

# K2 and Concordia

Trip Code: K2

Version: K2 K2 and Concordia



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



CHALLENGING



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Spectacular views of Broad Peak, Gasherbrum and K2 from Concordia
- Trek past the dramatic towers of Trango, Cathedral and Lobsang
- Visit K2 Basecamp (optional) and overnight at Broad Peak Basecamp
- Western leader plus local guide and full trek support

**AT A GLANCE**

- 14 days trekking
- Max altitude - 4850 metres (optional to 5100m)
- Join at Islamabad

**ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS**

- All meals included
- 13 nights Camping
- 5 nights Hotel

**VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE**

## Introduction

KE have been trekking in the Karakoram Mountains of Pakistan since 1984. It is the place where our story began and it has a special place in our hearts. The trek to Concordia at the foot of K2 (8611m) the second highest peak on Earth is an absolute classic. It was the very first KE trek and is arguably still the best. KE groups always receive a fantastic welcome from our friends in Baltistan. The 'wild west' town of Skardu is our point of access for the Karakoram Mountains and from here we drive in rugged 4WD vehicles via the village of Askole, the highest village en-route to K2, to begin our trekking adventure.

Trekking into the heart of the Karakoram, we see such famous peaks as the Trango Towers, the Cathedral group and mighty Masherbrum (first designated K1 by the survey of India because it appeared to be the highest peak in the Karakoram). After several days of trekking on and beside the Baltoro Glacier, we reach the junction of glaciers known as Concordia, the place that US adventurer Galen Rowell aptly named the 'Throne Room of the Mountain Gods'. Nowhere else on earth can you stand so close to so many of the world's highest peaks including Broad Peak (8047m), Gasherbrum (8080m) and the stupendous south face of K2 (8611m). After a night at Concordia, we will then move our camp up to Broad Peak Basecamp (4850m) and spend a night there, which gives those who are keen to visit K2 Basecamp the best possible chance of doing so. Anyone choosing to go no further than Broad Peak Basecamp will still enjoy arguably the best views of K2 and of the surrounding mountains. Escorted by a KE Western leader and supported by a local guide and trek crew drawn from the local Baltistan people, this is adventure trekking at its finest. This universally acclaimed Karakoram trek is well within the capabilities of experienced hill-walkers.

View our full range of [adventure holidays in Pakistan](#).

### Is this holiday for you?

This almost legendary walk up Concordia is within the capabilities of any reasonably fit person with previous trekking or hiking experience. There are some differences to more popular trekking regions of the Greater Himalaya such as Nepal. In the Karakoram the terrain is generally more rugged underfoot, there are no tea houses or lodges on the route and no villages or permanent habitation above Askole. The altitude 'steps' are generally easier in the Karakoram mountains than in Nepal since we are ascending vast glaciated valleys (in fact the largest glaciers in the world outside of the polar regions are in the Karakoram). Although we spend a fair amount of time on the glacier, we are rarely walking on ice and crampons are not required as the trail is almost entirely on the stones and rubble that have melted out from the glacier. We will travel as a self-supporting group with a Western leader and a local trek crew and this in itself can be a highly rewarding experience. We will usually walk for between 6 and 8

hours each day, covering a distance of around 15 kilometres on average. No mountaineering skills or specialist equipment are required for this trek but a sense of adventure and a willingness to adapt to the needs of a self-supporting group are essential items to bring with you!

# Itinerary

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Version: K2 K2 and Concordia

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## DAY 1

**Meet at the group hotel in Islamabad. Transfers from Islamabad Airport are provided.**

Your holiday starts at the hotel in Islamabad. Transfers from Islamabad Airport are provided. The majority of international flights arrive in the early morning and you may want to rest before lunch. The first group get-together will be at lunch, during which the tour leader will provide a pre-trip briefing. In the afternoon it may be necessary for the whole group to visit the offices of the Ministry of Tourism to receive an official briefing. If there is the opportunity to include a sightseeing tour today, either in the modern city of Islamabad or in nearby Rawalpindi, a city from the days of the British Raj, it will be optional and there will be a charge payable locally.

Meals: **L D**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel

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## DAY 2

**In the morning, take the spectacular flight to Skardu (2500m), afternoon free for sightseeing.**

Weather permitting, we take the early morning 1-hour flight from Islamabad to Skardu, skirting breathtakingly past the Rupal and Diamir faces of Nanga Parbat (8126m) the world's ninth highest peak. It is even possible to catch a fleeting glimpse of K2 and the other high peaks of the Baltoro in the distance before landing at Skardu. Here, we check in to the group hotel and can spend the afternoon looking around the bazaar, visiting the nearby Alexandria Fort or taking a jeep ride up to the beautiful Satpara Lake. A prominent rock inscription of the Lord Buddha on the drive up to Satpara is a reminder that this area was a part of the Buddhist world before the arrival of Islam.

Meals: **B L D**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel

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**DAY 3****Drive via the Shigar Valley and the Braldu Gorge to Askole (3000m).**

Making a reasonably early start, we leave Skardu by jeep for the first stage of our approach to K2. The road is mostly surfaced as we pass through the relatively fertile Shigar Valley, but deteriorates after 3 hours or so as we turn eastwards to follow the Braldu River. The valley narrows as we negotiate the steep-sided 'Braldu Gorge', a section which 30 years ago occupied the first 2 days of the trek to Concordia. By mid afternoon we reach Askole (3000m), a single street of wood and mud-brick houses, backed by irrigated fields of corn and potatoes and groves of apricot trees. We camp outside the village.

Meals: **B L D**



**Accommodation**  
Camping

**DAY 4****Drive to Korofon and trek to Jhola Camp (3140m).**

Leaving Askole, the highest village in the valley, we have just a short drive through a wild landscape to the snout of the mighty Biafo Glacier. Here, we cross one of the outflows of the glacier on a 'jhola' (box and cable) bridge to reach the place known as Korofon. From Korofon we start our trek on a rough jeep track which continues as far as the junction with the tributary Panma River. We cross this tributary on a suspension bridge and set up our camp a little way beyond the bridge at the place known as Jhola Camp (3140m).

Meals: **B L D**



**Accommodation**  
Camping



**Ascent**  
250M



**Descent**  
110M



**Time**  
4 hrs trekking



**Distance**  
8KM

**DAY 5****Trek through the Valley of the Braldu with a glimpse of K2 to Paiju (3420m).**

We make an early start today for our first proper day of trekking. The trail takes us out of the tributary Panma Valley and turns east to follow the Braldu River once again. We continue on a good path, passing a couple of old camping places at Chowblok and Bardomal which are now rarely used as much of the level ground has been eroded by the shifting river. Beyond these old camping places the path runs for a while at the very edge of the river, before climbing to higher ground and allowing us excellent views of the impressive Paiju Peak. We have to negotiate a couple of streams today and depending on the melting of the glaciers above, we may have to ford these (sports sandals or old trainers useful). At our high point today we have views ahead to the snout of the Baltoro Glacier and the granite peaks of the Trango and Cathedral groups. On a clear day it is even possible to see K2, which is partially obscured by

the shark's fin of the Lobsang Spire. After dropping down to the main Braldu River again, we reach the expedition staging camp at Paiju (3420m).

Meals: **B L D**

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	<b>Accommodation</b> Camping		<b>Ascent</b> 580M		<b>Descent</b> 335M		<b>Time</b> 6 - 7 hrs trekking		<b>Distance</b> 21KM
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## DAY 6

### Acclimatisation day at Paiju (3420m) with options for day walks.

Paiju is the traditional stopping point for all groups headed for Concordia, located at a widening of the Braldu Valley and within sight of the snout of the mighty Baltoro Glacier. This became a key staging point for climbing expeditions and trekking groups due to the presence of spring water and a sparse population of trees which were originally use for cooking fires. Today there are several levelled pitches for tents and the site is equipped with 'long-drop' toilets and wash basins - a 'bathroom' with one of the best views in the world! We spend a complete day at Paiju, which is good for our acclimatisation and is also a useful time for our porters to bake as much bread as they can for the trek before we climb up onto the glacier. We have the option to stretch our legs with an easy walk out and back towards the snout of the glacier. We spend a second night at Paiju.

Meals: **B L D**

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	<b>Accommodation</b> Camping
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## DAY 7

### Trek up onto the Baltoro Glacier, cross to the south bank and continue to Horbose (3795m).

Another early start today. From our camp at Paiju, a walk of approximately one hour brings us to the snout of the Baltoro Glacier. After viewing the outpouring of melt water from the ice we now climb up onto the back of this great beast. At this point the ice of the glacier is completely covered by rubble and rocks and although we are following a trail used by many expeditions, the going here can be quite tough. The trail undulates as we climb over the swells of the flowing glacier and it is fascinating to think that the stones underfoot could have come from the summit of Broad Peak, Gasherbrum or K2. Gradually we work our way across the glacier to its south side where we can use a path along lateral moraine. Heading roughly east we continue, sometimes on the moraine and sometimes down beside the glacier until we reach a side valley. At this point it may be possible to continue more or less directly by climbing up onto the glacier. Or, if the glacier is not easily accessible, we will turn off into the valley for approximately half an hour to reach a point where we can cross the meltwater stream (sandals or old trainers required). Finally reaching the camping place at Horbose (3795m) we have sensational views of



the Cathedral Towers, the Trango Group and the striking rock tower of Uli Biaho. A great day of trekking over difficult and mixed terrain.

Meals: **B L D**

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	<b>Accommodation</b> Camping		<b>Ascent</b> 640M		<b>Descent</b> 220M		<b>Time</b> 8 hrs trekking		<b>Distance</b> 15KM
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## DAY 8

### Trek beside the glacier with views of Trango Towers to Urdukas (3900m).

We have a shorter day today, mindful of the need to increase our sleeping altitude slowly. We continue east beside the Baltoro Glacier either along the lateral moraine or sometimes on the glacier itself, passing the ship-like prow of Great Trango and the isolated pillar of the 'Nameless Tower' to our next camp at Urdukas (3900m). This campsite is perched a hundred metres above the glacier on terraces originally hacked out of the hillside by the Duke of Abruzzi's K2 expedition of 1909. It has truly sensational views of the Trango Towers to the west and directly opposite and almost a mile away across the valley, the vast rock walls of Cathedral Peak and Lobsang rise like ramparts above the glacier. This is a truly awesome place. We should reach here in time for a late lunch and the rest of the afternoon is free to tend to camp chores or just to soak up our fabulous situation.

Meals: **B L D**

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	<b>Accommodation</b> Camping		<b>Ascent</b> 250M		<b>Descent</b> 40M		<b>Time</b> 3 - 4 hrs trekking		<b>Distance</b> 6KM
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## DAY 9

### Trek along the Baltoro Glacier with views of Masherbrum to Goro (4295m).

Leaving Urdukas behind, we follow the moraine edge eastwards until it is possible to climb up onto the broad back of the glacier. We now cross to the centre ground where the 'flow' is generally smoother and soon we come within sight of the spectacular Masherbrum (7821m) on our right hand side. Ascending and descending the mountains of rubble which are strewn over the ice, we also have glimpses ahead to the peaks which surround Concordia. Especially prominent is the stunning Gasherbrum IV (7925m) at the head of the glacier. There are good views back towards the Trango and Cathedral peaks as we approach our camp at the place known as 'Goro' (4295m). We are quite high now and camping on one of the largest pieces of ice outside the polar regions, so we will make sure to wrap up warmly for the cooler nights ahead.

Meals: **B L D**

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	<b>Accommodation</b> Camping		<b>Ascent</b> 330M		<b>Descent</b> 90M		<b>Time</b> 6 - 7 hrs trekking		<b>Distance</b> 12KM
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## DAY 10

### Trek on the Baltoro Glacier past Mustagh Tower to Concordia (4500m).

The final approach day to Concordia takes us through what must arguably be the most spectacular mountain scenery anywhere in the world! Our approach to Concordia continues along the heaving swells of the Baltoro Glacier as we pass Mustagh Tower (7284m), an imposing monolith of rock first climbed by Joe Brown and Ian McNaught-Davis in 1956. At the time this was considered one of the hardest climbs in the region. A French team competing for the summit by a different route reached the top just five days later, but then almost thirty years passed before the third ascent was made by Sandy Allan, Tony Brindle, Mal Duff and Jon Tinker, following Brown's original route. Ahead of us Gasherbrum IV (7925m) acts like a beacon drawing us on, whilst at some points on today's walk we can also see Gasherbrum II (8035m) which peeks out to the right of Gasherbrum IV. As we make our way up the Baltoro, the aptly named Broad Peak (8051m) comes into view above the ridge connecting Marble Peak and Crystal Peak on our left. K2 keeps itself hidden until the very moment we reach Concordia when suddenly its full height is revealed in sweeping lines that climb almost 4000 metres from the valley floor to the summit - a sight that will never be forgotten. Concordia is a wide area where glaciers coming down from K2 meet those from the Gasherbrums and Chogolisa. It was given its name by Sir Martin Conway, explorer and alpinist who named the place after another famous glacial junction in the Swiss Bernese Oberland. It is undoubtedly one of the most spectacular places on the planet and here you can stand within 20 kilometres of no fewer than four eight-thousanders and ten of the world's thirty highest peaks! We make our camp at approximately 4500 metres on a moraine ridge surrounded on all side by jagged peaks including Gasherbrum IV, Mitre Peak, Chogolisa, Crystal Peak, Marble Peak, Baltoro Kangri, Broad Peak and K2.

Meals: **B L D**

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	<b>Accommodation</b> Camping		<b>Ascent</b> 290M		<b>Time</b> 5 - 6 hrs trekking		<b>Distance</b> 12KM
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## DAY 11

### Trek to K2 Basecamp and overnight at Broad Peak Basecamp (4850m).

North of Concordia, the Godwin-Austen Glacier leads directly to the foot of K2, just 10 kilometres away. The first part of today's walk is the most difficult, crossing the chaotic meeting of the Godwin-Austen and Baltoro glaciers and involving the negotiation of a maze of crevasses and meltwater rivers. Beyond, the underfoot conditions are slightly easier, sometimes on long, level sections of gritty ice. It takes around 4 hours to get to Broad Peak Basecamp (4850m), followed by another 4 hours of out-and-back for those who are keen to get to K2 Basecamp. We overnight at Broad Peak Basecamp and anyone who chooses to go no further than this will enjoy arguably the best views of K2, as well as a fine panorama



back down-glacier to Concordia, spectacularly framed by Mitre Peak, Chogolisa and the Gasherbrums.

Meals: **B L D**

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	<b>Accommodation</b> Camping		<b>Ascent</b> 600M		<b>Descent</b> 250M		<b>Time</b> 8 hrs trekking		<b>Distance</b> 14KM
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## DAY 12

### Trek back to camp at Concordia.

A much easier day today, as we head back down the glacier to Concordia. Lunch at camp and an afternoon at leisure with plenty of time to enjoy the special ambience of the 'throne room of the mountain gods'.

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	<b>Ascent</b> 50M		<b>Descent</b> 400M		<b>Time</b> 4 hrs trekking		<b>Distance</b> 8KM
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## DAY 13

### Trek down the Baltoro Glacier to an elevated viewpoint camp at Shachspung (4100m).

This morning we can take a last look at K2 before packing up the gear and heading back down the Baltoro. In descent we can make longer stages and today we go past Goro to a campsite off our approach route at a place known simply as Shachspung (4100m). The word Shachspung is Balti for 'a big pile of stones' which seems ironic considering the landscape through which we are trekking, but in fact this is a reasonably elevated part of the stone covered glacier and as such it makes for a very good viewing platform. Our local crews also refer to this place as Rex's Camp, after Rex Munro, the much-loved KE leader who completed more than 30 K2 treks in the 1990s. K2 is once again hidden but Gasherbrum IV resumes its prominence at the head of the Baltoro and also reveals a sliver of Gasherbrum 1. Down valley, the serried ranks of granite towers and spires of the Lobsang, Cathedral and Trango move into the distance, beyond which lie the peaks of Uli Biaho and Paiju. Directly opposite to the south is the snow-capped red granite spire of Masherbrum. This is an atmospheric place and now that they are headed for home it is quite possible that our crew will want to have a party. Almost anything can be a musical or percussion instrument and if you have the chance, listening to the voices of the Baltis in full song is quite an amazing experience.

Meals: **B L D**

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	<b>Accommodation</b> Camping		<b>Ascent</b> 30M		<b>Descent</b> 400M		<b>Time</b> 6 - 7 hrs trekking		<b>Distance</b> 16KM
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**DAY 14****Trek via Urdukas with views of Biale Peak to Horbose (3795m).**

We continue our descent of the Baltoro Glacier. It is amazing how different everything looks in descent with our constant field of vision now filled with an entirely different view. The drop in altitude starts to become more noticeable as the granite walls and spires lining the glacier, which yesterday looked almost lower than us, now tower to lofty heights above. It is also a little warmer and there is more oxygen in the air. Passing through the campsite of the Duke of Abruzzi at Urdukas we can marvel at the tenacity of those early pioneers who endured untold hardship simply to get to their basecamps. After taking lunch on the Duke's terrace, with sensational views across the glacier to Biale Peak which remains hidden except from this vantage point, we continue trekking down this huge valley, sometimes on the glacier and sometimes along the moraine or the valley sides until we reach Horbose, our first off-glacier camp for some days. Ahead now we can make out the end of the glacier and the start of the valley of the Braldu. We can even see the patches of green on the lower slopes of Paiju Peak which mark the location of the spring water camp.






Meals: **B L D**

	<b>Accommodation</b> Camping		<b>Ascent</b> 100M		<b>Descent</b> 470M		<b>Time</b> 6 - 7 hrs trekking		<b>Distance</b> 14KM
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**DAY 15****Trek on the Baltoro Glacier with spectacular views of the Trango Towers to Paiju (3420m).**

On this day's walk we have a superb view of Trango's Nameless Tower (6239m), first climbed by Joe Brown and Mo Anthoine in 1976. To the left of the Tower a smaller pinnacle is known as 'The Monk' and to the right is the graceful prow of Great Trango (6286m) first climbed in 1977 by John Roskelly and Galen Rowell. In August of 1992 two Australians Nic Feteris and Glenn Singleman climbed to a ledge on Great Trango at 5955m and then BASE jumped, falling hundreds of metres close to the rock walls before opening their chutes and landing on the glacier. At the time this was the highest BASE jump on record. Having made the detour and returned to the main Baltoro Glacier, we now cross to its north side, climbing over the huge swells of the glacier towards the ramparts of Uli Biaho. On the other side we then work our way down to the valley where we pick up the main trail and pass by the snout where the underground river which flows through the length of the glacier erupts out in a cascade to become the Braldu. The last hour of the day is an easy walk on a good path although there is a final uphill pull to reach the campsite at Paiju. On our first arrival here we relished the prospect of a cooler climate ahead. Now we will welcome its warmth!

Meals: **B L D**

	<b>Accommodation</b> Camping		<b>Ascent</b> 220M		<b>Descent</b> 640M		<b>Time</b> 6 - 7 hrs trekking		<b>Distance</b> 15KM
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**DAY 16****Trek beside the Braldu and then into the Panma Valley as far as Jhola Camp (3100m).**

Now we are off the glacier and at a lower elevation it is considerably warmer and we may make an early start to use the cool of the morning. Leaving Paiju we walk on a good trail down the valley. Once again it is surprising how different the experience is compared to our ascent. The trail rises and falls as we cross several alluvial fans. We have to cross some side streams today, mostly using makeshift bridges or stepping stones but it may be necessary also to wade across, especially later in the day. The source of all these streams is meltwater and so they grow bigger as the day gets warmer. At one point the trail passes close to the river beside walls of conglomerate and it is possible to feel its tremendous power. We follow the main Braldu River downstream to its confluence with the Panma River where we turn north-east to reach a camping place beside the toll bridge at the place known as Jhola.

Meals: **B L D**

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	<b>Accommodation</b> Camping		<b>Ascent</b> 400M		<b>Descent</b> 770M		<b>Time</b> 7 hrs trekking		<b>Distance</b> 21KM
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**DAY 17****Trek to Korofon, then drive via Askole and the Braldu and Shigar valleys to Skardu.**

We make an early start ahead of our final short walk back to Korofon and the Biafo Glacier, where we recross the outwash river on the jhola and meet our transport. From here, we set off the long drive back to civilisation after almost two weeks in the wilderness. We cross the level area known locally as the 'King's Polo Ground' to reach the green fields, stone walls and houses of Askole. Continuing, we follow the remarkable jeep road through the Braldu Gorge and then travel down the fertile Shigar Valley to its confluence with the Indus. Arriving in Skardu, we check in at our hotel and there will be time for a welcome shower and clean up before sitting down to dinner. Tonight we will enjoy the comfort of a real bed!

Meals: **B L D**

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	<b>Accommodation</b> Hotel		<b>Ascent</b> 110M		<b>Descent</b> 250M		<b>Time</b> 3 hrs trekking		<b>Distance</b> 8KM
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**DAY 18****Morning flight to Islamabad. Afternoon free for sightseeing.**

Skardu airport is a 40 minute drive from the hotel along a good road lined with poplar trees. Boarding our plane we have an exciting flight out of the valley, once again passing by Nanga Parbat before turning south for Islamabad. Arriving in the Pakistani capital after a period in the mountains is always a strange

experience and it takes a little time to get used to the hustle and bustle and especially the traffic. Our private bus will be waiting at the airport to transfer us to the group hotel and once we have settled in it will be time to take lunch (unless we have experienced unusual flight delays). After lunch the rest of the day is free for independent sightseeing or to relax at the hotel. Your trip leader will advise you on the possibilities for sightseeing. Shopping for hand-made rugs is a usually popular option. This evening we come together again for a celebratory meal at the hotel or in a local restaurant.

Meals: **B L D**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel

## DAY 19

### Contingency day in case of delays.

Skardu is a 'weather dependent' airport which means the planes will only fly here if the visibility allows line of sight to the runway by the pilot on the approach. Fortunately the weather is mostly clear in the Karakoram but local weather conditions can bring cloud and rain from time to time. If we cannot fly we will travel down to Islamabad by road along the spectacular Karakoram Highway. If we flew up to Skardu this will be an added bonus as it is a fantastic travel experience in its own right. The drive down the Indus River to Islamabad takes two days so this is an important contingency day to allow for this. If we have flown to Islamabad this will be a further day for sightseeing in the capital and your leader will advise the group on the options available for today.

Meals: **B L D**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel

## DAY 20

### Your holiday ends after breakfast. Transfers to Islamabad Airport are provided.

Your holiday ends after breakfast. Transfers to Islamabad Airport are provided.

Meals: **B**

# Holiday Information

## What's Included

- An experienced KE Western leader
- Islamabad Airport transfers for international flights on Day 1 and Day 21
- Internal flights and associated airport transfers
- All land transport involved in the itinerary
- All accommodation as described in the trip dossier
- 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.

We generally manage to avoid travel on the KKH by flying from Islamabad to Skardu and from Skardu or Gilgit back to Islamabad. However, if a flight is cancelled we are obliged to make this journey by road and in this case we prioritise the route via the Babusar Pass which avoids the section of the KKH between Mansehra and Chilas. Rarely, when the Babusar Pass is closed, we may have no alternative but to drive through the section referred to in the FCDO advice.

We have been taking groups to Pakistan for over 35 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.

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 arrival on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 19.

## Food & 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.

On trek, the food is a mixture of local and international dishes, made from ingredients mostly purchased in Pakistan and cooked by our highly trained trek cooks. Breakfasts consist of cereal, muesli or porridge, eggs, bread or chapatti, tea and coffee. Lunches are a picnic from 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 taken in a group 'mess' tent, is a three course meal. We do routinely cater for vegetarians but you must inform us if you wish your diet to be exclusively vegetarian. Drinking water which has been treated with iodine is provided by the trek kitchen during breakfast, at the lunch stop and while in camp. We use spring water wherever possible but on some days we have no choice except to use glacial melt which may contain silt. Conventional filters do not work well with glacial silt and in camp the kitchen will use a large water barrel which allows the silt to settle away. You should bring a little bicarbonate of soda if you find the taste of iodine unpalatable. Trail-mix and snacks will be provided.

## Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide 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 diet 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.

## Accommodation

During this trip the group will spend a total of 3 nights in Islamabad at a good standard hotel. The group will also have 2 nights in a tourist class hotel in Skardu. Accommodation at each of these hotels is twin-sharing with en-suite facilities. Whilst on trek there will be a total of 13 nights spent camping in 2-person tents. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired with another single client of the same sex. It is possible to hire a single tent while on trek for an additional cost. Please note single tent hire does not include single rooms in hotels. For the 5 hotel nights, single rooms are available for a supplementary cost. Additional hotel nights in Islamabad are also available. For hotel prices and single supplement costs please refer to the dates and prices page of the trip on our website. Hotels are subject to availability and prices may vary.



## Internal flights

### Skardu Flights

Skardu is a weather-dependent airport. Since the valley is completely surrounded by high mountains, planes can only land here in good visibility and this means flights to and from Skardu are never guaranteed. The planes do fly more often than not, but cancellations can and do occur and in these circumstances we will travel by road. If we did not do this groups would risk being stranded in Islamabad and you should beware of companies that say they will only fly to Skardu as this may mean you have no possibility of trekking. 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. During the trek the group will be accompanied by a full support crew, including a local guide, cook and kitchen crew, as well as porters to 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 supported KE groups many times before, or their fathers and even grand-fathers will have. 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 on our website which can be viewed via the link below. 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.

[www.keadventure.com/page/altitude.html](http://www.keadventure.com/page/altitude.html)

### 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 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. It is not necessary to purchase local currency (Pakistan rupees) before your trip. 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. We estimate that £80-100 (in local currency equivalent) will cover this aspect of your trip expenditure. 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.

## Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage, which should be a soft and sturdy duffel bag and a daypack. Your bag on trek will be carried by porters. The packed weight of your bag whilst trekking including your sleeping bag and camping mattress should be no more than 12.5 kgs. (27 pounds). You should note that this allowance which is governed by maximum porter loads, is slightly less than allowances for treks in India and Nepal and is quite strictly adhered to. It is possible to leave items not required on trek at the group hotel in Islamabad and also in Skardu.

## 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 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

# General Information

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## 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.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

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

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. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

Dengue fever is a known risk in places visited. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you [take precautions to avoid mosquito bites](#).

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any vaccinations or other medical preparation prior to your holiday. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella), along with hepatitis A and typhoid. Malarial prophylaxis is discretionary for this trip. Malaria exists in the area around Islamabad. However, incidences of urban transmission of malaria are extremely low. In Skardu or Gilgit and in the mountains there is no malaria risk. A certificate of yellow fever vaccination is required if travelling from countries with risk of yellow fever transmission and for travellers having transited for more than 12 hrs through an airport of a country with risk of yellow fever transmission. Travellers who intend to visit Pakistan for 4 weeks or more should note that proof of Polio vaccination will be required on exiting the country. On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

## 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. For this trip you need to be aerobically fit and also comfortable with walking on a variety of terrain including loose scree and boulders for between 4 and 7 hours on most days. We suggest that you adopt a weekly exercise regime leading up to your trip. Regular hiking in hill country is the best training but running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardio vascular fitness and stamina. Before departure, we recommend that you undertake a number of long walks in hilly country.

## Climate

From mid June to the end of August, we can expect to encounter temperatures as high as 30°C at Skardu and 25°C at Askole (at 3000m). During the day it will remain pleasantly warm (unless there is cloud cover) until we reach Concordia by which time daytime temperatures will be down to single figures. In June we may encounter snow on the upper part of the Baltoro Glacier, but this has usually melted by July. However, snow can fall at Concordia even in August. At any time of the season the night-time temperatures will be considerably lower usually falling to freezing levels once we are above Paiju and at Concordia, overnight temperatures can drop as low as minus 10°C. During the September departures we can expect temperatures just a few degrees lower than the above. The Karakoram Mountains are sheltered from the full effects of the monsoon which means summer is the best season for trekking and climbing here with predominantly clear skies. 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 prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at [travelaware.campaign.gov.uk](https://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk) and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: [www.travel.state.gov](https://www.travel.state.gov) for essential travel advice and tips.

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 direct 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.
- K2 Triumph and Tragedy. Jim Curran.

## Maps

### **TerraQuest: Karakoram. 1 : 175,000**

Available from Stanfords - stanfords.co.uk - £14.99

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.

## 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. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum. The packed weight of your bag whilst trekking including your sleeping bag and mattress should be no more than 12.5 kgs. This limit which is set by the porters is strictly enforced and bags will be weighed prior to setting off on trek. Anything not required on the trek can be left at the

group hotel in Islamabad and also in Skardu.

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 (see notes)
- Sports sandals or old trainers (for river 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:**

- Trainers for camp use
- Spare laces
- Trekking trousers
- Underwear
- Baselayer shirts
- Shirts or T-shirts
- Thermal underwear
- Wash kit including soap and flannel (water is available at most camps for washing and is more eco-friendly than wet-wipes)
- Small towel and small cloth (the latter for wiping out dusty tents)
- Antibacterial handwash
- Trekking poles (recommended)
- Gaiters (optional)
- Microspikes (Kahtoola) or similar footwear traction (see notes)
- Insect repellent



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

#### Notes:

We suggest that you take a pair of trekking poles which can be helpful on the rough terrain encountered on and off the glacier.

The rugged underfoot conditions are also really hard on boots and it is important that you take walking boots that are in good condition and not nearing the end of their shelf-life.

Kahtoola Microspikes or similar footwear traction can provide extra security when walking on sections of dry glacier.

#### 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/gearadviser/destination.php?destinations\\_id=18](http://www.phdesigns.co.uk/gearadviser/destination.php?destinations_id=18)

#### Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers. [>> Find out more](#)

#### 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

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

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## Why KE

We are by far UK's leading operator of treks in Pakistan. Leading groups to this part of the world since 1984, working with the same expert Pakistani local guides, we are rightly considered one of the pioneers of adventurous trekking in the Karakorum (its what the 'K' in KE Adventure stands for!)

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 18/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change