

Scouts' Guide to Winter Adventure

Getting out in the cold and loving every minute. (Hot chocolate not included).



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1. Welcome

The great outdoors doesn't close for winter. In fact, that's when nature can be at its most spectacular. But it's easy to get caught out in the cold. That's why you need to be prepared for outdoor adventures with the right equipment and clothing. And hot chocolate, of course.

In this guide we've provided some great tips to make the most of the outdoors this winter, from a winter camp complete with some tasty cooking ideas to shelter building and fire lighting. Start planning your winter adventures (and don't forget to wrap up warm!).



Please remember that safety is always your first priority when attempting any activity in this guide. See here for more: [Stay safe | Scouts](#)

2. Camping in the cold

If you're setting out on a winter camping trip, then you need to protect yourself against sudden drops in temperature.

Choose the right equipment

A cheap tent won't feel so much of a bargain on a windy Scottish hillside with broken poles and no shelter for miles. Likewise, your sleeping bag should be right for the conditions. Most sleeping bags have a minimum temperature marked on the packaging. Check this when buying your gear. To save money, you can use one sleeping bag inside another to improve the insulation, but think about the weight if you're hiking and check with an expert (or knowledgeable shopkeeper) to make your sleeping bag will be warm enough. You'll also need a good ground mat to prevent contact with the cold ground.

Heating

The only safe source of heat in a tent is your own body, so conserve it by wrapping up well. Don't light a fire or stove inside a tent, or drag in a barbecue – apart from the fire risk, these can generate deadly Carbon Monoxide fumes that will become trapped in the tent.

Food and drink

As your body is your key heat source, make sure to use the right fuel. In cold weather, your body needs sugars to generate heat. Make sure you eat plenty of butter and pasta for example. Drink hot tea or other hot drinks, especially before going to bed. Always stay hydrated.

Clothing

Most of your heat will be lost through your head and extremities (your hands and feet), so wear a hat, even in bed if necessary, as well as gloves, scarf and two pairs of socks! Don't be too proud to use a hot water bottle, which you should place at the foot of your sleeping bag some time before going to sleep. In addition, wear light, wick layers close to the skin beneath your other winter clothing. Black clothing will help attract sunlight.

Signs of hypothermia

Hypothermia happens when a person's body temperature drops below 35 degrees. In this state, excessive shivering confusion, slurred speech and clumsiness will result. If you suspect someone becoming hypothermic, try and warm them as quickly as possible, ideally, this means getting them to a warm shelter, but at the very least, they should huddle up with others, drink a warm drink and wear dry clothes. Seek emergency medical attention.

Signs of frostbite

An early signs of frostbite is a whitening of the skin that doesn't return to its normal colour after applying pressure. Seek immediate emergency medical attention for this.

Sleeping bags

Legend has it that Treasure Island author, Robert Louis Stephenson, invented the first ever sleeping bag, during his adventures in France described in *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*. He wanted a practical, self-contained and portable sleeping blanket. However the fleece lined sack produced was so heavy it could only be carried on his donkey! Fortunately sleeping bag technology has improved since then.

Sleeping bags work by trapping warm air within the bag while you sleep. They use the heat generated by your body to circulate warm air without releasing it. The best kind of sleeping bags are those with features that help retain this heat, whether it's a top of the range filling, 'baffles' that keep drafts out, or a hood that stops warmth escaping from around the head.

Sleeping bags have ratings so that you get an idea of what's comfortable in the summer and which are better in winter. When buying a sleeping bag, look carefully at the rating and the maximum and minimum temperatures that it is claimed that the bag will keep you warm in. Here's a rough guide of how sleeping bags are rated:

- **1 season**

Really only for use in the summer; usually around +4/5 degrees

- **2 season**

Good for later spring to early autumn when it's not sweltering, but when you are unlikely to be on the receiving end of cold snaps or snow; around 0 degrees

- **3 season**

Best for mild to cold nights, but with a very low temperature; 0 to -5 degrees.

- **4 season**

These are made for very cold winter nights in the outdoors and are typically more bulky and weigh more, but they do keep you exceptionally warm. To -10 degrees

- **5 season**

Specialist bags for expedition use, these are probably too warm for most activities in the UK.

Sleeping bags should be well aired and dried when the trip is over. At home your sleeping bag should be stored out of its stuff bag if possible, as this avoids the filling becoming compacted and less effective.

Packing your rucksack

There's an art to packing your rucksack. Do it the right way and it'll make life a lot easier on your winter adventure:

- Put the items you need easy access to at the top of the rucksack
- Spread the weight so it's easy and comfortable to carry
- Take care to ensure that easily damaged items are stowed carefully in the pockets
- Keep clothes in a waterproof liner bag to keep them dry
- Carry mats can be carried beneath the rucksack in a plastic bag, or be secured to the top.
- Light bulky items should be placed near the bottom. Heavier items are best placed at the top. This will make the rucksack easier to carry.
- Check you have everything on the kit list.

3. Fire lighting

Everyone heading into the great outdoors needs to know how to build a good fire. The size and type of fire you build depends on what you want to use it for: warmth, cooking, or light.

Remember a fire needs three things: Heat, oxygen and fuel. Gather sticks of different thickness and start with the smallest. You can light a fire with matches, or, if you're feeling more adventurous you can use a flint and steel. These create a show of sparks – have some cotton wool ready to catch these, then start your fire with dry wood shavings or pieces of tinder and kindling (such as small and very dry twigs).

Whatever you build, you must do it safely and consider the impact you have on the land. Don't dig a hole in the ground unless you have permission from the landowner.



Here are some types of fire for you to try:

Wigwam fire

As the name suggests, this takes the form of a wigwam or tepee shape and is the classic campfire. To make it, find a large stick and embed in the ground. Surround with a couple of handful of small kindling. Now lean a series of smaller sticks against the stick all the way around. Repeat, with larger sticks to create another layer, ensuring you leave enough space for air to circulate. Light the fire in the centre then blow as necessary until it catches.

Altar fire

This is an excellent fire to use when the ground must not be scorched, dug or otherwise disturbed. There are many variations on this, however one of the simplest is to make a double layered platform using similar sized logs placed at right angles, lashed together. Now create a top level made of smaller sticks. Cover with soil to prevent the altar itself catching fire. Now make your fire on top.

Star fire

This is a way of making a fire using kindling and small sticks. Now add the ends of four logs next to the fire to create a star shape. These logs will act as fuel, so the fire will burn for a long time.

Crane fire

Find two stout sticks of a similar size, each with a fork at the same level. Now find a longer stick to rest on these forks. Using a steel hook you can now suspend a pot to hang above your fire.

4. Outdoor cooking

Once you've got your fire going, it's time to test your outdoor cooking skills. Here are some simple recipes that can be rustled up on an open fire. Just pack plenty of tin foil!

Knife safety

Outdoor cooking requires a sharp knife. Knives should be stored and carried carefully (in the middle of a rucksack) and only taken out when you're ready to use them. If you're sitting, make sure the ground, chair or log is stable and level. Always cut away from the body.

Different countries have different laws for carrying and storing knives. Legally you must have a good reason to be in possession of a knife in a public place. In the UK, the legal length for a folding blade that does not lock is 7.62cm (three inches). Always check first and remember ignorance of the law is not an excuse.

Spud eggs

Cut the top off a potato, hollow it out, crack an egg into it, replace the lid and wrap in two layers of foil. Put in hot embers for 40 minutes.

Campfire casserole

Wrap sausages (or finely chopped beef/chicken, or no meat at all), chopped onion and any choice of other vegetables in one layer of foil and put into embers for around 30 minutes.

Baked fish

Clean and gut your fish thoroughly beforehand. Wrap your fish in newspapers, wet thoroughly and place on the embers. Turn the fish several times at intervals of about 3-4 minutes until the newspaper is dried and in about 15 mins it is done.

Kebabs

Peel the bark from a long 'green' (i.e. living) stick (not laurel or yew as these are poisonous) and push a mixture of chopped sausages, onion, mushroom, peppers and tomato onto it. Cook over hot embers until the sausage is browned.

Twists or dampers

Mix self-raising flour, water, milk and an egg (or just plain flour, water and vegetable oil), to make a thick dough. Roll into a 'snake' and wrap it around a green stick (see above). Toast over embers until lightly browned and serve with butter and jam.

Chocolate banana

Slice an unpeeled banana in half lengthways and push chocolate buttons inside. Close it up, wrap in two layers of foil and cook in hot embers for up to 15 minutes.



Baked apple

Cut out the core of an apple, place the apple on foil and fill the hole with raisins, sultanas, sugar and/or, chocolate. Wrap in two layers of foil and cook in hot embers for 20 minutes or so. Eat with care as the sugar gets very hot!

Campfire sausage rolls

Cook sausages in the normal way i.e. on a stick or in a pan. Mix flour and water with a pinch of salt to make a dough (twists). Wrap the dough around the sausage put on a stick and turn slowly over a camp fire until light brown. Hey presto- sausage roll.



5. Winter weather

Believe it or not, but you can get a good indication of the weather just by taking a deep breath. If the air is very pungent, for example with compost like odours as plants release their waste, then wet weather is on the way. When the air contains more moisture, scents are stronger.

Watch what animals do

Most people know that cows lie down before a thunderstorm. They also tend to huddle together before bad weather. You will also notice fewer seagulls in the sky at the coast if a storm is on the way. Almost all animals become subdued before rain. Rows of birds on telegraph wires usually indicate low pressure, and therefore fair weather.

Look down

If you see dew on the grass in the morning, it is an indicator of fair weather – there is little breeze to bring rainclouds your way. If it is dry, this means that it has been dried by a breeze, which can often bring inclement weather. Forget all of the above if it rained during the night!

Look at a pine cone

Why not use this favourite to predict the weather. If there is moisture in the air, the scales on the pine cone will close – this means that rain is on the way. If it is fine, the scales will dry up and open.

Cloudspotting

Cloud spotting has become recognised as an art in its own right; it's easier than you think and allows you to predict weather conditions with surprising accuracy.

Stratus

These stretch over a wide area and can often cover the sky for as far as the eye can see. Stratus are low lying clouds (fog is actually stratus cloud) and do not often result in much rain.

Cirrus

These fine, feather-like clouds are not likely to produce rain either. They can indicate a change in weather conditions.

Nimbus

You don't need to be a weatherman to know that these clouds spell rain. They are the classic gathering storm cloud.

Cumulous

When you see a cloud in a child's picture book, it is more than likely to be a cumulous – they are the classic fluffy cloud and indicate fair weather if white, and rain if dark.

Alto cumulous

Patchy cloud, at medium height; low chance of rain.

Cumulonimbus

An oversized cumulous cloud, which can indicate storms, rain and hail.

Altrostratus

This cloud acts like a screen over the sun and usually indicates a deterioration in the weather

Stratocumulus

Low, lumpy cloud, which indicates light rain.

Nimbostratus

Sheets of dark grey cloud, which indicates heavy rain.

Cirrocumulus

This is what is sometimes referred to as 'mackerel sky' and is most often seen on cold winter days. Little chance of rain.

Weather proverbs

For centuries, people have looked to the skies for indications of the weather to come. Here are some of the most popular saying for predicting the weather.

- Rain before seven, fine before eleven
- When sea-gulls fly to land, a storm is at hand.
- When smoke descends, good weather ends.
- Dew on the grass, rain won't come to pass.
- Red sky at night, shepherd's delight.
- Red sky in the morning, shepherd's take warning
- When stars shine clear and bright, we'll have a very cold night.
- Clear moon, frost soon.
- Halo around the sun or moon, rain or snow coming soon.

6. Wildlife watching

We share our countryside with a huge variety of animals. Take some time to get to know some of these woodland creatures.

Stoat

Stoats are surprisingly large, fierce creatures with a reputation for thievery; they will swipe anything from mice and rabbits to game as well as eggs. While usually quiet, which assists their stealthy behaviour they make a trilling sound before mating, hiss when anxious and are even known to bark when aggressive. Not to be confused with the smaller weasel (although confusingly, the female stoat is smaller than the male stoat).

Wood Mouse

These rodents are found mostly at night in fields, forests and grasslands. They feed mostly on tree seeds which are taken back to their burrows and nests rather than eaten on the spot. Fruit berries and even small snails also form part of their diet. They breed between February and October. If you have any trouble telling the difference between a wood mouse and a House mouse – look out for the larger ears and eyes.

Muntjac deer

Found mostly in southern England, the Midlands and South Wales, the Muntjac deer is small, russet brown variety of deer. Introduced from China a century ago, they have spread from private ownership at Woburn Park into the wild. They feed mainly on small shrubs and plants such as brambles, heather and small shoots. Listen out for their distinctive bark - they can be seen mostly at dusk or dawn.

Squirrel

The now rare red squirrel was a native to Britain for thousands of years. While they didn't directly fall victim to the grey squirrel (contrary to popular belief) when they were introduced from North America in the late 19th century, the grey has proved more adaptable and versatile of the two.

Carrying more body fat, which helps them survive harsher winters, the grey squirrel is also quite content to forage on the ground. The more secretive red squirrels prefer the safety of high conifer branches.

Life has not been easy for the red squirrel in recent times. Losing numbers during an outbreak of the parapox virus in the 1920s, they were also actively hunted for their pelts. The red squirrels can still be seen in significant numbers, mingling with peacocks on Brownsea Island, Poole Dorset – the birthplace of Scouts. They produce two litters each year – in spring and summer.

Red deer

This beautiful animal is also the UK's largest land mammal. While famously associated with the Scottish highlands, they can also be seen in the Lake District, East Anglia and south west England. Feeding on grass and tree roots, stags can grow up to 190kg, while hinds grow up to 120kg. While browner in colour despite their name, their coats are more reddish in summer and greyer in winter.

Badgers

Badgers (named from the French 'Becheur,' meaning digger) are among the UK's most iconic animals; immediately recognisable from their black and white markings, small heads they are nocturnal by nature and are more at home underground than overground. While they were once more populous, there are now 300,000 badgers in the UK, two thirds of which are in England. They make their homes in setts (networks of tunnels and chambers) in groups of five or so on sloping sandy, easy to dig soil, often near fields with good drainage. Badgers are omnivores, eating both animals and plants and their diet varies depending on available food, with earthworms as their principle foodstuff, supplemented with fruit and berries, insects, frogs and even bird

7. Shelter building

Before heading out into the cold, learn how to build a shelter in an emergency. Here's how to make an A-frame shelter, one of the best and easiest to make.

Prepare the ground

Before you begin work on your A-Frame, check that the site is suitable. For example, don't build it near an animal trail or ants nest. Check that there aren't any dead branches above you. Think about where the sun rises and sets and the direction of the prevailing wind. You can use the terrain and surrounding flora to help minimise the latter. Avoid lower ground between two high points as cold air can collect in such places and rain runoff may be a problem too.

- To start the frame you'll need a straight and sturdy ridgepole and two forked supports. Make sure the supports are locked together and that the ridgepole is also secured through the middle. You should be able to rest your weight on the entrance end of the ridgepole at this point. You can use a sharpened digging stick to create small depressions in the ground for the supports.
- Next clear any debris inside the frame and check for any sharp stones.
- Before going any further, lie inside the frame to check you can fit inside without your head sticking out and your feet touching the ridgepole.
- Now start to build the sides by using more sticks which you should rest on the ridgepole. Aim to get fairly straight sticks, avoid rotten ones and trim them to size so that they don't exceed the ridgepole excessively. This will help to funnel rain. If you find that some sticks won't stay in, weave very thin branches or plants such as nettles between them for support but again, don't have them sticking out.
- Once the frame is finished the thatching can start. To make the available leaf litter go further, consider 'tiling' the frame with something like bracken if available (never pull bracken as you'll find the stems can give you a nasty paper like cut), Birch bark or further woven twigs.
- Finally, add lots of leaf litter, starting at the base of the frame and working upwards towards the apex. Using a coat or old tarp will speed up collection, and keep checking in the entrance for chinks of daylight. If there is no chance of wind and rain a minimal covering will make a surprisingly cosy shelter. If it's going to be wet then look to put on in excess of a foot of leaf litter all over. Try not to scoop up soil and small debris as it can fall on you in the night.



8. Hiking and navigation

Getting off the beaten track and hiking is one of the most inspiring ways to see the countryside. There's no better feeling than pulling off your boots at the end of a long walk with a good mate. But like anything else, it pays to be prepared.

Safety first

Before setting off anywhere, let someone know where you're heading and when you expect to return. Check your phone is fully charged and that you have a compass and map with you.

Now, make sure you're wearing a good pair of boots (preferably water proof) or comfortable shoes. Take time to plan your route, and think carefully about how long it will take you to walk it. If there are hills it will take longer! If you're heading into unfamiliar territory or terrain, training in how to use a map and compass and hiking skills is essential. Remember your phone can lose signal and charge, leaving you stranded.



The five Ds of Navigation

In Scouts, we'll help you learn how to use a map and compass, as well as the five D's of navigation – Distance, Duration, Direction, Description and Destination:

- Distance – (how far)
- Duration – (how long)
- Direction – (which way)
- Description – (What does it look like and what we I see?)
- Destination – (What will I see at the end?)

Distance

This is the total length of your walk from start to finish (your destination). This can be measured in advance using the map, following the scale (which will be marked on the map):

- 1:50 000 scale map - 1mm = 50 metres in real life
- 1:25 000 scale map 1mm = 25 metres in real life.

Duration

Once you know how far you'll be travelling, you can start to estimate how long it will take you.

This will depend on:

- how quickly you walk
- the kind of terrain you'll be travelling over (remember, hills take longer!)
- how tired you are
- what sort of load you're carrying.

This is a rough guide for walking speed and time taken:

- Slow walking is 12 minutes per kilometre
- Medium pace: 9 minutes per kilometre.

Direction

When it comes to navigation, this is the most important 'D' of all. To do this, you'll need a map, and a compass, a simple device that can take quite a lot of time to master.

First you need to set your map, lining up north on the map with the north direction on the ground. You can do this by finding landmarks in front of you, then locating them on the map. This means your map is now 'set' for your direction of travel. You can also do this by take a bearing on your compass.

Description

Good navigators are very observant, always looking around them to make sure that what they see in 'real life' matches what's on their map. It's important to visualise what your route will look like in advance. Look out for forests, hill and especially rivers, which can be used as 'handrails' – for example, you'll know before you set off if you're following a river, that it should always be on your right or left.

Destination

Finally, make sure you know what your end point will look like. Is it a car park, a village, or landmark? Try and find a photo so you don't overshoot. Try and make it an obvious feature, such as a tower or hill, which means it will be easier to spot and harder to miss.

This is just an introduction to navigation. It can take a lifetime to learn. Find out more using [this factsheet](#).

Navigation using the stars, sun and moon

In an emergency, you can also find your way in dark using the stars, at least when the sky is clear. The North Star is directly above the North Pole, so if we can find it then it will show us the way north, because 'north' means 'towards the North Pole'.

Finding the North Star

Look for a group of seven stars known as the Plough or Big Dipper, although they actually look a bit more like a saucepan to many people. This saucepan shape never changes although it does rotate anti-clockwise around the North Star in the sky, so it will sometimes appear on its side or even upside down.

Now find the two stars known as the 'pointers'. If you think of the shape as a saucepan on the cooker then these would be the two stars at the far right. Imagine a line from the bottom of these two stars through the top one and then continue five times that distance you will find the North Star. You are now looking north.

The Sun

The easiest star to find is the one we see during the day, the sun. It rises in the eastern part of the sky and sets in the western part although the exact points vary over the year. It rises and sets north of east and west in the summer and south of east and west in the winter. In the middle of the day, when the sun is highest in the sky it will be due south from the UK (all of Europe and North America.)



9. Geocaching

Geocaching began when someone wondered what would happen if they hid a container of trinkets and a log book out in the wilderness and posted the coordinates on the internet. Would people go and look for it? They did, and it's now grown into an activity enjoyed across the world. Participants seek out hidden containers (caches) using published coordinates. When found, they record the find in the log kept in the container and on the website that listed the location.

Although other websites do exist, the activity is dominated by www.geocaching.com. Within the United Kingdom, there are other websites that supplement the provisions of geocaching.com and provide essential information and rules specific to the UK.

It's important to remember that this activity is based on locating a hidden container, while making sure that non-geocachers don't find the cache.

Follow the code of conduct

A Geocache may be of any size from Micro (simply large enough to hold a paper log) to regular containers of several litres capacity. For the rural environment, a new cache category is appearing, the Nano cache, a specialist container just large enough to hold only a long thin strip of paper, often magnetised and secured behind road signs etc. Weather sealing is very important too.

Geocaching - Glossary of terms

- Bearing - The direction to the selected Waypoint.
- CITO - Cache In Trash Out. A principle that should be followed by all cachers which can result in specific CITO Events. All cachers should try to do their bit to keep the countryside clean by collecting litter, but a CITO Event is organised with that specific goal. A community clean-up usually followed by a social gathering of geocachers with a cache hunt or two
- Geocache - Often called simply a 'Cache', the actual container placed at the waypoint. From 'Geo' for Earth and 'Cache' being a store of goods or supplies, often left by explorers.
- Geocaching - A recreational activity that entails seeking a container hidden at specific coordinates. Finding it, recording your details on the log within and then concealing it for the next person.
- A Geocoin has a tracking number allowing them to be moved and tracked in a similar manner to Travel Bugs.
- GPSr/GPS - A Global Positioning System receiver, more regularly referred to as a GPS, even though in reality the satellites and the receiver make up the system.
- Heading - The direction in which you are travelling.
- Latitude - The North/South component of determining a location on the Earth.
- Longitude - The East/West component of determining a location on the Earth.
- Multi-Cache - A type of Cache that requires several waypoints to complete. The first waypoint may contain a small cache containing the coordinates of the next stage. Or several waypoints might each contain components of the coordinates for the final waypoint.
- Route - A path between two or more waypoints.
- Trackback - The ability to reverse a route on a GPS to enable the user to return to their starting point.
- Track Log - The ability of the GPS to automatically record track points; an electronic 'breadcrumb trail'.
- Travel Bug - An item with an Identity Tag attached, which through a unique tracking number can be tracked on the internet as it is moved from Cache to Cache by Geocachers.
- Waypoint - A specific point defined by coordinates, which may be programmed into a GPS in advance or marked along a route whilst at the location, for example to return to the same point later.

10. Winter cycling

Cycling is still one of the best (and cheapest ways) of heading out on an adventure. But in colder conditions, with the possibility snow and ice, it's more important than ever to do it safely. Here are ten safety tips we've developed with Scouts' partner, GO Outdoors.

Check your bike lights (they're a legal requirement)

Not only do bike lights help your visibility, but you're also legally required to have them when you're out when it's dark or turning dark.

You always need a rear reflector when you're riding on roads. It's essential to have:

- a white front light
- a red rear light
- a red rear reflector
- amber pedal reflectors
- white wheel reflectors (to be seen from the side)

Before setting out on your next ride, make sure your bike has lights set up and check they're working. Even if you think you might not be riding in the dark, it's much better to be prepared – you never know when your plans might change.

In case something breaks, our [Repair shop runaround](#) activity can teach you all you need to know about bike repairs.

Check your brakes and tyres

No matter the season, you should regularly check your bike brakes. If they're not working as well as usual, get them fixed before you head out on your next ride.

It's especially important during autumn and winter, when there might be frost or ice on the ground. When it's more slippery, it takes longer for us to brake and come to a stop, putting us at more risk of a collision. Make sure both brakes work properly, so you can stop quickly and safely if you need to. Using both brakes is much safer than using just one, as you might skid or go over your handlebars.

Also, check your tyres have enough grip (tread) to help you brake safely. Get them changed if they're looking a little worn. The tread on tyres keeps them gripping when it's damp, wet or muddy. Why not give our [Ready to ride](#) activity a go to check your bike is safe?

Put on some reflective/luminous clothing

While you'll no doubt be wrapped up in scarves and jumpers when braving a chilly bike ride, it's important to throw on some reflective and luminous clothing on top so you're as visible as possible (especially to car drivers).

Luminous, bright colours can make it much easier for you to be seen in the day, and reflective clothing reflects car lights, street lights or torches, so you'll be seen much better at night.

There're plenty of different items to choose from, including jackets, helmets, rucksacks, covers, reflective bands and gloves. Gloves in colder weather are a great addition, because keeping your hands warm means you're always able to use your brakes/gear and handlebars properly.

Change your road position

If you move out slightly further when you're passing a junction, you'll be able to see better, and drivers will have more chance of seeing you. Keep an eye on other drivers and make sure they've seen you before you make a turn.

Our [Road cycling](#) activity can help prepare you for cycling on the road.

Make your signals visible

This is where hi vis gloves come in handy. It's important to make your signals extra clear and visible during autumn and winter, so make an extra effort to stick your arm out further and wear something reflective to make your signal clearer.

Be extra wary of turning vehicles

It's even more important in the darker months to keep an eye out for turning vehicles. Lots of collisions happen when a driver is turning left and there's a cyclist alongside them. Even if the driver isn't indicating, make sure you approach with caution and hang back until you're completely sure which way they're turning. Let them go ahead before you proceed – don't try to undertake them.

Always follow the Highway Code

When the weather conditions change, it's a great time to remind yourself of the Highway Code. Follow all stop and give way signs, and always stop at red lights.

Use cycle lanes and joint cycleways

Even though cyclists can use the road, lots of towns and cities have special cycle lanes or joint pedestrian/cyclists pavements. They're not only less busy than roads, but they're usually easier to ride on, as roads often have extra obstacles such as grids, speed bumps, or parked cars. Remember to always give way to pedestrians on shared cycleways.

11. Volunteering and fundraising

Helping other people is part of the Scout Promise. It also makes you feel great. And you'll feel even better if you're doing it outdoors. There are so many charities and organisations looking for willing volunteers. Or why not plan a sponsored winter adventure to raise funds for a charity close to your heart? Here are some top tips on how to be a great volunteer.

Find a cause you're passionate about

Whether that's being a young leader in Scouts helping younger children get opportunities to get outdoors, or supporting a charity that's tackling an issue that affects you or a family member, you'll give more if you're fired up about it.

Be safe

If you're a young person, take a parent or carer with you. Check in advance that the organisation has all relevant safety and safeguarding procedures in place. In Scouts, everyone must follow the [Yellow Card, safeguarding code of conduct for volunteers](#).

Be reliable

Although you're not being paid, people will still be relying on you. Keep your promises, turn up on time and do your best. If you do that, you'll end up with more interesting opportunities.

Don't be too proud

Remember there'll all sorts of things that need doing – not all of them glamorous. So don't turn your nose up to opportunities. If you do some of the mundane things, more challenging things are bound to turn up. Be prepared to muck in.

Keep an open mind

Welcome new experiences and different ways of looking at the world. They'll help you develop as a person as well as a volunteer. There's nothing more interesting than finding out how others live their lives.

Put yourself in other people's shoes

Empathy is one of the greatest qualities a volunteer can have – the ability to understand what someone else is feeling. It makes you understand why people do things. This will also help you help them.

Listen

This is one of the greatest skills a volunteer can have. Let's not give people the support we think they need. Let's ask them, and then give them the support they really need. There are lots of ways to be a great listener. The most important is not to speak until the other person has finished.



Learn from others

You're bound to meet volunteers who've been helping longer than you. Ask them questions. Find out what they like doing best and try to get to know them as a person. They're sure to have some really useful tips that will make your volunteering life easier (even it's just how to find the coffee machine!)

Be respectful

One of the great things about volunteering is that you meet and work with people who are different to you. They might come from a completely different background and culture. If you're not sure how to act, or if you're afraid of offending someone, then ask the person to help you.

Be a team player

Remember you're not on your own. As a volunteer, you'll be part of a team and you should have someone there to guide and help you along the way. Don't be afraid to ask for help. That can be bravest thing to do of all.

Be kind

You'll meet all sorts of people as a volunteer. You might not like or get on with all of them. But they could be going through all sorts of things you don't know about. So whatever you do, do the kindest thing.

12. Getting to your winter adventure safely

Remember, don't just plan for your winter adventure. You need to think how you're going to get there too.

Setting out on a winter outing can be a journey in more ways than one. The season's harsh weather and shorter, darker days often making for difficult driving conditions.

With a bit of preparation, though, plus some handy tips from Dacia, travelling to your destination can be a hassle-free experience. This will mean that your winter adventure starts in the best way possible and is memorable for all the right reasons.



Better still, doing a few little things can go a long way to making sure you arrive safe and sound, whatever winter may throw at you and your family's car. For fuss-free driving adventures during the colder months, Dacia recommends that you:

Check your fluids

Just like us, a car needs fluids to function properly. The engine's oil and water levels need regular checks during winter. It's also more important than ever to make sure the screen wash is topped-up. With the season's rain and dark and the increase in road grime and salt, it's more important than ever that you're able to keep the windscreen clean.

Inspect your tyres

Your family car's tyres must be in good condition if you're to stay safe on the road during winter. As well as checking the pressures, look for damage and signs of perishing. The legal limit of tread depth is 1.6 mm, but during the winter it's best to have at least 3 mm.

Look at your wipers and lights

Checking windscreen wiper blades is often overlooked, and it's especially important that you inspect them during winter. Make sure the rubber isn't split and that they're still able to clear the windscreen effectively. Likewise, make sure all the lights are functioning correctly and that the lenses are clean.

Remember your de-icer and scraper

Plummeting temperatures mean your windows can often be covered in ice when your car's been parked overnight or even during the day. Make sure you have a good ice scraper and a bottle of de-icer.

Stay warm and seen: pack for winter

If your car breaks down or you become stranded, make sure you have the essentials to stay warm and seen. This means having warm clothing, a blanket, a shovel, a torch, and a high visibility vest packed in your car.

Don't forget food and drink

Again, being stranded is bad enough, but it's doubly worse if you're hungry! Be sure to carry a good supply of food, water and a flask of hot tea or coffee with you.

Wear your shades

Sunglasses are arguably even more essential for winter driving than during the hotter months. The low sun can dazzle drivers, making it very hard to see the road.

Keep your phone charged

Most people have a mobile phone with them, but don't forget the charger! If you need to call for assistance, now isn't the moment to discover that your battery is flat or low on charge.



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13. Keeping the adventure going

Scouts is the UK's biggest youth movement. We welcome all young people aged 4-24. We'll help you get started on some great outdoor adventures, step up and dream big. And along the way, you'll gain skills that'll stay with you for life. We have over 7,000 Groups across the UK in almost every community. Adult volunteers (including parents and carers) are very welcome too and have just as much fun. Come and join the adventure.

Find out more at www.scouts.org.uk



Scouts 