Hunza Valley and the Rush Lake Trek

Trip Code: RLT

Version:

WALK & TREK	GUIDED GROUP	MODERATE
		6



HIGHLIGHTS

- Trek across glaciers and alpine meadows to camp beside Rush Lake
- Take in the views of Karakoram giants, including Rakaposhi, Ultar and distant K2 (8611m)
- Marvel at the incredible natural beauty of the Hunza Valley as seen from the Eagle's Nest
- Explore the ancient UNESCO-listed Baltit and Altit forts at Karimabad

AT A GLANCE

- 7 days trekking
- Max altitude - 5098 metres
- Join at Islamabad

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

Introduction

North of the regional capital and former Silk Road trading post of Gilgit, the famously scenic Hunza Valley provides access to some of the highlights of Northern Pakistan's Karakoram Mountains. Here, the intrepid traveller will discover historic towns and isolated villages, welcoming people, ancient forts and wealth of breath-taking scenery including some of the world's biggest glaciers and mightiest snow-capped peaks. This fantastic new adventure holiday allows you to experience all of this without having to undertake a particularly long or sustained expedition-style trek.

Driving to Hunza across the Babusar Pass (4173m), we have a 2-night stay in Karimabad which gives us the chance to visit the spectacular 'Eagle's Nest' viewpoint at sunrise, where the best of the Hunza Valley is laid out before us and dominated by the great bulk of Rakaposhi (7788m). Whilst in Karimabad, we also explore the ancient and historic Baltit and Altit forts, each of them UNESCO-listed. Then, a short transfer takes us to the charming village of Hopar in the Nagar Valley, the starting place for our week-long trek to the rarely-visited Rush Lake (4694m). Perched on a high ridge between the Hispar Valley and the Barpu Glacier, this stunning little pool is one of the highest alpine lakes in the word. From a viewpoint above the lake, the sensational panorama includes every one of the Hunza peaks, the Hispar La, Snow Lake and the giants of the Central Karakoram including K2 (8611m), Broad Peak and the Gasherbrums. For an unforgettable taste Northern Pakistan's mountains and warm hospitality, without the challenges of a lengthy and committing expedition-style trek, come and join the Karakoram Experience.

Is this holiday for you?

Driving to Hunza across the Babusar Pass, we begin our acclimatisation with a night en-route at 2400 metres in Naran. We then have 3 nights in the Hunza Valley before setting off on the 7 days of the Rush Lake Trek. The daily distances are short on this trek, but the height gain is not inconsiderable, reaching a high camp at 4695m. We have 2 rest and acclimatisation days during the 5-day ascent to Rush Lake. This is not intended to be a long or continuous trek and should fall within the compass of regular weekend hillwalker. The classic outing involves cross the Bualtar and Barpu glaciers (twice each), mostly on unconsolidated moraine material but also on exposed glacier ice. We are able to keep clear of crevassed areas and these crossings are actually relatively straightforward. No specialist skills nor equipment are needed for this trek but a sense of adventure and a willingness to adapt to the needs of self-supporting group travel will stand you in good stead.

Itinerary

Version:

Holiday Information

What's Included

- An experienced KE Western leader
- Islamabad Airport transfers for international flights on Day 1 and Day 16
- Internal flights and associated airport transfers
- All land transport involved in the itinerary
- All accommodation as described
- All meals throughout the holiday
- Full trekking service including food and all equipment (excluding personal equipment)

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Pakistan Visa
- Tips for local guides and support staff
- Guided Islamabad sightseeing
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc
- PLEASE NOTE: an airport departure tax of Rs500 is sometimes payable.

Important Notice

Travel on the Karakoram Highway

We encourage you to read the up to date Travel Advice on the FCDO website. Currently, the FCDO warns against travel on the Karakoram Highway (KKH) between Mansehra and Chilas.

Driving by road up to the Hunza Valley, we avoid the proscribed section of the KKH by taking the N-15 National Highway across the Babusar Pass.

However, if the Babusar Pass road is closed we may be obliged to travel on the above-mentioned section of the KKH. In this event your insurance cover may be compromised.

We have been taking groups to Pakistan for 40 years and have never had any problems on this road. In actuality, the journey along the Karakoram Highway is spectacularly scenic and an epic experience which has been enjoyed by hundreds of KE clients.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Islamabad.

To guarantee access to your room on arrival earlier than mid to late morning, you have the extra-cost option of booking an additional night. The usual procedure is for the group to relax in the hotel public areas until the rooms are available.

Transfers are provided from/to Islamabad Airport for all clients arriving on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary and departing on the last day of the Land Only itinerary.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All meals are included in the holiday price from lunch on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 16.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your meals with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Food & Water

Drinking Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a Water-To-Go bottle) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

During the Rush Lake Trek breakfasts and dinners will be provided in a mess tent at camp. There will be a mix of local and Western dishes made from ingredients purchased in Pakistan and cooked by highly trained trek cooks. Breakfasts consist of cereal, muesli or porridge, eggs, bread or chapatti, tea and coffee. Lunch is generally a picnic consisting of a choice of canned fish, tinned meats, cheese, pickles, pate, and crackers or chapattis, sometimes accompanied by hot soup and noodles and finished off with tea or coffee. Dinner is a three course meal; soup, main course, dessert. At the hotels we use during this holiday, it is not unusual that dinner is provided in the form of a buffet with a wide choice of dishes.

Accommodation

During this trip the group will have 3 nights in Islamabad at a good standard of hotel. There will also be 4 nights in tourist class hotels (1 night in Naran, 2 in Karimabad and 1 in Skardu). When in Hopar (1 or 2 nights) we will use a simple guesthouse. Accommodation at each of these places is twin-share and there are generally en-suite facilities. Whilst on trek there will be 6 or 7 nights camping in 2-person tents. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired with another single client of the same sex. Single room occupancy can be pre-booked for each of the hotel nights and you can also pre-book additional hotel nights in Islamabad. Hotels are subject to availability and prices may vary. It is also possible to arrange for single tent occupancy at additional cost.

Internal flights

Skardu is a weather-dependent airport. Since the valley is completely surrounded by high mountains, planes can only operate when the visibility is good, which means our flight back to Islamabad at the end of the holiday is not guaranteed. The planes fly much more often than not, but cancellations can occur and in these circumstances we will travel by road. If we were not prepared to do this, our groups would risk being stranded in Skardu. See our 'Important Note' about travel on the Karakoram Highway for more details.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by an experienced KE Western leader assisted by a local guide. During the Rush Lake Trek the group will be accompanied by a support crew, including a cook and a team of porters who will carry all equipment and personal trek bags. This crew is drawn from local villagers who depend on working for trekking groups to supplement their subsistence income. Most of the crew will have worked with KE groups before. Travelling with these friendly and hardy people is a major part of the experience of Karakoram trekking.

Altitude

This holiday involves going to very high altitude. During the course of your trip you will be spending at least one night above 4000 metres and/or trekking to 5000 metres or above. This is not something that you should worry about; the human body is quite capable of adapting to a very wide range of altitudes, but it is important that we follow some simple rules in order to acclimatise successfully. Before coming on this holiday you should read the advice on trekking at high altitude. Unless you have previous experience of trekking above 4000 metres you should consult one of our trekking experts before embarking on this holiday. On this trip we carry a portable altitude chamber (PAC-bag) and/or bottled oxygen for use in emergencies.

Spending Money

Approximately £200 (or equivalent in US dollars, Euros etc.) changed into local currency should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses, including porter and trek crew tips. You will also pay directly for guided sightseeing in in Islamabad if this works out for your group and you choose to take part in the tour. The cost of this will be approximately 50 US dollars for a half-day tour. Note that money for tips should be changed into local currency (denominations of 500 rupees or smaller only) before you leave Islamabad. Money can be changed at a reasonable rate at the airport or at authorised money changers. Since you will be changing the majority of your spending money into local currency soon after your arrival, we recommend that you take it in cash, taking care that all notes are new, clean and in good condition. US dollars, Sterling and Euros can readily be exchanged at the airport. US dollars will give you more flexibility to exchange in smaller towns or in an emergency. Credit cards can be used to purchase many goods in Islamabad or Skardu and are particularly useful for more expensive items such as carpets. Withdrawing cash from an ATM machine may prove to be impossible anywhere on this trip.

Guidance on Tipping

It is usual to tip the members of your trek crew, if you are happy with the services provided. As a guide, we recommend that each group member contributes around £100 (in rupees) to these tips - although the amount you give is entirely up to you Towards the end of the trek, the trip leader will help the group to determine an appropriate level of tipping for each crew member, and this is most usually done as a group ‘thank-you’ with ceremony on the final day of trekking.

Beat the Jet Lag

Our holidays are normally designed with minimal 'down time' at the start of the trip, but having a day or two at the beginning will have the additional benefit of allowing you time to get over the stress of a long journey or travelling across time zones, leaving you refreshed and ready for your holiday. We can easily arrange for you to have additional nights and airport transfers.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage, which should be a soft and sturdy duffel bag, and one day pack. Your baggage will be carried in the support vehicle and by porters during the trek. The packed weight of your bag whilst trekking including your sleeping bag and camping mattress should be no more than 12.5 kgs. It is possible to leave items not required on trek at the group hotel in Islamabad and also in Hopar.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the ‘Dates and Prices’ table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders.

A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required**,** and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates *(see Health & Vaccinations below),* **and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check the FCDO for the latest advice for **each country visited** before travel.

All British passport holders are required to obtain a visa for entry into Pakistan. Download our Pakistan Visa Information document for full details of how to apply.

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations:

You should be up to date with the routine vaccinations recommended in the UK for overseas travel.

You must also contact your doctor or travel clinic to check if there are specific vaccinations or other preventive measures that you need for the area you are visiting, in good time before you are due to depart.

Please ensure you are looking at the recommendations for all countries visited on your holiday plus recommendations for any borders you cross.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dental check-up.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates.

Please check the FCDO and Travel Health Pro. For all of your intended destinations for up-to-date advice.

Severe Allergies:

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips.

Currency

The unit of currency in Pakistan is the Pakistani Rupee.

Preparing for your Holiday

It makes a lot of sense to spend some time before coming on a trekking holiday getting some additional exercise. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. You need to be comfortable walking for 6 to 8 hours on the longest of the trekking days and you need to be able to cope with a variety of terrain including loose scree and boulders. Regular hiking in hilly country is the best training but running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardio vascular fitness and stamina.

Climate

From mid-June to the end of August, we can expect to encounter temperatures as high as 30°C at Karimabad, 25°C at Hopar and 10°C at Rush Lake. If the weather is clear, it will be warm during the day and cool in the evenings above 3000 metres. This part of Pakistan is reasonably sheltered from the effects of the monsoon and the weather tends to be settled during the summer. However, weather in mountainous areas is notoriously difficult to predict, and short-lived storms can occur at any time of the year.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's **'Travel Aware'** campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. All other nationalities should check their government websites for relevant information.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- Trekking in Pakistan. Isobel Shaw.
- Karakoram Highway. King.
- Top Treks of the World. Steve Razzetti.
- Throne Room of the Mountain Gods. Galen Rowell.

Maps

TerraQuest: Karakoram. 1 : 175,000 Available from Stanfords - stanfords.co.uk

This is the best map for all of KE's current Karakoram treks. Covers the central part of the Karakoram Range on a waterproof and tear-resistant, double-sided map, with coverage extending from Gilgit and the Karakoram Highway to the peaks of K2 and Gasherbrum. The map is presented in a special format, handy for conveniently viewing just small sections of it at one time.

Private Groups Information

Make this KE Adventure holiday your own!

- Do our normal group departure dates not fit?
- Would you prefer to travel with just friends and/or family?
- Are you looking to organise a trip for your local walking, biking or mountaineering club?

It's really easy to make a trip your own. Simply select from our full range of adventure holidays and choose the dates that work for you and your group.

We are experts in creating holidays for groups of friends, families, charities and clubs. Our personal service means you'll be fully involved as we make the arrangements for your perfect adventure holiday.

Independence with Security

Travelling as a KE Private Group allows you more flexibility and choice, but still with the peace of mind that everything is pre-planned and arranged for your group by a reputable adventure travel company.

To take your first step to an amazing adventure with your friends and family complete the private group enquiry form, or call our **Sales Experts on: 017687 73966**

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our Travel Insurance page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. You do not have to bring everything on the list and you should use your own experience and judgement, but we ask you to ensure you have the items on the mandatory list. When selecting clothing for this holiday, please be culturally sensitive. Tight fitting or revealing clothing is not appropriate. Shorts and tee shirts can be worn but only once we are above the last temporary habitations of the valley.

You must bring the following items:

- Hiking boots
- Sports sandals or old shoes (for river crossings)
- Kahtoola Microspikes (or similar footwear traction) for the glacier crossings
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Warm jacket (e.g. down)
- Scarf or buff
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses
- Gloves or mittens
- Daypack 30 to 40 litres
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)

- Water bottles 1 litre (x2) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Sleeping bag (comfort rated -15°C)
- Thermarest or similar sleeping mat
- Basic First Aid Kit including: antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), altitude (Diamox), painkillers, plasters, blister treatment, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).
- 2x small padlocks (one for left luggage and one for trek bag)

Packing checklist:

- Socks
- Trainers for camp use
- Spare laces
- Trekking trousers
- Underwear
- Baselayer shirts
- Shirts or T-shirts
- Thermal underwear
- Trekking poles (recommended)
- Gaiters (optional)
- Insect repellant

- Washbag and toiletries
- Sleeping bag liner
- Travel clothes
- Pen-knife (note: always pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Antibacterial handwash
- Small towel
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Camera
- Dry bags(s) for daypack/kitbag contents (to ensure they keep dry)

Notes:

PHD Gear Advisor PHD specialise in cold weather equipment, from the world's lightest right up to the most protective for Everest or the Poles. It's a large range. So to help you choose what you need to keep you warm, PHD have listed the gear that is appropriate for this expedition. View *>>http://www.phdesigns.co.uk/gearadviserdestination.php?destinations_id=18*

Land Only Information

Please refer to the 'Joining Arrangements & Transfers' within Holiday Information for further details.

Flights and other transport to your destination should not be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary starting at the hotel in Islamabad. Transfers are provided from/to Islamabad Airport for all clients arriving on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary and departing on the last day of the Land Only itinerary.

Flight Inclusive Information

Limited seats are available at the advertised flight price, please book as early as you can. If we are unable to secure seats at the price shown, or you have requested regional departures and/or upgrades, we will provide you with an alternative quote. It is likely that flight payment will be in advance of your final holiday balance. Booking a flight inclusive package means you will benefit from full financial protection, eases your holiday planning, and leaves us to deal with airlines and schedule changes. If you book flights through KE Adventure Travel we will offset the carbon of your flight.

Regional departures and/or alternative carriers are available on request.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Islamabad. Outbound flights will usually depart from the UK in the morning, arriving in the early morning of the following day (Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights will depart Islamabad usually in the morning of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK later the same day.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

With 40 years of experience running adventure holidays in Northern Pakistan, there really is no alternative if you are looking to visit this stunning part of the world and we have long considered ourselves to be the experts on operating treks in this region. Our most renowned Pakistan treks are epic in nature, so we have developed this walking holiday to access some of the most staggeringly beautiful scenery in Pakistan for those who would like to experience this wonderful country another way.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 02/11/2026 and the trip is subject to change