



2012 Course information sheet

Come and enjoy a complete adventure with us
Fraoch Lodge, Deshar Road, Boat of Garten PH24 3BN
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SNOWHOLE EXPEDITION

- the ultimate winter experience.
3 days, 4 nights

The challenge is unique, the rewards are unrivalled and the memories are unforgettable.

Help construct a comfortable communal snow-hole lit by flickering candles! Wake up to the soft light of a Cairngorm dawn. Not a sound, not a soul, a vast pristine winter wonderland all to ourselves. Snow-holing in Scotland is for some one of the most remarkable experiences.



What the price includes:

There are no hidden extras. 3 days instruction and guiding, accommodation [link], delicious home made food and transport are included along with:

1. Transfers between Inverness Airport /Aviemore Station* at no extra charge
2. An evening meal on arrival - a chance to meet the rest of the group before the trip begins.
3. Learn how construct a safe snow-hole specific to Scottish conditions
4. Home prepared expedition food - you'll never have eaten so well out on expedition!
5. Cake O'clock - homemade cakes/biscuits and tea on our return from the mountains .
6. Dinner, bed and breakfast at the end of the course before you depart the following morning

*Those who travel by train or bus to Aviemore qualify for our £15 Green travel discount.

The course is based from the homely and friendly atmosphere of Fraoch Lodge in the Cairngorm National Park.

Our inspiration isn't your local rabbit warren but the Sistine Chapel!! Well, almost. We construct a snow-hole designed specifically for Scottish conditions. We make it big with a

vaulted roof for good ventilation. After a day of essential winter skills training we embark on a 2 day expedition spending the night out deep in the snowy wilderness. The route takes us across the Cairngorm (4085ft) - Ben Macdui (4295ft) plateau to learn the essentials of good snow hole design and efficient construction.

Andy, your guide, has over 30 Snow-hole Expeditions to his credit and is one of the few instructors in the UK deemed competent by HSE criteria to lead Snow-holing trips. The focus is on enjoying the experience. Although at times tough, this isn't an SAS survival course. We put the time in to make our communal snow-hole comfortable. Once the hard work is done it's time to snuggle into your cosy sleeping bag, sit back, relax, and enjoy the camaraderie of the shared experience. Andy cooks up a delicious home-prepared 3 course meal for us all to enjoy together. Who else can boast home-made Carrot and Cardamom soup in a snow-hole!

STRUCTURE OF THE TRIP

Arrive before 7.30 pm if possible to join the group for dinner and a brief introduction to Mountain Innovations & logistics of the trip.

Day 1: Essential personal winter skills - use of crampons & ice axe for safety and security on the hill. Evening session: Techniques for construction of the snowhole.

Day 2: Pack up and walk in to the selected site to dig the snowhole and prepare for the night out.

Day 3: Return from the snowhole site after a winter walk to Ben Macdui (weather dependent).

Evening: leave kit to dry out in our drying room and enjoy the "craic" in the pub for the evening with the digital photos etc.

Depart after breakfast the following morning



Dates: 28th - 30th Jan
26th - 28th Feb
10th - 12th Mar
25th - 27th March

Price: £382 (3 days, 4 nights)
incl. full board, accommodation, provision of snowholing & cooking equipment, & transfers from Inverness Airport/Aviemore Rail Station.

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

Clients should have plenty of stamina and a good level of physical fitness to cope with three physically demanding days in the winter mountains. The 2 expedition days will involve about 4-5 hours walking with around a 10+ kg rucksack, in what could be difficult conditions. On the 1st Expedition day the walk-in is followed by at least 3hrs of heavy digging. Clients should have had some previous hillwalking experience, preferably in winter.

COMMENTS FROM PREVIOUS SNOWHOLERS

[Chris Sommerville](#) - [Freelance Journalist for The Telegraph](#) Thank you both very much indeed for your hospitality, for the friendly atmosphere and the superb imaginative food, and for the memorable experiences - both wild and tame. It was great to share the tough stuff with such easy-to-get-on-with people. I hope the rest of your winter season goes well. I think the two of you make a wonderful team, and have something really excellent to offer.

[Rick Taylor](#) "Thank you once again for a great snow hole trip. It was exactly what I needed after a busy and stressful few weeks and I thoroughly enjoyed it. It was also great to catch up with everyone and also to make some new friends."

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.

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
- Waterproof trousers/salopettes
- Gaiters
- Walking boots with stiff soles which are compatible with crampon use (plastic or leather)*
- Torch (preferably head torch style)
- Crampons*
- Ice axe*
- Rucksack of adequate size (approx. 50 litres plus)
- Fleece jacket/tops
- Hat & spare
- Good Gloves & spare
- Warm trousers (not jeans, preferably fleece or salopettes)
- Walking socks
- Sun block (optional)
- Ski goggles (essential - sunglasses aren't adequate)
- Water bottle/flask
- Thermal underwear
- Good sleeping bag (with a rating which goes down to at least -10°C)
- Thick sleeping mat
- Change of clothing (to take on the expedition)

As a safety measure, clients are also advised to provide their own compass and map (Sheet 36: Grantown and the Cairngorms, OS Landranger series).

* 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. 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).



Cairngorms
NATIONAL PARK

