Beginners Navigation Skills in the Brecon Beacons



Trip style:	Destination:	Walking Grade	Carbon Footprint:
Small group holidays	Brecon Beacons	4	77kg CO2

HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

There's an art to navigating the outdoors that goes beyond mastering a GPS tracking device and loading a smartphone app. The National Navigation Award Scheme (NNAS) Bronze Navigator Award is designed for beginners who are seeking to improve their navigation skills and build confidence in the outdoors. Upon successful completion of the course, you'll be able to plan and follow your own countryside walks, with a good understanding of safety, weather, kit and judgement of time and distance. This holiday is suitable for anyone and no previous experience of navigating with a map and compass is required.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Having the chance to complete the NNAS Bronze Navigator Award
- Learning basic navigation skills through practical indoor and outdoor exercises
- The expertise of a knowledgeable and experienced tutor
- Staying at our country house
- A more personalised experience thanks to small group sizes (maximum 8 people to 1 leader)

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Comfortable en-suite accommodation in our country house
- Cream tea on arrival day
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Registration with the NNAS

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Day 1 Arrival Day

Check-in at the hotel is available from 16:00. If you are a member you can arrive at the house from 14:00. Enjoy a complimentary cream tea at 16:30 and meet other guests.

At 17:00 meet your leader and fellow guests in reception where you will have a welcome to the course.

Day 2–3 Navigation Days

Our days will be spent working through a range of practical indoor and outdoor exercises
that will help us cover the Bronze Navigator Award Syllabus:

- Navigate using a variety of maps and scales.
- Use 4 and 6 figure grid references with worded descriptions to define the position of a map feature and to locate a feature on the ground.
- Orientate the map using handrails, obvious point features and major landforms.
- Use linear features (e.g. paths, tracks, clear boundaries) as handrails in simple navigation exercises.
- Relate prominent landforms such as large hills and valleys to corresponding contour information on the map.
- Orientate the map by aligning a compass needle against grid north and be aware that magnetic variation causes an inaccuracy.
- Use an orientated map to confirm the direction of travel.
- Use clearly identifiable features to confirm position along the route and to recognise when the target has been overshot.
- Measure horizontal distance on the map and estimate distance on the ground using timing, pacing and simple visual judgements e.g.100m.
- Plan and implement simple routes and navigation strategies based on the above skills.
- Recognise a navigation error within a few minutes and apply simple relocation techniques using handrails and prominent features.
- Be aware of the use of mobile phone location apps as a back up to map and compass and in emergencies.
- Demonstrate an awareness of local and national access issues, access legislation, personal responsibilities, the Countryside Code and sustainability.
- Demonstrate appropriate knowledge of walking equipment, safety equipment and emergency procedures.

If you would like more information about what you will learn on a Bronze course please read these Participant Notes.

Assessment for the Bronze award is optional.

Pre course reading material:

OS map reading tips

Countryside Code

Mountain Rescue stay safe fact file

You will be outside for parts of the course and there will be some standing around outside so please bring plenty of warm clothing with you.

You can expect to walk between 5 to 7 miles each day.

The course includes map work exercises and walk planning in the evenings. Maps will be provided for use during the course, if you have a compass please bring one with you to help with orientating the map.

Day 4 Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

DAILY WALK OPTIONS



Gentle walking grade 4

The most active Gentle grade, with longer walks, some ascent, and possible steps, stiles, or off-path uneven ground. Typically, 6-7 miles (10-12km) with around 1,000ft (300m) of ascent.

ACCOMMODATION

Nythfa House

Not many places in the UK outshine Brecon Beacons (Bannau Brycheiniog) National Park when it comes to wide open spaces and walks with incredible views. So it's easy to see the appeal of Nythfa House. With its name meaning 'nesting place' in Welsh, once you settle in you'll never want to leave. Built in 1867 as a private residence, this charming property is perfect for those seeking a rural retreat, yet one which is just a 10-minute walk from the Welsh market town of Brecon. It sits on a hill above The Struet, one of Brecon's oldest and most historic streets, famed for its Charles I connections who visited the town during the English Civil War. Nythfa House also puts you within easy reach of some of the area's show-stealing walking spots, including the Black Mountains, the Mellte Valley, and Pen y Fan - the highest point in the national park at 886 metres. Equally visit-worthy is the Big Pit National Coal Museum in Blaenavon, the National Showcaves Centre for Wales in Abercrave, and the bibliophile's paradise that is Hay-on-Wye. Should time allow, Hereford and Cardiff are both just an hour's drive away.

About

· 31 well-appointed guest rooms · Exclusive occupancy: 43 guests minimum · Check in from 4:00pm · For members check in from 2:00pm · Free Wi-Fi · Free on-site parking · Boot room and drying room · Travel cot & high chair · Discovery Point offering a wide range of local area maps, route guides, and information for self-guided walks · Books and games to borrow · Licensed bar · Lounges · Garden with putting green and croquet lawn · Electric vehicle charging point - Please note, you will need to bring your own cables to use this EV charging point



Then & now

Meaning 'nesting place' in Welsh, Nythfa House was built in 1867 as a private residence for wealthy solicitor and antiquarian Joseph Richard Cobb at a cost of £1,426. Known as Lord of the Manor of Brecon and Caldicot, he lived in the house with his wife, six children, cook, nurse, stable hand, and five servants. Cobb was a prominent member of the Cambrian Archaeological Association and played key roles in the restoration of the priory church (now Brecon Cathedral) and Manorbier Castle. He was also involved in the construction of the Brecon and Merthyr Railways during the 1860s. Cobb bought Caldicot Castle in Monmouthshire in 1885 (hence his dual title) and made that his home thereafter. In the 20th century, Nythfa House was occupied by the Mayberry family (relatives of the Cobbs) and later purchased by the Fowler family. It has been part of our HF Holidays line-up since 1990.

Sitting pretty on a hill above The Struet (one of Brecon's oldest and most historic streets for its Charles I connections), you'll find a selection of comfortable public spaces, a handy boot and drying room for walkers, plus books and games to borrow during your stay. There's also a Discovery Point offering a wide range of local area maps, route guides, and easy-to-follow information for self-guided walks. The house has 31 well-appointed guest rooms in three categories (Classic, Premium, and Superior), with many blending classic and contemporary furnishings. A licensed bar for gins and whiskeys, a light-filled dining room for a wide range of dishes made with fresh and seasonal ingredients, and an attractive garden with a putting green and croquet lawn tops things off nicely.

Check-In & Check-Out

You are welcome to check in from 4pm at the earliest. HF Members can check in earlier, from 2pm. On arrival, you'll enjoy a complimentary cream tea and get to meet your fellow guests, our HF Holidays Leaders, and the rest of the friendly team. Check out 10am.

FOOD & DRINK

Dining

Seasonal dining, tailored for you

Our team of skilled chefs design our dinner menus to showcase the best of each season, from warming winter comfort food to vibrant summer dishes, including vegetarian, vegan and high-protein options. We also source fruit and vegetables within a 40-mile radius of each house, open every break with a Chef's Special menu inspired by dishes and flavours of the local area, and are able to adapt dishes to suit special dietary requirements.

Welcome Cream Tea

What better way to start your stay than with a cream tea, served fresh on arrival to make you feel instantly at home. A quintessentially English tradition, our scones are baked in-house and served with preserves and clotted cream, providing the perfect opportunity to meet fellow walkers.

A hearty breakfast to start the day

Start the day with a freshly-prepared cooked breakfast and a wide choice from our continental buffet, including hot drinks, juices and fresh fruit. Our team offer a quick and friendly service, leaving you fuelled and ready for your day's adventures.

Our famous picnic lunch

Our personalised picnic lunches are perfect for a day out walking, ready to enjoy when hunger strikes. Choose from a large selection of fresh sandwiches and salads, freshly baked cakes and snacks, including the ever-popular Freddos chocolate bar! Everything is designed to fit neatly into your rucksack, and all of the packaging we provide is recyclable or compostable.

3-course evening meals

Our à la carte evening menus feature a wide choice of starters, mains, and desserts, made with seasonal ingredients and, wherever possible, herbs and vegetables from our own gardens. Shared around sociable tables, dinners are relaxed occasions, with drinks available to order at the table or from the bar, and a traditional Sunday roast to round off the week.

ROOMS

Your room at Nythfa House

Designed with your comfort in mind, Nythfa House has 31 well-appointed guest rooms available in three categories: Classic, Premium, and Superior.

Classic rooms are comfortable en-suite guest rooms, ideal for a peaceful night's sleep. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, and shower gel), and a TV.

Premium rooms are more spacious en-suite guest rooms*. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, body lotion, shower gel), and a 32-inch TV. Extras include bathrobes, slippers.

Superior rooms are even more spacious en-suite guest rooms offering upgraded views of the surroundings*. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, body lotion, shower gel), and a 32-inch TV. Extras include bathrobes, slippers.

We love: Rooms 6 and 7 in the main house both have gorgeous views across the garden and the Brecon Beacons. Room 21 is up in the eaves and has a separate seating area (please be mindful of the low ceilings). The garden guest rooms are very pretty and have their own small deck.

The **Choose Your Room** service is available at our UK country houses, allowing you the option of choosing and confirming a specific room for an extra charge of £30 per room. This is subject to availability. Upgrade supplements apply.

Room supplements

Superior	Premium single	Premium double/twin	Choose your room
£25 pppn	£20 pppn	£20 pppn	£30 per room

*Views and layout reflect each properties unique character and location

ACCESSIBILITY

For accessibility and assistance information, please contact our expert team on 020 3974 8865 or view the accessibility information online for Nythfa House

ABOUT YOUR STAY

A warm welcome
We want you to feel comfortable from the moment you arrive. You'll find a welcome pack in your room with guest registration forms, menus, order forms for dinners and picnic lunches, the Wi-Fi password, and the front door code. Our houses are locked at night, so we recommend noting the Duty Manager's number on arrival in case of an emergency (or getting locked out).

Evening entertainment

While evening entertainment varies from house to house, HF Holidays Inter-House Quiz night held after dinner on Wednesdays is a weekly staple. Your HF Holidays leader may be around for tips on guided and self-guided waking routes as well as visit-worthy local attractions.

Helping you enjoy the Great Outdoors - A natural focus on walks

Walks talks and Discovery Points
Our founder, country pastor turned social innovator, Thomas Arthur Leonard, was passionate about encouraging people to explore the countryside. His legacy continues in HF's continued focus on walking. Many guests choose to travel with us on guided or self-guided walking holidays, and as such, evenings at our houses are often busy with walk leaders hosting various briefings and talks. On guided walking holiday arrival days, there are walking information briefings before dinner, and for the duration of any guided walking holiday there will be a Walks Talk before (or on occasion after dinner), to go through the following day's walk options. Self-guided walking guests, and those on special interest holidays (where there is free time to explore independently), are of course welcome to also join in these Walks Talks - please talk to the team locally if you have any queries. Our Discovery Points are filled with handy maps and route notes, designed to ensure everyone, not just those booked on a guided walking holiday, can enjoy the beautiful countryside settings that our HF houses enjoy.

The walking day
Prior to setting off on guided walks, our HF Holidays Leaders run through a short safety briefing. There's also an up-to-date weather forecast on display at the house to ensure walkers have appropriate clothing and footwear. If you choose to do your own walks or are on a self-guided walking holiday, we ask that you please complete an Independent Walker Card each day. These can be found near the Discovery Point in the house.

TRAVEL DETAILS

Address

Nythfa House
Brecon
Powys LD3 7NN

Tel: +44 (0)1874 624287

By train

The nearest station is Abergavenny, from here you can take a bus or taxi to Brecon (see details below).

Check National Rail for train times and routes.

By taxi

The 21-mile journey from Abergavenny railway station takes 40 minutes to one hour.

For pricing, please contact A&A Cabs directly.

A&A Cabs
You can pre-book a taxi from our recommended company, A&A Cabs*. We recommend booking your taxi at least seven days in advance by contacting:

Tel: +44 (0)1874 622288
Email: aandabrecon@yahoo.ie

A return journey can be arranged on your behalf by the HF Holidays House Manager at Nythfa House.

*A&A Cabs is not owned or managed by HF Holidays.

By bus

The X43 bus operates from Abergavenny station to Brecon and takes about an hour. The most convenient bus stop for Nythfa House is the bus interchange in Brecon.

For bus times check Traveline.

By car

The A40 from Abergavenny and the A470 from the northwest converge at a roundabout on the Brecon bypass.

At the roundabout, follow the B4601 into Brecon. Turn right at the second mini roundabout on to Heol Gouesnou road. Drive straight over another mini roundabout and go straight on at the traffic lights. Turn right into Mount Street, then take the second left into Belle View Road. At the top of the road, go straight ahead up the drive to Nythfa House.

By air

The nearest airport is Cardiff.

Catch the 905 bus service to Rhoose Railway Station bus stop. Take the train from Rhoose Cardiff International Airport to Cathays Station and walk 10 mins to Merthyr Tydfil Bus Station. From here take the T14 bus to Brecon. You'll need to allow up to 3.5 hours.

An alternate option is to fly to Heathrow airport. Take a train to London Paddington Station, where there are trains to Abergavenny (with one change at Newport). Here you can take a bus or taxi to Brecon.

LOCAL AREA

Places to visit in Brecon Beacons

Whether you're enjoying a guided or self-guided walking holiday, there's always the opportunity to linger for longer. Here's our pick of the very best things to see and do within easy travelling distance of Nythfa House.

Brecon

Located at the top edge of Brecon Beacons (Bannau Brycheiniog) National Park, this market town is most famous for its military connections, magnificent cathedral, and jazz festival. If time allows, take a scenic cruise from Brecon along the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal.

Langorse Lake

Just east of Brecon between the Central Beacons and the Black Mountains, this is the largest natural lake in Wales. It's also a popular wildlife-watching spot so keep your eyes peeled for otters, water voles, warblers, swifts, and large flocks of Canada geese.

Big Pit National Coal Museum

Set in the Blaenafon Industrial Landscape and designated UNESCO World Heritage Site, this former working coal mine once employed up to 1,300 workers. Nowadays it has award-winning interactive exhibits as well as an underground tour. It's only a 45-minute drive away.

Hay-on-Wye

A 30-minute drive away, this literary-loving Welsh town on the banks of the River Wye charms with second-hand bookshops, medieval ruins, and stunning surrounding scenery. The annual Hay Festival takes place for 10 days from the end of May to the start of June.

Hereford

An hour's drive away, this attractive cathedral city is home to the famous Mappa Mundi, a medieval map of the world dating from the 1300s. Further highlights include the Chained Library, the Black and White House Museum, and the life-sized Hereford Bull Statue.

National Showcaves Centre for Wales

Home to a series of impressive show-caves, this top-rated attraction is a 30-minute drive away. Highlights include exploring the Dan-yr-Ogof cave, walking behind the 40-foot waterfall in the Cathedral Cave, and discovering how the Bone Cave got its name.

Tretower Court & Castle

This two-in-one architectural wonder located near the village of Crickhowell is a 20-minute drive away. Highlights include strolling around the recreated 15th century garden complete with white roses that symbolised creator Sir Roger Vaughan's Yorkist sympathies.

Cardiff

An hour's drive away, the Welsh capital of Cardiff warrants a visit for its cultural and historical thrills. Highlights include St. Fagan's National Museum of History, Castell Coch, Cardiff Castle, and Cardiff Bay.

Brecon Mountain Railway

This heritage line follows part of the route of the original Brecon & Merthyr Railway which closed in 1964. The 90-minute journey heads north from near Merthyr Tydfil into Brecon Beacons (Bannau Brycheiniog) National Park, passing a large reservoir as it climbs up to Torpantau station.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Packing list

"There's no such thing as bad weather, just the wrong type of clothing!" goes the adage. Come prepared for all eventualities and you'll walk in comfort as well as safety. Britain's famous for its changeable weather, so here's our advice on what to wear and bring.

Essentials

- Waterproof walking boots providing ankle support and good grip.
- A waterproof jacket and over-trousers
- Gloves and a warm hat (it can be chilly at any time of the year)
- Rucksack
- Water bottle (at least 1 litre capacity)
- A small torch (everywhere in winter, year round in mountains)
- Compass - any compass is fine but if you plan on completing your Silver award in the future we recommend a compass which has a baseplate, 360 degree protractor,
  map measuring features, plus scales of 1:25k and 1:50k. An example compass is the Silva Expedition 4.
- Sun hat and sunscreen
- Several layers of clothing, which can be added or removed Denim jeans and waterproof capes are not suitable on any walks.

Recommended

- Specialist walking socks to avoid blisters.
- A first aid kit inc plasters– your leader's first aid kit doesn't contain any medication
- Sit mat (insulated pad to sit on when you stop for a break)

You might also want

- Walking poles, particularly useful for descents.
- Insect repellent
- Flask for hot drinks
- Rigid lunch box
- Gaiters
- Blister kit (eg Compeed) just in case
- Waterproof rucksack liner
- Notebook & pen for taking down learning notes

TRIPNOTE VALIDITY

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred. In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary. The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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