

KIT LIST



PLAS Y BRENNIN
NATIONAL OUTDOOR CENTRE

Scottish Winter Walking & Mountaineering

Equipment List

Winter Walking/Mountaineering Kit List

Here is a list of all the kit you may need during your course. We have a comprehensive stores department that can provide many items you may not have.

The personal kit we have in stores is highlighted in **red**. We ask you to bring the rest.

Clothing

- **Waterproof Jacket**. A robust breathable and waterproof jacket that fits over several layers. It should have a permanently attached hood that is large enough to go over a helmet.
- **Waterproof Trousers or Salopettes**. Robust, breathable and waterproof, ideally with long side zips (for big boots), crampons patches on the ankle and braces.
- Insulated Jacket. A large warm jacket to wear whilst stationary is useful. Synthetic insulation is better than down in the UK due to our damp climate.
- Base Layers. A couple of lightweight 'thermal' tops, short or long sleeved. Should be of a synthetic material and not cotton.
- Mid Layers. A couple of mid weight layers, ideally fleece. This gives more flexibility for managing your temperature rather than one thick layer.
- Trousers. Softshell trousers, if possible, as they are good at blocking out wind. If you have thermal trousers bring them too as they can be great on cold days.
- Hat. A fleece or wool hat that is suitable to be worn under a helmet - no bobbles! A neck gaiter is also useful.
- Waterproof Gloves. At least two pairs are essential. They should be dexterous enough that you can put crampons on whilst wearing them. The Mountain Equipment Guide or similar is recommended.
- Thin gloves. A thin fleece pair is useful for wearing whilst approaching the hills. For example, the Mountain Equipment Touch Screen Glove.
- Socks. Nice thick warm socks. Some people like a thin liner pair as well.

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- **Winter Mountaineering boots.** We have an extensive stores range of boots for you to try and we can discuss different boots during the course so you know what to look for. However, if you are bringing your own then you'll need either B2 or B3 boots. The classic winter mountaineering boot is the Scarpa Manta. It's worth going to a specialist shop so you can try on several types to ensure they fit well. When buying winter boots it's worth investing in a good pair as they will last you a long time.
- Personal items for yourself during your stay at Plas Y Brenin.

Personal Kit

- **Ice axe.** This should be a walking/mountaineering axe such as the DMM cirque. 55-60cm is usually a good length
- **Crampons.** We do have crampons in stores for you to try and we can discuss crampons as part of the course, so you know what to buy for your winter adventures. However, if you are bringing your own then ensure they fit your boots. The Petzl Vasak is a good example of a mountaineering crampon as it has 12 points and anti-balling plates. We've included some crampon advice at the bottom of this list.
- **Gaiters.** Extremely useful to prevent snow and scree entering your boots and help to keep your feet warm. For example, the Mountain Equipment Trail DLE gaiter.
- **Crampon Bag.** A tough Nylon bag to protect the contents of your rucksack from the sharp points.
- **Climbing Helmet.**
- **Snow/Ski Goggles.** An essential item for days out in the winter environment. A budget pair with two-layer lenses will be fine.
- **Rucksack.** There is generally a lot more that needs to be carried on a day out in the mountains in winter compared with summer. Ensure it has a waistbelt to carry items comfortably.

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- Rucksack Liner/Dry bags. Almost no rucksacks are waterproof, so a waterproof liner is needed to keep your kit dry. Either a large dry bag or several small ones work well or a strong plastic bag such as a rubble bag (not a bin bag).
- Flask/water bottle. A small flask (1/2 to 3/4 litre) and a similar sized water bottle. Hydration systems with tubes rarely function well in winter.
- **Maps**. Need to be weather proofed.
- **Compass**. We recommend a SILVA Expedition 4 compass for navigating.
- Waterproof case for your mobile phone. A method of protecting your mobile phone from the elements is essential.
- Whistle. A cheap plastic whistle is a useful item of emergency equipment.
- **Headtorch** (Plus spare batteries) If you are buying a headtorch it's worth investing in a quality headtorch for durability, brightness, and battery life. A model such as the Petzl Tikka or Petzl Actik is recommended.
- Small personal first aid kit. Include blister plasters. Please remember any personal medication you may need.
- Emergency Food. Some spare items of high energy food that are sealed in a bag such as chocolate or muesli bars.
- Sun block and Lip Salve. To provide protection from UV radiation and the wind.
- Sunglasses. If it's sunny then these are essential as the snow reflects the sun into our eyes.
- **Trekking Poles**. Useful for walking below the snow line and for low angle snow slopes. Should be collapsible into 3 or 4 sections to make stowage inside your rucksack easier.

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Boot and Crampon advice

Winter footwear needs to deal with a very different environment than our summer boots so what we wear on our feet is very different. Our boots are heavier, so they are durable and warm. They are also stiffer so we can kick steps in hard snow and wear crampons.

Boots

Boots have a B rating, from B0 to B3. The four boots below are rated B0, B1, B2 and B3. The rating relates to how stiff the boot is and their crampon compatibility. The boot of the left is rated B0, is flexible and not designed to take a crampon. The boot on the right is rated B3, is rigid and is designed for winter climbing.



In general winter walking and mountaineering is generally done in a B2 boot and winter climbing in a B3. Good quality leather/synthetic boots are best. Plastic boots are warmer but are more cumbersome, and the warmth offered by high altitude boots is simply not necessary. Larger-sized boots will flex more than smaller sizes so if you have large feet, then go for a more rigid boot. You will be less likely to slip out of your crampons.

Our advice is to buy a quality boot that fits your foot well. Be careful to make sure they are not too small as constricted feet get cold. It is well worth the extra expense and a quality boot will last many years. Be prepared to spend some time ensuring the size and fit is correct and take the time to visit a mountaineering shop. It is important to wear your boots in and it can be advisable to initially place tape on your heels and any 'hot spots'. Spend time walking around locally, even around the house, before attempting anything more adventurous. Most staff wear either one thick sock or a thin and thick combination. Buy good quality socks, and bring several pairs. For most winter mountaineering courses, our staff use footwear from the excellent range by Scarpa.

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Crampons

Crampons are also rated from C1 to C3 and, like boots, relate to stiffness, with C1 being the most flexible and C3 being the stiffest. Again, the crampons below go from C1 to C3.



As a rule, a C2 crampon such as the Petzl Vasak (shown in the middle) would be used for winter walking and mountaineering and a C3 crampon such as the Petzl Lynx for climbing. However, for starting winter climbing C2 crampons will suffice as you don't need specialist climbing crampons. Climbing crampons are only necessary from Grade IV.

Crampons and boots need to be matched. B2 boots can be used with crampons rated B2 or lower. C3 boots can be used with crampons rated C3 or lower. But B2 boots cannot be used with C3 crampons as the crampon may come off due to the boot not being stiff enough. It's best to have your boots with you when you buy your crampons to ensure they fit well together. Take your boot with you when you buy your crampons and fit them to the boot in the shop to ensure a good fit. Buy a 12-point crampon with a general mountaineering configuration with anti-balling plates. Be aware that with small feet (size 6 or under), certain types of crampon are best avoided - get crampons fitted by the shop.



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