

22-DAY ADVENTURE

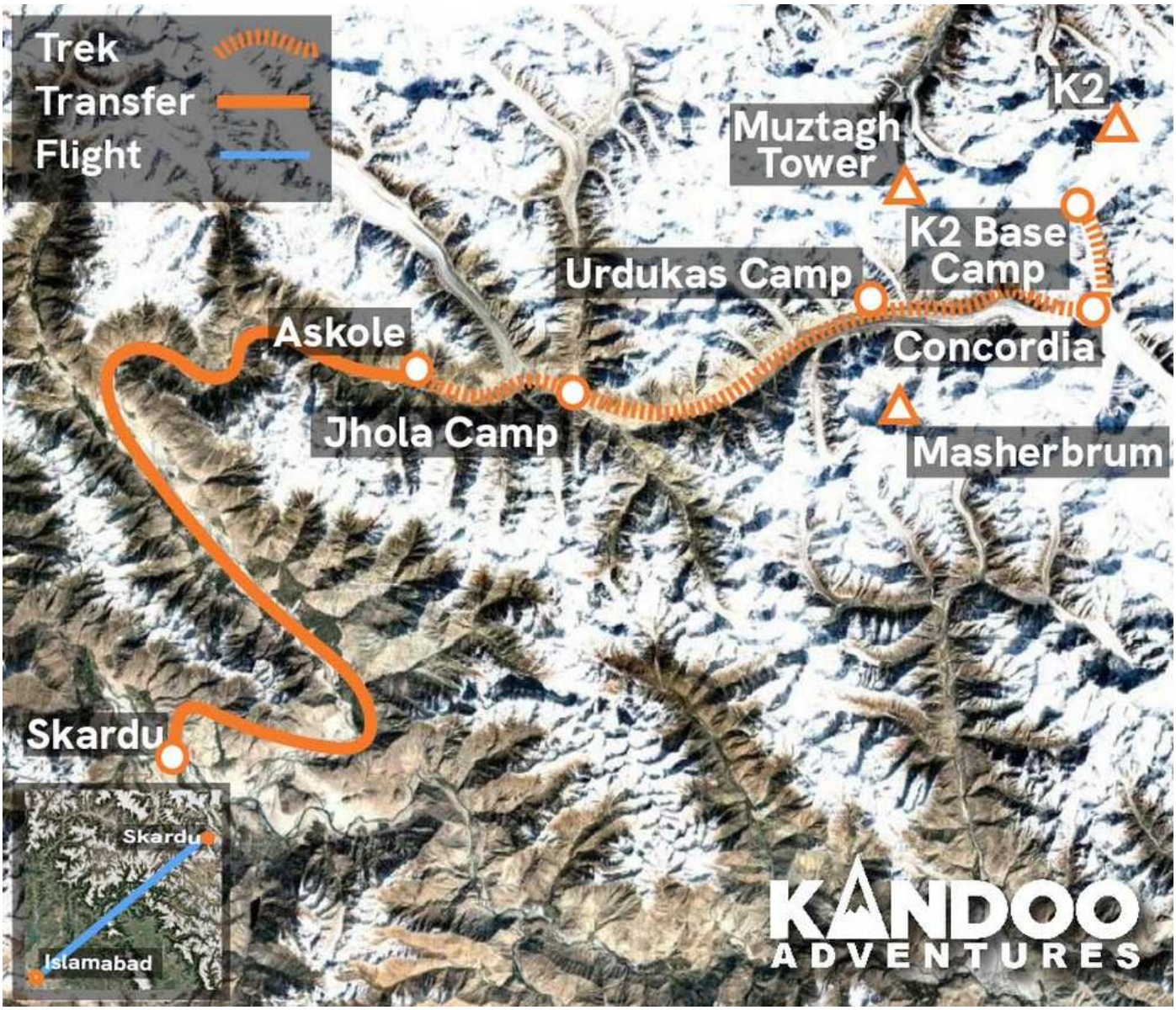
K2 BASE CAMP AND CONCORDIA

Pakistan

Experience one of the planet's greatest wilderness journeys. Our 22-day K2 Base Camp trek invites you into the awe-inspiring 'Throne Room of the Mountain Gods'. Confronting rugged glacial terrain and altitudes of up to 5150m, this is a true challenge – but one rewarded by the most breathtaking panoramas on Earth. Journeying deep into the Karakoram range, we pass iconic peaks and navigate the ever-shifting ice and moraines of the mighty Baltoro Glacier to reach the spectacular glacial confluence of Concordia. Accompanied by an experienced guide and supported by a local Sirdar and field crew from the Baltistan region, this fourteen-day trek for the experienced hiker who is wanting to take on a challenge in a part of the world a little less well-trodden.

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Trek over the colossal Baltoro Glacier
- Experience the warmth and hospitality of the Balti people
- Climb to K2 Base Camp (5150m)
- Camp at Concordia, beneath four of the world's 8000m peaks


Trek
Transfer
Flight
K2
Muztagh Tower
K2 Base Camp
Urdukas Camp
Concordia
Askole
Jhola Camp
Masherbrum
Skardu
Skardu
Islamabad
KANDOO ADVENTURES

ITINERARY

DAY 1

ARRIVE IN ISLAMABAD

Welcome to Islamabad! From Islamabad Airport (ISB) we will arrange a private transfer to your hotel. Once you have checked-in, there is time to have some breakfast and rest before meeting your guide, tour leader and the rest of your group at this afternoon's pre-trek briefing.

Accommodation: **Hotel**
Meals included: **Breakfast**

DAY 2

FLY TO SKARDU

The flight from Islamabad to Skardu takes just over an hour and it is no exaggeration to say it is one of the most scenic flights in the world. With views of the Himalaya and Karakoram ranges, see if you can spot Nanga Parbat (8126m) or even the magnificent K2. After landing, we take a short transfer to our hotel and then have the afternoon free to explore. Must-see places in Skardu include the historic Kharpocho Fort, from where you have immense views over the Indus Valley. Alternatively, the beautiful turquoise Satpara Lake is just under an hours drive away.

Max. altitude: **2500 m**
Accommodation: **Hotel**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 3

DRIVE TO ASKOLE

This morning, we leave Skardu in 4x4s as we take the mountain road into the rugged Braldu Valley. Passing through the lush Shigar Valley, the road becomes rough and narrow as it heads east along the Braldu River. The route then navigates the narrow, steep-sided Braldu Gorge, accessible only on foot when the first climbing teams arrived in Pakistan but today, the journey can be made in all-terrain vehicles. It's a pretty exciting ride! The village of Askole, also known as the Gateway to the Karakoram, is the last inhabited settlement on the route and it is here that we meet the rest of our support crew, including cooks and porters. Tonight, we will camp overlooking the Braldu River. This route can be affected by landslides and, if it becomes impossible to drive, the journey will be completed on foot.

Transport: **4x4 Vehicle (6 - 7 hours, 130 km)**
Max. altitude: **3000 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 4

TREK TO JHOLA CAMP

Today marks the start of our trek. Departing Askole, the highest settlement in the valley, the trail weaves beside cultivated fields tended by generations of Balti families and shepherds before reaching the CKNP checkpoint where we complete relevant formalities. As we head through the Braldu Valley, we cross traditional bridges over meltwater flowing from the Biafo Glacier and the confluence of the Braldu and Panma rivers. Towards the end of today's trek, the path takes us through a narrow section of the trail that has been hand-carved into the cliffside and provides spectacular views into the gorge below. Tonight we camp at Jhola Camp, beside the Braldu river.

Hiking time: **6 - 8 hours**
Walking distance: **22 km**
Ascent: **250 m**
Descent: **120 m**
Max. altitude: **3140 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 5

TREK TO PAIJU CAMP

Today's trek follows the Braldu river deeper into the Karakoram, passing the former campsites of Choghobrak and Bardumal, which are now no longer used due to erosion from the ever-shifting flow of the river. Water shoes / lightweight trekking sandals will come in handy as we cross several glacial streams. As we gain elevation, the scenery increasingly spectacular as we head towards the enormous Baltoro Glacier. In the distance, the skyline is dominated by the Trango Towers and Cathedral Peaks. It it's very clear, you may even catch a glimpse of K2, hiding behind the elegant Lobsang Spire. Tonight we camp beneath juniper and willow trees at Paiju Camp, a long-established expedition staging point.

Hiking time: **6 - 8 hours**
Walking distance: **22 km**
Ascent: **580 m**
Descent: **335 m**
Max. altitude: **3420 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 6

ACCLIMATISATION DAY AT PAIJU CAMP

Paiju Camp is one of the most comfortable sites we visit on the trek, with reliable spring water, level tent sites, shaded areas and wash basins. Today is an important chance to reorganise and repack supplies as well as baking bread and preparing food for the next few days. From the camp, there are a number of short acclimatisation walks which are designed to aid your body's adjustment to the altitude.

Hiking time: **2 - 3 hours**
Walking distance: **5 km**
Max. altitude: **3420 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 7

TREK TO HORBOSE CAMP (BALTORO GLACIER)

Today is one of the toughest on the trek, as we climb onto the Baltoro Glacier, one of the world's longest non-polar glaaciers. Marvel at the torrents of glacial meltwater flowing out from underneath the ice before taking our first steps onto the glacier's surface. The route traverses the southern side of the glacier where we will trek across ice and rocky moraines. We will camp tonight at Horbose Camp where we will have views of Cathederal Towers, Trango Towers and the striking rock spires of Uli Bioaho that are simply out of this world.

Hiking time: **7 - 8 hours**
Walking distance: **14 km**
Ascent: **640 m**
Descent: **220 m**
Max. altitude: **3795 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 8

TREK TO URDUKAS CAMP

Whilst today's trek is a shorter one, the uneven glacial terrain requires care and attention as we trek eastwards towards the famous Urdukas Camp, sitting 100m above the glacier. The camp was established in 1909 for the Duke of Abruzzi's K2 expedition and, from its elevated position you will have uninterrupted views across the enormous glacier.

Hiking time: **3 - 4 hours**
Walking distance: **7 km**
Ascent: **250 m**
Descent: **40 m**
Max. altitude: **3900 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 9

TREK TO GORO II CAMP

We spend the whole of today on the glacier as our path undulates over ridges of morain shaped by the glacier's slow but constant movement. Looking around us, we see Masherbrum (7821m) and Gasherbrum IV (7925m) come into full view. Wrap up warm tonight as the temperatures drop significantly as the sun sets and we spend the night on the glacier itself.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**
Walking distance: **12 km**
Ascent: **330 m**
Descent: **90 m**
Max. altitude: **4295 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 10

TREK TO CONCORDIA

After a hearty breakfast, we lace up our boots and continue over the glacier to Concordia. Often described as the 'Throne Room of the Mountain Gods', it is the spectacular cross-roads where the Baltoro, Godwin-Austin, Vigne and Upper Baltoro glaciers converge. Named by explorer Sir Martin Conway after the famous glacial confluence in Switzerland's Bernese Oberland, it is widely regarded as one of the finest mountain viewpoints on Earth. We camp tonight beneath these magnificent giants.

Hiking time: **5 - 6 hours**
Walking distance: **12 km**
Ascent: **290 m**
Max. altitude: **4500 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 11

TREK TO K2 BASE CAMP – OVERNIGHT AT BROAD PEAK BASE CAMP

Today's the day! We head north along the Godwin-Austin Glacier, following the historic route taken by generations of climbers and explorers towards the legendary K2. The beginning of the walk is the most challenging and your guides will navigate you through the confluence of the Godwin-Austin and Baltoro Glaciers. The terrain is constantly changing and a well-chosen route is required through meltwater streams and across moraine, glacial ice and possible crevasses. Once we are past this, the route becomes more straightforward and it takes around four hours to reach Broad Peak Base Camp. For those who want to continue, there is an optional return hike to K2 Base Camp (this takes around 4 hours).

Hiking time: **8 - 9 hours**
Walking distance: **14 km**
Ascent: **600 m**
Descent: **250 m**
Max. altitude: **5150 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 12

RETURN TO CONCORDIA

After an unforgettable visit to K2 Base Camp, we retrace our steps down the Godwin Austin Glacier to Concordia. Now that we have started our descent to lower altitudes, the trekking should start to feel a little easier and we can begin to reflect on our incredible experience so far.

Hiking time: **3 - 4 hours**
Walking distance: **8 km**
Ascent: **50 m**
Descent: **400 m**
Max. altitude: **4500 m**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 13

TREK TO SHAKSPUNG CAMP

We wake up one last time surrounded by so many towering granite peaks and soak it all in as we enjoy a leisurely breakfast. With our bags packed, we wave farewell to K2 and continue down the Baltoro Glacier. Shakspung Camp is situated on an elevated moraine ridge. In the Balti language, Shakspung means 'a big pile of stones'. Now that we have achieved the toughest days of the trek, this evening we can celebrate our achievement and the new friendships we have formed. Your Balti trekking crew may want to share traditional songs and music with you as they join in the celebration.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**
Walking distance: **16 km**
Ascent: **650 m**
Descent: **1050 m**
Max. altitude: **4100 m**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 14

TREK TO HORBOSE CAMP VIA URDUKAS

As we continue our descent of the Baltoro Glacier, we get a different perspective of the Karakoram as the mountains that seemed level with us earlier in the trek now tower overhead. From our elevated position on the glacier, we can see the striking Biale Peak which is only visible from this unique vantage point. Horbose Camp will be our first campsite off the glacier and, at this lower altitude, we start to see green patches of vegetation.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**
Walking distance: **14 km**
Ascent: **100 m**
Descent: **470 m**
Max. altitude: **3795 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 15

TREK TO PAIJU CAMP

Today's route takes us back to the flowing spring water and groves of willow and juniper at Paiju Camp. As we continue our descent, we detour south to cross the Liligo Glacier before returning to the northern side of the main Baltoro Glacier. At this lower altitude, the temperatures are warmer here and the campsite comfortable.

Hiking time: **6 - 7 hours**
Walking distance: **15 km**
Ascent: **220 m**
Descent: **640 m**
Max. altitude: **3420 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 16

TREK TO JHOLA CAMP

Today we leave the Baltoro Glacier behind us and journey into the lower Braldo Valley. The trail follows the twists and turns of the Braldo River and we can marvel at the deep gorges and sheer cliffs that have been created by centuries of water forcing its way through the rock. During today's trek, we cross several glacial streams so have your water shoes / trekking sandals close to hand if there are no stepping stones or bridges available. We will also retrace our steps carefully over exposed sections of the trail which offer unbeatable views into the steep-sided gorge. Jhola Camp is a peaceful space with more greenery than we have seen for many days now.

Hiking time: **6 - 8 hours**
Walking distance: **22 km**
Ascent: **120 m**
Descent: **250 m**
Max. altitude: **3140 m**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 17

TREK TO ASKOLE

Our final days trekking follows morains created by the Biafo Glacier before we cross the 'King's Polo Ground', the local name for a broad, open area of ground that offers significant contrast to the rugged terrain of the past few days. A little further along the trail, we encounter the first signs of human habitation as we see traditional irrigation channels created by the local Balti people to carry precious glacial meltwater to the cultivated terraces of Askole. We will camp just a short walk from the village and, tonight, bid a fond farewell to our trekking crew, many of whom call Askole home.

Hiking time: **6 - 8 hours**
Walking distance: **21 km**
Ascent: **120 m**
Descent: **250 m**
Max. altitude: **3000 m**
Accommodation: **Camping**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 18

DRIVE TO SKARDU

After breakfast, we start the scenic return journey to Skardu by 4x4. Leaving the steep walls of the gorges behind, the landscape gradually transforms as we descend into the Shigar Valley, speckled with traditional Balti Villages, orchards and well-tended farmland. We continue along the smooth highway which takes us to our hotel in shardu where we can take a well-earned shower before having time to explore or simply rest after your trek. This evening we will all dine together in celebration of our achievement.

Transport: **4x4 Vehicle (6 - 7 hours, 130 km)**
Accommodation: **Hotel**
Meals included:
Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner

DAY 19

FLY TO ISLAMABAD

We will take the short, scenic flight to Islamabad and arrive at our hotel. You then have a free afternoon and time to explore the sights and sounds of Islamabad.

Accommodation: **Hotel**
Meals included: **Breakfast**

DAYS 20 TO 21

CONTINGENCY DAYS

In case weather has affected your flights between Islamabad and Skardu, one of these days may be used for travel. If your scheduled flights operated as planned, you will have more time to explore at leisure in Islamabad.

Accommodation: **Hotel**
Meals included: **Breakfast**

DAY 22

DEPARTURE

We will collect you from your hotel and transfer you to Islamabad Airport for your departing flight.

Meals included: **Breakfast**

PLEASE NOTE

Please note that due to restricted availability at campsites, your itinerary may be different to the one shown. The start and end points will still be the same, however some campsites and distances may change. Please speak to a member of the team if you would like more information. It is in the nature of a trip of this kind that arrangements and participants have to be flexible. While we use all reasonable endeavours to ensure a trip runs according to your itinerary, the day-to-day agenda and ultimate goal of the trip are taken as aims and not as contractual obligations. It is a necessary condition of your joining any of our trips that you accept this flexibility. Occasionally, we may have to make changes and we reserve the right to do so at any time.

TRIP INFORMATION

DIFFICULTY

Whilst the number of trekking days is only two more than the Everest Base Camp trek, this trip is a significant step up and should not be underestimated. Several of the days are over 20km and may take up to 9 hours to complete. Added to this, you will be trekking in temperatures over 30°C in an extremely remote environment. If you are considering taking on this incredible trek, we ask that you have experience of multi-day high-altitude trekking and have a good understanding of how you cope with altitude. Having treks in Nepal such as our Gokyo Lakes or Manaslu Circuit under your belt will be great preparation for this trek.

Looking for training advice or a training plan in preparation for this trip? We'd recommend checking out Kate Sielmann and her coaching programs that are specific to mountaineering and trekking training. Find more details here.

FOOD & DRINK

MEALS

Staying well-fed on your trek is absolutely vital, especially when conditions are such that you might not want to eat or drink as much as you should.
Because you are exerting much more energy than normal, our cooks have developed special menu plans that are appealing, healthy and filled with all the energy you need for your trek. For the majority of this trek, you will be in very remote areas which means it is not always possible to stock up on fresh ingredients. Our menu combines a mix of traditional Pakistani dishes, popular Asian dishes and western favourites. Typical meals include tinned fish, meats, pulses and vegetables with fresh ingredients whenever possible. We highly recommend bringing snacks that you know work for you when you are trekking and snacks that are high in protein will be beneficial. Popular snacks are energy bars. chocolate, nuts / trail mix and dried fruit. If you are considering bringing energy gels, you should have used these before and should ensure that your body is used to using them as they can cause stomach upsets.

A typical day's meals on the trek are as follows:

Breakfast

Each day begins with a hearty breakfast with plenty of hot options including eggs, porridge, freshly baked breads and chapatis as well as plenty of tea and coffee. There will also be a selection of jams and spreads.

Lunch

Depending on where we are on the trek, lunch may be served picnic-style or a hot, sit-down meal. Typical lunch dishes include cheese, breads, tinned fish / meat, hot noodles and soup, as well as plenty of hot drinks.

Dinner

Each evening, we convene in the communal mess tent to enjoy a delicious three-course meal. We start with a freshly prepared soup, followed by a substantial main course combining rice, pasta or potatoes with vegetables and lentils or tinned meat. If you still have room, there will be a small desert and hot drinks.

ISLAMABAD AND SKARDU

You will be staying in hotels in Islamabad and Skardu where rooms are booked on a bed and breakfast basis.

In Islamabad, your lunchtime and evening meals can be taken in your hotel or in Islamabad city. Many dishes feature tender, slow-cooked meats, fragrant rice and fresh breads. Look out for rich meat dishes such as nihari and paya, Karahi dishes made with chicken or mutton, or, if you prefer to go meat-free, you will find plenty of daal (lentil curry) and sabzi (seasonal vegetable) options. All will be served with traditional local breads such as chapati or roti.

In Skardu, you can expect to find hearty, comforting Balti dishes designed for the mountain cold. The cuisine is a combination of Tibetan and Central Asian flavours. Traditional dishes include chapshoro (savoury meat-filled pastry), thukpa (warming noodle soup), khambir (traditional leavened bread) and gur gur chai (salty butter tea). Lunches and evening meals will be available from your hotel. Alternatively, ask our team for recommendations if you plan to venture out.

DRINKING WATER

On the trek, we boil or filter all the water that we give you for drinking. Where possible, natural spring water is taken from reliable mountain sources. Where this is not available, we rely on glacial meltwater which is extremely mineral rich and can cause an upset stomach. As this may contain glacial silt, it is allowed to settle in large water containers before being treated. All water is either boiled or purified using an appropriate treatment method. Whilst we do everything we can to ensure water is suitable for drinking, we highly recommend treating your water with chlorine tablets yourself in addition. Water filters may become blocked and may not work well if the water contains glacial silt.

In Islamabad and Skardu, you will be able to purchase bottled water but should ensure that the seals on the bottle caps are unbroken. If you are eating out, use your common sense when choosing where to eat and avoid raw foods such as salads as well as drinks which contain ice.

ISLAMABAD

Your lunchtime and evening meals can be taken in your hotel or in Islamabad city. Many dishes feature tender, slow-cooked meats, fragrant rice and fresh breads. Look out for rich meat dishes such as nihari and paya, karahi dishes made with chicken or mutton, or if you prefer to go meat-free, you will find plenty of daal (lentil curry) and sabzi (seasonal vegetable) options. All will be served with traditional local breads such as chapati or roti.

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Vegetarian diets are frequently catered for, but if you have special dietary requirements or are vegan, you need to let us know when you book so that we can inform our team who will be catering for you on the trek.

ACCOMMODATION

Your full day by day itinerary shows what is included in terms of accommodation and meal basis. Our pre and post-trek accommodation is based in Islamabad and Skardu. Where your hotel basis is B&B, you can usually purchase snacks or meals at the hotel, which can be paid for in Pakistani Rupees. In Islamabad, you will stay in a comfortable 3* hotel with en-suite rooms in the city's Blue Area (the central business and commercial district). Hotels in Skardu are used primarily for mountaineers and trekkers, and whilst still comfortable, are more basic, with simpler rooms and shared bathrooms facilities.

CAMPING AND MESS TENTS

Our team in Pakistan use good quality, durable tents to ensure you stay warm, dry and comfortable on your trek. These are suited to high-altitudes and temperatures well below freezing. Keep in mind, these are proper mountain tents, designed to cope with extreme conditions so don't expect to be able to stand up and walk around inside! A two-person tent will be set up with a comfortable foam mattress (we recommend bringing an additional mat for added comfort and warmth). Hot water is provided at campsites so you will be able to have a wash when you arrive at camp. We will be camping at recognised camp grounds, some of which have facilities such as long-drop toilets. You should expect facilities to be basic and there will be no access to electricity or mobile signal. Your meals will be taken in a separate mess tent where you will be able to sit comfortably while you relax and chat to your team-mates and enjoy the delicious food our cook has freshly prepared for you. Inside, you'll find a table and comfortable chairs. With a full 2 meters of headroom, even the tallest members of the group will be able to stretch a bit and move about without hunching over.

Most campsites have basic toilet facilities which are available for the group to use. Where there are no fixed toilet areas, a portable camping toilet will be set up. This provides a little privacy and will simply cover a hole in the ground. If you need to use the toilet whilst trekking then this will be a case of finding somewhere hidden, off the beaten track and going wild. We can guarantee it will be the most scenic toilet break you've ever had! Please take all used toilet tissues away with you and do not leave any on the trail. Biodegradable dog waste / nappy bags are useful in this situation.

YOUR GUIDE

On this trek, you will be accompanied by a qualified mountain guide and a local Sirdar These will be your Lead Guides). Once you have started your trek, you should speak to your Lead Guides about any problems, whether it relates to food, equipment or health. Once you have set on the trail, your Lead Guides have overall responsibility for your health and welfare. You must listen carefully to all of their instructions and follow them carefully. The guide's ruling on any matter is final, especially in relation to an early descent. We would much prefer you to sort out any problems with them on the spot, rather than allow them to spoil your trek. Your guide is in contact with the local office if further further assistance is required.

If the Lead Guide is the source of your concern, you will have the opportunity to speak to one of the office representatives when you return to your post-trek hotel.

TRANSPORT

This itinerary includes private transfers in Islamabad and Skardu, domestic flights and travel on high mountain roads. The general standard of driving throughout Pakistan is poor and badly regulated and we insist on using a high standard of vehicle and driver for all of our transfers. It is not a legal requirement to have seatbelts fitted in the back of vehicles and, whilst we try to use vehicles with rear seatbelts, this cannot always be guaranteed.

The main trekking season in Pakistan (July – August) coincides with the monsoon season, but the Korakoram range sits largely out of reach of the heavy monsoon rains and the weather remains mostly stable. However, the mountain roads we travel on are prone to landslides and may become impassable. Safety is our number one priority and these journeys will be undertaken in well-maintained 4x4 vehicles, driven by highly skilled local drivers who know these roads well. As with all high mountain roads, landslides can occasionally affect travel and, should any section of the road be temporarily blocked, our team will make the necessary arrangements to safely navigate the blockage. In some cases, it may not be possible to continue by vehicle and it may be necessary to continue on foot. Such delays are part of travelling in this remote and ever-changing environment and our local team are well used to managing these journeys.

If you are unhappy about any aspect of the vehicle or the standard of driving, please speak to the driver or our local office.

LUGGAGE

On this trip, we recommend bringing the following luggage:

- Duffel bag (80-100 litres) to be carried by a porter
- Day pack with rain cover (30-40 litres) to carry water (minimum of 2 litres), waterproof jacket and trousers, warm layers, warm hat, gloves, snacks, sun cream, gloves, etc.
- Lightweight foldable bag / bumbag to carry valuables in Islamabad and Skardu

The Pakistani authorities set a strict maximum weight limit for porters who will be carrying your personal luggage as well as a share of the camping and cooking equipment for the trek. Your duffel bag to be carried by porters must weigh no more than 12.5kg and it must be soft and waterproof.

HOW DO I GET THERE?

Our trips in Pakistan start from Islamabad. From the UK, British Airways offer direct flights from London airports and you can find indirect flights with Ethiad, Turkish Air and Pakistan International Airlines. For travellers coming from the USA, Emirates, Qatar and Turkish Airlines operate indirect flights from across the United States.

We always recommend taking your time deciding which airline to travel with as you may find mixed customer experiences relating to customer service and baggage handling.

The vast majority of international flights arrive into Islamabad in the morning which gives you time to settle in at your hotel before the pre-trek briefing on your scheduled arrival day.

If you are changing airlines or re-checking your luggage at an airport en-route, please ensure you leave a minimum of 3 hours between flights. This will account for any delays on arrival, travel time across airports (this can take longer than you think) and time taken to re-check bags.

DEPARTING PAKISTAN

Airport security in Pakistan is pretty strict and you will need to have printed evidence of your departure flights to show to the officials. This should be your flight tickets and receipt of payment for your flights. You may also be asked to show your visa and other visa related documents in paper form. If you prefer to do things digitally, you may do this as well but you MUST have aper copies of all of the above.

ON ARRIVAL

Once you have cleared immigration and collected your luggage, make your way to the main doors. Your driver will be outside these doors, holding a 'Kandoo' sign or a sign displaying your name. If you have chosen to make your own way to the pre-trip hotel, you can easily find a taxi at the airport. The address of your hotel is on your trip itinerary. It takes about 35-45 minutes to drive to the hotel depending on traffic.

PRE-TREK BRIEFING

It is a requirement of joining any of our treks that you attend a pre-trek briefing before the trek begins. This gives our guide team the opportunity to review the plans for the trek with you, make sure you have all the right gear and answer any questions you may have. Your guide will also go through everything that you will need to bring on the trek with you, including travel documents for your flights and checkpoints on the trek. We will also carry out a pre-trek health check which must be completed before you trek to high altitude. In order to set a base line for your daily health check, your resting pulse rate will be tested and if it is above 100 you will be required to see a doctor before starting your trek. The majority of international flights arrive in Islamabad in the morning and your briefing will be held at 1pm on day one, after you have checked-in and had time to grab some breakfast / lunch.

If you should arrive on a later flight, you will still need to be given the full briefing before you go to bed. We need to complete our safety checks in the evening as we will have an early start in the morning.

BUDGET & CHANGE

The Pakistani Rupee is a closed currency so you will not be able to buy this before you arrive. Pakistan has a mostly cash-based economy and, whilst you may be able to use Visa / Mastercard in larger shops in cities, you should not rely on being able to pay by card. It is advisable to travel with US Dollars as these are widely accepted at currency exchange offices. It is very important that bills be new (less than 10 years old), crisp and untorn. We recommend changing currency in Islamabad rather than at the airport as you will get a much better exchange rate. Your hotel is located in the Blue Area, Islamabad's business district, and there are exchange offices within waking distance of hotel. Your guide will be happy to assist you in finding these should you need them to. Alternatively, you may be able to exchange a small amount of currency at the hotel reception, but expect to pay a higher exchange rate.

You will need to budget for meals in Islamabad and Skardu as well as any souvenirs. Depending on your tastes, you can eat for as little as $3 / £2 or treat yourself to a three-course meal for around $20 / £15. If you are relying on a credit or debit card for emergency funds, make sure you tell your card issuer that you will be using it abroad, or you may find that it won't work when you really need it.

US dollars are also useful if you have run out of rupees and we recommend bringing a small amount of cash in USD.

TIPS

We realise that tipping may not be a common practice in all countries but it is a long-standing tradition in Pakistan that all operators support and provides valuable support to the families and communities involved in the trekking industry. The decision on how much to tip should be determined by how well the team served you while you were on the trek. Tips are always discretionary and if you are not happy with the service you have received you do not have to pay tips. Tips should be made in Pakistani Rupees. The group tip can be given to your porters and guides during a small farewell ceremony on your last night in Askole. We recommend a tip of between $165 - $190 / £120 - £140 per trekker.

Tipping is entirely voluntary and, if you are not satisfied with the service you have received, you are under no obligation to tip.

FORMALITIES & HEALTH

PASSPORT

Please double check that your passport is valid for a minimum of 6 months beyond the date of your arrival into Pakistan. You will also need at least two completely blank pages. We recommend that you take a photocopy of your passport and keep it separate from the original, and this will be useful if the original is lost while you are travelling. You must carry your passport with you at all times.

VISA

Almost all visitors to Pakistan require a visa to enter and these must be secured in advance of your trip. It is s serious offence to enter Pakistan without a visa and you must check the current travel advice from your own government prior to your trip.

K2 BASE CAMP AND CONCORDIA
When applying for your visa, you must apply for a Trekking Visa. Our local team in Pakistan will formally register you as a participant on the trip and, once this has been approved by the government, we will send you everything you need for your trekking visa application. We require the following to register you for your trek:

Copy of your passport (photo page with bio-data)
2 passport-style photographs

It can take up to 8 weeks to be formally approved and you cannot apply for your visa until this has been granted. Please allow enough time to complete the trekking visa process. Please use the following website to apply for your visa:

https://visa.nadra.gov.pk/mountaineering-trekking/

For this visa you will need to upload the following documents:

Copy of your passport (photo page with bio-data)
Passport-style photographs (requirements can be found on the government website when applying for your visa)
List of people who will be on your trek (provided by Kandoo)
Invitation letter from the designated tour operator (provided by Kandoo)
Signed 'Trekking in Restricted Area' form (document can be found on government website when applying for your visa)
You may also be asked to provide proof of address in the form of a utility bill or similar

You will be sent an email with a Visa Grant Notice. Once you receive this, please email it to your Kandoo Adventures travel consultant as we need to pass this on to our team in Pakistan. We also recommend printing a copy of the Visa Grant Notice and keeping it with you whilst you are in Pakistan in case you are asked to show it to an official.

Tips for the visa application

Visa category - please select 'Mountaineering and Trekking'
Visa Sub-Category - please select 'Trekking'
Application type - please select 'Entry'
Visa type - please select 'Single Entry'
Visit purpose - please select 'BALTORO GONDOGORO HUSHE'

You will be asked to provide details of your accommodation on arrival and of the area where you will be staying outside of Islamabad. Please contact us for this information.

The visa fee will vary based on your nationality. You can check this using the following web address:

https://visa.nadra.gov.pk/fee-structure/

The fees for your trekking permit and restricted area permits are included in the trip cost.

This information is subject to change and it is your responsibility to check the current information on your own government's travel advisory website.

HUNZA VALLEY AND NANGA PARBAT BASE CAMP
When applying for your Pakistan visa, you must apply for a tourist visa. Our local team in Pakistan will formally register you as a participant on the trip and, once this has been approved, we will send you everything you need for your visa application. We require the following to register you for your trek:

Copy of your passport (photo page with bio-data)
2 passport-style photos

This can take up to 3 months to be approved and you cannot apply for your visa until this has been granted. Please allow enough time to complete the tourist visa forms. You can apply for your visa through the government website:

https://visa.nadra.gov.pk/tourist-visa/

For the visa, you will need to upload the following documents:

Copy of your passport (photo page with bio-data)
Passport-style photos (requirements on government website)
Hotel booking details (provided by Kandoo)
You may also be asked to provide proof of address (utility bill or similar)

You will be sent a Visa Grant Notice by email. Please email this to your travel consultant so we can do everything we need to. We also advise printing this and keeping it with you on your trip.

The visa fee will vary based on your nationality. You can check using the following web address:

https://visa.nadra.gov.pk/fee-structure/

VACCINATIONS

The following vaccinations are highly recommended for travel to Pakistan:

Tetanus
Polio
Typhoid
Hepatitis A

You should always consult your doctor or travel clinic in plenty of time before your trip as they will have the most up to date advice.

INSURANCE

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are fully and adequately insured for the duration of your trip. Please ensure that all activities, excursions and destinations in your itinerary are included in your travel insurance policy, in addition to your regular cover for cancellation and medical expenses. If you are joining the K2 Base Camp and Concordia trek, you will need cover for trekking up to 6000m of altitude and travel by 4x4 on remote mountain roads. For the Hunza Valley and Nanga Parbat Base Camp trip, you must be covered to trek up to 4000m and travel by 4x4 on the Karakoram Highway. Your policy must include cover for evacuation (including by helicopter) and repatriation if necessary.

Please take a copy of your insurance policy to the pre-trek briefing as the guide will need to collect your insurance details. We also ask that you keep a copy of your policy summary (containing your policy number and the emergency number for your insurer) in your day sack at all times, so we can access this information should we need to contact the insurer on your behalf.

HEALTH

Before travelling to Pakistan, it is recommended that you visit your doctor and dentist for a routine health check-up.

Malaria

There is very low risk of malaria in Islamabad, Skardu or whilst trekking as you will be at or above 2,500m when not in Islamabad. However, there is a risk of malaria in many rural areas of Pakistan that are below 2000m, particularly in the provinces of Balochistan, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. You should always speak to a healthcare professional in plenty of time before you travel. If you will be travelling more widely in Pakistan, you should make them aware of where you will be visiting.

Altitude sickness

Altitude sickness, also called Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), hypobaropathy and soroche, is an illness caused by exposure to low air pressure, especially low partial pressure of oxygen, which many trekkers experience at high altitudes. AMS is caused by exerting yourself at high altitudes, especially if you have not been properly acclimatised. It is most common at altitudes above 2400 meters. Our routes have been designed to aid your acclimatisation wherever possible, but the following will also help your body adjust:

Slow and steady. You need to keep your respiration rate low enough to maintain a normal conversation. If you are panting or breathing hard, you must slow down. There is no pressure on you to keep up with other members of the group.

Drink much more water than you think you need. Proper hydration helps acclimatisation dramatically. You need to drink at least three litres each day.

Diamox

There has been a lot of research on Diamox that shows that is has been reasonably well proven to be helpful in avoiding AMS by speeding up the acclimatisation process. In the UK, it is a prescription only drug which must be prescribed by a doctor, but some doctors are reluctant to prescribe it. The concern is that by taking Diamox, people believe that they are immune from AMS and can ignore the symptoms. In reality, although Diamox can help prevent the symptoms, should symptoms still develop, it means that you are not acclimatising and you have to take notice. Diamox is taken before you start trekking to prevent altitude sickness, not once you are on the trek and symptoms have started to develop.

Dehydration

You can easily become dehydrated at high altitudes. The lower air pressure forces you to breathe more quickly and deeply, and you lose a lot of water through your lungs. You will also be exerting yourself, sweating and may suffer from diarrhoea. As a result, you will have to drink much more water than you normally would. You should drink at least 3 litres of fluids every day while trekking. Even when you do not feel thirsty, you have to drink this amount of water as a minimum and preferably more. Stay on the look-out for signs of dehydration in yourself and your fellow trekkers. The most common symptoms include thirst, dry lips, nose or mouth, headache and feeling fatigued or lethargic.

MEDICATION

All participants should speak with a doctor in plenty of time before the start of their trip to discuss the altitudes you will be reaching and the remote environment you will be visiting. There are strict rules on which medicines can be brought into Pakistan and you must check with your own government's current travel advice and the airlines you will be travelling with. These restrictions relate to prescription medications and medicines you may be able to buy over the counter in your home country.

EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING

CLOTHING TO BRING

HEADGEAR

- Warm beanie style hat - knitted or fleece
- Buff - essential to prevent the cold air reaching your lungs
- Wide brimmed sun hat or peaked cap for sun protection
- Sunglasses - high UV protection
- Glacier / snow sunglasses (not essential but highly recommended)
- Headlamp (plus extra batteries)

UPPER BODY

- Long-sleeved thermal base layer x2
- Light or medium weight, moisture-wicking t-shirt x3
- Long-sleeved UV protective top x2
- Fleece or warm mid-layer x2
- Lightweight insulated jacket - Primaloft or down
- Thick insulated jacket - Primaloft or down
- Water and windproof hard shell outer jacket
- Gloves - lightweight, fleece or quick-drying fabric
- Gloves or mittens - heavyweight, insulated, preferably water resistant

LEGS

- Moisture-wicking / thermal underwear
- Full length thermal base layer x2
- Trekking trousers - light or medium weight x2
- Water and windproof hardshell trousers
- Gaiters - especially useful in snow or wet conditions
- Shorts - breathable fabric, women should ensure knees are covered

FEET

- Trekking boots - mid-weight with good ankle support
- Training shoe or similar - to wear at camp
- Trekking sandals / water shoes - for river crossings
- Microspikes
- Mid-weight trekking socks x5
- Thermal trekking socks x2

EQUIPMENT TO BRING

GEAR

- Sleeping bag (4 season or -15°C) and compression sack
- Warm sleeping bag liner
- Lightweight inflatable sleeping mat
- Small inflatable / travel pillow
- Trekking poles
- Water purification system (chlorine tablets recommended)
- Water bottles - must be able to carry a minimum of 2 litres of water. We recommend a wide-mouthed Nalgene bottle
- Thermos / flask for hot drinks
- Hydration bladder

LUGGAGE

- Duffel bag (80-100 litres) - must be soft-sided and waterproof
- Daypack (30-40 litres) - with rain cover
- Lightweight foldable bag / bumbag

OTHER ACCESSORIES

- Sun cream - SPF 50+
- Lip balm - SPF 50+
- Toiletries, including wet wipes, toothbrush and paste, anti-bacterial handwash, hand sanitiser and moisturiser - please carry all rubbish off the trail
- Toilet paper
- Camera and spare batteries
- Personal medication and first aid kit, including painkillers, blister plasters, rehydration salts, upset stomach treatment and throat lozenges
- Personal snacks and energy bars - dried fruit and nuts are also a good source of energy
- Isotonic drink powder / energy drink powder to mix in with your water. This improves flavour and helps replace electrolytes
- Microfiber towel for wiping hands and face each day
- Ear plugs and eye mask if you are a light sleeper
- Luggage locks x 2 (one for anything left at the hotel and one for your duffel bag)
- Universal travel adapter
- Powerbank and charging cables - solar powerbanks work well
- Spare boot laces
- Dry bags - great for organising your packing in your duffel bag and daypack as well as keeping everything dry
- Insect repellent

GEAR RENTAL

We have a limited number of sleeping bags and lightweight inflatable sleeping mats available to rent and this is subject to availability. You should bring a sleeping bag liner for hygiene purposes. If you are planning on renting items from our local team, please let us know at least six weeks before the start of your trip. Please see below for rental costs for the duration of the trip:

- Four-season sleeping bag: £50 / $70
- Sleeping mat: £25 / $35

Payment should be made in local currency.

If you are planning on renting any other items for your trek, there are a number of equipment hire stores in Islamabad and Skardu. We highly recommend contacting the stores prior to your trip to check that they have the items you will need, their opening times and what payment is accepted. The quality of rental gear is very variable and it is your responsibility to check carefully the condition of any item you rent. We accept no responsibility for the quality of equipment hired.

An indication of the likely rental costs is below:

- Trekking poles: $1 per day
- Down jacket: $2 per day

If you are planning on renting equipment, you need to make sure you have allowed sufficient time at the beginning of your trip.
All rental equipment is included in your overall trekking bag weight, so make sure you have allowed for this when packing your bag at home. A sleeping bag will weigh around 2kg.

HOW TO BOOK THIS TRIP

1 CHOOSE YOUR DATE AND CHECK AVAILABILITY

A full list of available dates can be found on our website.

2 CONTACT US

Contact us by phone, email or through our website. We will answer any questions you may have and send you a personalized itinerary and quote.

3 COMPLETE BOOKING AND PAYMENT

When you are ready to book, we will send you a link to our online booking forms and participation agreements. We accept all major credit and debit cards and require a low 20% deposit to secure your place.