

Di Gilbert Mountaineering – Winter Mountaineering

“When I was 20 I could not see myself still climbing at 30. When I was 40 I could not see myself still climbing at 50. But now I have reached 60, I know that old habits die hard and that if I am able I will still be climbing at 70!” Joe Brown

Introduction

Scottish Winter Mountaineering, probably the most rewarding of all the winter dimensions. The freedom to move fast, cover greatest distances and travel on some of Scotland’s most rewarding ridges and traverses.

The Course

This is a 5 day course kicking off in the Cairngorm National Park. After an initial revision period to reiterate the importance of the essential winter tools – the ice axe and crampons - we will build the course around your aspirations. We will introduce the harness, the rope and basic technical equipment during the course which will enable you to tackle more challenging and interesting mountain routes.

This course is based around the Cairngorm National Park but if conditions and weathers permit, we’ll head further a field.

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 mid December – end of March.

Price

£475.00 per person and requires 2 people for this course to run.

This price includes instruction and any technical equipment.

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

Ratio

This course is run on a 1:3 ratio.

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	<p>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.</p> <p>Hats and gloves have a habit of either flying away or getting wet so I always carry a few pairs with me. I walk in using a pair of thin gloves, then use a bigger 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.</p>
Spare Clothes	<p>Apart from the clothes that I expect to wear during the day, I'll always 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.</p>
Rucksack	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Food & Drink	<p>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.</p>
Walking boots	<p>A good pair of 4 season winter boots are essential for any type of winter activity. www.scarpa.co.uk.</p>
Gaiters:	<p>Quite a good idea in winter since it stops your boots getting filled with snow. I quite like the short gaiters.</p>
Ski Goggles:	<p>Essential for Scotland's winter. Make sure that the vents are covered up with foam or they will just fill up with spindrift.</p>
Personal First Aid Kit:	<p>Any personal medication and a small first aid kit to deal with common problems.</p>

- Head torch: A small head torch with spare batteries. Either Halogen or strong LED's are the best.
- Crampons: Most definitely nothing less than a set of 12 point crampons that are compatible with your boots. Make sure that they are easy to put on and that you can adjust them easily wearing big gloves. These can be hired from Di Gilbert for a small fee.
- 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.
- Mountaineering Axe: Not wanting to get into the great ice axe length debate, basically an axe between 50 – 60 cm should suffice, preferably with a leash that can be removed easily. This 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.
- 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.
- Climbing harness: Makes things a lot easier. This will be provided for use during the course if indicated on the booking form.