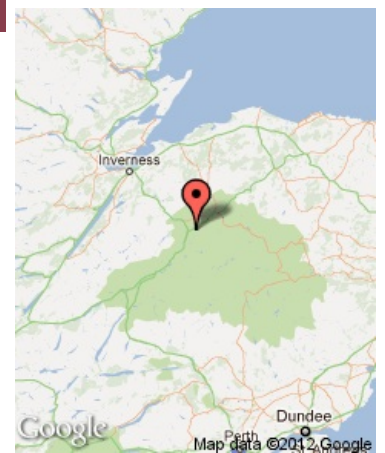


Mountain Navigation Courses in Scotland



Highlights

Navigation Courses for beginners and the more experienced in the spectacular Cairngorm mountains. Your expert guides will teach you the techniques you need to be able to enjoy the mountains safely and then back at the lodge put your feet up and enjoy delicious home cooked food!

The Cairngorms National Park in the eastern Highlands of Scotland offers some of the Scotland's wildest and most magnificent scenery. The highest mountain range in the UK, they offer the perfect destination for hill walking and munro bagging. In the winter, they become covered in snow and ice, making them an ideal base for winter sports. Sharing the mountains with us outdoorsy types is a plethora of wildlife including golden eagles, pine marten, deer and the mountain hare, which changes its colour in winter to white, to blend in with the snow.

The navigation courses allow both beginners and those with more experience to improve their orienteering skills and learn the nuances of mountain terrain: features, gradient, aspect of slope, distance and direction. Hitting the range, you will use map and compass in the safety of the group to steer a course through stunning scenery in the varying terrain of the Cairngorm mountains, from low-lying moorland to the wilder high plateau. You will be led on all expeditions by a highly qualified mountaineer with many years guiding experience and a local and intimate knowledge of the area. Back at the lodge you will dry your kit and lounge by an open fire before an excellent two-course dinner is served.

Is it for me?

These navigation courses vary in length and difficulty and are tailored to offer a range of experiences for beginners and experienced hikers alike. You will be in a group, but the ratio of guides to participants is usually 1:6 on the weekend courses and 1:8 on the longer courses, so you will get the individual attention that you need and won't feel swamped in a group. The guides are qualified and will always assess your competence, making safety their paramount concern.

The accommodation is comfortable without being luxurious, and the roaring fire and excellent home fare make for a convivial setting. If you can find a large group you can take over the lodge (capacity of 12) and have a whale of a time there and at the local pub!

Accommodation

Quality accommodation for the navigation courses is in Fraoch Lodge, nestled in the picturesque setting of Boat of Garton, surrounded by heather-clad hills and woodland. There are six twin bedrooms with sinks, a large lounge with an open fire and a separate dining room with log-burning stove. A purpose built kit drying room will have your equipment ready for the next day.

The food served at the lodge is really something very special. A hearty breakfast and good coffee are served in the morning to get you on your way. Expedition lunches are home-cooked and made with home-baked bread! After a day out on the mountains, you are welcomed back at the lodge in time for 'cake o'clock' and then for dinner you will be served two or three course fire-side dinners, prepared by a cook with a 'Certificate of Culinary Competence', serving a mix of wild and home-grown vegetables, fruits and herbs and the local beef and venison.

Prices from

245 GBP (2 days) per person

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Itinerary

There are two different mountain navigation courses on offer; Mountain Skills and Navigation and a Mountain Navigation Weekend. The main difference between the courses is the length, with courses ranging from 2 days to 6 days.

Mountain Navigation Weekend

A 2 day course for beginners and those with some navigating experience who would like to become more proficient and increase their repertoire of skills. The course provides a firm grounding in an array of navigation techniques - a keystone to good navigational practice. Price is inclusive of accommodation at Fraoch Lodge, full board, pick up/drop off from Aviemore station or Inverness airport, and all guiding. Arrival by 9pm on the Friday evening before the course commences, in time to join the rest of the group for a pre-course familiarisation. Departure after about 5pm on the Sunday.

Aspects and techniques covered in the course include:

- Feature recognition
- Map interpretation and the map to the ground
- Slope and contour feature interpretation
- Navigation with map alone
- Compass bearings
- Time and pace (distance) estimations
- Tactical Navigation techniques incl. aiming off, doglegging, attack points, etc.
- GPS and its appropriate relevance and use in modern Mountain Navigation

Five Day Mountain Skills & Navigation Course

A comprehensive five day six night five day Mountain skills and navigation course giving you a complete array of navigational skills and techniques with plenty of time for theory and practice. Price is inclusive of accommodation at Fraoch Lodge, full board, pick up/drop off from Aviemore station or Inverness airport, and all guiding. Arrival between 5pm and 7pm the evening before the holiday commences, departure after breakfast on the morning after the holiday is complete.

Aspects and techniques covered in the course include:

Day 1:

- Suitable gear & navigation equipment
- Different map scales - pro & cons
- Map reading - extracting all the information
- Feature & gradient recognition
- Setting the map by the landmarks & features
- Timings & paces - estimating distance

Day 2:

- Contour & slope interpretation
- Compass bearings
- Determining aspect of slope
- Collection features
- GPS: its appropriate use and relevance in modern Mountain Navigation

Day 3:

- Distance estimation in mountain terrain
- Setting the map by the compass
- Bringing it all together: ascertaining one's position and route by the 5 elements of mountain terrain: aspect of slope, distance, direction, features and gradient.
- Tactical navigation techniques including; attack points, aiming off...

Day 4:

- Route planning: weather considerations, size & ability of group, escape routes, etc
- Navigation around hazards: boxing, dog-legging.
- Grid references: common mistakes

Day 5:

- Planning your own route
- Opportunity for shadowed leading.
- Search techniques

Details

Getting there

The nearest airport is Inverness and the closest train station is Aviemore. Your hosts can arrange for you to be picked up from either.

Price includes

All prices fully inclusive of guiding, accommodation, full board, transfers & transport to your activity.

Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed