



# Ancestral Skills with Ray Mears

Pre~Course Information

Preparing your path to discovery...



# THE COURSE SITE, FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT PROVIDED

## The Course Site

This course will be conducted from an expedition style camp set amongst the beautiful English woodland of a large, private estate in East Sussex. It is a hidden gem and a wonderful example of ancient British woodland, containing staggering specimens of Oak, Beech and Yew trees. Being England's oldest deer park, it really does feel wild and it's not hard to see why some of the most eminent figures in British history chose to spend some of their leisure time here. Henry VIII hunted here on several occasions, as did, on one occasion, his daughter Elizabeth I, spending six days hunting in 1573.

With three species of deer, foxes, badgers, hares - not to mention the array of bird life it is blessed with, your time spent here is guaranteed to be an experience in itself.

Although there are public footpaths in some areas of the estate, it is little known and in general is very secluded.

Having met in Tunbridge Wells, driven in convoy to the estate and parked, we will walk 900 metres to the camping area where you will have space to set up your personal camp. This beautiful area is made up mainly of broadleaf deciduous trees with plenty of flat, level areas for you to set up a tent and more than enough trees to string a tarp or a hammock between.

As well as your own camping set-up, there will be a communal area which will be used both for lectures as well as coffee breaks. Here you will find a circle of logs for seating, a black board, a fire, a kettle and a brew box.

A thorough camp tour will be given on your arrival to help you familiarise.

## Catering

This course is self-catering so you will need to bring enough food and a stove to cook on. If you prefer, you may light a small fire to cook over but it is very important that you ensure it does not spread and that you practice a 'leave no trace' mindset. Being outdoors without refrigeration in potentially warm weather it is a good idea to either bring fresh food to use at the beginning before moving on to dehydrated rations or to bring a good quality cool box with plenty of ice which allows you to keep fresh food for longer. Please see the Woodlore self-catering food suggestions for some convenient camp cooking ideas.

For refreshments, we provide a communal brew box supplying tea, coffee, milk, sugar, hot chocolate, fruit squash and biscuits.

Fresh drinking and washing water is always available in our camp as we have a large water bowser. We have several jerry cans distributed around the camp in convenient areas which we keep topped up with the bowser.

Communal washing bowls are also provided along with sponges and washing up liquid, soap and a nailbrush.

## Toilets and Showering

There are two toilets available which are located approximately 600m downhill from camp. The location and distance have been carefully chosen in order to preserve the sensitive spring water sourced from this very special course site.

The toilet is simply a trench dug into the ground in a secluded spot, just like you would use when on a trip in the wilderness and away from facilities. We provide a container with toilet paper, hand gel and matches. This is a hygienic, easy and practical method.

If you would like to have a shower, we have a canvas bag shower in a private area and a bucket for heating water over the fire. You may find it useful to bring some flip flops or similar to avoid getting your feet dirty while showering.

## Equipment

The following items will be provided by Woodlore for your use during the course:

### **Flint working equipment**

Specialist tools such as hard and soft hammers, pressure flakers, leather pads and protective equipment.

### **Tarpaulins**

We will use these to make versatile and comfortable lavvu shelters.

### **All raw materials**

All the necessary materials such as flint, hide, iron pyrites, sinew etc. will of course be provided to facilitate your journey through the ages.

We also have very well stocked first aid kits, fire extinguishers and fire blankets for your safety. These are kept in specific locations and will be explained to you on arrival.

If you wish to use a mobile phone during the course, please consider the other members of the group and switch it on to silent mode.



# CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

This clothing and equipment list is designed to help you decide which items to bring and to ensure that you have the best experience possible. Having the right kit will make your experience more enjoyable and enable you to focus more on learning.

In the past we have been asked by clients for help in sourcing certain items of clothing and equipment. This list therefore includes options stocked by Woodlore which have been tried and tested by Ray Mears and the Woodlore Team. There is of course no obligation to buy from us and we will be delighted to offer you advice and guidance to ensure your preparation goes smoothly. With this in mind, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us, even for the slightest query.

**All items listed in red are essential for this course. All other items are just recommendations.**

ITEM:	SUITABLE OPTION STOCKED BY WOODLORE:	✓
<p><b>BASE LAYER</b></p> <p>The layer you will wear next to your skin should ideally be made from soft fibres that will trap warm air close to the skin. Our preference is for woollen underwear as it is breathable, is less smelly than synthetic alternatives, is easily repaired and is less at risk from heat than synthetic fabrics. Wool also dries slowly preventing evaporative chill.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Woolpower Ullfrotte Original Zip Turtleneck 200g</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>MID LAYER</b></p> <p>This should be sturdy, warm and comfortable. A pullover will suffice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">5.11 Tactical Long Sleeve Shirt</a> or</li> <li>• <a href="#">Swanndri Ranger Wool Bushshirt</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>OUTER LAYER</b></p> <p>This should be waterproof and windproof. Mute, natural colours will increase your chances of observing wildlife closely.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Swazi/Ray Mears AEGIS Tahr XP Anorak</a> or</li> <li>• <a href="#">Buffalo Systems Mountain Shirt</a> or</li> <li>• <a href="#">Bergans Super Lett Jacket</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>TROUSERS</b></p> <p>Lightweight, quick drying cotton trousers are best. Jeans are not suitable, being cold, restrictive and slow-drying.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Fjallraven Vidda Pro Regular Trousers</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>FOOTWEAR</b></p> <p>Footwear should be sturdy, give ankle support and have good grip. You will find it most useful to bring a lightweight pair for dry conditions as well as a pair of waterproof boots in case the weather is bad. Another option, in the event of wet conditions is to wear waterproof/breathable socks inside your dry weather boots.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Hanwag Tatra Top GTX Boots</a> or</li> <li>• <a href="#">Hanwag Tatra II GTX Boots</a> or</li> <li>• <a href="#">Rogue RB-2 Light Trail Boots</a> and</li> <li>• <a href="#">Thorlos Socks</a> or</li> <li>• <a href="#">SealSkinz Socks</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>SUN HAT</b></p> <p>You may wish to bring a sun hat if you are easily sun burned.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Tilley T3 Cotton Duck Hat</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>WOOLLEN HAT</b></p> <p>The temperature could drop suddenly at any time of year and combined with dampness, it can get rather chilly. A woollen hat can make all the difference to your comfort when sleeping outside or standing still for a while.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Possum Fur and Merino Wool Beanie Hat</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>WARM SLEEPING BAG</b></p> <p>Please ensure you bring an adequate sleeping bag. If you are purchasing a bag, go for one that is rated to be warmer than you think you need, you can always open it or use it as a duvet if it is too hot.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Ray Mears 3-Season Sleeping Bag - Osprey</a> or</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ray Mears 4-Season Sleeping Bag – Golden Eagle</a> or</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ray Mears 3-Season Down Sleeping Bag – Black Bear</a> or</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ray Mears 4-Season Down Sleeping Bag – Grizzly Bear</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>GORE-TEX / BREATHABLE BIVI BAG</b></p> <p>You will need a bivi bag as we will be building a shelter that requires one during the week. This will ensure that your sleeping bag remains dry. Please make sure that it is made from a breathable Gore-Tex or similar material. There are some fairly cost effective options available from army surplus stores.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Snugpak Special Forces Bivvi Bag</a></li> </ul>	

<p><b>INSULATING SLEEPING MAT</b></p> <p>You could have the warmest sleeping bag but without an insulative mat under you, you will feel the warmth being drawn away from you by the ground.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Therm-A-Rest Mattress</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>LIGHTWEIGHT TENT OR SIMILAR SHELTER</b></p> <p>Please be mindful of what you bring with you as your home for your time on the course, bearing in mind the time of year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Hilleberg Tent</a> or</li> <li>• <a href="#">MSR Tent</a> or</li> <li>• <a href="#">Vihe Vaellus Eratoveri Tarp</a> or</li> <li>• <a href="#">Hilleberg Tarp XP 10</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>STOVE, FUEL &amp; COOKING EQUIPMENT</b></p> <p>Please ensure you bring enough fuel with you for the duration of the course. You may light a small cooking fire if you are confident in your ability to manage it and tidy up thoroughly at the end of the course. Bear in mind that in poor weather it can take longer if relying on a fire so it may be a good idea to bring a stove as a backup.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Littlbug Junior Camping Stove</a> and</li> <li>• <a href="#">Esbit Alcohol Burner</a> and</li> <li>• <a href="#">Zebra Stainless Steel Billy Can</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>MUG &amp; EATING UTENSILS</b></p> <p>Please bring suitable utensils for eating your meals and a mug for drinks. A good set up is to have a NATO crusader cup, which can be used for meals as well as drinks, and a utensil such as a spoon or spork. This is perfectly adequate and keeps things simple, but feel free to apply your own system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">BCB NATO Crusader Cup</a> and</li> <li>• <a href="#">Esbit Titanium Folding Spork</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>FOOD</b></p> <p>We will be static in one camp for the duration of this course so weight and bulk of food is not really a concern. Bear in mind when choosing what food to bring, that the weather could be very warm and there is no refrigeration available on our course site. Some people choose to bring a coolbox for storing their food, which works very well and also helps to keep your food protected from wildlife.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Expedition Foods - Chicken Korma with Rice (High Energy Serving)</a> and</li> <li>• <a href="#">Expedition Foods - Spaghetti Bolognese (High Energy Serving)</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>WATER BOTTLE (1 litre) x1</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Osprey NATO Water Bottle</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>SMALL FIRST AID KIT AND PERSONAL MEDICATION</b></p> <p>Our staff will have swift access to first aid equipment at all times, but you will need to bring a small first aid kit including plasters and any personal medication, including headache tablets, reading glasses/contact lenses, inhalers etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">O'Tom Tick Twister</a> and</li> <li>• <a href="#">Uncle Bill's Sliver Gripper Tweezers</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>WASH KIT &amp; TOWEL</b></p> <p>We provide hand washing facilities including bowls, nail brushes and hand soap. We also have a screened camp shower; you will need to bring some soap/shower gel and will find it useful to bring flip flops or similar footwear to avoid getting dirty feet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Grandpa's Wonder Pine Tar Bath and Shower Gel</a> or</li> <li>• <a href="#">Grandpa's Wonder Pine Tar Soap</a> and</li> <li>• <a href="#">Nikwax Travel Towel – Trek Size</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>GOOD INSECT REPELLENT</b></p> <p>There have been ticks encountered on our course sites and a good repellent is the first and best line of defense against them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Pyramid Trek Repellent</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>WATCH</b></p> <p>You will be asked to meet at certain times for lectures or meals and we cannot wait for anyone who is not on time.</p>		
<p><b>WHISTLE</b></p> <p>A valuable tool should you become lost and an item of equipment that you should have on you at all times during your stay with Woodlore.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Fox 40 Micro Whistle</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>WATERPROOF NOTEBOOK AND PENCIL</b></p> <p>There will be a lot of information to take away from the course and you may also like to record your experiences for future use. It can also be helpful to draw on paper what you plan to carve before you start carving.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Chartwell Watershed Waterproof Notebook</a></li> </ul>	

<p><b>HEAD TORCH WITH FRESH BATTERIES &amp; 2 SPARE SETS</b></p> <p>This is a very important but often forgotten piece of equipment. Under the cover of the trees, it can get surprisingly dark and therefore it can not only be inconvenient to move around without light, but dangerous too. A head torch is the most convenient as it leaves your hands free for other jobs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Petzl TACTIKKA Plus RGB Headtorch</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>FOLDING SAW</b></p> <p>A good quality folding saw is an invaluable piece of equipment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Bahco Laplander Folding Saw</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>CAMERA</b></p>		
<p><b>RUCKSACK/HOLDALL</b></p> <p>This item is simply to contain all of your equipment when travelling to and from the course as well as during the course. It serves no purpose apart from this and can stay in your sleeping area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Karrimor SF Sabre 45 litre Rucksack</a> and</li> <li>• <a href="#">Karrimor SF Sabre Side Pockets</a> or</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ray Mears Leaf Cutter Rucksack</a> or</li> <li>• <a href="#">The North Face Base Camp Duffel Bag</a> or</li> <li>• <a href="#">Scottish Mountain Gear Holdall</a></li> </ul>	
<p><b>BUSHCRAFT KNIFE</b></p> <p>Your knife must have a fixed blade, be strong and not too big. A blade length of roughly 11cm is plenty for the jobs we need to accomplish.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Morakniv Companion Heavy Duty MG Knife</a></li> </ul>	

Please visit the Woodlore online shop at [www.raymears.com](http://www.raymears.com).