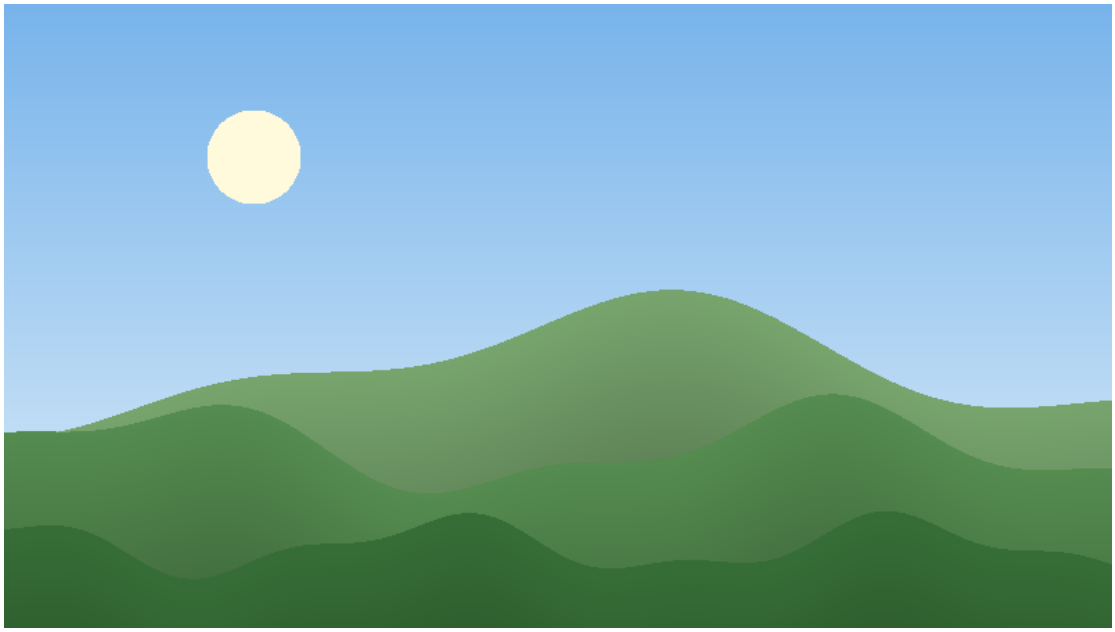
# Checking the Weather

Matt Alias - 2026-11-10 - Comments (0) - Chapter 1: Planning Your Trip

The weather can change quickly, especially in the hills. A short check before you leave and another on the way can keep a good day from turning into a difficult one.



## What to look for

Do not stop at the headline forecast. The details tell you far more about how the day will feel.

- Wind speed and direction, because wind makes cold air feel much colder
- The chance and timing of rain, not just whether it will rain
- Temperature at the top of the hill, which is usually lower than at the bottom
- Visibility, which matters most on open ground with few landmarks

## When to turn back

Question

How do you know when it is time to turn back? Decide the answer **before** you set out. A simple rule is to turn back if you have used half your time and are not yet halfway to your goal.

Plan a shorter option from the start. Knowing there is an easy way down makes it much easier to make a sensible decision when the clouds roll in.

## Recording your plan

Leave your route and your expected return time with someone you trust. A simple message like the example below works well.

```
Route: Hill circuit via the north ridge
Leaving: 08:30, back by 16:00
Group: 3 adults
If I have not checked in by 18:00, please call the mountain rescue.
```

Tip: send a quick message when you are back so nobody worries.