

## Ben Nevis Ice And Mixed

Please note that this course meets at 16.00 hours on the Sunday afternoon.

### Is It For Me?

This course focuses on climbing classic Ben Nevis winter climbs as appropriate to prevailing conditions, as such, it is a guided experience allowing participants to maximise their climbing time on the Ben.

Climbing on the Ben in winter is one of the unique winter experiences. To get the most from this experience you must have winter mountaineering experience (ideally happy soloing up and down exposed Grade I ground), plus experience of seconding/leading grade III+ winter climbs. If conditions allow we can be climbing routes up to Grade V.5 hence the requirement for participants to be comfortable on at least Grade III climbs.

This is one of the more physically demanding courses we offer so you should expect 5 physically hard days of climbing winter multi-pitch routes.

The actual programme is fairly flexible, with your instructor basing the five days around the topics below, taking into account individual needs and aims, weather, snow conditions etc.

***Note: due to the serious nature of many of the winter climbs on Ben Nevis it is not expected that participants will lead. As such, it is more of a guided experience allowing participants to maximise their climbing time on a variety of types of winter climb on the Ben, although in the course of the week participants will become very familiar with the layout of the Ben which will be off use in any future personal trips.***

### Aim

Based at the CIC hut the course will concentrate on ascents of classic Ben Nevis winter climbs, whilst developing your awareness of the many facets that make climbing on the Ben such a unique experience.

### Course Content

You will usually be in a team of two with one instructor. Meeting your instructor on the Sunday evening provides an opportunity to discuss yours and the other participants experience and aspirations, enabling the instructor to plan the week's programme based around the main topics to be covered. These are:

- Climbing classic Ben Nevis snow, ice and mixed routes up to Grade V.5
- Intensive coaching to develop personal climbing technique on ice and mixed ground.
- Avalanche awareness and safe travel techniques.
- The essential skills required to move fast on alpine type terrain.
- Top tips in the Black Arts of protecting Ben Nevis climbs including use of pegs, Dead Man, ice screws and all manner of sneaky tricks.

***Note: although late March/early April is generally a reliable time to climb on the Ben, with regard to good ice conditions, Scottish winters are notoriously fickle. In the event of poor ice conditions we can still climb routes although we may be limited in our choice due to which routes are in condition coupled with safety considerations.***



## Arrival & Departure Information

**Please arrive at Glenmore Lodge on the Sunday afternoon by 1600Hrs.**

If you need a pick up from the train/bus station in Aviemore on Sunday afternoon please call us to arrange a time.

By meeting at 1600hrs this will allow us time to kit you out with any equipment you may require (see below).

You will then have a meal at 1700hrs departing for the Ben at 1800hrs on the Sunday evening. If conditions allow we will drive up to the dam car park, and then walk into the CIC hut. This walk will take about an hour – albeit we will be carrying heavy rucsacs. Still, it'll be worth it! No pain no gain as they say.

We will aim to return to Glenmore Lodge for 1700hrs on the Friday to return kit (this means heading off from the CIC around 1300Hrs on the Friday). Tea and cake will be provided at 1700hrs at the Lodge.

## Your Accommodation

You will be based in basic self catering communal accommodation in the Scottish Mountaineering Club's CIC hut with everyone mucking in to help with the chores.

The CIC has basic facilities, including cooking facilities and drying room. For personal washing there is a burn with fresh running water outside. No longer do you have to head outside to use the al fresco toilet facilities - the CIC now has two indoor toilets.

Sleeping arrangements are on mixed alpine style sleeping platforms, for which you will need a sleeping bag. Glenmore Lodge will supply all meals and packed lunches.

## What Will I Need?

Outlined below is a suggested kit list for climbing on Ben Nevis.

**Please keep in mind that you will have on top of this your week's food and ropes/technical hardware, plus you will have to carry all this uphill for several hours.**

So be ruthless when deciding what is a 'need' to have and what is 'nice' to have. This list is 'need' to have, unless specifically mentioned. Items marked with an \* can be borrowed from Glenmore Lodge stores. Check out the Top Tips, they can save you some effort!!

### PERSONAL CLOTHING

Shell gear - waterproof and windproof jacket & trousers

Thermal top & bottoms plus spare set

Pair of socks plus spare set

Underwear plus several spares

Fleece top plus spare

Fleece jacket or Belay Parka/jacket

Fleece trousers/salopettes or equivalent



Hut Clothing T shirt and light trousers (nice to have) **see Top Tip #1**  
Hut shoes - flip flops/sandals or lightweight trainers (nice to have) **see Top Tip #2**

Climbing gloves plus spare pair  
Dachstein mitts (ideal in wet conditions)  
Balaclava

### **PERSONAL EQUIPMENT**

Head torch\* + spare battery  
1:50 000 or 1:25 000 map of Ben Nevis  
Compass\*

Bivvy Poly Bag

Water bottle or equivalent e.g. Platypus etc

Goggles  
Sunglasses  
Sun cream

Camera and spare film

Tooth brush and tooth paste  
Talcum powder (for feet)  
Very small personal First Aid Kit (include bluster stuff e.g. compeed; elastoplast tape, plasters, anti-inflammatory pills e.g. ibuprofen, any personal medication).

Lightweight sleeping bag\* **see Top Tip#3**  
Suitable technical winter climbing boots plastic\* or leather

Gaiters that fit your boots\*  
Winter climbing harness\*  
Belay plate & locking karabiner\*  
Karabiner & 8ft sling\*  
Spare locking karabiner\*  
Prussic loop\*  
Climbing helmet\*  
Technical climbing crampons adjusted to climbing boots\*  
Technical ice tools (hammer & axe) with suitable and adjusted leashes\*  
Ruc sack to carry all above (suggest minimum size is 55L) \* **see Top Tip #4**

### **Top Tip #1**

What I do is use my spare thermals (top and bottoms) as my hut clothes for wearing in the evening. The spare thermal top or jacket also doubles for eveningwear. You can always wash out used thermals and dry them in the hut overnight for latter use. Another top tip is to walk up wearing a lightweight thermal and keep your other ones for wearing latter. This lightweight one can be washed out on arrival and dried for latter indoor hut use.

## **Top Tip #2**

The floor of the hut tends not to be the cleanest. A very lightweight pair of slippers/sandals etc whilst not very fashionable is useful. If you have plastic boots the inners can always double as your hut wear, although bear in mind what you will do if they happen to get very wet and need dried out. If wearing leather boots you may want to think about lightweight hut slippers.

## **Top Tip #3**

The hut tends to be warm at night so you will get away with using a lightweight summer bag. If you do feel the cold think about wearing some of your clothes in your bag as opposed to carrying a heavy weight winter bag up to the hut. The lodge bags are fairly hefty although we do have three reasonably compact and light bags.

## **Top Tip #4**

To fit all this gear into a rucksack, and carry it all up to the hut, you will need a fairly large capacity sac (around 60L+). When climbing from the CIC I tend to put on all my gear (harness, rack etc) at the hut and carry personal kit such as spare gloves, water bottle, torch etc in a very small lightweight daypack (about 15 to 20L). You can buy these small packs for about £20+ at any outdoor shop. You are looking for the simplest and lightest sack, something that can easily fold down and pack away in your main pack for the walk in. This saves all sorts of packing problems as you try to squeeze it all into a 55L rucksack for the walk in, or having to carry a 70L sac on the hill whilst you are climbing.

If you have any questions or queries about the above please call George McEwan on 01479 861256, or email [george.mcewan@glenmorelodge.org.uk](mailto:george.mcewan@glenmorelodge.org.uk). If you do not get me you can always leave an evening number or email address and I can get back to you.