

INTRODUCTION TO WINTER SKILLS

To experience Scotland's mountains in full winter conditions is to see them at their finest. Winter walking provides you with unrivalled rewards and unique challenges. Snow in Scotland quickly evolves, you need to recognise its varying types and know how to cross snow/ice-covered slopes safely and efficiently.

Mountain weather is as varied as the snow it creates: blizzards, clear skies, white-outs - up to 80% of winter accidents stem from navigational errors. It is of paramount importance that your navigation skills are good if you want to safely venture into the winter hills and meet these challenges.



If you:

- have few or no winter navigational skills
- want to learn all the skills for safe movement across snow & ice covered terrain (e.g. crampon techniques, avalanche assessment etc)
- want to know how to arrest a sliding fall and the correct use of an ice axe
- want to be able to confidently and proficiently navigate in white-out conditions
- are interested in the construction and relevance of emergency snow shelters
- want to consolidate your skills (under expert guidance) to get the most out of future winter trips

- then this is the winter skills course for you.

This 5 day comprehensive course is designed to leave you fully proficient and confident both in the technical winter skills and as a winter mountain navigator.

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

The course consists of 5 practical days in the Cairngorms Mountains - universally recognised as providing Britain's most consistent winter conditions. Delivered in a fun and progressive manner, the course provides you with a clear understanding of all the necessary skills and techniques with plenty of time being given over to consolidating all the skills learnt.

Mountain Innovations have developed a clear and structured approach to allow you to steadily gain in proficiency and confidence. Through understanding the underlying principles you will be able to make appropriate choices of technique on the varying terrain. Towards the end of the week there will be the opportunity to do some shadowed leading on the 'test-piece' Cairngorm plateau.

COURSE CONTENT

Day 1: Suitable equipment: boots, ice axe, crampons - various types. Avalanche assessment incl.: snow pit analysis, weak layer recognition, triggers, precautions & emergency procedures, etc.
Boot and axe use w.r.t. step-kicking & cutting techniques, self belay and Self-arrest techniques

Day 2: Equipment for & practicalities of winter navigation. Micro-navigation (gauging distance through timing & pacing; Contour interpretation w.r.t. the 3 primary elements of mountain terrain: features, gradient, & slope aspect.

Day 3: Practise of self-belay and self-arrest techniques on steeper ground; Cramponing: the principles, various techniques and their appropriate application w.r.t the gradient; Winter Navigation techniques taking a route over Cairn Lochan & C'gorm incl. bearings, pacing, timing, etc.
Route planning & considerations incl. effect of mountain weather.

Day 4: Winter Mountain navigation across Cairn Lochan plateau to Ben Macdui; Winter application of tactical navigation techniques incl. boxing, attack points, aiming off, doglegging, etc.; ascertaining position and route by the 3 elements of mountain terrain

Day 5: Relevance & design of



emergency snow shelters; Search techniques; the opportunity for shadowed leading.

Dates: Arr 15 Jan - dep 21 Jan
Arr 5 Feb - dep 11 Feb
Arr 12 Mar - dep 18 Mar

Price: £543 (5 days, 6 nights)

all inclusive of: accommodation for 6 nights at Fraoch Lodge, Boat of Garten; full board (from 2 course evening meal on Sun to Sat breakfast); transport between Fraoch Lodge and the mountains; transfers between Aviemore Station/ Inverness Airport

CHECK OUT THE 6 DAY HOGMANAY WINTER SKILLS EXTRAVAGANZA AT WWW.SCOTMOUNTAIN.CO.UK/HOGMANAY

Mountain Innovations advises all clients to take out suitable insurance cover.

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

FITNESS & EXPERIENCE INFORMATION

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

ABOUT US

Established in 1998, we're an owner-run provider of guided walking holidays and mountain courses in the Highlands of Scotland. We firmly 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.

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/sallopets
- Gaiters - essential to prevent snow getting into the top of your boot.
- Winter boots* (preferably B2 or

B3) which are compatible with crampon use

- Torch (preferably head torch style)
- Watch (with stop watch - required if on Navigation or Winter Skills course)
- Crampons*
- Ice axe* preferably approx 55cm
- Walking Poles (optional)
- 30 Litres plus Ruck sack - i.e. one that is of adequate size to contain ALL YOUR GEAR WITHIN, not on the outside.)
- Fleece jacket/tops. Duvet jackets are not suitable on the mountains
- Warm Hat & spare
- Warm Gloves & spare
- Warm trousers (not jeans and not made of cotton, preferably fleece or saloppets)
- Walking socks
- Sun block (optional)
- Ski goggles, double lens, anti fog (essential - sun glasses are not an adequate substitute).
- Water bottle/flask preferable (Hydration bladder hoses readily freeze - fill with warm drink & empty hose after each drink)
- Compass: Silva Expedition 4 preferred
- Digital stopwatch
- 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 1:50 000 scale. If you would like further advice please phone.
- Thermal underwear
- Towel
- Slippers/indoor shoes
- Outdoor shoes for bus, etc
- Helmet (if you have one)

* These items can be hired. Please call to check 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 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. We are in the process of reorganising our plot with the help of volunteers on the WWOOF scheme, so we can supply more fruit and vegetables from the garden.

The lodge is mainly heated by radiators fed from a biomass boiler fueled by Scottish wood pellets.

We have been awarded Gold in the Green Tourism Business Award Scheme.

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).

Mountain Innovations is offering a £15 **GREEN TRAVEL DISCOUNT** This applies to those guests travelling to and from the designated base/pick-up point solely by public transport (train, bus or boat).

