



## Enjoy the Cairngorms National Park Safely

The Cairngorm Mountains and their many straths offer some of the most awe-inspiring and varied terrain for those keen to venture outside. The experience can be challenging and life affirming whether you're scrambling up the peaks or striding out through the forests.

To get the best out of your experience you should consider the following, and remember, hazards do exist, despite the relatively low height of the mountains. This leaflet gives some simple guidelines for your enjoyment and safety.

### Before You Go

Before setting out on ANY trip, obtain a weather forecast from national and local radio, television, newspapers or visit [www.mwis.org.uk](http://www.mwis.org.uk). Leaving word with someone of where you are going can be a good idea but if you do, don't forget to advise them when you return. Many Ranger Bases have a log which you can use for this purpose.

### The Weather

Changeable is the best way to describe the weather in Scotland, particularly the Cairngorms - and it can change at an alarming speed. Even on warm sunny days bad weather might be on the way. So, if the wind strengthens, clouds thicken, visibility decreases or the temperature falls, consider whether you need to revise your plans.



### Planning

Choose a walk which is appropriate to you or your group's experience, fitness, navigation skills, knowledge of the area and for the prevailing weather conditions. As a general rule, take children only on routes which allow for a safe and easy retreat. If the conditions are not ideal consider a walk lower down, most communities in the Park have fantastic networks of promoted paths.

# What to Take

## Clothing

Warm, wind and waterproof clothing is essential, including gloves and a hat (even in the summer!). Ideally, you want to have warm, thin layers (which you can remove/add as you go) and fully waterproof and windproof outerclothes (jacket and trousers). It's always a good idea to carry some spare clothing - socks, tops and bottoms - just in case. There's nothing worse than trudging home in soggy socks....!



Scottish Viewpoint

## Equipment

Always carry a map and compass - but it is vitally important that you know how to use them (Ordnance Survey maps scale 1:50,000 or 1:25,000 are recommended).



Carry equipment for use in an **emergency** such as a torch, whistle, First Aid Kit and emergency shelter. These items are inexpensive and readily available from all outdoor shops. The emergency signal is six blasts on the whistle or six flashes with the torch.



## Footwear

Your footwear should provide good ankle support and have a firm sole with a secure grip. Hillwalking boots are strongly recommended.

## Food and Drink

Take ample food and drink for each member of your group. Always take reserve supplies. Simple high energy foods are best (e.g. chocolate, dried fruits, cheese and biscuits), as are hot drinks in cold wet weather.





## On Your Walk

### Tracks and Paths

Part of the Park's attraction is the wildness of its countryside. Many paths are not signposted and even those marked on maps may sometimes be difficult to trace. It's very easy to follow a sheep or deer track that leads to nowhere! Use your map and check your location regularly.

### The Cairngorms Varied Terrain

The ground you cover - from heather and peat bog to rocky paths - makes walking in the Cairngorms exciting; however, it can also be slow and exhausting! Rivers and burns can rise rapidly and become impassable. Consider these points when planning your walk, for it will affect the distance you can cover in the time available.

### Shelter

Do not assume you will find emergency shelter in the Cairngorms as even those marked on maps may not be suitable. Ensure that you are properly equipped for emergencies.

### Snow

During the summer months you may find patches of snow. You should avoid these areas unless you have the skills to cope with the extra hazard. Remember, many mountain accidents result from a simple slip. It can snow during any month of the year in the Scottish hills. Hillwalking in winter should be regarded as mountaineering.



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