

One of the most common pre-trip questions we receive is all about what to pack, and what the essential items are. This is a list of recommended kit to take on the Winter Ben Nevis challenge. We have tried to pare down this kit list to the absolute must-haves for your trek, but above all you should use your common sense and your own personal preferences when you are packing. Check out our additional guidelines at the bottom of this list!

RUCKSACKS AND BAGS

- Day sack 25-30L
- Waterproof liner*

FOOTWEAR

- Strong and waterproof mountain trekking boots (suitable for C1 crampons – stiff sole – B2 boots recommended)
- Hiking socks at least 2 pairs, of which one thermal
- Comfy shoes
- Gaiters*
- Spare laces*

CLOTHING

- Waterproof and breathable jacket GORE-TEX recommended
- Waterproof and breathable trousers
- Warm trekking trousers
- Down jacket/fleece (with layers)
- Lightweight fleece top
- Wicking t-shirt
- Long sleeved shirt/t-shirt
- Thermal long johns
- Warm mid-layer – wool or fleece preferred
- Underwear light and loose
- Scarf/buff for the cold
- Woolly hat/balaclava/hat
- Insulated gloves/mittens
- Spare pair of gloves
- Casual clothes

GENERAL TREKKING EQUIPMENT

- LED Head torch plus spare batteries
- Water bottles/bladder min 3l
- High energy snack bars, dried fruit, chocolate, nuts
- Plastic bags for keeping clothes and docs dry
- Walking poles
- Ski goggles or appropriate outdoor sunglasses (to protect you from the glare of the sun)
- Thermos*
- Camera*
- Contact lenses (plus spare glasses)*
- Gaffa tape*
- Alarm clock/watch*
- Ear plugs*

SMALL FIRST AID KIT

- Your own medication
- Pain killers
- Plasters
- Zinc oxide tape
- Blister pads such as Compeed
- Dextrose tablets for extra energy*
- Deep heat*
- Knee supports*

TOILETRIES

- Personal toiletries
- Tissue/toilet paper
- Sun screen (min factor 30), Aftersun/moisturiser
- Lip balm with SPF

DOCUMENTS

- Money – see Challenge trip notes
- Copy of Final Details

KEY * Indicates Optional

If you do not own some of this equipment and do not wish to spend a lot of money on buying equipment then we would highly recommend hiring equipment from our partners at **Outdoorhire**. They can hire really good quality outdoor equipment for weekends and often hiring a high quality piece of equipment is better than purchasing a cheap version

Crampons and ice axe are provided. Crampons are adjustable and fit all kinds of winter boots.

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR KIT

PACKING

Your day sack should have a thick waist strap for maximum comfort. Other things to consider are back ventilation, hydration compatibility and gear loops for stowing walking poles. Waterproof liners or bags are essential for keeping valuables and clothes dry within your pack.

CLOTHES

Temperatures can fluctuate enormously during the day. Lots of light layers are key, as well as a synthetic or down jacket. You should ensure that your waterproof jacket is a robust jacket, that you are able to wear over the top of multiple layers. A lightweight, flimsy summer waterproof is not appropriate. An insulated, or down, jacket is essential. These can be expensive so please consider hiring one from a company like [Outdoor Hire](#). Again, make sure that it is large enough to fit over multiple layers.

We would also recommend that you have at least 2 hats and 2 pairs of gloves as these can get wet during the day and wet heads and hands are dangerous in winter. Having a dry pair to change into is very important.

Make sure that you wear and test your kit before arrival, particularly your boots.

WINTER BOOTS

If this is the first time that you have done any winter walking, then the most important thing to consider will be whether your boots are suitable for walking on the hills in winter conditions. This can be a very confusing issue, and you will come across lots of things like B1, B2 or B3 and C1 crampon compatible! Please don't worry about this.

In simple terms, you will require a B2 boot. We will be providing everyone with C1 crampons so you will be required to have a boot that is compatible with a C1 crampon.

When using crampons, it is extremely important that your boots have very little flex, and that the boot is very rigid. This is the opposite of what most people desire in a good, lightweight summer boot where you want your boots to have some flex to increase their comfort.

The following points should help you to decide if your current boots are suitable:

1. Check the stiffness of the sole - hold the heel and toe of one of your boots, then try and push the heel to the toe. If the sole of your shoe can flex when doing this test, then your boots are not suitable for winter walking. If you can flex your boots a small amount (approximately 1-2cm of flex) then your boots are probably 3-4 season boots (B1). If there is practically no movement, then your boots will be 4-season (B2 or B3).
2. Check how rugged the boot looks. A winter boot has a much more rugged and stiff appearance to a normal summer walking boot. For an example of a classic 'rugged' winter boot please [click here](#).
3. If you know the brand and model of your current boot then check online to see what it's designed for. Most retailers' websites will state if the boot is designed for winter use and is either B1, B2 or B3.

If you have any questions about your boot's suitability, then please email a photo of your current boots to challenges@charitychallenge.com for advice.

HEALTH

Make sure you take a first-aid kit with you, as the group medical kit is designed for emergencies. Zinc Oxide tape is a handy addition, as it is often a lifesaver for blisters. Tape up your feet before trekking and this will reduce the chance of you developing hotspots. In addition, when applying your sunscreen, make sure that you cover the backs of your hands as well as your face and neck. Although you may feel cold, the sun will be stronger on the mountain. Don't forget to take an SPF stick for your lips as well. Anti-bacterial hand gel is good for use before meals and after toilet breaks.

