

Kit & Equipment

In order that each participant is able to make the absolute most of the programme, we are very strict about what kit and equipment they need to bring in order to maintain comfort and safety whilst on expedition.

Scotland has some of the most stunning landscapes in the world and its iconic mountains, lochs and glens provide more than just a spectacular backdrop to the reflective programme we offer. When you encounter wonder, inspiration and respect for the natural environment daily, mind-set quickly shifts to focus on perspective and priority on a different plane than it would be at home.

The climate in the Scottish wilderness could be described as sub-arctic. This might sound dramatic, and it can be. In winter, temperatures and precipitation levels can cause a real challenge for those who are not prepared. In summer, though it remains more temperate, flying, biting insects (midge) form a genuine challenge to most human beings. Unfathomable in number during their emergence in spring, those who lack head-to-toe cover will find out just how tough the natural world can get! But don't worry, they aren't known to carry any sort of disease and their bites are all but harmless and can be treated easily with antihistamine. There are also small parasitic arachnids which can, in rare cases, be more problematic, but all of our staff are very experienced in dealing with these bites safely.

If you haven't heard the phrase "there's no such thing as bad weather, just the wrong clothing" then take note. Here is a list of all the right things we need all participants to have, and it is the responsibility of the parent or main contact to ensure everything is provided. If important items are missing or the type/quality of item provided does not meet our requirements, we will replace it for the participant and invoice for the appropriate hire amount.

Clothing

Base layer thermals 3x top 3x bottom	These keep you warm in cool conditions and wick sweat and dry quickly on warmer days. Though there is much marketing to dodge, there is unlikely to be a great deal of difference in performance between higher and lower cost options. Top performer: Merino wool, various brands
Socks 5x	Well-structured walking socks will protect the feet from 'hot-spots' and blisters, whilst providing thermal balance Top performer: Merino 'fusion' (merino wool, mixed with man-made fibre for toughness and longevity), various brands
Underwear 5x	Sports type underwear which is quick drying would be beneficial. Avoid cotton if at all possible.
Boots 1 pair	A sturdy pair of supportive, high-ankle boots. Leather or fabric options are available. Gore-Tex waterproofing will help, but won't guarantee dry feet over multiple days. The MOST important thing is that they fit well and are broken in (you've worn them before you arrive at the start!) Top performer: whatever fits your foot best – go and try some on!

Fleece top 3x	With hood or without, with zipped pockets or without, a fleece is pretty much a fleece. Great thermal properties for the price and weight, it's hard to go wrong. Top performer: North Face Glacier Delta
Walking trousers 2x	Light enough to dry fast, heavy enough to be robust and provide protection from the elements. Top performer: Craghopper Classic Kiwi
Insulated jacket 1x	Whether a thicker fleece layer, or a synthetic layer, something to add on cooler evenings and mornings or to put on during a break will really help those that feel the cold. A gilet (body-warmer) works well for this option Top performer: Montane Prism
Waterproof jacket 1x	A good quality waterproof is essential and performs several functions: keeps the rain out (mostly), keeping your mid-layers dry(ish), keeps the wind off and holds some warmth in whilst letting sweat escape. Gore-tex is the best known brand of waterproof, breathable material, but many companies have their own versions. Top performer: Berghaus Stormcloud
Waterproof trousers 1x	As for jacket. Pretty essential to have (at least) knee length zips for getting on without removing boots. Top performer: Montane Atomic pants

Sleep Kit

Sleeping bag	A sleeping bag is one of the least exciting but most important items. It must be warm enough to withstand fluctuating overnight temperatures and camping at altitude, but light enough to carry for multiple days. We recommend a synthetic fill with 3 season warmth. Top performer: Vango Stratos 350
Sleeping mat	Can be a very basic foam rollmat to attach to the outside of your pack, or a highly expensive light-weight, self-inflating mat. Both will provide insulation from the ground (it's true purpose), but one has a tendency to burst, so bring a repair kit! Top performer: Multimat Discovery
Bivvy bag	These can usually be picked up more affordably from army surplus stores and provide an extra layer of insulation and also a waterproof shell for your sleeping bag. On consecutively wet days this can make the difference in a pack full of wet kit. Top performer: check army surplus; Alpkit Hunka
Tent	Usually the biggest investment inside an expedition pack; the tent could be a super lightweight one person shelter or, we recommend shouldering the additional weight for the comfort of extra space with a small two person. A porch to cook and store kit in should the weather get nasty and space to comfortably sit up and get dressed (it's the simple things)! Top performer: Vango Mirage 200; Wild Country Trisar 2

Eating

Stove	We <i>really</i> like Trangia stoves. They are an all-in-one burner, wind shield, pots, pans and lid. They can burn liquid fuel (methanol) or can be converted to gas. Gas stoves are probably lighter but you will need separate pots. 3-5 lighters really helps because they WILL get lost/break. Alternatively a flint & steel is very effective even when wet. Top performer: Trangia 27; MSR Pocket Rocket
Cutlery	Nothing fancy, just a spoon. Worth bringing a spare just in case it gets dropped in a loch.
Pots, pans, plates, cups,	If you have a Trangia, you don't need pots. If you have a gas burner, you will need a pot to cook with too. We recommend aluminium. Non-stick doesn't stay that way for long so we think it's hardly worth it. Lids help a lot when fuel is low. We recommend not bringing any further plates/bowls as we generally eat straight from the pot and it just creates extra bulk and weight that is unnecessary. An insulated mug with a lid is great for hot brews.
water bottles	A 1L water bottle is plenty and could even be a re-used soft drink bottle (free!). More than this becomes too heavy, less than this and you might struggle between reliable sources. Lots of options for robust longer lasting products Top performer: Nalgene

Sundries/toiletries

Midge net X2	Absolutely essential. A head net to keep the midges off your face is the most valuable piece of kit you have.
Sunscreen 1x small pot	Believe it or not, it is just as likely you get sunburnt as it is you get rained on in Scotland. In the high mountains, the UV levels are higher and there is no shade.
Sunglasses & sunhat	As above
Warm hat and gloves	The weather can be hugely changeable and nights can be cold. Because we will be outside for the vast majority of our time, it is essential to keep ourselves warm.
Headtorch	A small LED headtorch that you can walk with and spare batteries.
Lipsalve X1/2	The elements dry out your lips. Keep them protected. Any brand, any flavour. Not for sharing.
Deodorant	Entirely unnecessary. If you must, bring roll-on ONLY. NO aerosol.
Toothbrush & toothpaste	Oral hygiene is really important to maintain. A couple of small travel size tubes of paste should do. You can get a toothbrush cover which is a handy, hygienic addition
Wet-wipes X2-3 packs	The closest you'll get to a shower during expedition. It's amazing how refreshing a bath in your tent can be!
Towel and shower kit	When we are in accommodation, there will be a chance for showers. Don't bring hundreds of products, just one for body and one for hair would will be plenty.
Indoor shoes	Trainers or crocks or plimsolls or flip-flops
Casual clothing X2 sets	This is for evenings whilst in accommodation. We're talking joggers, t-shirt and hoody. That's it. No sports team colours/strips please.
Sleep clothes	For in the accommodation. E.g. some lightweight pyjamas

Medication	Any medication you are prescribed MUST be brought in its original packaging with the participants name, dose and frequency. If this is not available we may not be able to take that person. You must have enough of each medication to last the duration of the programme. If you require a repeat prescription from a Doctor this should be done well in advance and any issues raised with the enrolment team.
Mobile phone	We will keep all participant's mobile phones in safe storage. They will not be accessible day-to-day. But in the event a participant does leave early they will need to make contact en-route home. There will be no other need for participant's to have access to their phone. Any emergency or scheduled contact will be made through or by staff.
£10-20 cash	in case of an early departure that could be used during a homeward journey

Carrying kit

The ideal scenario would be that a participant arrives at the start point wearing one set of outdoor clothing, ready to travel to an outdoor 'base-camp' where we will spend our first night in tents and tipis. The rest of the camping and outdoor clothing should be packed into an expedition size backpack:

Expedition backpack	A pack that fits your back length and has sufficient padding and support for walking for multiple days carrying relatively heavy loads (between 10 & 15kg). It should be around the 60-70 Litre size (litres are the volume packs are measured in). It should obviously be appropriate for you to carry all the gear listed above and we don't feel strongly about number of pockets or compartments. Whatever suits you. We would say that the aim is to pack everything INSIDE the bag, rather than have bits dangling off it (maybe with the exception of a sleeping mat. Top performer: Low Alpine Atlas
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The rest of your kit should be packed into a smaller weekend/hand luggage type bag that can be stored separately and securely whilst we are away on expedition phases.

If you provide equipment and on our inspection it does not meet the required standards for the rigours of the programme, we reserve the right on the grounds of safety, to replace any item with one from our stores. In this instance you will be informed and invoiced appropriately. If you have any doubt or concern about an item you intend to provide, please seek our advice. If you intend to purchase items there are many discounts available online. Shop around and if you need advice, just ask.

What NOT to bring

- Jewellery, expensive watches or very personal items (we can take no responsibility for loss or damage of any items you bring)
- Laptops/tablets
- Sweets/chocolate/fizzy drinks
- Any illegal substances or alcohol (obviously)
- Pen-knives, multi-tools or any sharp items (nail clippers would be OK)
- Any tobacco or cigarettes. Because the majority of participants will be under 18y/o, it would be **illegal** for us to facilitate smoking for those people on the programme
- Pillows, blankets or duvets
- Make-up; hair dryers; hair straighteners. There will be nowhere to use these.
- Precious handbags/luggage
- Lots of cash. There will be no opportunity to spend it
- Multiple casual clothing options or smart clothing

Hiring Kit

We can offer the use of equipment from our stores to hire. Our kit is tried and tested and robust. It is not 'top of the range', but we know it will perform well in the environments we will be in. The stores are maintained by our dedicated stores person and all 'softwear' is freshly laundered. Boots will have been cleaned and proofed. Any equipment that we have provided that is not functioning to full capacity, we will obviously be able to replace. If you have provided your own, in the event that an item fails or breaks or is lost, for the safety of the participant, we will do what we can to replace it from our stores. Depending on the item, the hire of this will then be invoiced for the appropriate period.

Hire rates are for the full duration of the three week programme. We require your clothing sizes well in advance.

Clothing package: (baselayers, fleeces, walking trousers, socks)	£100
Waterproof package (jacket and trousers)	£50
Boots	£50
Tent	£100
Sleeping bag	£50
Bivvy bag	£25
Sleeping mat	£15
Stove (inc pots & pans)	£25
Headtorch	£15
Expedition backpack	£50
The full package (all of the above)	£350