

BEN NEVIS



SAFETY INFORMATION FOR WALKING THE MOUNTAIN PATH

JUNE - SEPTEMBER

Ben Nevis is Britain's highest mountain at a height of **1345m (4,413ft)** with a total return distance on the mountain path of **16km (10 miles)** which normally takes **6-8 hours** to complete. The information provided here is designed to help you prepare for an enjoyable and safe day on the hill.

REMEMBER: TAKE A SUITABLE MAP AND COMPASS AND KNOW HOW TO USE THEM

MOBILE PHONE RECEPTION SHOULD NOT BE RELIED ON.

SUMMIT PLATEAU

It is essential to keep well back from the edge. Serious accidents can occur. This is especially important during high winds or when there is snow. Snow on the ground covers the path and makes it very hard to follow. Beware of overhanging cornices that are ready to break away.

NORTH EAST FACE

All around the summit there is steep dangerous ground such as the 600m (2000ft) cliffs on the NE face. Keep to the main route. When you leave the summit ensure you are returning by the correct path by taking a bearing on your compass.

FIVE FINGER GULLY

The top of the Five Finger Gully has a deceptive gentle slope which quickly leads to steep dangerous cliffs. Pay attention and ensure you are heading in the correct direction. Many accidents occur in this area.

RED BURN

On your way up and down the path, when you reach the area near the lochan, make sure you follow the mountain path and not the path to the North Face.

RECOMMENDED MAPS

Ordnance Survey: Landranger 1:50,000 Sheet 41
Ordnance Survey: Explorer 392 1:25,000
Harvey Ben Nevis Map 1:25,000

A local Mountain Guide can help you complete your walk up Ben Nevis safely as well as being a mine of knowledge about the mountain and the surrounding area.



1345m (4413ft)

!DANGER!
600m (2000ft)
cliffs on
North Face

!DANGER!
Five Finger
Gully

Ben Nevis
Mountain
Path

RED BURN

North Face Path

Youth
Hostel
Bridge

**GLEN
NEVIS**

Achintee

Ben Nevis Visitor Centre
Car Park & Toilets

For further information and local advice contact
The Ben Nevis Visitor Centre on 01397 705922
www.bennevis.org

Do not use this illustration to navigate Ben Nevis

PLANNING YOUR WALK

The walk usually takes at least **6-8 hours** to complete, but can take longer. Plan to set off early in the morning to avoid returning in the dark. Note your start time and again when you reach the Red Burn (half way point). If it has taken you 2 hours to reach this point it will be at least the same again to the summit, but could be longer if you are tired as the path gets steeper.

Please consider your general health before setting out. Many accidents occur coming down the mountain as the **descent can be as arduous and tiring as the ascent**. Please take this into account and plan your trip accordingly. The path is relatively easy at the start but becomes increasingly rocky, arduous and exposed. Even with a good level of fitness you may still find the walk difficult and strenuous.

Always notify someone of your intended route and expected return time. You can do this by leaving a CLIVE form with a friend, family member or your accommodation provider.

The weather can be very changeable and the summit temperature can be **significantly colder** than at the base of the mountain. Check the local mountain weather forecast:

www.mwis.org.uk/scottish-forecast/WH
www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/forecast
Met Office Weather Desk 0370 900 0100

Weather forecasts are displayed at the Ben Nevis Visitor Centre in Glen Nevis.

If you do not understand the weather forecast, seek advice at the Ben Nevis Visitor Centre.

Cloud and hill fog cause poor visibility, especially when there is snow on the ground. You will be dependent on accurate navigation with a map and compass. You will need to be able to set your compass to the correct bearing and follow it to walk in the correct direction, as well as measure your distance over the ground by counting paces. If you do not have these skills it is not recommended that you go above the snow line in fog. A GPS is a useful back up to navigating with a map and compass but should not be relied on by itself.

KIT LIST

Being properly dressed and equipped will greatly improve your enjoyment of a day on the hill. Layering is the ideal way to regulate your temperature throughout the day.

Clothing:

- Warm, comfortable trekking trousers (**not jeans**)
- Thermal base layer top
- Warm mid layer top
- Warm fleece jacket or top
- Thick walking socks
- Walking boots (with ankle support)

In your rucksack:

- Water and wind proof trousers and jacket with hood
- Spare warm clothing
- Warm hat and gloves
- Waste kit bag
- First Aid Kit (include blister plasters)
- Survival bag / emergency shelter
- Food (you will burn in the region of 3000 calories!)
- Drinks (take at least 1l of water)
- Map (preferably in waterproof case)
- Compass
- Whistle
- Watch
- Torch (preferably a head torch)
- Rubbish bag

Other items you might consider taking:

- In hot weather - additional water, sun cream, sun hat, sun glasses
- Mobile Phone, GPS, camera

TAKE STEPS TO MINIMISE YOUR IMPACT

Over 150,000 people climb Ben Nevis annually. Enjoy your day, but please leave it litter and waste free for others to enjoy also.

- Take **ALL** your litter and food scraps home with you
- Use a refillable water bottle
- If you need to urinate, do so at least 30m from streams and burns
- If you need to defecate, use a waste kit bag and pack out your waste. Do not leave waste on, or buried on, the hill
- Bag **ALL** sanitary waste and toilet tissue and bring it off the hill
- Do not build cairns or leave any objects on the hill
- Help to protect the fragile montane habitat by staying on the path

ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY

Decide if your situation can be dealt with by your group. It can take several hours for a rescue team to reach you, depending on the location and weather. The best plan may be to continue descending, **if safe to do so**.

If you do require assistance dial 999 and ask for POLICE, then MOUNTAIN RESCUE.

- Do not expect a rescue to be immediate
- Do not expect a helicopter

When in contact with the emergency services be prepared to provide the following information:

- Your name and contact number
- The nature of the problem or injury
- Location, including grid reference if possible
- Name, age and medical history of casualty
- The weather conditions where you are

A member of the Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team will normally attempt to call you back to gain further details that may be required or to update you on the progress of a rescue.

In the event of a serious accident or illness:

- Assess the situation - **do not** further endanger yourself or others
- Speak to the casualty, offer reassurance, even if they are unconscious
- Call for help in your immediate vicinity
- Apply first aid as appropriate
- When the casualty is stable, continue to reassure, monitor and keep them warm

The summit shelter is for emergency use only and helps to save lives - please respect this and do not use it as a toilet or camping area.