzards, blue skies, white-outs - be prepared for anything it may throw at you. We cover these and all the other essential skills so you can confidently venture into the winter mountain wonderland.

There's also the opportunity to climb Britain's 2nd (Ben Macdui) and 5th (Cairngorm) highest peaks along with attending the New Year Ceilidh as part of Boat of Garten's own Winter Festival.

Arrive: Fraoch Lodge on Sunday 28th December 2008 preferably between 5 & 7 pm so that you have time to settle in and meet the rest of the group.



Day 1: You'll cover suitable equipment, crampons & ice axes; avalanche assessment; step kicking & cutting and cramponing techniques.

Day 2: Equipment & practicalities of winter navigation. Micro navigation techniques, bearings and other necessary compass skills, contour interpretation, etc.

Day 3: Use of the axe to self-arrest a sliding fall in all the various body orientations. The construction of the technical skills and relevance of

emergency snow shelters.

Day 4: Planning a route over Cairngorm & then walk it using all the relevant navigation skills, ice axe breaking on steeper ground & self belay. Relocation skills.

Day 5: Consolidation of cramponing techniques, plan the big day - ascent of Ben Macdui incorporating tactical navigation techniques incl. boxing, attack points, aiming off, doglegging

Day 6: Ascent of Ben Macdui taking in views into the Lairig Ghru and Loch A'an, 2 of the most spectacular features of the Highlands. Advanced contour interpretation

Depart: Sunday 4th January 2009.

Price: £635 (6 days, 7 nights) fully inclusive of: all guiding or instruction, accommodation at Fraoch Lodge, full board, transport and transfers to Aviemore Station or Inverness airport*.

Mountain Innovations advises all clients to take out suitable insurance cover. For clients resident in the UK we can offer insurance cover against personal accident, cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Please phone 01479 831 331 for full details.

* Mountain Innovations Ltd will pick up from Inverness airport at approx. 5pm, unless otherwise arranged.

GRADING INFORMATION

The grading of each holiday is based on the average length of the day for that holiday. The time takes an accurate account of the distance and amount of ascent & descent. Additional time is also included for breaks. These calculations have then been tempered by walking the routes with any necessary adjustments having then been made to the grading. For the easier grade holidays (grades 1 & 2) the day length has been adjusted to give a slower pace more suited to the tempo of the holiday.

Grade 3: this is challenging walking. These holidays involve 6 - 7 hrs walking with the need to maintain a steady pace. They're suitable for fit hill walkers or anyone who takes regular (weekly) exercise. The routes may include steep ascents/descents over rough mountain terrain. The steeper gradients usually total up to



around 800m of ascent.

***This trip is graded on the hardest day rather than the average length of day. Days involving training & skills will not involve walking any great distance.**

It's important for your own and the rest of the group's enjoyment, that you choose the right holiday for your ability. If you are in any doubt to the suitability of a particular holiday please don't hesitate to give Andrew a ring on 01479 831 331 so we can better advise you.

Since time is often given over to photography and due to the vagaries of the mountain environment the average day length should only be regarded as an estimate.

ABOUT US

Established in 1998, we're an owner-run provider of guided walking holidays and mountain courses in the Highlands of Scotland. We believe 'the day' doesn't finish with the walk; we don't hand you over to someone else, you arrive back to 'Cake O'Clock' - a welcoming mug of tea and some of Rebecca's home baking.

Andrew's knowledge of the mountain environment is extensive. Having a background in geology and being interested in natural history and conservation from an early age, he's a mine of information. The fine food and relaxed atmosphere mean that access to some of the wildest places in Britain is a safe, fun and exhilarating experience.

We are always on hand to ensure your stay exceeds expectations and are very proud of all the great testimonials we receive. Come and enjoy an adventure with us.

YOUR HOSTS

Both Andrew and Rebecca have

travelled widely. Andrew's mountaineering experience of 15 years is complemented by a number of independent expeditions to such places as the Karakoram mountains of Pakistan, the Indian Himalaya, the Alps, Mount Kenya and the High Atlas of Morocco.

Rebecca has trekked extensively in New Zealand and Australia. She has worked in Taiwan and travelled throughout Asia. She brings her knowledge of global cuisines to the preparation of her highly regarded and creative menus.

FRAOCH LODGE - YOUR ACCOMMODATION



Our Highland base is Fraoch Lodge. The Lodge provides a very comfortable dining room with wood burning stove & a separate lounge with open fire.

Single guests generally share a twin room with a member of the same sex.

If you would prefer single occupancy of a room please enquire for availability (surcharge may apply).

Full details of Fraoch Lodge are available from our web site at www.scotmountain.co.uk

CATERING

Rebecca's meals have been described as 'blue-ribboned events'. Bread is baked daily and all dishes are home-prepared using as much of our organic, home-grown ingredients as possible. There are a variety of options for breakfast. Packed lunches are imaginative but practical. There are home made cakes on our return and the evening meal consists of 2 courses, with the option for seconds, followed by tea or coffee.

We operate a BYO policy for dinner.

RECOMMENDED KIT LIST

- Waterproof jacket (+ old one if you

have it for self-arrest) - a duvet jacket is no substitute.

- Waterproof trousers/salopettes
- Gaiters
- Winter boots* (preferably B2 or B3) which are compatible with crampon use
- Torch (preferably head torch style)
- Crampons*
- Ice axe* preferably approx 55cm
- Walking Poles (optional)
- Rucksack of adequate size (30 litres plus for a day sac)
- Fleece jacket/tops
- Hat & spare
- Warm Gloves & spare
- Warm trousers (not jeans and not made of cotton, preferably fleece or salopettes)
- Walking socks
- Sun block (optional)
- Ski goggles - double lens, anti fog (essential - sunglasses aren't adequate). For those who normally wear glasses you may want to consider contact lenses. Anticipate wearing contact lenses for 8hrs plus alternatively you might want to spray your glasses with de-mister.
- Water bottle/flask preferable (Hydration bladder hoses readily freeze - fill with warm drink & empty hose after each drink)
- Compass: Silva Expedition 4 preferred using degrees & not military mils, etc
- Map: O.S. 1:50000 preferred (Sheet 36: Grantown & the Cairngorms)
- Waterproof map case - Ortleib A5 document wallet preferred though this does tend to restrict use to 1:50000 scale. If you would like further advice please phone.
- Thermal underwear
- Towel
- Slippers/indoor shoes
- Outdoor shoes for bus, etc

* These items can be hired. Please call to check for hire rates.

Clients are advised to avoid wearing clothing made out of 100% cotton for mountaineering since cotton loses a lot of its thermal potential when wet. It is far more versatile to opt for a number of thin layers, as opposed to a couple of thick layers with regards to warm clothing.

If you have any doubts on the suitability of your kit please don't hesitate to contact us:

01479 831 331.

OUR RESPONSIBLE POLICY

On all our holidays we have a 'leave nothing, take only photographs' policy. Our guides are asked to explain and encourage this policy. For example, leaving an apple core or feeding a seagull on a mountain summit may seem innocuous but it detracts from the 'untouched wilderness' aspect and can have a detrimental knock-on effect on the indigenous wildlife. Our guides are there your safety & enjoyment & to informally share their knowledge of the mountain environment - from its geological beginnings through to contemporary land management and its associated politics.

We compost all biodegradable waste in 3 large compost heaps built from scrap wood and use this to fertilise the garden, especially our vegetable patch.

The lodge is mainly heated by a multi-fuel stove which is supplied by wood from the garden, deadfall in the local woods and cutoffs (a waste product) from the sawmill at Carrbridge.

We have been awarded a Silver Green Tourism Business Award.



TRAVEL TO THE HIGHLANDS

If you are intending to fly you can find all options on the Inverness airport web site at www.hial.co.uk Alternatively you could take the train to Aviemore. Direct services run from London with GNER & Scotrail (the sleeper).

