



SKARDU TREKKERS

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K2 BASE CAMP TREK DOSSIER

(Journey to the Heart of the Karakoram Range)

OVERVIEW

The K2 Base Camp Trek is a journey to one of the most remote and breathtaking wilderness areas on Earth, leading adventurous trekkers into the heart of Pakistan's Karakoram Range. Standing at 5,150 meters, the base camp offers an awe-inspiring view of K2, the world's second-highest mountain, as well as its iconic neighbors, including Broad Peak and the mighty Gasherbrum massif. The trek is known for its rugged beauty and dramatic landscapes, from vast glaciers to towering granite peaks, showcasing some of the planet's most spectacular scenery.

KEY FACTS:

- 🚩 **Location:** Karakoram Range, Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan
- 🚩 **Duration:** Approximately 12-16 days
- 🚩 **Best Time to Visit:** June to August
- 🚩 **Elevation:** Base Camp at around 5,150 meters
- 🚩 **Difficulty Level:** Challenging

Highlights

Concordia: Known as the "Throne Room of the Mountain Gods," Concordia is a breathtaking viewpoint where trekkers can marvel at a panorama of towering peaks, including K2, Broad Peak, and Gasherbrum IV.

Baltoro Glacier: One of the world's longest non-polar glaciers, the Baltoro offers a unique trekking experience over rugged ice fields surrounded by sheer granite walls and remote wilderness.

Mesmerizing Campsites: From the green oasis of Urdukas to the high altitude starkness of Goro II, each campsite on the route provides striking scenery and moments of tranquility amid the vast mountains.

Wild and Remote Terrain: The journey crosses untouched landscapes far from civilization, immersing trekkers in one of the planet's most remote regions, with challenging trails and awe-inspiring natural beauty.

K2 Base Camp Arrival: The culmination of the trek, reaching K2 Base Camp at 5,150 meters, provides a profound sense of accomplishment and the unforgettable sight of K2 towering above in all its glory.

QUICK FACTS

- ✚ **Total Duration:** 20 Days
- ✚ **Trekking Grade & Days:** Challenging (Mountaineering), with 13 dedicated trekking days
- ✚ **Accommodation:** Hotels and camping
- ✚ **Minimum Group Size:** 1
- ✚ **Maximum Group Size:** 20

COST for Private Trek

For Foreign Trekkers

Group size	Cost per person in USD
Solo	\$4300
2 to 4 person	\$2800
4 to 8 person	\$2200
8 to 20 person	\$2000

For Pakistani Trekkers

Group size	Cost per person in PKR
Solo	PKR 550,000
2 to 4 person	PKR 380,000
4 to 8 person	PKR 360,000
8 to 20 person	PKR 310,000

THREATS AND RISK ASSESMENT

Please note that trekking, mountaineering, and traveling in developing regions carry inherent risks, including the possibility of personal injury. By booking this trip, you acknowledge these risks and accept responsibility for your actions. Successful adventure travel requires an adaptable, open-minded approach, as you may encounter extreme conditions, unpredictable weather, and last-minute itinerary adjustments beyond our control. Working collaboratively with your team is also crucial for a safe and enjoyable experience.

Our team has conducted a thorough threat and risk assessment specifically for the K2 & Gondogoro La trek. While some level of risk is inherent in all our adventures, it contributes to the excitement and allure of this type of journey. By identifying potential hazards on the K2 & Gondogoro La trek, we aim to assess and mitigate risks effectively.

Below is a summary of identified risks and hazards that travelers should be aware of:

- ✚ Potential falls or slips, especially on ice or uneven terrain
- ✚ Altitude-related illnesses, including AMS, HACE, and HAPE
- ✚ Harsh weather conditions when camping in remote locations like Concordia and K2 Base Camp
- ✚ Temperature extremes, which can reach up to 40°C in the early stages of the trek
- ✚ Dangerous river crossings without bridges, posing drowning risks
- ✚ Risk of rock falls and landslides, especially on the Skardu–Askole jeep track
- ✚ Snow and ice avalanches
- ✚ Potential lightning strikes
- ✚ Encounters with wildlife and pack animals, such as donkeys or stray dogs
- ✚ Seismic activity, as the Karakoram region is earthquake-prone
- ✚ Endemic diseases—consult your doctor about necessary vaccinations
- ✚ Physiological emergencies (heart attack, appendicitis, etc.) in remote areas
- ✚ Road traffic risks along the jeep track to Askole, with high exposure to landslides and rockfall
- ✚ Flight risks on the Islamabad–Skardu route
- ✚ Potential exposure to contaminated food or water

Additionally, please note that this trek leads to remote areas with limited access to emergency services and medical care. In the event of a serious injury, evacuation could take several days, potentially affecting recovery time. While helicopter evacuations are a primary option, availability can be restricted due to adverse weather conditions.

This risk and threat assessment serves to inform you, helping to prepare for a challenging and rewarding adventure.

Altitude and Acclimatization

The K2 Base Camp Trek is set at high altitudes, where acclimatization is essential for a safe and enjoyable journey. The trek's gradual ascent allows time for the body to adjust, minimizing the risks of altitude sickness. Altitudes on this trek range from approximately 3,000 meters to over 5,000 meters, which can impact physical performance and increase the risk of altitude-related conditions, such as AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness), HACE (High Altitude Cerebral Edema), and HAPE (High Altitude Pulmonary Edema).

Tips for Effective Acclimatization

1. Pace Yourself: Move at a steady, relaxed pace, focusing on your breathing and maintaining a rhythm. The itinerary includes enough time to allow a gradual ascent, so there's no need to rush. Slower movements will aid your body's acclimatization process while allowing you to appreciate the views along the route.

2. Hydration: Staying hydrated is crucial at high altitudes. Drink plenty of water throughout the day to keep your body well-hydrated, which supports acclimatization. Avoid caffeinated beverages and alcohol, as they can contribute to dehydration.

3. Medication (Diamox): If recommended by a healthcare professional, consider taking Diamox (acetazolamide) as it may help speed up acclimatization. Consult your doctor before the trek to discuss the pros and cons and determine if this option is right for you.

Altitude-Related Symptoms and Precautions:

At high altitudes, even physically fit individuals may experience symptoms of altitude sickness. Symptoms can include headache, nausea, dizziness, shortness of breath, and loss of appetite. If these symptoms worsen or if you experience confusion, difficulty breathing, or loss of coordination, notify your guide immediately. Quick action is vital in managing altitude-related conditions and ensuring safety on the trek.

The itinerary for the K2 Base Camp Trek is designed to maximize acclimatization, allowing you to enjoy each stage of this remarkable journey into the heart of the Karakoram Range.

Symptoms of AMS

- Headache
- Nausea and vomiting
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Difficulty sleeping
- Shortness of breath

Symptoms of HACE

- Severe headache
- Confusion
- Loss of coordination (ataxia)
- Drowsiness or lethargy
- Vision disturbances
- Hallucinations
- Coma (in severe cases)

Symptoms of HAPE

- Shortness of breath
- Persistent cough with frothy or pink sputum
- Fatigue and weakness
- Rapid heartbeat
- Increased respiratory rate
- Bluish discoloration of skin

FIRST AID KIT

Trekking in remote areas means limited access to medical resources, making it essential to prepare for minor health issues that might arise. With a well-stocked basic medical kit and proper knowledge, many common problems can be managed. The principle "primum non nocere"—first, do no harm—guides us to use only what we're familiar with. When in doubt, it's best to administer first aid and seek professional assistance, possibly by phone. The UIAA (International Union of Alpine Associations) advises carrying a compact, easy-to-use first aid kit with clear instructions, enabling trekkers to handle minor issues independently or after consulting a doctor.

Recommended Items for a Trekking Medical Kit:

- ✚ Antibiotics: Zithromax 500 mg (3 tablets)
- ✚ Gastrointestinal relief: Tanagel sachets, Almax tablets
- ✚ Pain and inflammation relief: Neobrufen 600 mg (40 tablets), Paracetamol 500 mg or Aspirin, Actira tablets
- ✚ Stomach protection: Omeprazole tablets
- ✚ Skin and wound care: Flutental cream, Fucidine cream, Steri-Strips, sterile gauze pouch, small Betadine bottle, cloth tape (5 cm), small scissors, tweezers
- ✚ Anti-allergic: Polaramine tablets
- ✚ Eye care: Chivrouvelin eye drops
- ✚ High-altitude support: Edemox tablets
- ✚ Sun and hydration support: Sunblock cream, glucose or Isostar tablets
- ✚ Anti-diarrheal: Fortasec tablets
- ✚ Anti-cold: Romillary tablets
- ✚ Anti-inflammatory: Urbason 40 mg ampoule with syringe
- ✚ Miscellaneous: Compeed, bleach in a small opaque bottle (for food safety), elastic band (10x10 cm), small cream

VACCINATION AND MEDICAL

Before traveling to Pakistan, it's recommended to seek professional advice from a travel clinic or local GP on necessary vaccinations. Additionally, a dental check-up is advisable since there are no dental facilities on the trek.

Our team carries a comprehensive first aid kit, including high-altitude medications, antibiotics, and other essential medicines. Feel free to contact us if you'd like the full list of items in our medical kits.

Training and Medical Preparation:

Physical fitness is crucial for enjoying the remarkable landscapes, so preparing physically for the trek is beneficial. A medical exam is also essential to address any potential health concerns that could worsen in remote areas.

Medical Preparation Checklist:

- ✚ Consult your family doctor about any health issues that could be problematic due to isolation on the trek.
- ✚ Know any medication allergies and health conditions (e.g., stomach issues, back pain, migraines) that may be triggered by physical exertion.
- ✚ Blood pressure check and a basic blood test, especially if not done in the last two years.
- ✚ Comprehensive exam; For those over 40, a more detailed check-up with an electrocardiogram is recommended.
- ✚ Ear and eye care :If you have ear issues, consider getting your ears checked for wax buildup. Bring spare contact lenses or glasses after a recent eye check-up.
- ✚ Dental examination to reduce the likelihood of issues on the trek.

Vaccinations:

While a COVID-19 vaccination is mandatory, it is also recommended to have up-to-date tetanus and other routine immunizations. It's best to follow advice from a health professional regarding additional vaccinations.

CONNECTION

Internet access is available at Concordia and K2 Base Camp, and we'll set up a WiFi connection if the network permits. For added communication and safety, we also bring along a Thuraya satellite phone, which can be used for logistical coordination, emergency situations, and personal calls. For personal use, calls are charged at £3 (US\$5) per minute, and SMS messages cost £2 (US\$3) each to send or receive.

A TYPICAL DAY ON TREK

A typical day on the trek begins early with a wake-up call around dawn, accompanied by a warm drink brought to your tent to help you shake off the chill of the night. After breakfast, which usually includes high-energy foods, you'll pack up and prepare to set off for the day's trek. The morning hike typically lasts a few hours, allowing you to cover a good distance while temperatures are cooler.

Around midday, you'll break for lunch at a scenic spot along the trail. This break also provides a chance to rest, hydrate, and enjoy the stunning views around you. The afternoon hike continues at a steady pace, with guides pointing out landmarks, wildlife, or interesting geological features along the way.

By late afternoon, you'll reach the designated campsite for the night. After setting up camp, you'll have time to relax, take photos, or explore nearby areas. Dinner is usually served early, giving you time to enjoy a warm meal and share stories of the day with your fellow trekkers. Evenings on the trek are peaceful and quiet, with an opportunity for stargazing before turning in for a well-deserved rest to recharge for the next day's adventure.

**FOOD**

In Islamabad, you'll find a diverse selection of excellent restaurants to explore. Some popular choices include Kabul Restaurant and Larosh Restaurant in Committee Chowk, both known for their delicious Pakistani cuisine, as well as Omar Khayam, which offers flavorful Iranian dishes. Each morning, your hotel will provide breakfast to start your day right.

While trekking, you'll enjoy a hearty breakfast featuring porridge, cereal, toast or chapattis, omelets, and a variety of hot drinks. Typically, a hot lunch is prepared by the trek crew, and on longer trekking days, a packed lunch will be provided after breakfast. Upon reaching camp in the afternoon, you'll be greeted with tea and biscuits, followed by a satisfying three-course dinner that includes soup, a main course, and dessert. We make sure to bring along fresh vegetables and meat (including chicken and goat) to enhance the main meals, ensuring you stay energized and well-fed throughout your adventure.

**CLIMATE**

The traditional trekking season in Pakistan runs from June to September, offering a varied climate that depends significantly on altitude and the time of day. In the mountainous regions between 1,000m and 3,500m, nights are typically cool, averaging around 5°C. However, daytime temperatures can soar, reaching as high as 40°C in lower elevations. It's essential to stay hydrated and protect yourself from the sun, so be sure to bring plenty of water, a sunhat, and sunscreen.

At higher altitudes, temperatures can fluctuate dramatically, ranging from approximately 20°C during the day to -10°C at night. Mornings usually start clear, with clouds often forming in the afternoon, only to dissipate at night, revealing breathtaking starry skies.

In Rawalpindi and Islamabad, the climate during this period is hot and humid, with temperatures typically ranging from 30°C to 46°C. In contrast, Skardu, located at 2,340m, enjoys cooler temperatures, making it a refreshing destination before heading into the higher elevations.

CLOTHING AND EQUIPEMENT

For the K2 Base Camp trek, it's essential to pack appropriately to ensure comfort and safety in varying weather conditions. Below is an overview of the clothing and equipment you'll need:

Clothing

- ✚ **Base Layers:** Moisture-wicking long-sleeve shirts and thermal underwear
- ✚ **Insulating Layer:** Fleece or down jacket for warmth
- ✚ **Outer Layer:** Waterproof and windproof jacket and pants
- ✚ **Trekking Pants:** Quick-drying and breathable trekking pants
- ✚ **Warm Hat and Gloves:** To protect against cold temperatures
- ✚ **Sun Hat:** To shield from sun exposure during the day
- ✚ **Trekking Socks:** Thick, moisture-wicking socks, preferably wool
- ✚ **Footwear:** Sturdy trekking boots with good ankle support, and lightweight sandals for camp
- ✚ **Buff or Neck Gaiter:** For additional warmth around the neck

Equipment

- ✚ **Sleeping Bag:** A suitable sleeping bag rated for cold temperatures is crucial for comfort at night.
- ✚ **Day Backpack:** A small backpack for daily essentials such as warm clothes, a jacket, camera, water bottles, personal first aid kit, and snacks.
- ✚ **Duffel Bag:** For your main equipment, which will be carried by a porter; ensure it is clearly marked for easy identification.
- ✚ **Weight Limit:** The maximum weight allowance for your duffel bag is 13 kgs. Additional charges will apply for extra weight that requires additional porters.

Be sure to check the list of clothing and equipment provided in the Appendix below for any specific items recommended for the trek. Packing wisely will help ensure a successful and enjoyable experience as you make your way to K2 Base Camp.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

For a tourist visa, the Pakistan Consulate requires an Invitation Letter from a licensed tour operator in Pakistan, along with a copy of the Pakistani identification of the individual who issued the invitation. We will provide this letter to assist you with your visa application process.

Additional Pakistan visa documents required to submit along with Pakistan Visa Application:

TREKKING PERMIT

We require the following personal information in order to process the trekking permit:

- + **Passport details:** name, nationality, passport number, date & place of issue & expiry date
- + **Home address**
- + **Profession**
- + **Two passport photographs**

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

We do not arrange international flights for our holiday packages. All package prices cover land-only services, starting from your arrival in Islamabad.

INSURANCE

Travel insurance is mandatory for booking any holiday. At a minimum, you must have emergency medical and repatriation insurance, which must cover mountain rescue costs.

Please review your insurer's Terms and Conditions carefully, ensuring coverage for:

1. The specific activity (e.g., touring, trekking, or mountaineering)
2. Maximum altitude reached during the trek
3. Emergency helicopter evacuation if needed

Important Information

Any costs incurred for evacuation and repatriation are your responsibility, and you are liable for all expenses related to emergency or medical care. Ensure you are fully informed about the coverage limits and exclusions of your travel insurance policy.

In case of a medical emergency, our local tour leader may initiate rescue procedures, such as helicopter evacuation, if necessary, even if prior approval from your insurance company is not obtained.

CULTURAL CONSIDERATION

Pakistan has a deeply patriarchal society, influenced in part by Islamic customs. Women are traditionally viewed as homemakers and caregivers, spending most of their time within the home. When venturing out, they often wear a burqa that covers them entirely, although in major cities, many women opt for a headscarf that covers only the hair and chest.

- In Pakistani culture, the left hand is considered unclean, so it's customary to use only the right hand for eating, giving, and receiving items.
- Avoid bringing any pork products into Pakistan, as they are prohibited.
- Pakistanis are known for their hospitality; you may be invited to visit someone's home, possibly by a cook or porter. It is polite to remove your shoes when entering a private residence.
- Among Pakistani men, handshakes are a common greeting, and some elder men may place their hand over their ear while shaking hands. When greeting someone of the opposite sex, avoid initiating a handshake; allow them to make the first move if they are comfortable.
- It is also respectful to avoid pointing the sole of your shoe or foot at anyone and never step over any part of another person's body.

SUGGESTED READINGS

For those interested in exploring the rich history and dramatic stories of Pakistan's mountainous regions, here are some recommended books and maps:

- ✚ *K2: Triumph and Tragedy* by Jim Curran
- ✚ *The Endless Knot: K2, Mountain of Dreams and Destiny* by Kurt Diemberger & Audrey Salkeld
- ✚ *Clouds from Both Sides: An Autobiography* by Julie Tullis
- ✚ *Regions of the Heart: The Triumph and Tragedy of Alison Hargreaves* by David Rose and Ed Douglas
- ✚ *Above the Clouds* by Anatoli Boukreev

SERVICES INCLUDED

Services included for both International & local trekkers

- Implementation of government **SOPs/Guidelines** in case of new pandemic variants.
- All domestic flights (Checked Baggage Allowance: 20kg, Hand Carry: 7kg)
- All road transfers including airport transfers
- All hotel accommodation in Pakistan (twin sharing room)
- All trekking accommodation in Pakistan (twin sharing dome tent)
- All camping site fees and bridge fees
- All expedition supplies (all tents, non-personal equipment and tools etc)
- All meals (breakfast, lunch & dinner) and beverages/water during meals
- Snacks including dry fruits and tea/coffee during the trek
- Free refills of boiled drinking water on the trek
- Licensed professional guide (government requirement)
- Government trekking permit fees and paperwork
- Waste management fees (government requirement)
- Skardu city tour including all entry fees
- Support staff (cook, assistant(s) etc)
- Porters - personal luggage (14kgs)
- Storage service for baggage in Skardu (for leaving a bag behind in Skardu before going on the trek)
- First aid medicine kit (basic)
- Satellite phone
- for emergencies

**SERVICES EXCLUDED****Services not included for both International & local trekkers**

- Personal travel insurance (Recommendation/Rescue Partners: (**Global Rescue**))
- Visa to Pakistan (five supporting documents will be offered)
- International airfare
- Personal equipment (e.g. trekking shoes, down jacket, walking sticks etc)
- Personal mountain equipment (crampon, mountaineering boot, ice axe, harness, two carabineers, helmet etc)
- Extra nights in Islamabad (hotel check in/out is 12pm)
- Additional trek weight/baggage
- Storage service for baggage in Islamabad
- Tips/gratuities for guides, porters, staff etc
- Miscellaneous (minibar, bottled water, phone calls, laundry, souvenir etc)
- Early Windup/Return Costs (e.g. early return from trek due to any reason)
- Costs due to Force Majuro (e.g. earthquake, landslide, floods, etc)

**MONEY**

For the K2 Base Camp trek, managing money wisely is essential, as certain areas lack reliable banking options and ATMs. After calculating the trek's budget, assess what you can pay by credit card, particularly in larger cities like Islamabad or Skardu, to minimize the amount of cash you'll carry. It's wise to carry some money in smaller rupee denominations, as smaller bills will help for unforeseen expenses or purchases in remote areas.

Distribute your cash across two or three secure places—such as a neck pouch, money belt, or internal bag pocket—so if you encounter any loss, only a portion of your funds is affected. Both euros and U.S. dollars are easily exchangeable in Islamabad, and many exchange offices accept them at favorable rates. Additionally, credit cards are generally accepted in major cities and can serve as a helpful backup. For safety, consider a travel belt or money pouch to hold both your cash and essential documents throughout the journey.

LUGGAGE

For the K2 Base Camp trek, streamline your luggage to a minimum number of bags, aiming for a compact pack under 13 kg to avoid excess baggage charges and for ease of handling. Porters on the trek generally allow a maximum of 13 kg per person, along with a personal backpack. For smooth airport processing, arrive early, ideally three hours before your international flight, as check-in desks may become less accommodating closer to departure.

Your luggage should include a hand bag or backpack for essential and delicate items you'll need quick access to, such as comfortable footwear, a warm layer, a lightweight rain jacket, and a camera. Be prepared for varying temperatures and lengthy flight durations by packing items that ensure your comfort and self-sufficiency during transit.

For non-trekking days, lightweight, fresh clothes are recommended. Women are advised to wear modest clothing outside of trekking areas, such as loose-fitting and higher-neck attire. Avoid packing prohibited items, including knives, lighters, batteries, or other items restricted during security checks. For both international and domestic flights, stringent checks mean it's best to keep hand luggage simple and unobtrusive.

During the trek you should have these essential gears,

- Weather-resistant backpack and duffel bag
- Layered clothing (base, mid-layer, waterproof outer)
- Insulated gloves and thermal hat
- Down jacket
- Trekking boots and wool/synthetic socks
- Lightweight camp shoes or sandals
- Personal medical kit
- UV-protective sunglasses
- High-SPF sunscreen and hat
- Trekking pole
- Water bottle/hydration bladder
- Water purification tablets or filter
- Headlamp and spare batteries
- Sleeping bag (sub-zero rated)
- Lightweight snacks (energy bars)

Lastly, upon your return, plan a relaxed day at home to properly unpack, recover, and review your gear.

PRECAUTIONS

To make the most of your K2 Base Camp trek, it's crucial to follow basic health and safety measures. From food and water precautions to personal hygiene and security, these tips will help ensure a safe, enjoyable adventure.

- ✚ Set clock to local time
- ✚ Use Wi-Fi (available in many places)
- ✚ Avoid street food from stalls
- ✚ Be cautious with fresh vegetables and unpeeled fruits
- ✚ Avoid dairy products without a quality guarantee
- ✚ Drink only bottled water with sealed caps
- ✚ Avoid drinks with ice
- ✚ Disinfect water with purifying tablets or chlorine bleach drops
- ✚ Use iodine for effective water disinfection (4 drops per liter)
- ✚ Prevent disease transmission (avoid using contaminated personal items)
- ✚ Exchange currency gradually as needed
- ✚ Avoid displaying money or valuables
- ✚ Be mindful of local schedules and holidays
- ✚ Keep hand sanitizer and use frequently
- ✚ Carry a basic first-aid kit
- ✚ Avoid touching your face and wash hands regularly
- ✚ Check food expiration dates and packaging
- ✚ Avoid close contact with stray animals
- ✚ Use insect repellent to prevent mosquito bites
- ✚ Wear a hat and sunscreen to avoid sunburn
- ✚ Ensure medicines are securely packed and labeled
- ✚ Keep valuables in a secure money belt or pouch
- ✚ Don't share personal items (e.g., razors, toothbrushes)
- ✚ Be cautious with local alcoholic beverages
- ✚ Stay informed about local safety and health advisories
- ✚ Secure accommodations and transportation in advance
- ✚ Keep important documents and copies in a waterproof pouch
- ✚ Use reliable trekking and transportation services
- ✚ Familiarize yourself with local emergency contacts