

Di Gilbert Mountaineering – Winter Climbing

*“You’re not a master until you’ve become a good teacher. And I’m teaching the world to *beep* ice climb at the moment” Steve Haston*

Introduction

Snow, mixed or ice. Scotland has it all. From the thin ice routes on Ben Nevis to the mixed test pieces in the Cairngorms, Scotland’s winter climbing is world famous. With notorious weather, conditions that change at the snap of the finger and an attitude that will give any Ned a run for his money, you will either love it or hate it.

The Course

This is a 5 day course based out of the Cairngorm National Park and is completely designed around you. Whether you want to second your first ever winter route, learn to lead your first ever winter route, or wish to be guided up more technical climbs, then this is the course for you. We combine individuals with similar aspirations so that you will get the most out of the week.

Although based out of the Cairngorm National Park, we have the flexibility to chase the best weather and conditions so that we are hopefully always in the right place and the right time.

We will meet you early on the Monday morning and after a quick kit check we’ll spend the rest of the week braving the elements in Scotland’s mountains.

Dates

This course will run from the middle of December right through until the end of March.

Price

£475.00 per person

This price includes instruction and any technical equipment.

Ratio

This course is run on a 1:2 ratio and requires 2 people to run.

Accommodation can be arranged in either a Bunkhouse, B&B or Hotel depending on your personal preference.

Equipment

Waterproofs You will require waterproof jacket & trousers. Essential to keep the wind and precipitation out and the warmth in. I prefer a hard wearing set of waterproofs that will cope with the

rigours of Scotland's winter season. Trousers with at least a half leg zip will ensure that they can be put on over boots.

Clothes

Do not underestimate Scotland's winter climate. I recommend the layering system so that you can easily regulate your temperature depending on what the weather is doing and how hard the conditions are at the time. I tend to wear a thermal top, a mid layer fleece and a toasty warm fleece. I will be able to regulate easily to prevent any sweating. I'm a fan of power stretch trousers which have always kept me warm in the harshest of environments.

Hats and gloves have a habit of either flying away or getting wet so I always carry a few pairs with me. I usually walk in using thin gloves, then use a thicker pair for climbing— make sure that you can actually do things wearing these. I'm also a fan of the 'buff' which can be pulled over my face when its blowing a hooley.

Spare Clothes

Apart from clothes that I'll be wearing through the day, I'll carry an extra layer with me. I'm a big fan of the synthetic 'belay jacket' which is a lightweight jacket that can be worn over all my clothes. If you don't have one of these, an extra fleece will suffice. I'll also carry a spare pair of big gloves with me.

Rucksack

Roughly 40-45 litres will be fine for this course. You want to be able to comfortably get all your kit inside. I like simplistic designs with a good size pocket in the lid. I highly recommend www.deutergb.co.uk.

Everything in your rucksack wants to remain dry so a waterproof liner is a good idea. I'm a big fan of Exped's Fold Dry bags. Failing this, lots of plastic bags will also work.

Food & Drink

Like any engine, your body needs fuel to perform at its best. Lots of small items that can be munched on throughout the day are ideal. A one litre water bottle should provide enough liquid and/or a flask depending on personal preference.

Walking boots

A good pair of 4 season winter boots are essential for any type of winter activity. www.scarpa.co.uk.

Gaiters:

Quite a good idea in winter since it stops your boots getting filled with snow. I quite like the short gaiters.

Ski Goggles:

Essential for Scotland's winter. Make sure that the vents are covered up with foam or they will just fill up with spindrift.

- Personal First Aid Kit: Any personal medication and a small first aid kit to deal with common problems.
- Head torch: A small head torch with spare batteries. Either Halogen or strong LED's are the best.
- Crampons: A good pair of crampons are essential and make sure that they are sharp! They dinnae work if they're blunt!
- Map & Compass: You will need an Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 map, Sheet 36 for this course and a compass – I use the Silva type 4. Don't forget a map case if you're not using laminated maps – I prefer the ortlieb mapcases.
- Climbing tools: You will need a set of technical tools for the duration of this course. These can be hired from Di Gilbert for a small fee.
- Climbing helmet: This will be provided for use during the course if indicated on the booking form.
- Climbing harness: Something to tie the rope into. This will be provided for use during the course if indicated on the booking form.
- Emergency kit A cheap orange plastic emergency bivouac bag which can live in the bottom of your rucksack. A little whistle is good for attracting attention and weighs nothing.