

W i N T E R F e s t

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WELCOME to WINTERFEST 2013

The following information is intended to provide you with a detailed guideline for the WinterFest 2013 programme. However, such is the beauty of Scottish winter walking, that even the best laid plans may have to change without prior notice due to factors such as weather, access, conditions underfoot, etc. It may be that conditions are so fantastic

that small changes to your day will enhance your experience. This decision will be in the hands of the guide for the particular walk who will ensure that the best experience for the group is gained.

GET KITTED Friday 22nd Feb. Your chance to hire winter equipment and take advice from the Tiso personal shopper. Meet at Tiso Outdoor Experience Inverness between 12 and 3pm. Come along and let the experts run a pre-WinterFest kit check. Remember if your gear is not suitable the guide will not let you join the walk.

WELCOME Friday 22nd Feb. Join us at the Bog Cotton Café, Cannich between 6 and 7pm to meet the guides and the other walkers and to ask any last minute questions, i.e. are my boots and crampons suitable?

THE WALKS All walks leave from the Bog Cotton café, Cannich at 8.15am.

Saturday 23rd February

HL1 High Level Munro Tom a' Choinich, 1112m - Hard

Leaving the car at Chisholm Bridge and taking the stalkers path that follows the north side of Abhainn Gleann nam Fiadh we journey into the 'wild glen of the deer' and soon the dominating SE ridge of Tom a' Choinich is in full view. We follow the ancient path north alongside the Allt Toll Easa until the gradient eases at about 650m. Today we branch west directly up the SE ridge of Creag na h-Inghinn. Don't worry it isn't as steep as the view from the walk in would suggest and the vistas west along the Affric ridge open up as height is gained. This great ridge leads right to the summit cairn at 1112m from where views of both coasts from the same spot can be had! The direct route down is east along a narrow trail to the Bealach Toll Easa 872m then SE to retrace the path back. With suitable conditions we can extend the walk on to Toll Creagach 1053m. This is relatively a short distance away and only a small change to the route plan with a descent down a broad S ridge to rejoin the outward path alongside Abhainn Gleann nam Fiadh.



WS1 Winter Skills – Ice Axe & Crampon technique Sgurr na Lapaich, 1036m - Moderate

For sheer 'in your face' points then the top of Sgurr na Lapaich must be my favourite walk in the Glen. It is the dominating mountain that can be seen from the Affric car park with options to get to the top depending on experience and conditions. Although Munro height at 1036m Sgurr na Lapaich is part of the Affric horseshoe and is joined to Mam Sodhail by a great undulating ridge. Our focus for the day is to learn and practice important skills to enable safe travel in a winter environment - so crampons & ice axes here we come! We explore the area below the east facing crags of Sgurr na Lapaich and conditions allowing, continue past Loch Lapaich to ascend the steeper NE ridge which leads directly to the summit cairn. We will be presented with views west to An Tudair 1074m and towards the western seaboard as well as north to Mam Sodhail and Carn Eige. On the SE descent we keep our eyes and ears alert for ptarmigan.

Sunday 24th February

HL2 High Level Munro Sgurr na Lapaich, 1036m & Mam Sodhail, 1181m - Hard

Mam Sodhail is one of the giant twins of Glen Affric. From this point to the North, nothing else in the British Isles rises higher. This is a big day out and we intend to ascend via Coire Leachavie to arrive at Mam Sodhail. Our return journey follows along the steep sided SE ridge into Glen Affric, taking in the top of Sgurr na Lapaich en route before meeting up with the stalkers path to Affric Lodge from Am Meallan. The views of Scotland's most remote and wild country are awe inspiring and with luck we may glimpse Ptarmigan, Mountain Hare or Golden Eagles soaring along the cornice topped ridges.

SNOW SHELTER SUNDAY

WS2 Winter Skills – Snow Sheltering Tol Creagach, 1053m - Moderate/Hard

So we all walk in winter and sometimes need to use the spiky cool tools but how often do you get the opportunity to learn about and build your own shelter? This practical session will look at various types of shelter from quick shelters to planned nights out in a snow hole. This is both great fun and an essential skill for anybody spending time in the winter mountains. Leaving the car at Chisholm Bridge and taking the stalkers path that follows the north side of Abhainn Gleann nam Fiadh we're led into the 'wild glen of the deer' and soon Tom a' Choinich rises majestically to command the glen. Our requirement for the day is snow and the local environment will dictate our route, as we seek the best conditions to dig into and practice essential winter skills. There are a couple of big mountains on this trail and both hold snow but it is Tol Creagach and Coire an t-Sneachda that we are heading for (the clue is in the name) – we also plan to bag the top!!

Monday 25th February

ML1 Guest Glen Meall Fuar-mhonaidh 696m - Moderate

Our excursion for 2013 sees us travel the short distance to 'Drum. If you are into your hills then you must have asked yourself the question when driving through Drumnadrochit - *'my, whats that big hill staring me in the face?'* Well it is Meall Fuar-mhonaidh – the hill of the cold slopes. For our last walk this isn't a huge day but the reward for climbing the highest Old Red Sandstone top in the country is a good one with views along Loch Ness and out to the west for a perspective of the last few days of play. Our final descent of WinterFest 2013 may see us drop safely into the Loch Ness Inn for a celebration dram.



Walk Gradings Winterfest 2013 is a walking event that takes place in a mountainous environment, in winter conditions, in Scotland. With this in mind for all walks you need to be prepared for the liveliest of winter weather hoping that the day will be sublime.

The high level walks are aimed at people that are used to the mountain environment in a 'summer' condition wanting to progress to winter and as such will have a reasonable level of fitness. The walks will be visiting wild places and will not necessarily follow footpaths. Conditions underfoot, coupled with the terrain dictate that these walks are of a medium to strenuous nature.

Winter skills may involve ice axe arrests, movement on snow and ice and the assessment of snow conditions. However there is no obligation for you to undertake any of the winter skills, although a great deal of fun can be had in practicing these valuable winter skills. These activities involve a degree of physical input and as such any aches, pains, weaknesses or concerns need to be advised to the guide at the start of the day and to NHG before the WinterFest.

Snow Shelter Sunday will hopefully be a brilliant adventure and a good level of fitness is required for the practical 'Home building' session. This can be wet work and as such a change of clothes is recommended. You will be required to work as a team member, which includes taking a turn at digging & shifting the snow. If you have any questions then please contact the WinterFest team.

Equipment The organisers reserve the right to refuse entry on to a walk if your equipment is not up to standard or sufficient. Please see below for a detailed equipment list or call the WinterFest office. If you are not able to join a walk because of your kit, no refund will be offered. It is prudent to have your boots, crampons and ice axes checked by the WinterFest guides or Tiso Outdoor Experience, Inverness staff before the morning of your first walk. This will avoid disappointment if your equipment is found to be unsuitable for winter walking.

Transport Wherever possible we strive to reduce the environmental impact of activities within Scotland's National Nature Reserves and Parks. This includes travelling to and from Glen Affric. Transportation to and from the walks will be in car convoy. If you don't have transportation or are able to offer shared lifts to others then please contact Gina Francis on 01456 415379 in advance.

Cannich / Glen Affric is approx 23 miles south west of Inverness the A82 road from Fort William or Inverness. Rail links at Inverness, timetables and fares at www.firstgroup.com or www.gner.co.uk. For local Buses please visit citylink.co.uk.

Recommended Maps Please bring the following OS Landranger maps for your walks WS1, HL1, WS2, HL2 (OS Landranger 25); and ML1 (OS Landranger 26). We highly recommend also bringing Harvey's British Mountain Map 1:40,000 for Knoydart, Kintail & Glen Affric. OS Explorer (1:25000) 415 also covers WS1, HL1, WS2 & a bit of HL2 and OS Explorer 414 covers most of HL2. For further details please call Tim Francis on 01456 415379.

Charges and Bookings All walks need to be booked in advance. Where a walk is either over or under subscribed the organisers reserve the right to transfer your booking. By completing the booking form, walkers agree to abide by the terms and conditions of the WinterFest. Please note that all walks are subject to appropriate conditions on the day and may be subject to change without prior notice.

Please note that no refunds will be made once your booking form has been received.

Cancellation If the Festival fails to attract sufficient interest, all monies paid to the organisers will be refunded in full. Notice will be given of cancellation 21 days prior to the start of the WinterFest. Accommodation bookings or transport tickets will not be taken into consideration for refunds by the organisers.

If you decide to cancel your booking, you must notify the organisers as soon as possible and confirm this in writing. No refunds will be offered.

Liability Activities in the outdoors are potentially hazardous by their very nature. Individual participants in the WinterFest must, therefore, accept that they take part at their own risk. The organisers and sponsoring bodies cannot accept liability for any death, injury, loss or damage suffered during the WinterFest. Nor can they accept any responsibility for any loss of expense to the clients from any cause beyond our control. All walkers are responsible for their own safety and understand that they are responsible for providing adequate insurance cover for the activities undertaken.



As organisers, Natural High Guiding wish to ensure that everyone enjoys these varied walks and that walkers are well prepared. For your own safety and enjoyment, please ensure that you abide by the recommendations set out for each individual walk. Any relevant medical conditions must be notified to the group leader in advance of the walk. In particular, if you need to take any medication, please ensure your guide is aware of this in advance of the walk and that you carry it with you at all times.

Please observe the Scottish Outdoor Access Code at all times and be aware that you are walking within a National Nature Reserve.

Accommodation & Services Strathglass offers the full range of accommodation from hotels, B&B, guest houses, caravan & camping, hostels and self catering.

Food You must supply your own packed lunches, snacks and drinks for all walks. Please note that the WinterFest operates a leave no trace policy. You will be expected to take out everything you bring in from packaging to fruit skins, apple cores, tissues and toilet paper.

If you would like to pre-order a WinterFest breakfast or packed lunch, please call 01456 415379 to let us know.

Guides All guides are specialists in their own field. As well as ensuring that the correct routes are followed, they will provide you with interesting information about the landscape, flora, fauna, geology and local heritage of the area. All guides are very experienced in the winter environment.

All high level walks are guided by professional mountain guides with all the appropriate qualifications and experience. The mountain guides will carry first aid and safety equipment at all times.

Your guide reserves the right to refuse you entry on to the walk if you are deemed to be ill equipped or not physically fit. Likewise, if your guide believes that you are placing yourself or the group at risk by your actions, they reserve the right to remove you from the walk. In adverse weather conditions, guides will decide on the appropriate course of action, which may include abandoning the walk or altering the route. Their decision is final and in all of the above circumstances, no refund will be given.

WINTER WALKING KIT

- 3-4 season walking boots
- Ice axe
- Crampons suitable for your boots
- Crampon anti-balling plates
- Day rucksack (30 - 40 litre)
- Rucksack liner – can be a large plastic bag to keep your kit dry
- Head torch and spare batteries
- Ski Goggles (clear lenses preferred)
- Walking socks
- Thermal Base layers
- Walking trousers (no jeans)
- Long sleeve walking shirt
- Fleece or wool sweater
- Good quality waterproof jacket (Gortex or similar)
- Waterproof trousers
- Gaiters
- Warm woollen or fleece hat
- Waterproof gloves
- Spare thermal gloves
- Mitts
- Good quality 3-4 season boots
- Whistle
- Water bottle
- Small thermos flask
- Neck gaiter/Buff
- Lip block
- Walking poles (optional but recommended)
- Personal 1st aid kit
- Spare pair of socks and laces
- Survival bag
- Watch
- Spare top to put on during stops
- Personal munchies
- Camera and spare batteries!

