

Kit List for the Cuillin Traverse

A 2-day traverse of the Skye Cuillin Ridge is a fantastic adventure and is about as 'Alpine' as a route can get in the UK. This adventure demands two big days with one night on the ridge so we need to move as fast and light as possible, while still sleeping comfortably on a potentially freezing night. Anyone that has successfully completed a Skye Cuillin Ridge Traverse will have an opinion on what you can and can't do without. The following list and insights come from my experience of hundreds of traverses over the last decade, and is aimed at people looking to traverse from May to September. Feel free to reach out with any questions. Keep in mind that each guide may have their own tactics for a ridge traverse so there maybe some differences between them.

Rucksack

40l Rucksack - The bigger the bag the more stuff you are going to throw in it. Anything bigger than 40l is going to be bulky and get in the way on the more technical sections. A 40l bag with some compression straps on the outside should be more than enough.

Sleeping system

Sleeping bag - You want to be warm enough and comfortable to try and get a good nights sleep but there are other items in your bag that you can use to increase your comfort overnight. I usually carry a lighter weight down bag with a comfort range of about 5-10c. It shouldn't weigh more than about 750g if possible, something like the Alpkit Pipedream 200 is ideal.

Bivvy bag - A reasonable bivvy bag will not only prevent your sleeping bag getting too wet either from a brief shower or from the dew caused by a cold clear night. It will also provide a couple more degrees of warmth to your sleeping system. The Alpkit Hunka is a great and affordable option, mine has lasted me years. It can act as your rucksack liner too.

Sleeping mat - You have a couple of choices here and both have their advantages and disadvantages. The cheapest option is a foam roll mat cut down to length so you are sleeping on it roughly head to knee. Roll mats are cheap and easy to come by but obviously are quite bulky. The big advantage is that you can carry it strapped to the outside of your pack so saving some space inside. The other option is a small self-inflating mattress that will fit in your pack. It should be small and light as possible but they are more expensive and can also puncture but I find that they give a more comfortable nights sleep.

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Climbing Equipment

We can provide all climbing equipment if needed.

Helmet - Your standard climbing helmet. It can be attached to the outside of your bag on the approach to save space.

Harness - Your usual climbing harness will be fine. If you are looking to buy a harness, I suggest getting a lightweight mountaineering harness with no padding.

Belay device and HMS carabiner - A standard style device that can take two ropes.
120cm sling and carabiner

Food & drink

2 x dehydrated meals - They might be a little on the expensive side but well worth the weight and space you can save. I would suggest a warm breakfast meal, never underestimate the morale boost of a warm meal on a cold morning when you are tired.

Lunch and snacks - You will need enough food for two days, anything goes really from energy gels to sandwiches and chocolates. Whatever you take make sure it is a good mix of stuff that you actually want to eat and don't over pack. Your usual amount of food plus a couple of extra bars would be perfect.

Tea/coffee/hot chocolate - Everyone feels better after a warm sugary drink.
Plastic mug and spoon - Your guide will have organised the fuel and stove, you just need something to eat and drink with.

Folding drinks bottle - I suggest a 1ltr folding water bottle so as to save space when it is empty. You can start your ridge traverse with an empty bottle, drink at every opportunity on the approach and fill it at the last possible chance. 1ltr should last you the day, you will arrive at your bivvy thirsty and a bit dehydrated but you have all evening to change that.

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Extras

Small personal F.A kit - Some blister plasters, paracetamol, ibuprofen and any personal medication.

A small headtorch - You are unlikely to need to use it but just in case.

Spare pair of socks - You are going to be on your feet for two hot and long days, a spare pair of dry socks will help reduce the chance of blisters and weigh nothing really.

A hat and gloves - A hat for the chilly evening and morning along with the gloves will help keep you warm and comfortable. The gloves can be a pair of cheap gardening or leather gloves. They will protect your hands from the rough Gabbro rock and will probably be ready for the bin once you are finished anyway.

Camera/phone - For taking those fantastic sunset shots and calling for help if needed.

A midge net - Sometime needed but not always, either way you won't get much sleep if you are being eaten all night.

Sunglasses and sun cream - You never know, you might get lucky.

A small amount of toilet paper - You should know what that is for!

Footwear

What to wear on your feet for a ridge traverse is always a hot topic and everyone has their own opinion. My advice would be to wear what you would normally wear for a day in the mountains. After all you are going to be on your feet for hours and you want to be comfortable. Most of the time is spent on dry rock so you don't really need to worry about getting wet feet (some exceptions) and the sections of climbing you will have are short and never too difficult with a rope above your head.

My personal recommendation is a pair of La sportiva TX 4 mid shoes

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Waterproofs

A good **3 layer goretex jacket and waterproof over trousers** are 100% necessary. They obviously help with water protection but they also add warmth on cold spring days especially from the breeze high up.

Clothing

Trousers - Mid weight/light weight trekking trousers

Base layer shirt - Long sleeve unless it is forecast to be very hot.

Mid/outer layer - A hooded soft shell jacket will help keep the wind off you but be breathable enough whilst moving.

Extra insulation layer - The forecast will dictate what layer i take, if it is going to be a cold night then I will take a hooded synthetic fill jacket. It can be worn through the night for extra warmth too. If it is going to be a bit warmer then I will take a synthetic Gilet to save on the weight



The Inaccessible Pinnacle: Scotland's most challenging Munro