

SCOTTISH WINTER WALKING & MOUNTAINEERING

SUGGESTED KIT LIST

This list contains suggestions – especially for clothing – if you have been wearing an old woolly jumper for the last 10 years & it has done the job on cold & wet Scottish winter days, then keep on using it! However do not forget that an Alpine winter day when skiing - although sometimes the air is a lot colder than a Scottish winter day – it is also a lot drier. Expect cold but sometimes moister air in Scotland in winter.

- **Footwear** - A pair of boots suitable for Scottish winter mountaineering have at least a three-quarter shank; meaning that the boots do not bend too much when wearing crampons. B2 or B3. Any good quality leather or plastic boot with a reasonably stiff sole would do. Scarpa Pro B2, or Scarpa Frenay XT B3, are good. For climbing, stiffer B3 boots are needed. Larger feet/boots tend to mean that boots become more 'bendy', even B2 boots.
- **Gaiters** – good quality gaiters with a zip.
- **Rucsac** – at least 45 to 55 litres. Preferably without side pockets, - they get caught on rock when scrambling - with an ice – axe loop. Rucsac liner – heavy duty bin liner or fertiliser bag (cleaned) is fine. Should be big enough to carry thermos flask, waterproofs (top & bottom), spare fleece, head-torch, packed lunch, crampons, harness, helmet, slings & carabiners, spare gloves & hat, personal first aid kit, camera, mobile 'phone, waterbottle, 'kisu' group shelter.
- **Crampons** – 'clip on's' are the most practical for putting on & taking off – but boots need to be fairly stiff & have a good ledge or welt at the heel. 'Strap-on's' are fine, but cold on the fingers to put on. A good option is the Grivel G12 & similar system, with a front cradle for the toe, & a cradle also for the heel. We can supply these or clip-on crampons to borrow for the course if needed.
- **Ice –axe** – 'Walking' axes' are usually 55 to 65cm in length, & are fine for general mountaineering & snow gullies up to grade II. Longer than 70cm means the axes starts to get in the way when traversing & climbing in constricted gullies. Harder & steeper ice-climbing require two axes usually; with shorter shafts – 50 to 55cm typically, and steeper picks. We have spare ice axes to borrow, to use as well as your own on days when 2 axes might be needed. Wrist loops are useful for scrambling with axes, & give support for climbing. I tend not to use wrist loops for general walking on snow, but keep a wrist-loop in the top pocket of my rucsac with a 'larks-foot' knot already tied so that I can fit it quickly & easily. Grivel, Charlet Moser, Mountain Technology & DMM are all good makes of ice-axes.
- **Waterproofs** – Goretex or similar top & bottom. A lightweight windproof is a good idea if dry – & keeps the spindrift & showers out.
- **Gloves** – waterproof gloves have not been invented yet! But if dry, Daschstein mitts are good, & cheap. If wet, a shell outer & fleece inner works well. The inners can be dried overnight, & spares are easy to carry & change during the day. A pair of thinner fleece gloves are a good idea. Ice/snow-climbing places great demands on the hands – you need dexterity to deal with carabiners etc, but hands get cold whilst you are hanging off ice-axe loops. There is no easy solution, most people make sure they can feel their ice-axes & place ice-screws etc, so wear good quality gloves to enable them to do this, and sometimes suffer cold hands as a consequence! It is common to stuff mittens down the front of your jacket whilst climbing wearing gloves, then put the mitts back on when the stance is reached. A spare pair of ski-gloves/mitts in the rucsac is a good idea if the main pair get wet.
- **Hat** – a warm fleece hat is important, with a spare in the rucsac - (even an old woolly balaclava as spare). Make sure that it fits under a climbing helmet – there is no room for 'bobbles' or the like.
- **A neck- gaitor** – is a good thing to carry to keep out spindrift & protect the neck closure in the wind & cold. Made from light fleece.

- **Trousers** –Do not rely on Rohan Bags or similar Trekking trousers to keep the legs warm, unless with long-johns. Fleece trousers tend to be sweaty & are not wind-proof. Troll 'Rockstars' – a bit like 'Ron Hills' but heavier, are a good option. An alternative is to wear a pair of Goretex, or similar, salopettes over a pair of long-johns, & keep them on all day. 'Alpine' trousers eg. Mammut, or Scholler trousers, are ok, but they are expensive & do not use if they are cotton based, multi-coloured & have too many pockets.
- **Top** – A fleece top, with a good neck closure. Perhaps a lightweight fleece as a spare in the rucsac. I carry a fleece waistcoat in my rucsac as a spare – it packs very small & light.
- **Thermal layers** – absorbs & wicks sweat & dries quickly. 'Layering' I find more adaptable & versatile than one layer 'Buffalo' systems.
- **Head-torch** – it gets dark at about 4.30 pm in late January although we will aim to be down before it gets fully dark on most days, (hopefully!). Sometimes a **headtorch** (a torch that leaves your hands free) is useful for the last half an hour on the path. Lots of choice these days; if using LED bulb torches, make sure there are at least 4 bulbs. Little Petzl 'Tikka' 3 LED torches do not cast a strong enough beam, but are fine for up-close mapreading etc.
- **Food & drink** – I eat things like flapjack's & Snicker bars, as well as sandwiches. I usually carry a 1 litre flask of tea/coffee/hot Ribena. Make sure you come with a good supply of 'hill food' for the day. There is a grocers shop in Glencoe & Ballachulish & shops in Fort William & Glencoe, & Kinlochewe & Lochcarron, which are open to 7pm, usually.
- **Harness/helmet (for scrambling & climbing courses)** – We supply a harness & helmet if you do not have your own. Bring what you have & would like to use. A harness that you are able to put on over boots & crampons is most user-friendly, eg – Black Diamond Bod or Alpine Bod, & Troll Technician or DMM Alpine. These harnesses work by pulling up the leg loops between the legs, & fastening the loops by non-load bearing buckles. This means that the user can put the harness on whilst wearing skis, for example.
- **Slings, carabiners & belay plates** (for scrambling & climbing courses) – if you have any of these items, then bring them along. You do not need to buy these specifically for the course, we have some to loan.
- **Personal first aid kit** – spare contact lenses – 'Compeed' blister kits etc. – in a waterproof container.
- **Map & compass** – I will carry a map & compass, but another set in the party is a good idea.
- **Emergency kit** – I will carry a 'group shelter' big enough for three people, also a first aid kit, GPS & mobile phone. We should all have spare food, something like Kendal mintcake that you would only eat in a dire emergency!