

# **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.
- ) With our itinerary you will camp for the night at Broad Peak Base Camp for the best view of K2 whereas most other operators only camp at Concordia for an unfeasible long walk Concordia to K2 Base Camp back to Concordia in one day!
- ) 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.
- ) We also offer the 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

- ) The Mountain Company has a long track record of organising treks in Pakistan. We have had groups successfully crossed the Gondogoro La pass on six previous occasions (August 2018, July 2017, August 2012, August 2010, August 2008 and August 2004).
- ) We designed an itinerary based on this first-hand experience which is the best in terms of acclimatisation, safety and enjoyment.
- ) We send a Thuraya satellite phone on all of our treks in Pakistan. It is essential for your guide to have reliable communications with us for logistics, planning and group safety. We also send GPS locator called SPOT Adventures so your friends and family can track your progress



- ) 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.
- ) There will be a range of tasty meals for breakfast, lunch and supper. We bring along fresh vegetables and meat (chickens and a goat). 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 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 scwgate carabiners, Petzl handle ascender, two slings and prussik cord.
- ) The Mountain Company will receive bespoke weather forecasts for the K2 region from EverestWeather.com throughout the duration of this trek. Having this weather information is key for a safe and successful crossing of the Gondogoro La.



# 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 GONDOGORO LA

Total number of days	23 days
Grade & days trekking	Challenging (Mountaineering), 16 trekking days
Accommodation	6 nights hotel, 16 nights camping
2019 price from Islamabad	£3,395 (US\$4,395 or €3,850)
2020 price from Islamabad	£3,395 (US\$4,395 or €3,850)
Minimum group size	5
Maximum group size	10
Dates	July 20 <sup>th</sup> to August 11 <sup>th</sup> 2019 July 18 <sup>th</sup> to August 9 <sup>th</sup> 2020

## 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).
- ) All internal transport and transfers including airport collections on arrival and departure to/ from Islamabad for group flights only. If you are not on the group flights we can arrange airport transfer for an extra charge of GBP70 (US\$85). **For our 2019 K2 Base Camp trek the group flights are as follows:**
  1. From Dubai to Islamabad on Emirates EK0612 arriving at 7.30am on morning of July 20<sup>th</sup>.



2. From Muscat to Islamabad on Oman Air WY347 arriving at 1.10pm on afternoon of July 20<sup>th</sup>.
3. From Islamabad to Dubai on Emirates EK0615 departing at 3.10am on morning of August 11<sup>th</sup>.
4. From Islamabad to Muscat on Oman Air WY346 departing at 8.50am on morning of August 11<sup>th</sup>.

- ) Twin share room at hotel in Islamabad and at Concordia 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.
- ) Bespoke weather forecasts for K2 region from EverestWeather.com throughout the duration of this trek.
- ) Full financial protection for all monies paid to us through our membership of Association of Bonded Travel Operators Trust (our ABTOT membership number is 5365) and having an Air Travel Organiser's Licence (our ATOL number is 10921).
- ) 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 Pre Trip Information" notes

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

Single room supplement	£240 (US\$315 or €270)
Single tent supplement	£315 (US\$415 or €355)

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.
- ) Airport pick up and transfers if not arriving on group flight costing GBP65 (US\$85 or €75).
- ) Travel & trekking insurance.
- ) Pakistan visa (obtain before departure).
- ) Lunch and evening meals in Islamabad.
- ) Personal clothing & equipment, please see the Appendix 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 £150, USD\$200 or €170).
- ) Other items not listed in “What is included”.

## **CURRENT FCO ADVICE- OCTOBER 2018**

In April 2015, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (“FCO”) downgraded their travel advice to Pakistan so they no longer advise only essential travel to Skardu, Gilgit and the Karakoram mountains. Having said this, at the moment FCO warns against travel on the Karakoram Highway (“KKH”) however we are hoping this will be downgraded too in the near future. If the flights to Skardu are cancelled then, as per our itineraries, we plan to drive the KKH therefore you need to be aware of this and be still happy to travel.

We require a signed FCO Awareness Disclaimer (see Appendix 2) from all clients before booking onto our trips to Pakistan. This document confirms



you assume and accept the risks associated with travel against FCO advice and knowing that access to evacuation and/or consular support may not always be available. In such a case our public liability cover does not extend to include cover for claims arising out of war and terrorism risks. The Mountain Company cannot be held liable for any incident claim, loss or damage, however caused in this regard. Your travel insurance must ensure that you have adequate cover for travel through the region.

Please carefully read FCO travel advice to Pakistan at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/pakistan>

## PARTICIPANT SELECTION

The Mountain Company carefully selects and screens potential participants applying to join our groups to ensure the trip is an appropriate objective for you. We have a number of pre-trip questions asking information about your outdoor experience, training, experience, medical conditions and fitness. To access the pre-trip questions please send in your application by clicking on the **“Apply now”** button on the trek webpage. After review of your replies we might contact you by telephone or email for further information to aid our selection process.

Please ensure you have done your own research about K2 & Gondogoro La trek by reading our pre trip documents (Trip Dossier, Trip Grading and Trip Reports published on TMC blog) to ensure you have a realistic idea of what to expect. Every trip organised by The Mountain Company has been graded based on four factors: daily walking times, altitude, terrain and remoteness.

## 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 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.

In 2019 and 2020 we are planning to run two treks to K2 Base Camp, in late July we have K2 Base Camp & Gondogoro La trek where mountaineering skills are required to cross this technical pass. In late August we have a group doing K2 Base Camp & Concordia where you walk back down Baltoro glacier from Concordia.

## 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 on arrival at Islamabad airport and driven back to the hotel. Please note we provide complementary airport pick up and hotel transfer for only two group flights on Emirates and Oman Air. If you arrive on a different flight and would like an airport pick-up there will be an extra charge for this service.

At some point during the day (time to be confirmed) the trek leaders will give a full trip briefing will be given at the hotel. **Overnight at Hotel Hill View in Islamabad (Meals: none).**



### **Day 2. Fly to Skardu, if cancelled drive KKH to Chilas.**

Today we will attempt to fly to Skardu in Gilgit-Baltistan, if the flight is cancelled then we will start driving Karakoram Highway (“KKH”) and spend the night in Chilas.

**Important note** FCO currently warns against travel on the Karakoram Highway (“KKH”). If the flights to Skardu are cancelled then, as per our itinerary, we plan to drive the KKH therefore you need to be aware of this and be still happy to travel. We require a signed FCO Awareness Disclaimer (see Appendix 2) from all clients before booking onto our trips to Pakistan.

### **Overnight at Concordia Motel in Skardu (B,L,D) or Shangri La hotel in Chilas (Meals: B,L,D).**

### **Day 3. Drive to Skardu on KKH (if we flew on Day 2 then we will have a sightseeing day in Skardu).**

Drive from Chilas to Skardu on KKH. 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 at Concordia Motel in Skardu (B,L,D).**

### **Day 4. Skardu to Askole (3,050m) by jeep- 6 to 7 hours driving.**

An exciting drive on a winding jeep trail with exposed sections passing through the arid landscape past villages with fertile terraces and apricot trees. Askole is the last village we will see for a few weeks. The time taken to drive to Askole depends on the condition of the jeep track which varies year to year. This jeep track is prone to blockages if there are landslides as this follows a narrow valley. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

### **Day 5. Trek to Korofong (3,100m)- 3 to 4 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 Korofong. Given that we will be in camp by lunchtime we can spend the afternoon relaxing by the river, and also do a short acclimatisation walk if we wish.

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 sun cream. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

**Day 6. Trek to Bardumal (3,305m)- 7 hours walking.**

From Korofong we follow the path up a side valley and cross the 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. From Jhola we continue onto Bardumal campsite (also known as Skambong Scok). **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

**Day 7. 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. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

**Day 8. 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. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

**Day 9. 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. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**



### **Day 10. Acclimatising 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 11. 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. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

### **Day 12. Goro to Concordia (4,600m)- 5 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 (Meals: B,L,D).**

### **Day 13. Trek to Broad Peak Base Camp (5,000m)- 4 hours walking.**

From Concordia the route passes through some jumbled ice fins and moraine ridges before gaining the medial moraine of the Godwin Austen glacier. Broad Peak Base Camp is located on this moraine near the base of climbing route on Broad Peak. One of the best views of K2 is from Broad Peak Base Camp.



Please be aware that most other operators organising K2 Base Camp trek with their highest camp at Concordia and this means an unfeasible long walk Concordia to K2 Base Camp back to Concordia in one day. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

**Day 14. Trek to K2 Base Camp (5,150m) and back to Concordia (4,600m)- 6 to 7 hours walking.**

This morning you make an early start for the walk up to K2 Base Camp. On the return you pass through Broad Peak Base Camp and then continue down to Concordia. From Concordia, our western leader will take our K2 & Gondogoro La group out over Gondogoro La and our K2 Base Camp group will descend Baltoro with our local Pakistani guides. The two groups will meet up again at Concordia Motel in Skardu on Day 21. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

**Day 15. 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 (Meals: B,L,D).**

**Day 16. 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. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

**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 two nights at Concordia and one night at Broad Peak Base Camp.
- ) We have two buffer days in case of delays or bad weather on Day 17 & 18 of the itinerary.
- ) we obtain bespoke weather forecasts from everestweather.com sent by SMS text direct to the satellite phone.

**Day 17 and 18. Buffer/ spare trek days in case of delays.**

In case of bad weather on Day 16, these days will give us another chance to cross the pass. If we successfully got over the pass on Day 16, you may enjoy rest or exploration days or the other option is to continue down to Hushe to spend a night. **Overnight camping (Meals: B,L,D).**

**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 (Meals: B,L,D).**

**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 at Concordia Motel in Skardu (Meals: B,L,D).**

**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 at Hotel Hill View in Islamabad (Meals: none) or Shangri La in Chilas (Meals: B,L,D).**

**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 at Hotel Hill View in Islamabad (Meals: B).**

**Day 23. Fly back home.**

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



## YOUR COMPLETE FINANCIAL PROTECTION

The Mountain Trekking Company Ltd (trading as The Mountain Company) is a fully licensed and bonded tour operator. For flight inclusive packages sold to UK residents these will be covered by our Air Travel Organisers Licence (our ATOL number is 10921). For packages that do not include flights and for packages sold to customers outside of the UK your financial protection is covered by our membership of Association of Bonded Travel Organisers' Trust ("ABTOT"). Our ABTOT membership number is 5365.



Our membership of these organisations means that you can book with us in complete confidence that all monies paid to us for trips are protected.

## THREAT AND RISK ASSESSMENT

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. The ability to work in team is an important aspect of all of our trips.





As a part of our planning process we have performed a detailed threat and risk assessment for our K2 & Gondogoro La trek. It is worth pointing out all of our trips have a certain degree of risk, this is of course part of the attraction of adventure travel and why so many people choose to join this type of holiday. However by identifying the potential hazards on K2 & Gondogoro La we can assess the level of risk and implement control measures to reduce this happening.

Our full threat and risk assessment for K2 & Gondogoro La is available to clients on request. For your information we have listed below a summary of the significant risks and hazards identified by us:

- ) Personal security such as terrorism or kidnapping.
- ) Falls and trips resulting in physical injury eg. slipping on ice or falling off the path.
- ) Altitude illness including but not limited to AMS, HACE and HAPE.
- ) Getting lost or becoming separated from group eg. crossing Gondogoro La pass in whiteout.
- ) Severe bad weather and conditions when camping eg. at Concordia or Ali Camp.
- ) Climatic injuries (dehydration, sun burn, heat exhaustion, hypothermia or heat stroke). Temperatures of up to 40 Celsius may be experienced during the first few days of the trek.
- ) Crossing a river with no bridge resulting in drowning and/ or a fall. There are a number of river crossings on the trail to K2 Base Camp and after crossing Gondogoro La on way to Shaisho.
- ) Rock fall and landslides eg crossing Gondogoro La pass. The jeep track Skardu – Askole and Hushe - Skardu is at a risk of rockfall and landslides as well as many sections of the trek.
- ) Snow and ice avalanches eg crossing Gondogoro La pass.
- ) Lightning strike.



- ) Wildlife, pack animals (eg. donkeys or horses) or stray dogs. Pack animals have been known to knock people off the path. Dogs can attack and bite, we advise you discuss rabies vaccination with your doctor.
- ) Earthquake. There is a high risk of earthquake in Karakoram mountains.
- ) Risk of fire in the hotel or lodge.
- ) Endemic local diseases. We advise you discuss vaccinations with your doctor before departure.
- ) Physiological injury such as heart attack, appendicitis, hernia, toothache etc. in a remote area.
- ) Road traffic. The drive along the jeep track Skardu – Askole and Hushe – Skardu is a prone to landslides and rockfall and has many sections with high degree of exposure.
- ) Flight accident on Islamabad – Skardu – Islamabad route.
- ) Contaminated food and/ or water.

This trip visits a remote area where you are away from normal emergency services and medical facilities. In case of a serious injury requiring hospitalisation 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.

## **THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT TOUR OPERATORS (“AITO”)**

The Mountain Company is a member of the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO) and we have agreed to abide by the terms of the AITO Quality Charter.



AITO is the Association for independent and specialist holiday companies. Our member companies, usually owner-managed, strive to create overseas holidays with high levels of professionalism and a shared concern for quality and personal service. The Association encourages the highest standards in all aspects of tour operating. For more information please take a look at <http://www.aito.com/>



## **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 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.

In 2017 the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO) launched Project PROTECT in recognition of the important role that destinations play in the future of the travel industry. The aim of this project is to encourage sustainable tourism and to nurture the destinations for tomorrow's travellers. The PROTECT acronym stands for People / Resources / Outreach / Tourism / Environment / Conservation / Tomorrow.

This project is led by Professor Xavier Font of the University of Surrey and each AITO member has to publish an annual pledge and report back at the end of the year on how they got along. To see The Mountain Company's Project PROTECT pledges for 2018 and 2017, please take a look at our [Sustainable Tourism page on AITO website](#).



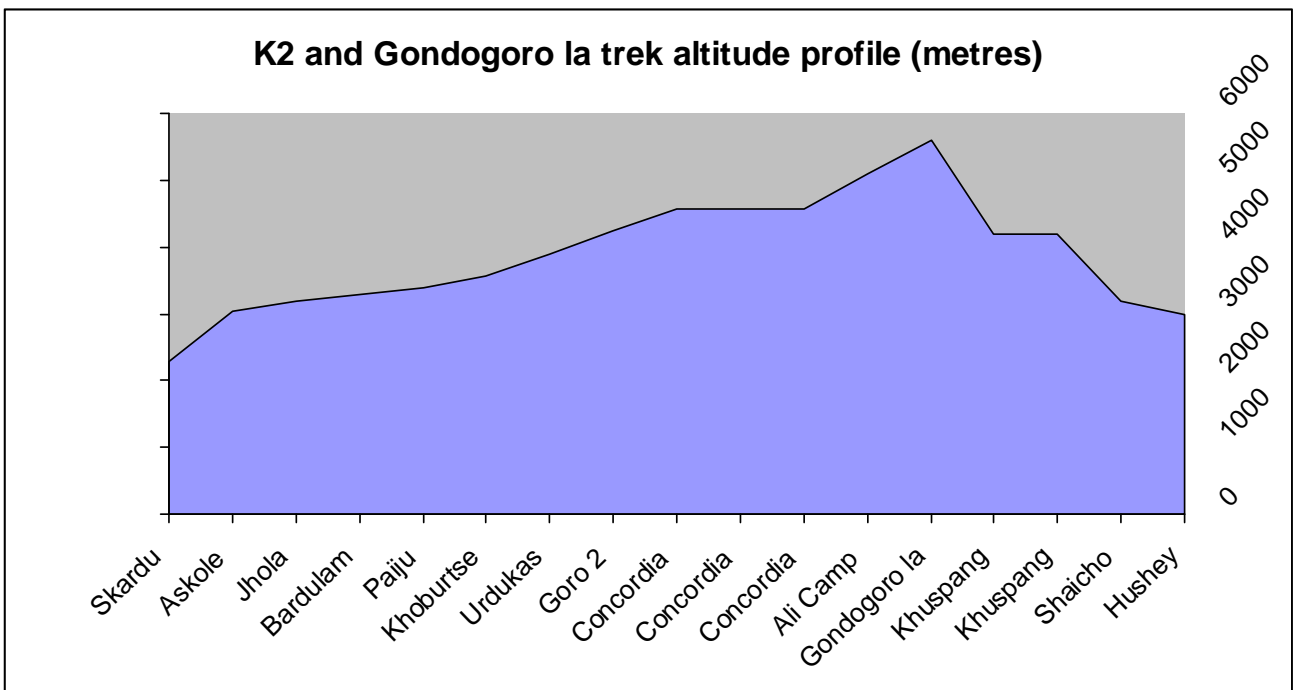
We work closely with the International Porter Protection Group and abide by their five guidelines for porter protection, their website is at [www.ippg.net](http://www.ippg.net). We also have partnered with Kathmandu Environmental Education Project in Nepal, their website is at [www.keepnepal.org](http://www.keepnepal.org)



# PRACTICAL INFORMATION

## ALTITUDE AND ACCLIMATISATION

Our K2 & Gondogoro La 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 researching the pros and cons of using this medicine.

Telephone: 0207 0187031 / International callers: +44 207 0187031

Skype ID: Rolandh1 / Email: [info@themountaincompany.co.uk](mailto:info@themountaincompany.co.uk) / [www.themountaincompany.co.uk](http://www.themountaincompany.co.uk)

Postal address: 108 Crowborough Road, Tooting, London SW17 9QG, United Kingdom



Please remember even the fittest and healthiest person can develop one of the altitude illnesses: AMS (acute mountain sickness), HACE (high altitude cerebral edema) and/ or HAPE (high altitude pulmonary edema). The symptoms of these illnesses are listed below, if any of these occur when you are on trek please immediately tell your guide.

### **Symptoms of AMS:**

- ) Tiredness
- ) Dizziness
- ) Nausea or if severe, vomiting
- ) Poor sleep

### **Symptoms of HACE:**

- ) Usually preceded by AMS
- ) Like “Severe AMS” also with severe headache unresponsive to painkillers; confusion and physical clumsiness (ataxia).

### **Symptoms of HAPE:**

- ) Fluid in the lungs: cough, tiredness, breathlessness out of proportion to exercise especially at rest and worse when lying flat.
- ) Often symptoms start later (at night or after 24 to 48 hours at new altitude).
- ) Often occurs without AMS (often no headache)
- ) But you can have AMS and HACE too.

If you have symptoms of altitude illness (AMS, HACE or HAPE) you must not ascend in altitude. If you have HACE or HAPE you must descend to nearest health post (if available) or seek medical help.

If you have only mild symptoms of AMS you should rest, drink fluids, try to eat, keep warm. If symptoms go away then you can go up. If symptoms get



worse you have to descend in altitude escorted by one of our guides (someone with altitude illness must never descend alone).

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

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.

## 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 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.

## **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 clothing and equipment for K2 Base Camp trek has been included in the Appendix below. 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 and Expedition Kit Hire rent out high quality items at competitive prices which would save you the expense of buying. The links to their websites are at <http://www.trekhireuk.com/> and <http://www.expeditionkithire.co.uk>

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 a 15% discount in their stores and online.

Each trekker should bring one backpack for items required during the day. Your day backpack will contain items such as warm clothes, jacket, camera, water bottles, personal first aid kit and 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 strictly 20kgs and if you are more than this there will be an extra charge for additional porters.** 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.phclondon.org/visa/>

**The visa application can also be downloaded from this link:**  
[http://www.phclondon.org/visa/form/visa\\_form.pdf](http://www.phclondon.org/visa/form/visa_form.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.

## 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 a comprehensive first aid kit including high altitude medicine, antibiotics and other medicines. Please get in contact with us if you would like to see the list of medicines contained in our medical kits.

## INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

The Mountain Company does not book international flights for our holidays. Instead all package prices are Land Only with services starting from arrival to the destination country.

If you would like help arranging flights then we suggest you contact our partner travel agent, StudentUniverse (ATOL registered) a specialist division of the Flight Centre Travel Group ---> [Get an online quote](#)



## 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.

Please carefully check your insurers' Terms and Conditions in particular you should make sure the following is covered: 1) Activity (i.e touring, trekking or mountaineering) 2) Maximum altitude reached on trek 3) Helicopter evacuation in an emergency.

It is important for you to understand that ultimately the burden of any expense incurred in evacuation and repatriation procedures will be borne by you and that it is your responsibility to pay any costs incurred in respect of any evacuation or for medical treatment. You should be fully aware of the implications involved in arranging your own travel insurance and understand the limitations and exclusions of your policy.

You should be aware that under certain circumstances, The Mountain Company leader (or our local agent, if no western leader) might instigate rescue proceedings via helicopter (or any other means necessary) in situations of medical emergency without first contacting your insurance company for their approval.

The Mountain Company has arranged travel and trekking insurance for European Union residents with the specialist insurance broker Campbell Irvine. Their insurance policy will cover you for most of the trips in our portfolio. However if your trek is classified or graded by The Mountain Company as "Strenuous" or "Challenging" then you must make sure you select this option when obtaining an online quote for your insurance. Campbell Irvine will not provide insurance cover for any trips classified as "Mountaineering".



## CAMPBELL IRVINE DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE

To apply for an online quote through [Campbell Irvine's Direct Travel Insurance website](#). Should you have any questions regarding the terms and conditions of cover please contact Campbell Irvine on 0207 938 1734 or email [info@campbellirvine.com](mailto:info@campbellirvine.com)

We have [listed on TMC website a comprehensive list of specialist adventure travel insurers](#) that our trekkers from UK, EU and Internationally based have used in the past. Please carefully check their Terms & Conditions prior to purchase. These companies are not necessarily recommended by us so it is your responsibility to ensure you have appropriate coverage.

### **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:

- J 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.
- J 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**

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

Telephone: 0207 0187031 / International callers: +44 207 0187031

Skype ID: Rolandh1 / Email: info@themountaincompany.co.uk / www.themountaincompany.co.uk

Postal address: 108 Crowborough Road, Tooting, London SW17 9QG, United Kingdom



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 Karakoram 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

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



# APPENDIX 1

## CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT LIST FOR K2 & GONDOGORO LA

For the safety of everyone in the group and to help ensure a successful trek, you are required to have the following items in our clothing and equipment list tailored for K2 & Gondogoro La trek. Your gear will be checked by the group leader in Islamabad prior to departure for the trek.

As a reminder, the weather on this trek will vary season to season and day to day as you ascend to higher elevations. During the first couple of days on K2 & Gondogoro La trek you will experience hot conditions with temperatures around up to 40°C. You will experience the coldest temperatures at Concordia and Ali Camp where overnight lows will be down to around -10°C.

### Footwear:

- ) Walking/ hiking boots.
- ) B2 rated mountaineering boots.
- ) Gaiters. A pair of knee high gaiters used to keep boots dry if walking through deep snow or on wet ground.
- ) Wool Socks and liner socks.
- ) Sandals (for use around camp and river crossings).
- ) Trainers or trail shoes. Can be used on arrival to camp.

### Clothing:

- ) Goretex shell jacket and trousers. For use if it rains or snows during the trek.
- ) Light trekking trousers. Minimum two pairs of trousers.
- ) Long sleeve, light coloured polypropylene shirts. Minimum two shirts.



- ) Microfleece.
- ) Mid to heavyweight fleece jacket (Polartec 200 to 300).
- ) Sleeveless/ gilet or body warmer type fleece. This will help keep your core warm while not bulking when layering up. Gilet fleece can be used in combination with base layers, other fleeces and down jacket to provide maximum warmth and insulation.
- ) 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.
- ) Warms 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 (eg. Buff Headwear check out <http://www.buffwear.com>)
- ) Light weight climber's headlamp for use at night around the camp. Bring extra batteries and spare bulbs.
- ) Sunglasses. The lenses need to be Category 4 rated and should have side protection or wraparound design to prevent light getting through to your eyes that could cause sun blindness.

**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 scewgate 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).
- ) C1 or C2 crampons.
- ) Mountaineering ice axe and leash.
- ) Helmet. Mandatory as there is risk of rock fall crossing Gondogoro La.

**Personal Equipment:**

- ) 4 season sleeping bag (maximum overnight low -10C).
- ) Fleece or silk liner for your sleeping bag. A liner protects your sleeping bag from getting dirty and helps by adding extra insulation to keep you warm at night.
- ) Thermarest self inflating pad and/or foam mat.
- ) Backpack. Recommended size is 40 litres or larger as you need to have enough space to carry water bottles, camera, lunch and extra clothing as well as crampons, ice axe and down jacket for day crossing the Gondogoro La pass. It is also a good idea to bring a pack cover to keep the contents dry.
- ) Stuff sacks for keeping your gear dry and organised. Or even better are fold- drybags such as from Exped.
- ) Two 1 litre water bottles (Nalgene wide mouth bottles are the best) and Camelback type water carrier 2 litre capacity.
- ) Pee bottle. Highly recommended as means you do not have to get up to find toilet tent at night! For men you can use an old water bottle for women take a look at SheWee at <http://www.shewee.com/>
- ) Sunscreen and lipsalve with an SPF 30 or better.



- ) Insect repellent.
- ) Water purification tablets (Pristine, Biox Acqua or Acqa Mira). You will be provided with boiled water at camp however if you refill water bottle at a water tap or steam during the day you should use water purifiers.
- ) Hand sanitizer. We suggest you keep this in your day pack for use after a toilet break during the trek or before eating any snacks.
- ) Favourite snack food.
- ) Paperback books, ipod and cards.
- ) Trekking poles (Black Diamond with “Flick Lock” are best). Having two poles is mandatory as required for your safety on steep and loose sections of the trail and for walking through deep snow higher up.
- ) Umbrella. You are likely to get some rain on this trek and also useful for providing shade when hot.
- ) Camera with spare batteries and memory cards.
- ) 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. We provide toilet paper so you do not need to bring this with you.

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



# APPENDIX 2

## FCO AWARENESS DISCLAIMER

I acknowledge that I have booked on one of the following treks with the knowledge that the itinerary visits areas to which travel is sometimes advised against by the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO). *Delete where applicable.*

### ***K2 Base Camp trek in Pakistan***

I declare that I have read the advice on <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/pakistan> and I am still happy to travel. I assume and accept the risks associated with such travel, knowing that access to evacuation and/or consular support may not always be available. In such a case our public liability cover does not extend to include cover for claims arising out of war and terrorism risks. The Mountain Company cannot be held liable for any incident claim, loss or damage, however caused in this regard.

I also acknowledge that adequate travel insurance (to cover medical emergency repatriation as a minimum) is a pre-requisite for all The Mountain Company trips. Given the fact that many insurance policies exclude cover for travel contrary to FCO advice I agree to provide clear evidence that I am sufficiently insured for the trip.

Name:

Date: