

PYGMY ELEPHANT

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# Scottish Highlands Packing Guide



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The Scottish Highlands are a magical region sprinkled with stunning lochs, imposing mountains and tranquil valleys. We offer two treks in the Highlands: the West Highland Way, 95.5 miles (153.2 km) long and Scotland's most popular long-distance hiking trail, and its beautiful little sister the Great Glen Way at 79 miles (127 km) long. It is officially. Preparing correctly for these hikes will allow you to absorb the experience with minimal stress and worry.

This packing list provides recommendations based on our experiences traveling and hiking. You may find that you don't need everything on this list, or that you need things we haven't mentioned. **Everyone's backpack will look different, depending on their situation.** If you need help deciding what you should and shouldn't pack, please contact us.

## PRE-TRAVEL PLANNING

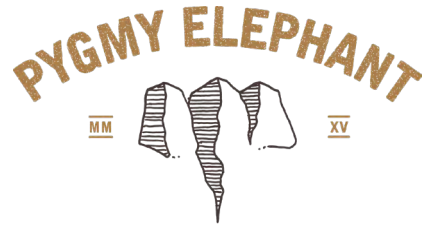
Before you start packing, there are several important planning tasks you should complete. These are related to your packing list and will contribute to a successful trek.

- **Notify friends and family of your travel plans.** We recommend you develop a plan to make regular check-ins with at least one person while you are on the trail.
- **Notify your bank of your travel plans.** State that you will be traveling in the UK and that they should allow transactions. Check with your bank about ATM restrictions, as well.
- **Notify your government of your travel plans.** This isn't strictly necessary, but your government can provide you with help in an emergency situation.
- **Ensure your passport is current.** Many countries require that your passport be valid for at least six months beyond the dates of your trip.
- **Obtain visas and travel documents as necessary.** [Check if you need a visa to enter the United Kingdom.](#)
- **Purchase a travel insurance policy.** Your policy should cover medical expenses, evacuation, and repatriation and should preferably have no elevation or equipment restrictions.
- **Familiarize yourself with the terrain for your trek.**
- **Familiarize yourself with basic first aid and emergency procedures.**

## DOCUMENTS

- Passport and visas.
- Travel insurance policy documentation.
- Cash in British pounds.
- Pygmy Elephant handbook.
- Guidebooks and maps.

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## CLOTHING

Scottish weather is fickle and you may experience three or four seasons in one day, regardless of the time of year. Layering is an effective way to adjust to temperature, wind, and precipitation. When the weather is bad, you want to be able to quickly add layers. Choose a base layer made of wool, silk, or synthetic material, as these fabrics both wick moisture away and keep you warm when wet. Do not wear a cotton base layer, as it dries slowly. Remember the fearsome biting midge, which can ruin an otherwise pleasant walk in the countryside. Cover up when they are most active at dawn and dusk, or consider wearing insect-repellent clothing to keep them at bay.

- **Technical hiking pants** and/or **hiking shorts**.
- **Wool, silk, or synthetic base layer and underwear**.
- **Synthetic long-sleeved shirt**.
- **Fleece mid-layer** (or similar).
- **[Waterproof and breathable jacket](#)**.
- **Wool or synthetic hiking socks**.
- **T-shirts and comfortable layers for mountain huts**.
- **Long underwear tops and bottoms** (optional).
- !! **Broken-in hiking boots**.

Note: It is important to break in your hiking boots before starting a long-distance trek, as new, stiff boots are more likely to cause blisters and foot pain. You should feel comfortable walking for 6 to 8 hours at a time in your boots for multiple days in a row. [Click here to learn more about how to choose the right boots](#).

## ACCESSORIES & HYGIENE

Accessories covers a wide range of items highly subject to personal preference and trail conditions. In addition to the items below, you might want a roll-top waterproof bag, or a waterproof backpack cover. One of the most important functions of the items below is protection from the elements. Sunscreen, for example, is one item that should be in every hiker's backpack.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ● <b>Backpack</b> (30–50 liters for day bag).   | ● <b>Sunscreen</b> .                        |
| ● <b>Duffel bag</b> (for luggage transfers).    | ● <b>Flip-flops</b> (optional).             |
| ● <b>Camelbak or water bottle</b> (≥ 2 liters). | ● <b>Towel</b> (quick dry).                 |
| ● <b>Hiking poles</b> .                         | ● <b>Toothbrush, toothpaste, floss</b> .    |
| ● <b>Hats</b> (wool and with sun-bill).         | ● <b>Shampoo, soap, hand sanitizer</b> .    |
| ● <b>Gloves</b> (waterproof recommended).       | ● <b>Insect repellent and/or head net</b> . |
| ● <b>Head lamp</b> .                            | ● <b>Blister plaster or moleskin</b> .      |
| ● <b>Sunglasses</b> .                           | ● <b>Earplugs and eye mask</b> .            |
| ● <b>Knife or multi-tool</b> .                  | ● <b>Slippers</b> (optional).               |
| ● <b>Compass</b> .                              | ● <b>Dirty clothes bag</b> .                |
| ● <b>Sleeping bag liner</b> .                   |   |

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## EMERGENCY GEAR

You will almost always be close to civilization in the Scottish Highlands, but it's a good idea to bring at least basic emergency gear, if only for peace of mind.

- **First aid kit** (disinfectant, bandages, scissors, absorbent pads, protective gloves).
- **Thermal tarp** or **space blanket**.
- **Medicine** (pain-relief tablets, fever-reducing and anti-inflammatory pills, ointment for scrapes or burns, antihistamines, mineral salts, anti-diarrheal, anti-itch cream).
- **Survival kit** (sewing needle, safety pins, fire starter, duct tape, resealable plastic bags, iodine tincture to disinfect water, orange flagging tape, magnifying glass, parachute cord, emergency food).
- **Whistle**.

## FOOD

Your accommodation will provide breakfast and dinner will be available for purchase every night, either at the accommodation or a restaurant nearby, so the only food that you will need in your backpack is your lunch and your preferred snacks. Many accommodations provide a packed lunch for purchase. Otherwise, there are groceries and supermarkets where you can buy food, or you can stop at a restaurant for a hot meal on the trail (where available). Below are some of our favorite food and food-related items.

- **Chocolate** (especially dark chocolate).
- **Trail mix**.
- **Regional sausage** or **cheese**.
- **Fresh fruit** (especially bananas).
- **Granola**.
- **Energy bars**.
- **Sports drink powder**.