

Di Gilbert Mountaineering – Winter Skills

“Somewhere between the bottom of the climb and the summit is the answer to the mystery why we climb” Greg Child

Introduction

Scotland’s winter wonderland – world famous for being challenging, dangerous and very rewarding – and you’ll either love it or hate it.

The Course

This is a 2 day course teaching you the basic skills to travel in the mountains during the winter months. Skills covered include for example: using the boot as a tool, ice axe and cramponing techniques and continuous avalanche assessment.

This courses is based in the Cairngorm National Park.

We will meet you early on the Saturday morning and after carrying out an initial equipment check, we head into the mountains.

Dates

We are available from mid Dec – end of March for this course.

Ratio

This course is run on a 1:6 ratio and requires a minimum of 3 people to run.

Price

£190.00 per person.

This price includes instruction only.

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

Equipment

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| 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 always have 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. At least one pair of thin gloves that I will walk in with and then a big pair for near the summits – 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 the clothes that I'll expect to wear during 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.
- 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 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: 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.