

SQUASH FALCONER ON HOW TO PLAN THE PERFECT TOURING TRIP

BY FALL-LINE SKIING / BRITISH TALENT, FEATURED, INTERVIEWS / 13 DEC 2016

THE BACKCOUNTRY SKI ADVENTURER EXTRAORDINAIRE ON HOW TO BE A HAPPY TOURER

All-round adventure goddess Squash Falconer spent the summer skinning across Svalbard, so we figured she'd know a thing or five about planning a ski touring trip. Apparently it's all in the knickers...



1. HATCH A PLAN

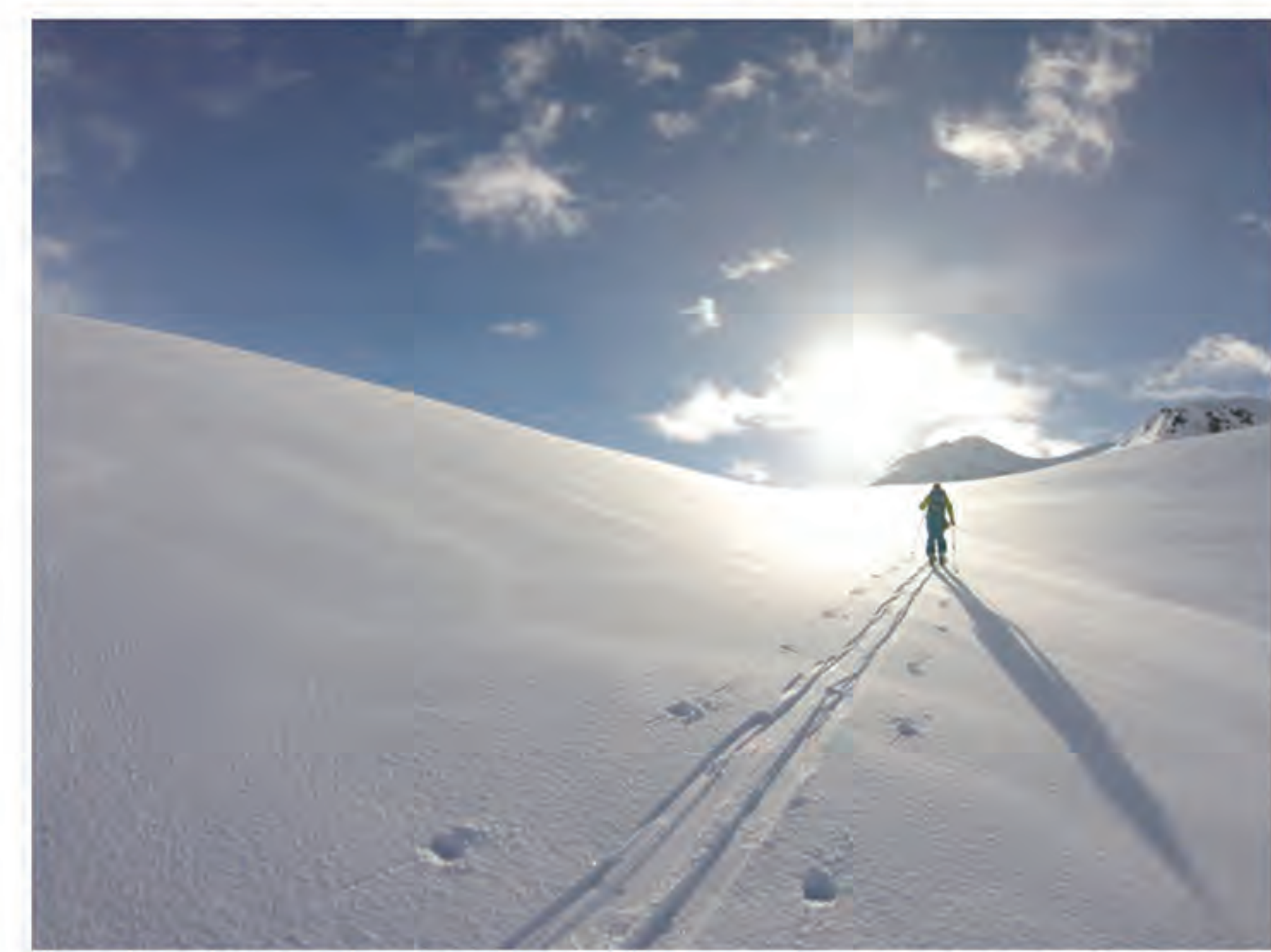
Have a plan – and a back-up plan. Do you, or someone you're going with, know the area? If not, ask someone who does; local knowledge is invaluable. Work out a route and, if you plan to do multiple days, call ahead to the refuges you want to stay in. Work out how long the route should take each day and give yourself a back-up plan if things change. The weather may turn unexpectedly or you may move slower than you predicted, so is there another refuge nearby that you can go to? Once you have your plan, tell somebody. That way they can check in with you.

2. WATCH THE WEATHER

Compare at least three weather reports. It sounds obvious, but to give yourself the best chance of success aim to go when you have a good weather window, and if there's a summit involved do your best to make the summit day the best weather day. Think about what the weather has been doing all season. What have the conditions been like? How is the snow pack? Review local avalanche reports. Monitor the weather all the time when you're out; notice what the wind is doing and look up at the clouds – they give big clues as to what's going on.

3. KNOW YOUR TEAM

It's so important to know your own fitness and ability, but also that of every person on your team. Any team is only as good as its weakest member. Understanding each person's goals before you set off will ensure everyone gets the most out of the trip. For some, reaching the summit is an important goal, while others want to work on their off-piste skills. Personality plays a huge part too. A good sense of humour makes long days on the mountain in tough conditions so much more enjoyable!



Keep your kit light and your chocolate plentiful... and always carry fresh knickers

4. GET THE RIGHT KIT

Go as light and as comfortable as possible. A lightweight touring ski and binding set-up with well fitting ski boots will make you a happy tourer. Think about what you wear – layers are good so you can adjust quickly and easily for the uphill efforts and downhill rewards. Choose a pack that is a good size and comfortable to carry. Then think about essentials. For me, that's avalanche equipment, a map, compass, spare batteries, a blizzard blanket, head torch, first aid kit and fresh underwear. Carry a clean pair of knickers for every day – I have a theory that if your knickers are right then your day goes right!

5. STAY NOURISHED

It's vital you carry enough water to last the day or until the next known water stop. Keeping hydrated is key. Think about how much food you'll need. Ski touring burns serious calories and regular snacks throughout the day will keep your energy levels topped up. If you're going to an unmanned hut make sure you have one-to-two days' worth of food in case you get trapped by the weather. Pack some chocolate. Then pack some more; you can never have enough.

Squash Falconer is a Salomon Ambassador

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Fall-Line Skiing

UK-based ski mag with the best images and most informed yet wittiest ski info in the English language. Age 23 and climbing (then skiing back down).

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