

Scottish Sea Stacks

Britain's highest sea stack - the Old Man of Hoy - lies off the coast of the Orkney Islands in Northern Scotland. Our mission is to go and climb it, together with the other well-known Scottish sea stack, the Old Man of Stoer.

Sample Itinerary

Day 1	Travel to Scrabster (the ferry terminal on Scottish mainland). Visit the Caithness coast en route for some sea cliff climbing to warm up, e.g. the unique conglomerate sea cliffs at Sarclet. Last evening ferry from Scrabster to Stromness on Orkney mainland. Or if clients are flying to Kirkwall, meet in Stromness pm.
Day 2	Early morning ferry from Stromness to Hoy. Taxi to Rackwick Bay. Approach over the headland - approx. 1 hour walk. Ascent of Old Man of Hoy. Return to Rackwick Bay and overnight in hostel/bothy/camp - as preferred. NB if a fast ascent is made, its possible to return to Stromness on the last evening ferry.
Day 3	Early morning taxi from Rackwick bay to ferry terminal, then ferry back to Stromness/Orkney mainland. Climbing on the sea cliffs of Yesnaby. PM ferry Orkney to Scrabster. Relocate towards Old Man of Stoer - overnight in Lairg/Ullapool. Or, if we make it back to Stromness on day 2, its possible to catch an early morning ferry back to the mainland. In this case, we can climb on Sheigra on day 3, and wild camp near the cliffs.
Day 4	Travel to Stoer, approach in approx. 1 hours walk, and climb the Old Man of Stoer. Overnight in Ullapool.
Day 5	Climbing on the sea cliffs at Reiff. PM return south via Inverness.

Fitness and Experience

You must have multi-pitch climbing experience, the ability to second HVS, multi-pitch abseil descent skills and a good head for exposure. If you need to train for this trip, then regular climbing beforehand should include plenty of crack climbing to practise hand/fist jamming skills, which are needed a lot on Hoy and Stoer.

Guiding Team

All our rock courses are staffed by BMG or AMI members, or IFMGA guides.

Meeting Point

Meet at a suitable point and share lifts together to the ferry terminal at Scrabster, or guide can collect from Inverness airport, or meet in Stromness. We will contact you to arrange this.

Included in the Price

- Guides fees and all guides expenses
- Communal safety equipment (ropes etc)
- Local travel in the guides' vehicle to complete the course itinerary whilst in Scotland.

Not included in the Price (see below for further info)

- Food and accom
- Ferries and taxis
- Travel to Scotland
- Personal equipment hire

Food

Take at least enough food for lunches and a couple of evening meals/breakfasts, which can be cooked on camping stoves (for an overnight on Hoy and possible camping at Sheigra). Other meals can be taken in BnB's/local pubs as preferred. We will be in touch to coordinate any shopping required en route.

Accommodation

This is a very flexible week with various accommodation options, to work around the ferry logistics, weather and other variables. It's possible to use bed and breakfasts for the duration of the trip, but typically we use a BnB on the first night, then nights camping/using bothies or hostels. This can be worked out as we go depending on weather etc.

Ferries

Cars will be left on the mainland. Ferries crossings are required as a foot passenger: 1 return journey from Scrabster to Stromness on Orkney mainland, and 1 return journey from Stromness to Hoy.

Taxis

A taxi ride is required from Hoy ferry terminal to Rackwick bay, where the approach walk starts to the Old Man. For climbing on the Orkney sea cliffs (Yesnaby) a local taxi ride is required from Stromness. (Taxis will be split between the team).

Budget approx. £200 per person for food, accom, ferries and taxis for the duration of the trip (plus extra for any drinks). Alpine Guides will make all the nec. bookings in advance for the team.

Travel to Scotland

Drive/car share with the guide, or fly to Inverness airport, or fly to Kirkwall airport on Orkney - a short taxi ride will then be required to Stromness where the first nights accom is situated. For a quick search of the best flight options, check out the excellent Sky Scanner website or mobile phone app <https://www.skyscanner.net>

Insurance

Although not compulsory, we recommend you buy holiday insurance covering cancellation and curtailment risks. The following companies provide specialist insurance:

The British Mountaineering Council	www.thebmc.co.uk	0870 010 4878
Snowcard	www.snowcard.co.uk	01327 262 805

More information, including advice for non-UK residents, can be found on the Insurance page of our website here: <https://www.alpine-guides.com/climb/planning-your-climbing-trip/insurance/>

Equipment

A full kit list is enclosed. We will provide all climbing and communal safety equipment (ropes etc), although we recommend people use their own harness/helmet if they have them. You are responsible for providing your own rock boots. Clients are expected to supply their own personal clothing, waterproofs and a rucksack.

Weather and Conditions

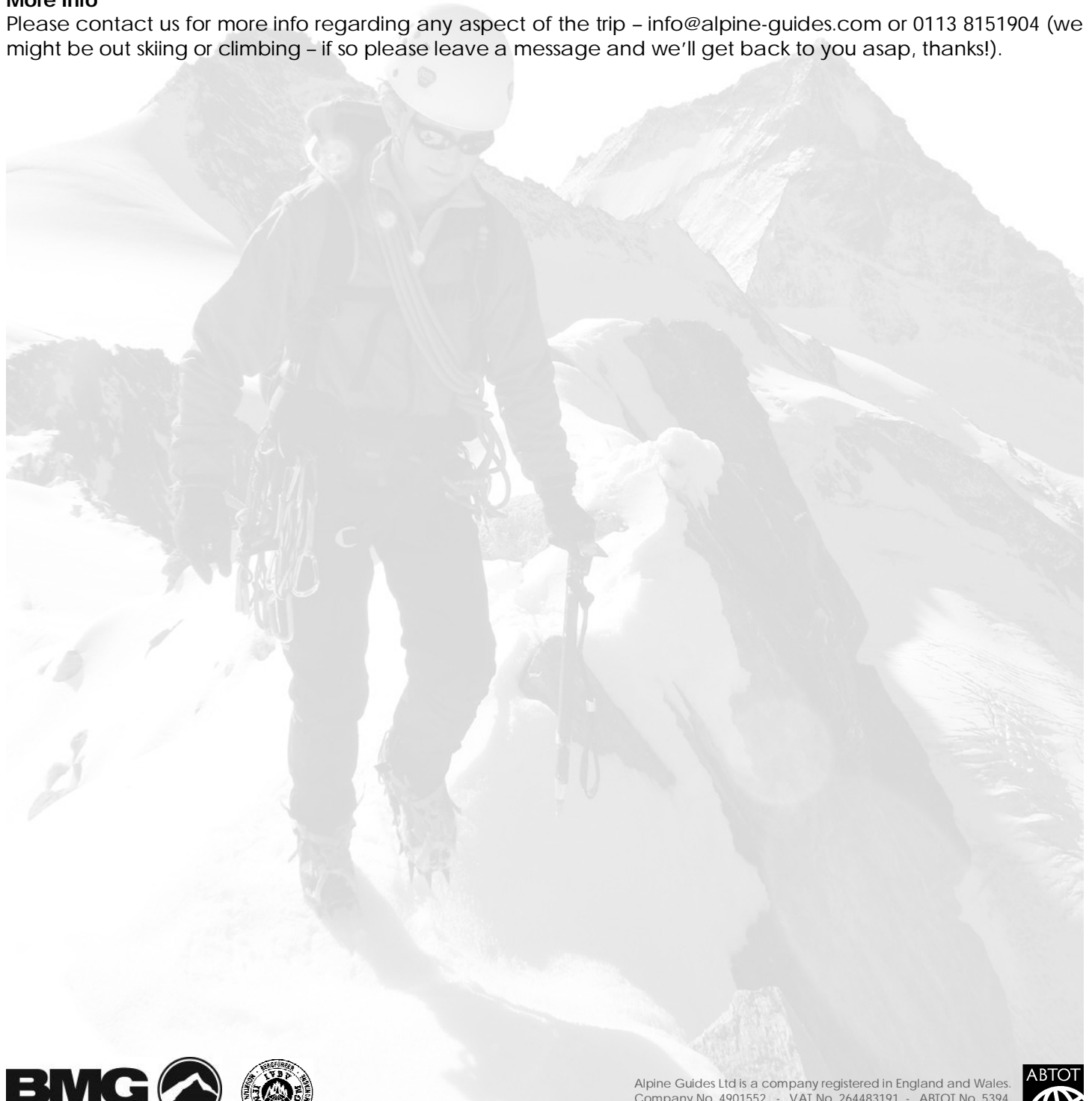
It's Scotland, so the weather can do anything at any time of year! Please check the forecast and come suitable prepared, with full waterproofs and/or sun cream. The good thing about the Scottish islands however is that the worst weather often blows over and breaks on the mainland.

What Next?

- Bookings can be made online via our website. The balance is due 8 weeks before the course start date - we will email you a balance reminder including your invoice and possible payment methods.
- Once we have the minimum required number of bookings we will email you to confirm the course is going (confirmed trips will also be visible on our website). Once confirmed, you should arrange your accommodation and travel to resort.
- We will email you 2 weeks before the course start date with any final info including your guides contact details and any other final info.

More Info

Please contact us for more info regarding any aspect of the trip - info@alpine-guides.com or 0113 8151904 (we might be out skiing or climbing - if so please leave a message and we'll get back to you asap, thanks!).



Rock Climbing Kit List

Above all, your kit needs to do the job but be as light as possible. Lightweight breathable fabrics are ideal for waterproofs, which are carried as often as worn (hopefully!).

Technical Clothing

- **Waterproof jacket** – lightweight breathable model
- **Overtrousers** – with long side zips
- **Socks** – warm 'Smartwool' type, plus thin liner socks and spares
- **Wicking thermal tops/t-shirts**
- **Fleece mid layer** – or equivalent light insulating layer
- **Mountain trousers** – light/mid-weight windproof softshell model
- **Thin gloves** – windproof 'hardfleece' model is good
- **Warm hat** – must fit under a helmet
- **Spare warm layer** – fleece or lightweight synthetic belay jacket

Personal Items

- **Water Container** – at least 1 litre
- **Headtorch** and batteries
- **Map, compass and whistle** (optional, but a good idea)
- **Personal medications and blister kit** – zinc oxide tape, compeed etc
- **Sun Glasses** – CE rated 3 or 4
- **Sun and lip cream** – factor 30+
- **Sun hat**
- **Shorts and t-shirt**
- **Wallet and passport**

Technical Equipment

- **Rucsac 35/45l** is perfect for general use
- **Small (10-15L) rucksack** - lightweight 'summit pack' or a fell running sack. Not essential, but useful for taking a waterproof and food on the climbs.
- **Mountain Boots or sturdy approach shoes with good grip** - for descending the cliff face paths to OMOH
- **Rock boots** – must be comfortable enough to wear for several hours
- **Approach shoes** or trainers
- ****Harness**, locking karabiner and belay device
- ****2 prussik loops and karabiner** – if in doubt, bring 3m of 6mm climbing cord!
- ****120cm sling** and locking karabiner
- ****Climbing helmet**
- **Camping gear** - tent, sleeping bag, sleeping mat, stove and fuel, cooking/eating equipment (if flying the guide may supply a spare tent etc)

Possible extras: Trekking poles

**We may well be able to provide these items if you haven't got your own.

Your guide will have all other climbing safety kit, first aid and survival equipment. For more advice please get in touch.

Alpine Guides Ltd – Booking Conditions

1. All bookings are made with Alpine Guides Ltd, company number 4901552, whose registered office is at 14 Wrenbeck Close, Otley, West Yorkshire, LS21 2BU and whose directors are Alun Powell and Richard Cross.
2. We only accept bookings from persons over the age of 18 at the time of booking. Bookings by or on behalf of persons under the age of 18 may be accepted on certain courses, when accompanied on the course by another person over the age of 18 and subject to written parental consent.
3. Unless stated otherwise, your booking must be accompanied with a deposit of £300 per person per course booked, or if booked within 56 days (8 weeks) of the course start date by the full payment. When we receive your booking application, you will be sent a confirmation email. Once we have received payment and checked all information contained within your booking application, we will accept your booking. You will then be sent further information about the current status of your trip
4. We will store and process your personal information securely and in line with our Privacy Policy which can be viewed on our website.
5. Email and PDF attachments are our primary contact method, so you must provide us with a valid email address. You must also ensure that our email address: info@alpine-guides.com is added to your safe senders list, as we cannot be held liable for communication problems caused by personal firewalls, spam filtering systems, or your inability to open attached email documents.
6. Balance of payment is due 56 days (8 weeks) prior to the course start date. We prefer you to pay full balance by a direct bank transfer. If full payment is not received by this date we reserve the right to cancel your booking without refund.
7. For courses taking place outside the United Kingdom you must purchase specialist mountaineering insurance covering helicopter rescue, medical treatment and repatriation (plus on and off piste skiing for ski courses). You must bring all insurance documentation with you on the course. We reserve the right to cancel your booking at any time if we are not satisfied you have adequate insurance in place.
8. If you wish to cancel you must notify us in writing, where upon the following charges will be applied from the date we receive your notice of cancellation:-
 - More than 8 weeks (56 days) before start date – loss of deposit.
 - Between 4 and 8 weeks (28-56 days) before start date – 50% of course fee or loss of deposit, whichever amount is greater.
 - Less than 4 weeks (28 days) before start date – full course fee.
9. Requests for course transfers must be made more than 56 days prior to original start date and are subject to availability. You also have the right to transfer your booking to another person who satisfies all conditions for the course (including health, fitness and experience requirements), subject to the same conditions above.
10. We reserve the right to cancel any course due to insufficient numbers, or transfer bookings between courses to make numbers viable. In either event clients will be informed of our decision as soon as possible and not less than 21 days before start date. You will be offered either a free transfer, a full refund, or a mutually agreed alternative program. You must inform us as soon as possible which you choose to accept.
11. In the event of guide injury or illness, we will endeavour to find replacement guide(s) as soon as possible. If replacement guide(s) cannot be found part way through a trip, we will refund guiding fees for any days of guiding not provided and you may still use remaining accommodation nights unguided. In the event that we cannot find replacement guide(s) for the whole of your trip, you may choose to use the accommodation portion of your trip and receive a refund of guiding fees, cancel your trip with a full refund, or accept a mutually agreed alternative program.
12. We do not accept any responsibility for changes to travel arrangements that you make in order to join your trip or course. We accept no financial liability that may arise from any enforced change to your travel plans due to any alteration of the trip or course dates, the itinerary or its cancellation, howsoever caused. You are advised to book transferable, refundable travel tickets with no penalties should a cancellation be necessary.
13. At the discretion of the course director, guiding ratios may be varied from the stated course ratio to cover eventualities such as staff absence or change of itinerary, so long as this does not breach accepted local guiding ratios or other professional guidelines laid out by the British Association of Mountain Guides.
14. We do not accept bookings from groups or individuals participating in sponsored climbs or 'challenge events' of any kind. If we discover that you are seeking sponsorship or participating in such an event in connection with one of our courses, we reserve the right to cancel your booking without refund, or exclude you from further mountain activities whilst on the course with immediate effect.
15. Whilst we maintain high professional standards of client care and safety, you must realise and accept that climbing, mountaineering and skiing are activities which carry a danger of personal injury or even death, as they take place in remote and hazardous mountain terrain. All clients must be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement in such activities.
16. All information contained within our website, social media channels and other publicity is for guidance only. Whilst making every effort to ensure accuracy, we cannot be responsible for any inaccuracies or alterations beyond our control. Should any changes occur, clients will be notified before a booking is accepted.

17. Although we adhere to planned itineraries wherever possible, changes may occur to both travel and guiding itineraries due to external factors beyond our control. In particular, the guide has total discretion to alter programs at any time in the interests of client safety and current mountain, or weather conditions.

18. By booking you agree to abide by instructions and decisions made by the guide regarding individuals and the group as a whole. Our guides reserve the right to exclude individuals from a planned activity on the grounds of health, safety or the success and enjoyment of the rest of the party. Any individuals so excluded are not entitled to a refund. Any individual contravening the decisions or advice of their guide, or undertaking independent mountain activities during the course shall forfeit all protection and duty of care from the guide.

19. We accept no liability for the consequences of strikes, riots, acts of war or terrorism, disease outbreaks, government intervention, natural disasters or adverse weather conditions. If such occurrences cause us to have to cancel a course or trip we will offer an alternative holiday if possible, but accept no liability for return of fees paid prior to cancellation or curtailment.

20. If you have a complaint about the guiding or other services you receive during your holiday, you must notify ourselves or the guide involved as soon as possible, in order to give us the opportunity to put things right. Non of our guides have authority to promise refunds or compensation on behalf of Alpine Guides Ltd. Only the company directors are authorised to make such decisions.

If, despite our best efforts and having followed the above procedure for reporting and resolving your complaint, you feel that it has not been satisfactorily settled, we recommend that it is referred for arbitration under the ABTOT Travel Industry Arbitration Service. An Independent Arbitrator will review the documents relating to any complaint and deliver a binding decision to bring the matter to a close. Details of this scheme are available from The Travel Industry Arbitration Service, administered by Dispute Settlement Services Limited, 9 Savill Road, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 2NY. This scheme cannot however decide in cases where the sums claimed exceed £5,000 per person or £10,000 per booking form, or for claims which are solely or mainly in respect of physical injury or illness or the consequence thereof.

21. On courses that include accommodation in the course fee:

The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT) provides financial protection under The Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018 for Alpine Guides Ltd, membership number 5394 and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following:

1. non-flight packages and
2. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the EEA, which are sold to customers outside of the EEA.

ABTOT cover provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled or repatriation if you are abroad. Please note that bookings made outside the EEA are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with Alpine Guides Ltd. In the unlikely event that you require assistance whilst abroad due to our financial failure, please call our 24/7 helpline on 01702 811397 and advise you are a customer of an ABTOT protected travel company. You can access The Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018 here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2018/634/contents/made>

22. All terms and conditions between clients and Alpine Guides Ltd are to be governed by and held under the exclusive jurisdiction of English Law.

23. Making your booking implies that you understand and accept the booking conditions and agree to abide by them.