

# K2 BASE CAMP AND GONDOGORO LA



K2, the second highest mountain in the world



## HIGHLIGHTS

- A must do trek for mountain connoisseurs and rightly listed as one of the world's Top 5 Mountain walks.
- A spectacular trek up the Baltoro glacier, over the challenging Gondogoro La pass and down the beautiful Hushe valley.
- Views of K2, Broad Peak, Masherbrum, GI & II, Trango towers and Leila peak among many others.
- There is an option to do the K2 & Concordia trek and descend back down the Baltoro rather than go over the Gondogoro La pass.

## REASONS TO CHOOSE THE MOUNTAIN COMPANY FOR K2 & GONDOGORO LA

- Adrian Summers will lead our K2 & Gondogoro La trek in August 2011, he is an experienced trek leader and Pakistan specialist having already completed K2 & Gondogoro La trek on four previous occasions. For more information on his background and experience:

<http://www.themountaincompany.co.uk/about-the-mountain-company/our-leaders/adrian-summers/>

- The Mountain Company has a long track record of organising treks in Pakistan, our groups have visited Pakistan every year since 2004. We have had groups successfully crossed the Gondogoro La pass on four previous occasions in August 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2010.
- If we end up driving to Skardu we plan to take a road that avoids the more volatile regions on the Karakoram Highway (KKH) near Besham, this new route goes from Mansera to Balakot, Naran and Chilas. If the new road is not open then we will take the original KKH road.



- We designed an itinerary based on this first hand experience which is the best in terms of acclimatisation, safety and enjoyment.
- We bring a satellite phone for logistical, safety and personal use.
- A USD\$10,000 bond is paid to Askari Aviation before the trek so that, in the unlikely case a helicopter rescue is required, they will fly as soon as we contact them on the satellite phone. If the bond has not been paid it will only take off when the money has cleared through their bank account (which can take a few days) even if you have comprehensive insurance coverage.
- We work with the same local trekking crew each year, our local trekking guides are very experienced and live in the Northern Areas of Pakistan.
- We provide each porter with rain/windproof jacket & trousers in addition to paying the government regulated equipment money. No other tour operator does this.
- There will be a range of tasty meals for breakfast, lunch and supper. We bring along fresh vegetables and meat (chickens and a goat). We also bring along a supply of chocolate bars and Pringles. For breakfast every morning we provide fresh coffee from our Bialetti Moka coffee machine.
- We bring a comprehensive first aid kit from UK (Life Systems Mountain Leader) plus high altitude medicine, antibiotics and other medicines. There will also be a portable altitude chamber (PAC or Gamow bag).
- Everyone's blood oxygen saturation and heart rate is measured twice daily using a pulse oximeter in order to monitor how the group is adjusting to the altitude.
- We use good hotels throughout the trip: Islamabad (private guesthouse) and in Skardu (K2 Motel).
- We have a limited number of "Harness packs" for rent, this includes harness (Black Diamond Alpine BOD), figure of eight abseil device with a large carabiner, three scwagate carabiners, Petzl handle ascender, two slings and prussik cord.

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# TESTIMONIALS

"An amazing trek in an amazing part of the world! The experience was even more remarkable because of the fantastic personal attention given. Roland was very knowledgeable, conscientious, and organized. The trek even included those ever-important morale boosters like Pringles and Mars *bars*." Mike Barker (USA).

"Simply the best trek I've experienced, very professional and great fun." Ian Scott (UK)

"The trek of a lifetime! Really appreciated the well thought out itinerary and brilliant organisation. Just need to decide what to do next year! Thanks again." Tim Waggett (UK)

"Thanks so much Roland for a fantastic trek. Your advice, care and experience really helped me get over that pass. I highly recommend this trip to anyone." Mindy Shea (USA)

"Thank you for putting together a great trip. I really enjoyed meeting you and I very much enjoyed the trek. I was very pleased with your preparedness and the way you handled things when the unexpected came our way. It did not take long for me to become comfortable with your leadership. Overall, it was great experience. Don't be surprised if you hear from me wanting to book another trip at some point in the future." Ken Pollock (USA)



# K2 BASE CAMP AND CONDOGORO LA

Total number of days	23 days
Grade & days trekking	Strenuous (Mountaineering), 15 trekking days
Accommodation	7 nights hotel, 15 nights camping
2012 price ex Islamabad	£2,495 (US\$3,995)
Minimum group size	6
Dates	August 4 <sup>th</sup> to 26 <sup>th</sup> 2012 August 3 <sup>rd</sup> to 25 <sup>th</sup> 2013 August 2 <sup>nd</sup> to 24 <sup>th</sup> 2014



## **THE FOLLOWING IS INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TRIP**

- Internal flights to/from Islamabad to Skardu (if cancelled then we will drive on KKH via Babusar Pass).
- All internal transport and transfers including airport collections.
- Twin share room at private guesthouse in Islamabad and at K2 Motel in Skardu.
- Breakfast only in Islamabad, all meals included in Skardu and on trek.
- Twin share domed tents while on trek.
- All trekking arrangements including permits and fees, Western and Pakistani guides, cook and porters.
- Financial protection insurance with International Passenger Protection.
- Pre departure support and advice from The Mountain Company by email, phone and face to face meetings in London. After booking with us we will send you our comprehensive "Pakistan Trek Information" notes

## **THE FOLLOWING SINGLE SUPPLEMENT IS AVAILABLE:**

Single room supplement	£150 (US\$250)
Single tent supplement	£195 (US\$295)

Please note that if you are a single person booking on one of our trips you do not have to pay the single room supplement, this is only payable if you specifically request to have a room or tent to yourself. You will not have to pay this for this option if you happen to end up with a single room or tent due to odd numbers on the trip.



## THE FOLLOWING IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TRIP

- International flight to/from Islamabad (London from £600).
- Travel & trekking insurance (eg. Snowcard from £88).
- Pakistan visa, cost in UK is £104 (obtain before departure).
- Lunch and evening meals in Islamabad.
- Personal clothing & equipment, please see Appendix II for suggested kit list.
- Tips to local trekking crew (these are discretionary however expected for good service in Pakistan, an appropriate amount to budget for would be approx £90 or USD\$150).
- Other items not listed in “What is included”.

## YOUR COMPLETE FINANCIAL PROTECTION

In accordance with "The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992" all passengers booking with The Mountain Trekking Company Ltd (“The Mountain Company”) are fully protected for the initial deposit and subsequently the balance of all monies paid to us, including repatriation if required, arising from cancellation or curtailment of your travel arrangements due to the insolvency of The Mountain Company.



For further information about our financial protection insurance with International Passenger Protection please see Appendix 2.



## **PARTICIPATION STATEMENT**

Participants should be aware trekking, mountaineering and travelling in a developing country are activities that involve a risk of personal injury or death. As a condition of booking you must accept these risks and be responsible for your own actions and involvement.

Adventure travel requires an open and flexible attitude. You may experience extreme conditions, unpredictable weather and last minute changes to the itinerary beyond our control. Lack of acclimatisation to high altitudes could also be a risk factor. Our itineraries allow optimum time for acclimatising although it is possible that some individuals might be slow acclimatisers.

The majority of our trips visit remote areas where you are away from normal emergency services and medical facilities. In case of a serious injury requiring hospitalisation, it has to be accepted by you, evacuation could take up to several days and may impede your ensuing recovery. Helicopters are the most usual means of evacuation, however they are not always available or they may be hindered by poor weather and flying conditions.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This is considered to be one of the world's great treks with breathtaking scenery unsurpassed anywhere else in the high mountains. This is a challenging trek to Concordia and K2 Base Camp followed by crossing the technical Gondogoro La pass.

The trekking route is lined with rugged mountains all the way from Askole, the last village in the Braldu gorge, to Concordia. On our walk up the Baltoro glacier we will see the Trango Towers, Masherbrum, K2 and Broad Peak among many others. Concordia has been described as the "Throne Room of the Mountain Gods" for its unique 360° panorama of 7,000m mountains and impressive views of K2.

After some time exploring K2 and Broad peak Base Camps, we start the challenging trek out over the Gondogoro La and descend down the

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beautiful Hushe valley. The route up and down the Gondogoro La is maintained by a local team from Hushe who fix the ropes for trekkers.

If you think the crossing of the Gondogoro La is going to be too challenging for you, we offer an option whereby you can descend the Baltoro. If you are interested please ask for further details.

## **DETAILED ITINERARY**

It is our intention to keep to the day by day itinerary detailed below, although there might be some flexibility due to local conditions or other factors beyond our control. If this is the case the trek leader will do everything possible to work out the changes to the itinerary in order to minimise your inconvenience.

### **Day 1. Arrive Islamabad.**

You will be met at the airport on your arrival to Islamabad. Please provide travel plans on booking and we will arrange the pick up and transfer. A full trek briefing will be given in the afternoon. Overnight hotel.

### **Day 2. Fly to Skardu.**

Today we will try to fly to Skardu in Gilgit-Baltistan, if the flight is cancelled then we will spend the night in Islamabad and drive Karakoram Highway ("KKH") tomorrow. Overnight K2 Motel in Skardu or Guesthouse in Islamabad.

### **Day 3. Drive KKH to Chilas (if flew to Skardu yesterday then we explore the town today).**

If the flight was cancelled on Day 2 then we will start driving KKH. Overnight Shangri La hotel in Chilas.

If we flew to Skardu on Day 2 then this is a day to explore Skardu, it is well worth going into town to see explore the bazaar and visiting the Skardu fort which has a good view of the Indus river. We might be lucky and get to watch a game of polo in the evening. Overnight K2 Motel in Skardu.



Beautiful gardens at K2 Motel overlooking Indus



Italian K2 museum at K2 Motel

**Day 4. Drive to Skardu on KKH (if flew on Day 2 then this is buffer day).**

**Day 5. Skardu to Askole (3,050m) by jeep- 7 hours driving, 1 hour trekking.**

An exciting drive on a winding jeep trail in the arid landscape past villages with fertile terraces and apricot trees, Askole is the last village we will see for a few weeks. Overnight camping.



Jeep ride to Askole (Menno Boermans)

**Day 6. Trek to Jhola (3,190m)- 7 to 8 hours walking.**

We follow a trail next to the Braldu river and, once passed the snout of the Biafo glacier, we arrive at the green oasis of Korophone. From here the path

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drops down to the river and, if the river level is high, then there is one section where we might have to take boots off and cross a section where the river floods the path.

We follow the path up a side valley and cross another river by a good bridge (rather than the old trolley system or “jhola” as used in the past). We then walk for another half an hour or so to reach the Jhola Camp. The views are impressive with Bakhor Das (5,809m) and Paiju Peak’s needles in the distance.

If the sun is out then this can be a very hot day with temperatures often approaching 40 degrees. It is important to bring plenty of water (at least three litres), wear a sun hat and apply plenty of suncream. Overnight camp.



### **Day 7. Trek to Bardumal (3,305m)- 4 hours walking.**

Today is a shorter day, the reason for this is that there is fast flowing river an hour beyond the campsite at Bardulam. It is safest to cross the river early in the morning before the sun hits the glacier above feeding the river. Therefore, we stop for the night at Bardulam and depart early the next morning in order to safeguard the passage for the group and porters.

### **Day 8. Trek to Paiju (3,380m)- 3 to 4 hours walking.**

After an early start from Bardumal we will arrive at Paiju mid morning. The path is quite loose in places and again it is likely we will have to take boots off where the river has flooded the path in a few places. Paiju is a green



oasis under the shadows of Paiju Peak (6,611 m). From this camp we have the first views of the immense Baltoro Glacier.

**Day 9. Trek to Khoburtse (3,760m)- 6 to 7 hours walking.**

After an hour we will walk up onto the Baltoro glacier for the first time. The path on the glacier is pretty good although care has to be taken as the moraine on the surface is uneven (trekking poles are useful from here on).

We will probably stop for lunch at the old campsite at Lilligo. After this break we cross below the snout of the Lilligo Glacier and then get back on to the Baltoro and walk up and down several moraine ridges before arriving at the Khoburtse campsite.



Porters walking on the Baltoro glacier (Menno Boermans)

**Day 10. Trek to Urdukas (4,130m)- 4 hours walking.**

During the walk today there are great views of Trango & Cathedral spires and Uli Biaho and Bial mountains. It is a short day but quite hard work as we walk up the undulating moraine and gaining height all the way. The campsite at Urdukas is very impressive with views over the Baltoro and to the dramatic rock spires on the opposite side of the glacier.



Trango Spires viewed from Urdukas



Grassy slopes behind Urdukas

### **Day 11. Rest day at Urdukas (4,130m)**

We have found in the past that taking a rest day at Urdukas has worked well, the advantages of spending an extra night here are:

- it helps the acclimatisation process and has proved to be more effective than a rest day at Paiju (the traditional place for a rest day after only three trekking days).
- there is a pleasant walk behind the campsite through grassy slopes full of alpine flowers. Climbing high & sleeping low is the best way to help the acclimatisation process.
- this is the last campsite on grassy slopes off the main glacier, it also has facilities for washing and cleaning.
- western leader will lead a training session in the afternoon explaining in detail the techniques for crossing the Gondogoro La.

### **Day 12. Urdukas to Goro II (4,250m)- 6 to 7 hours walking.**

The trail on the Baltoro goes past the Yermanandu Glacier, which flows from Masherbrum, and there are views of Muztagh (7,270m), Masherbrum (7,800m) and Gasherbrum IV at the head of the Baltoro and Concordia. The campsite at Goro II is on the glacier where ledges have been levelled out for the tents.



### **Day 13. Goro to Concordia (4,600m)- 5 to 6 hours.**

Today we reach Concordia where the Baltoro, Abruzzi and Godwin Austen glaciers converge, within a radius of 15 kilometres there are an incredible 41 peaks over 6,500m with 4 over 8,000m. The 360 degree panorama is simply incredible and has to be seen. Overnight camping.

### **Day 14. Concordia to K2 and Broad Peak Base Camps and return – 10 to 12 hours walking.**

This is a long day which typically takes 6 hours to K2 Base Camp and 5 hours for the return to Concordia. Some people might prefer to walk to Broad Peak Base Camp rather than walk all the way to K2 Base Camp. Overnight camping.



Trekking in front of K2 (Menno Boermans)

### **Day 15. Concordia rest day.**

You can go on further exploration walks today around Concordia or spend a day in camp enjoying the views. Overnight camping.

### **Day 16. Concordia to Ali camp (5,000m) -6 to 7 hours walking.**

From Concordia there are several moraine ridges to scramble over to reach the Vigne Glacier which is flatter with fewer crevasses. If it is a clear day we will get some spectacular views of K2 and the other mountains around. Overnight camping.



## **Day 17. Ali Camp and over the Gondogoro La pass (5,600m) to Khuspang- 10 or 11 hours walking.**

This is a tough day but the views from the top of the pass really make it worthwhile. All four 8000'ers are visible in one direction and the other way looks down the Hushe valley with the beautiful Leila peak.

We will start early, probably about 12 o'clock, to minimise the risk of rockfall on the descent down the Hushe side of the pass. If the snow conditions are good and the trail has already been broken the pass can be ascended quite quickly (in about 5 hours).

Depending on snow conditions it may be necessary to rope up for the crossing of the glacier before getting to the base of the pass.

You will need crampons and ice axes on the Vigne side of the pass. There are several sections with fixed ropes in place which can be used as a handrail. It is also best practice to clip a karabiner and sling onto the rope for safety.

The Hushe side of the pass can be a tricky descent although there are fixed ropes in place at the top. The slope starts at a sustained 50 degrees on snow and finishes on loose scree towards the bottom. On reaching the green oasis of Khuspang, you can put your feet up and relax remembering the excitement of the day.



Relaxing at Khuspang with Leila peak behind (Menno Boermans)



**Important note! The crossing of the Gondogoro La is dependent on good weather and conditions on the approach to the pass. If it is not possible to safely ascend the pass the group will walk back down the Baltoro glacier to Askole.**

**We believe our itinerary maximises our chances of crossing the pass because:**

- everyone should be well acclimatised due to the gradual ascent on the trek and also from the careful monitoring of everyone's acclimatisation by using the pulse oximeter.
- we have three nights at Concordia (many of tour operators only allow two nights) and we also include a spare day on Day 18. This gives more flexibility in case of bad weather or poor conditions.

**The set up and organisation of the trek also increases our chances:**

- we bring a climbing rope so that the group can rope up to cross the glacier to the base of the pass. Usually this is not required as the crevasses are open but a snowfall could easily cover them up.
- we also bring fixed rope, ice screws and snow stakes to fix extra sections of the pass if required. In the past the western leader has gone ahead to Ali Camp on the group's rest day at Concordia to check the condition of the ropes and where necessary to fix extra rope. We also donated 200m of rope and anchors to the Hushe Rescue team for their future use.
- we plan to obtain weather forecasts by SMS text direct to the satellite phone (to be confirmed).
- we provide the porters with water/windproof jackets and sunglasses.

### **Day 18. Buffer day at Khuspang.**

In case of bad weather on Day 17, this will give us another chance to cross the pass. If we successfully got over the pass on Day 17, you may well enjoy a rest day or the other option is to continue down to Hushe to spend a night. Overnight camping.



### **Day 19. Khuspang to Shaisho- 6 to 7 hours walking.**

After a couple of minutes of easy walking we get onto the glacier where we pick our way across the moraine and ice, finally crossing the glacier up to the camping site to reach Dalsangpa which means 'field of flowers'. There is a spectacular view of Masherbrum and the glacier cascading down from Masherbrum Pass.

It is a beautiful walk to Shaisho as we pass yak pastures and see the first trees since Paiju. Shaisho is a small village and has a shop run by a friendly local who has worked as a High Altitude Porter on a K2 expedition. Overnight camping.

### **Day 20. Trek to Hushe, drive to Skardu- 2 hours walking, 7 hours driving.**

An easy day walking to the village of Hushe and then a beautiful drive through villages to Skardu. Overnight K2 Motel.

### **Day 21. Fly to Islamabad.**

We will hopefully take the early morning flight to Islamabad (inshallah!), if unable to fly we will drive the KKH to Chilas. Overnight guesthouse in Islamabad or Shangri La in Chilas.

### **Day 22. Islamabad.**

If driving down the KKH we will arrive in Islamabad late afternoon. If we managed to fly the day before then we will spend today sightseeing in Islamabad. In the evening we will have a final group meal. Overnight guesthouse in Islamabad.

### **Day 23. Fly back home.**

Transfer to Islamabad airport for the flight back home. End of trip.



# ETHICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Mountain Company is committed to adopting a responsible attitude to the areas we visit. We are guests of the communities visited and with some thought and care we can ensure that everyone benefits from the experience.

We work closely with the International Porter Protection Group ([www.ippg.net](http://www.ippg.net)) who we support as a Camp 1 sponsor- we abide by their 5 guidelines for porter protection.

We also work with other organisations such as Climate Care ([www.climatecare.org](http://www.climatecare.org)), Tourism Concern ([www.tourismconcern.org.uk](http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk)), Friends of Conservation ([www.foc-uk.com](http://www.foc-uk.com)) and Kathmandu Environmental Education Project ([www.keepnepal.org](http://www.keepnepal.org)).

We have developed a Responsible Tourism policy which aims to ensure that The Mountain Company and its clients act in a way that is socially, environmentally and culturally sound; please refer to Appendix III in this Trip Dossier.

The Mountain Company has joined the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Know Before You Go campaign. The aim is to make sure travellers are properly prepared before travelling overseas. The best way to get the FCO latest advice is to visit their website at: [www.fco.gov.uk/travel](http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel).

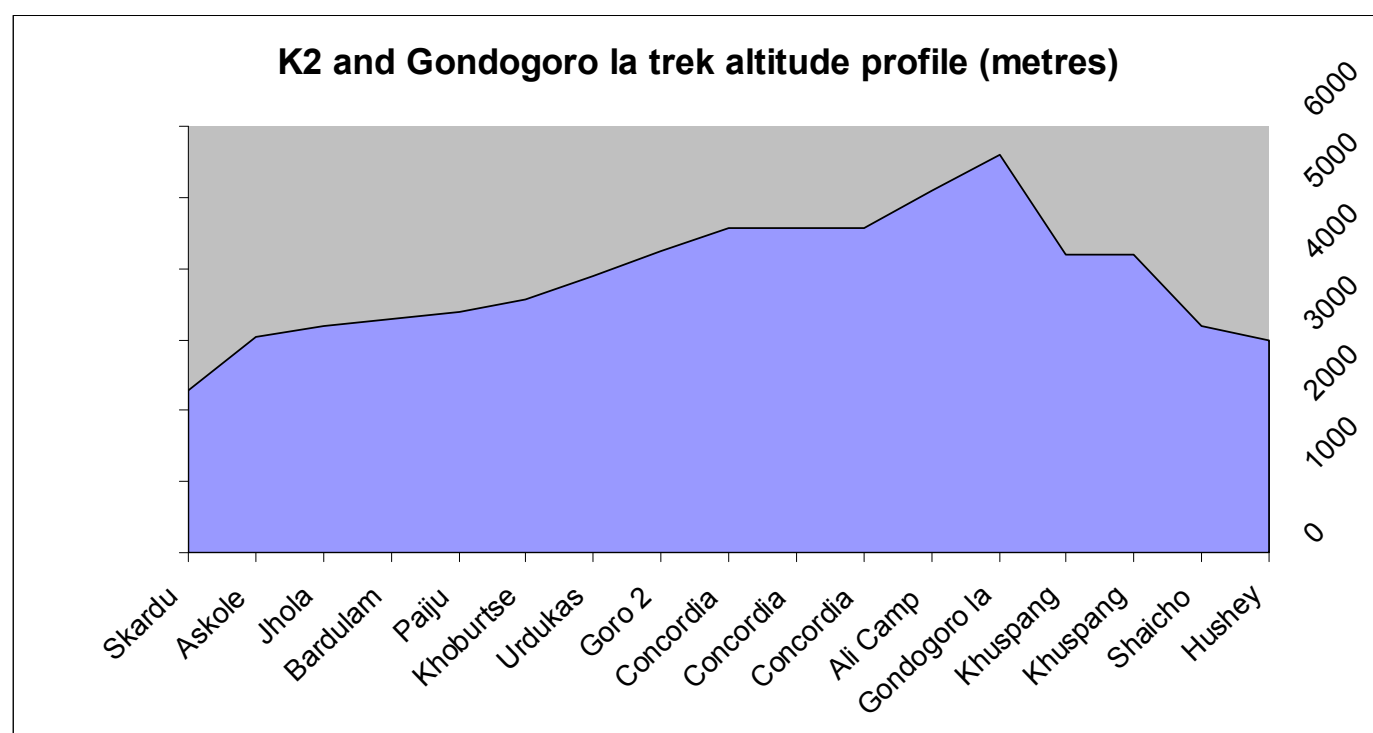




# PRACTICAL INFORMATION

## ALTITUDE AND ACCLIMATISATION

Our K2 itinerary has been designed for gradual acclimatisation to take place, take a look at the altitude profile for the itinerary below:



There are ways of helping the acclimatisation process, as described below:

- Walk slowly: there is plenty of time included in the itinerary so there is no need to rush, go at your own pace and enjoy the incredible views!
- Drinks lots of water: it is easier for your body to acclimatise when hydrated so drink water and avoid coffee, tea and alcohol.
- Consider taking diamox (acetazolamide): before using this drug we recommend consulting a doctor and thoroughly researching the pros and cons.

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**For further information we suggest you take a look at the following websites:**

**Base Camp MD website:**

<http://www.BaseCampmd.com/expguide/highalt.shtml>

**High Altitude medicine website:**

<http://www.high-altitude-medicine.com>

**Medex Travel at High Altitude:**

<http://www.medex.org.uk/v26%20booklet.pdf>

**BMC website:**

<http://www.thebmc.co.uk/Feature.aspx?id=1746>

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

We bring a Thuraya satellite phone for logistical, safety and personal use. Personal calls charged at £3 (US\$5) per minute and £2 (US\$3) to send and receive SMS text.

## **ACCOMMODATION IN ISLAMABAD & SKARDU**

In Islamabad we use a private guest house, the facilities are similar to a three star hotel however has a lower profile and better security than larger hotels in Islamabad.

In Skardu we stay at the K2 Motel, this is the best place to stay with beautiful gardens overlooking the Indus River. It is a well known hotel used by generations of expeditions to the Karakoram, we are bound to meet other trekking and expedition groups here.

## **A TYPICAL DAY ON TREK**

The day starts with an early morning mug of tea brought to your tent by one of the cook's helpers. Before heading over to the mess tent for

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breakfast it is best to pack your overnight gear into your duffel bag. During breakfast the tents will be packed away and, after the porters have arranged their loads, they will set off on the trail in the cool of the morning.

After breakfast, probably between 7am and 8am, we start walking. The pace of the trek is leisurely with plenty of time to enjoy the scenery, take photos and explore the local villages. Lunch will be around 11am at a spot by the side of the trail and is prepared for us by the cooks.

There is more walking after lunch and normally you will get into camp by mid afternoon with the tents already put up by the local staff. In the evening a three course meal is served in the mess tent around 7pm. After supper the western leader will discuss the plan for the next day with the group. People might stay in the mess tent chatting about the day's events for a while before retiring to their tent for the night.

## **FOOD**

In Islamabad there is a wide range of excellent restaurants to try out, some of the more popular ones are: Kabul Restaurant, Larosh Restaurant in Committee Chowk for good Pakistani food and Omar Khayam for Iranian food. Breakfast is provided each morning by the hotel.

While on the trek you will get breakfast with porridge and cereal, toast or chapattis, omelettes and a range of hot drinks. Normally a hot lunch is prepared by the trek crew or on the longer days a pack lunch is provided after breakfast. On arrival at the camp in the afternoon you will be given tea and biscuits and a three course meal will follow with soup, a main meal and dessert.

We bring along fresh vegetables and meat (chickens and a goat) for the main meals. We also provide a supply of chocolate bars, Pringles, biscuit and nuts.



## CLIMATE

The traditional trekking season in Pakistan is June to September. K2 and Gondogoro La trek will have a wide range of temperatures depending on the altitude and the time of day.

In the mountains between 1,000m and 3,500m the nights will be cool normally around 5 °C. During the day temperatures can be very hot even as high as 40 °C in the lower elevations. Bring lots of water, sunhat and sunscreen!

At higher altitudes temperatures range from about 20 °C to -10 °C. The mornings are generally clear with clouds building up during the afternoon and often disappearing at night to reveal beautiful starry nights.

Rawalpindi will be hot and humid at this time of year, temperatures typically range from 30 °C to 46 °C with high humidity, whereas the temperatures in Skardu at 2,340m will be cooler.

## CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

A list of suggested clothing and equipment for the K2 and Gondogoro La trek has been included in the Appendix below. This is a comprehensive list and experienced trekkers will often take only a selection of these items based on what has worked in the past. It is worth pointing out that you will need a sleeping bag for this trip.

If you do not have the clothing and equipment contained in this list then a good option might be to rent from the UK. Trek Hire is a company that rents out high quality items at competitive prices which would save you the expense of buying. The link to their website is <http://www.trekhireuk.com/>

Alternatively if you are going to buy then please contact the office for the Cotswold Outdoor promo code that entitles you, as a client of The Mountain Company, to 15% reduction in their stores and online.

Trekkers should bring all their gear in one large duffel bag and a backpack (40 to 50 litres). Each day you will carry your pack containing items that you

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might need while trekking such as warm clothes, jacket, camera, water bottle, personal first aid kit and some snacks (and crampons and ice axe on the Gondogoro La day).

The rest of your personal equipment, contained in your duffel bag, will be carried by a porter. **The maximum weight allowance is 18kgs.** Please ensure that your bag is marked clearly on the outside for easy identification.

## VISA REQUIREMENTS

Citizens from the UK, US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand require an entry visa, it is your responsibility to obtain the entry visa. For the latest visa situation, please look at the Pakistan High Commission website at <http://www.pakmission-uk.gov.pk>

**The visa application can also be downloaded from this link:**

<http://www.phclondon.org/HC/forms/Visa%20Form.pdf>

Contact details of the Pakistan High Commission in the UK:

35 - 36 Lowndes Square,

London SW1X 9JN.

Tel: 0207 6649200

Fax: 0207 664 9224

There are also consulates in Bradford, Manchester, Birmingham and Glasgow.

## 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

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- Home address
- Profession
- Two passport photographs

## VACCINATIONS AND MEDICAL

You should obtain professional advice from a travel clinic or your local GP about which vaccinations to have before you arrive in Pakistan. A dental check-up is a good idea as there will be no dental facilities while on the trek.

We bring along a comprehensive first aid kit on this trek. See Appendix IV for the contents of The Mountain Company's group first aid kit.

## FLIGHTS

We recommend Max Travel (ATOL bonded license# 4705) for booking international flights and other travel arrangements. Please take a look at their website at <http://www.maxtravel.co.uk/> or give them a call on 020 7095 0920.

There are a number of good online agents that we also recommend, they are:

Kayak: *an excellent flight cost comparison website* <http://www.kayak.co.uk/>

Traveljungle: *another good flight cost comparison website*  
<http://www.traveljungle.co.uk/>

Cheap Tickets: this site quotes airfares in USD\$ & often is very competitive when translated back to GBP£ <http://www.cheaptickets.com/>

Southall Travel: very competitive prices for India, Pakistan and Nepal both online and telephone support <http://www.southalltravel.co.uk/>



## INSURANCE

Travel insurance for any Mountain Company itinerary is a condition of booking a holiday. At the very least you should have emergency medical and repatriation insurance which must include the cost of mountain rescue. Cancellation insurance is strongly recommended as all deposits paid to The Mountain Company are non-refundable.

## CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

For those of you who are visiting Pakistan for the first time we have provided some cultural information to help you fit into the country:

- dress code is important for both men and women and even while trekking you should wear conservative dress. Wear loose, long-sleeved, non-revealing shirts and full length pants that cover your ankles. A shalmar kamiz, a traditional long shirt and baggy trousers, can be bought cheaply in Rawalpindi and generally makes locals feel more comfortable around you as it is a visible sign of your interest and respect for their culture. Women should bring a scarf to cover their heads especially in mosques or private homes.
- Pakistani society is a strongly patriarchal and only partly because it is Islamic, women are meant to be mothers and housekeepers and typically spend most of their time at home. When they do go out they are normally veiled from head to toe in the burqa, although in the main cities some wear just a scarf covering their hair and chest.
- Muslims consider the left hand to be unclean, therefore do not eat food with your left hand and make sure you give/receive food only with your right hand.
- do not bring any products made from pork into Pakistan.
- most Pakistanis are extremely hospitable and you could be invited to someone's house (often the cook or one of the porters), it is best to remove your shoes when you enter a private house.



- handshakes are common place among Pakistani men and some older men put their hand over their ear when shaking hands. Do not offer a handshake to the opposite sex as it will put them in an awkward position, it is generally best to let them make the first move.
- never point the sole of your shoe or foot at anyone and never step over any part of someone's body.

## SUGGESTED READING

Please take a look at The Mountain Company's bookstore for a wide selection of books and maps to Pakistan, the link is at:

<http://astore.amazon.co.uk/themountainco-21>

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

The Last Step: The American Ascent of K2 by Rick Ridgeway

The Ascent of Rum Doodle by WE Bowman

Quest for Kim: In Search of Kipling's Great Game by Peter Hopkirk

### **Altitude and acclimatisation information and advice**

Going higher Oxygen, man and mountains by Charles Houston, MD

The High Altitude Medicine Handbook by Pollard and Murdoch

Medicine for mountaineering by James Wilkerson, MD



## MAPS

K2 and Baltoro Glacier Satellite Image Map 1:80,000 (Geosystems) – this is the best map of the area with superb satellite photography. It is not widely available, I bought my copy at Stanfords, London. I will bring this map along on the trek.

Karakoram orographical sketch map Sheets 1 & 2. Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research, Zurich. Scale 1:250,000- this is a good map series and shows the whole Karaoram range including Ladakh in India. Highly recommended. I will bring this map along on the trek.

Leomann Trekking Maps of the Karakoram by West Col Productions  
Scale: 1:200,000

AMS U502 Topographic Survey Maps of the Himalayas by the Army Map Service Scale: 1:250,000

The Karakoram Highway by Open Road Guides, England Scale: 1:1,000,000



# APPENDIX 1

## SUGGESTED CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT LIST

### Footwear:

- Mountaineering boots (capable of taking crampons).
- Walking boots.
- Gaiters. A pair used to keep boots dry if walking through deep snow.
- Wool Socks and liner socks.
- Sandals (for use around camp and river crossings).

### Clothing:

- Goretex shell jacket and trousers.
- Light trekking trousers.
- Long sleeve, light coloured polypropylene shirts.
- Microfleece.
- Mid to heavyweight fleece jacket (Polartec 200 to 300).
- Sleeveless (bodywarmer) fleece.
- Lightweight synthetic long underwear for both top & bottom.
- Light to mid weight fleece pants (Polartec 100 to 200).
- Medium weight down jacket (recommended).

### Handwear:

- Fleece gloves.
- Warmers mittens and/or gloves.



### **Headwear:**

- Warm wool or fleecy hat/balaclava.
- Sun hat or baseball cap.
- Bandana or scarf. Very useful for the often dusty jeep rides and for protection on hot days.
- Light weight climber's headlamp for use at night around the camp. Bring extra batteries and spare bulbs.
- High quality sunglasses with 100% UV protection. Most effective for blocking sunlight are the wrap around type or side covers.

### **Climbing equipment:**

- Climbing harness with 1 m sling, 4 screw gate carabiners, figure eight descender and 3m of 4mm static cord for making prussiks.

*[we have a limited number of "Harness packs" for rent, this includes harness (Black Diamond Alpine BOD), figure of eight abseil device with large carabiner, three screwgate carabiners, Petzl handle ascender, two slings and prussik cord. Please contact TMC office for further prices and availability]*

- Jumar ascending device with sling attached (mandatory).
- Crampons (10 or 12 point general mountaineering type).
- Mountaineering ice axe and leash.
- Helmet.

### **Personal Equipment:**

- 4 season sleeping bag (maximum overnight low -10C).
- Thermarest self inflating pad and/or foam mat.
- 40 to 50 litre backpack (large enough to carry water bottles, camera, lunch and extra clothing).
- Stuff sacks and plastic bags for keeping your gear dry and organised.



- Two 1 litre water bottles (Nalgene wide mouth bottles are the best) and Camelback type water carrier 2 litre capacity.
- Sunscreen and lipsalve with an SPF 30 or better.
- Insect repellent.
- Water purification tablets (Pristine, Biox Acqua or Acqa Mira).
- Anti bacterial hand gel
- Favourite snack food
- Paperback books, ipod and cards
- 1 pair adjustable trekking poles.
- Camera and film
- Insurance certificate
- Baby wipes (optional)

### **Travelling:**

Large duffle bag for transporting your personal gear on the trek and during flights. Bring small combination padlocks.

Travel clothes. You will need street/casual clothing for air travel days and time spent in Islamabad.

Toiletry bag include toilet paper, soap, towel, toothbrush, etc.

### **Personal first aid kit:**

Note: we provide a comprehensive group first aid kit but please bring personal medications and other items you might use regularly such as:

- Any personal medications.
- Malaria prophylactic tablets.
- Blister treatment (Compeed patches are the best).
- Rehydration powder eg Dioralyte.

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- Analgesics (paracetamol, ibuprofen and aspirin).
- Plasters and zinc oxide tape.
- Throat lozenges.
- Diamox (helps with acclimatisation).



# APPENDIX 2

## INTERNATIONAL PASSENGER PROTECTION

In accordance with "The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992" all passengers booking with The Mountain Trekking Company Ltd ("The Mountain Company") are fully protected for the initial deposit and subsequently the balance of all monies paid to us, including repatriation if required, arising from cancellation or curtailment of your travel arrangements due to the insolvency of The Mountain Company.

There is no requirement for Financial Protection of day trips, and none is provided. This insurance is only valid for packages booked that DO NOT include flights.

**Consumer aware:** Your booking is insured by IPP Ltd and its panel of insurers. This insurance is only valid for passengers who book and pay directly with/to The Mountain Company. If you have booked and/ or paid direct to a Travel Agent for a holiday with The Mountain Company please request proof of how the booking is secured as this will not be covered by IPP Ltd in this instance. For further information please go to [www.ipplondon.co.uk](http://www.ipplondon.co.uk)

This Insurance has been arranged by International Passenger Protection Limited and underwritten by Insurers who are members of the Association of British Insurers & Lloyds Syndicates.

**Claim procedures:** download claim form from [www.ipplondon.co.uk](http://www.ipplondon.co.uk), any occurrence which may give rise to a claim should be advised within 14 days to: International Passenger Protection Limited, Claims Office, IPP House, 22-26 Station Road, West Wickham, Kent BR4 0PR, United Kingdom. Telephone: +44 (0) 208 7763752. Fax: +44 (0) 208 7763751. In order to deal promptly with any claims hereunder it is essential that you retain all bills, receipts and other documents relating to your travel arrangements. Claims forms must be submitted to IPP within six months of date of insolvency they cannot consider or pay claims received after this date.