Not About The Summit

Winter Kit List: for guided days

The basics for any of our winter walking events. Contact us if you need any advice hiring or purchasing any equipment. We have a small stock of spare items that you can borrow.

- ❏ Day pack - at least 30 litres is required for winter kit
- ❏ Dry bags (waterproof bags to keep your kit dry and organised)
  - ❏ Alternatively, use a strong bin bag as a waterproof liner, but organise your kit within your bag so you can identify and get to what you need easily
- ❏ Boots - winter boots that are compatible with your crampons (B1, B2 or B3 rated)
- ❏ Crampons (that fit your boots)
- ❏ Ice Axe - a walking axe, a suitable length for you height, contact us if you need advice
- ❏ Helmet - most winter days will require one
  - ❏ A helmet is essential for practising Ice Axe Arrest on Winter Skills courses
  - ❏ Contact us to check if you need to check if your day out requires a helmet
- ❏ Ski goggles - essential - sunglasses are better on the calmest of winter days
- ❏ Head torch
  - ❏ Fully charged, locked
  - ❏ Carry adequate spare head torches within the group
- ❏ Waterproof Jacket
  - ❏ With a hood that can go over a helmet
  - ❏ A hood which can be tightened so it doesn't blow around in the wind
  - ❏ Waterproofs that you're happy sliding around in for Winter Skills courses
- ❏ Waterproof overtrousers
  - ❏ That can be put on over boots (we recommend ¾ length zips)
- ❏ Gaiters - essential - prevent laces catching on crampons & snow getting in boots
- ❏ Warm layers
  - ❏ In winter an insulating jacket is essential - ideally a synthetic puffer jacket, as down will get damp, clump up, get smelly and no longer keep you warm if wet
  - ❏ We recommend a belay jacket - this is an insulated waterproof jacket you can put on over the top of your normal waterproof jacket
- ❏ Hat - a big woolly one!
- ❏ Scarf/snood/hood and/or balaclava
- ❏ Gloves
  - ❏ Multiple pairs to include
    - ❏ 1 medium weight semi-tactile pair (very thin gloves are virtually pointless except on the calmest of winter days)
    - ❏ 1 large thermal pair
    - ❏ We recommend carrying a waterproof overmitt and/or a spare pair of large thermal gloves/mittens
- ❏ Trekking poles - optional, we recommend a single pole with a snow basket
- ❏ Food and drink for the day
  - ❏ Drinks that won't freeze, e.g. hot flask, electrolyte salts drink
  - ❏ Use bottles not hydration bladders with straws - the straws freeze up!
- ❏ Personal medication
- ❏ Personal first aid kit - your leader will have a group first aid kit, but we recommend you bring a small first aid kit, as needs vary greatly for individuals, it should include the following

- ❏ Plasters
- ❏ Blister plasters
- ❏ Basic medication e.g. pain relief, allergy relief etc.
- ❏ Personal medication e.g. Asthma inhaler, Epi-pen, routine medication etc.

❏ A towel and spare clothes and shoes to leave at base/car in case of needing dry clothes on return from the activity (hopefully not needed!)

Clothing advice

Please wear suitable quick-drying outdoor fabrics. We recommend merino wool, synthetic materials or blends. Please avoid wearing cotton, as when cotton gets wet from rain or sweat, it stays wet and heavy.

Navigation equipment

Compass

We recommend the ‘Silva Expedition 4’ compass
It has a large base plate and roamer scales for 50k, 40k and 25k maps... there are subtle differences between models (within the Expedition 4 range)... Some but not all have the lines engraved not just printed on, which makes them last longer and lines more visible... if you are buying online it will be hard to tell. I also have and love my ‘Silva Expedition’ Compass but some versions of this have a poor placement of the 'SILVA' branding which deems one of the baseplate lines useless.

Map case

A suitable sized map case

- For winter we recommend a map case no larger than A5; we use Ortlieb A5 map cases
- Fold it small enough to fit in your pocket
- On a string attached to the pocket zipper

Maps

Suitable scale maps for winter:
1:50k OS Landranger (Pink cover)
1:40k Harvey Mountain Map

Map advice
In winter it can be useful to use OS maps online to print 1:50k maps at a 1:25k scale (twice the size), especially if you have sight impairments. We will look at this as part of winter skills courses. We can provide these for you, please request this in advance of your event.

Maps required for Winter Skills Courses
If you need to borrow a map, just let us know, we have spare copies.

Course Location	Harvey Map	OS Landranger (Pink cover) 1:50k scale map
Aviemore	British Mountain Map Cairngorms and Lochnagar 1:40,000	Landranger 36 Grantown and Aviemore; Cairngorm Mountains

Fort William and Glen Coe	British Mountain Map Ben Nevis and Glen Coe 1:40,000	Landranger 41 Ben Nevis; Fort William and Glen Coe

Recommended Kit, Reviews and Advice

This ‘Recommended kit’ is for winter specific kit only. For general recommended kit for both summer and winter, please visit the following link:
Basic Kit List NATS (includes kit reviews & recommendations).docx

- **Ice Axes**
- I have given details of the ice axes I have on the next page. This page covers some general considerations. The axe I take with me will depend on the type of terrain I expect to encounter.
  - **Axe Length:** This is the most important thing to consider, I highly recommend trying axes of different lengths before buying one. While walking with me, you can swap with me or arrange to borrow one from me. You can also try swapping with people out with you or hiring axes before buying your own. See my ‘Length Notes’ on each individual axe below.
    - If you are planning on doing walking and climbing, you will want to have a choice of axes as a length difference of 10cm will make a real difference.too short and it may not reach the ground, too long and it may get in the way and become cumbersome on more technical/steeper ground.
  - **Axe shaft width:** Axes have different width shafts, if it’s too wide it can spread the fingers too wide, making it uncomfortable to hold securely, especially if you have narrow hands - **I really want you to be able to hold your axe securely!!!** I personally find the Petzl Summit Evo has a wide shaft which is uncomfortable to hold at the head for long durations.

  - **IMPORTANT NOTE:** I am a Winter Mountain Leader (WML). This means I guide walks, NOT climbs. So for days out with me, a walking axe is most likely what you want. If you want to climb steeper, more technical terrain, you need a Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor (WMCI).
    - In winter, snow may accumulate in places making the ground more steep or smooth (where there would normally be zig zags, ledges to walk on). This is an example of the type of steep ground that I can guide you on, as a Winter ML. If a route is given a Scottish Winter Climbing Grade, you need a WMCI.

  - **Note that kit hire places may give people the wrong length axe (the staff in the hire shop will have their own opinion, they may or may not be qualified/experienced).** Please use your own judgement and consider my advice (sometimes shop staff can be quite insistent).

- My ice axes
  - **Black Diamond Raven Pro 65cm (445 grams)**
    - This axe goes with me on most winter mountain walks (not climbs)
    - It is light enough that if there's a chance I might need an axe, I take it. **It is my lightest axe, even though it is my longest axe!**
    - When I'm guiding, this is the axe I normally use
    - It has a slight bend in the shaft which is useful for steeper terrain
    - **A great feature I love:** It is very narrow where you hold the head, this makes it comfortable to hold
    - **Length note: I am 6ft, when holding this axe by the head, and dangle my arm by my side the axe tip reaches to just below the top of my boot. This is a very good length guide for a walking axe. Note that kit hire places may give people the wrong length axe (the staff in the hire shop will have their own opinion, they may or may not be qualified/experienced).** Please use your own judgement and consider my advice (sometimes shop staff can be quite insistent).
    - **I highly recommend this axe for walking**, though you should note the following
      - Its head and specifically the tip are good for snow, but the fine tip will blunt easily if struck onto rock (it's designed for walking). When **walking** in winter, this should not happen much if at all. If it does you can always sharpen it back up. There are good YouTube videos on how to sharpen/maintain your axe using a metal file.
      - The hand grip is poor; I have added some bicycle innertube, kept in place by duct tape, which works excellently, adds minimal weight, but will need replacing periodically (I do mine once per year).
  - **DMM Circque 55cm (610 grams)**
    - This was the first axe I bought and I still use it, though I'm keen to replace it because it's relatively heavy
    - These are common axes provided by hire companies
    - It is robust, but heavy - the tip is chunky so will handle being used on rock more than the Raven Pro tip
    - I use this axe when I'm doing steeper ground and ridges, where I think my longer axe may get in the way
    - It's shaft is not too wide, so it's comfortable enough to hold by the head (for me), but after a long time, it does become tiresome. The Black Diamond Raven Pro is much more comfortable. I personally find the Petzl Summit Evo has a wider shaft which is uncomfortable to hold at the head for long durations.
    - It has a good sturdy grip
    - A slight bend in the shaft is good for steeper ground
    - **Length note: I am 6ft, when holding this axe by the head, and dangle my arm by my side the axe tip is about half way up my lower leg. This is too short for a walking axe, it will not reach the ground on less steep slopes…**
      - You want your axe to reach the ground as a point of contact for balance
      - You do not want to have to bend over to get the tip to reach the ground (on a slope) as bending over makes you unbalanced!
      - **Note that kit hire places may give people the wrong length axe (the staff in the hire shop will have their own opinion, they may or may not be qualified/experienced).** Please use

your own judgement and consider my advice (sometimes shop staff can be quite insistent).

- **All my axes in length order**
- **Black Diamond Raven Pro 65cm (445 grams)**
- **Grivel Brenva 67cm (555 grams)**
- **Grivel Brenva 59cm (530 grams)**
- **Grivel Munro 59cm (450 grams)**
- **DMM Circque 55cm (610 grams)**

- My Crampons
  - Grivel Monterosa, 10 point (C1) **797 grams**
  - Grivel G12, 12 point (C1) **943 grams**
  - Petzl crampons
    - Irvis: 10 point crampon
    - Vasak: 12 point crampon
    - Flexlock is what Petzl call the C1 configuration
    - Leverlock is what Petzl call C2 configuration
    - The Irvis and Vasak are interchangeable with each other and can be set up as C1, C2 and C3 configurations
      - C1 configurations - suitable for any winter rated boot (B1, B2, B3)
        - 10 point (Petzl Irvis)
          - mostly used on winter Munro walks
        - 12 point **888 grams** (Petzl VASAK)
      - C2 configurations - suitable for B2 and B3 rated boots
        - 10 point **766 grams** (Petzl Irvis)
          - my lightest configuration
          - Mostly used on technical winter walks and scrambles
        - 12 point (Petzl VASAK)
          - Used on graded winter climbs
      - C3 configuration - only for B3 boots with good fitting toe bail
        - never really used
        - safer to use toe C2 toe bail
        - C3 toe bail needs to be a really snug fit and shape to match your boot - you do not want this coming loose
        - C3 toe bails are most common on steep ice climbs, to save marginal weight, when stiff boots are worn