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EXPERIENCE PAKISTAN FIELD GUIDE

K2 Base Camp Trek Guide

Baltoro Glacier - Concordia - K2 Base Camp

PRACTICAL A-Z TREK PLANNER

REGION	HIGH POINT	SEASON	GRADE
Baltistan	~5,150 m	Late Jun-Aug	Strenuous

Reviewed September 2026 | Route details must be reconfirmed locally

The trek at a glance

The K2 Base Camp trek is a fully supported high-altitude journey from Askole through the Braldu valley and across the Baltoro Glacier to Concordia. The standard trek returns by the same glacier route. Gondogoro La is a separate technical crossing and is never guaranteed.

Highest trekking point	K2 Base Camp, approx. 5,150 m	Typical Pakistan program	18-21 days
Trail time	Usually 12-16 days	Best operating window	Late June-August
Accommodation	Hotels + expedition camping	Experience	Prior multi-day altitude trekking advised

What makes it demanding

The trek requires repeated 6-10 hour days over loose moraine, rock and glacial ice. Several nights are spent above 4,000 metres, services are expedition-style and communications become unreliable beyond the roadhead. Fitness, pacing and honest reporting of altitude symptoms matter more than speed.

K2 Base Camp versus Gondogoro La

No technical climbing is normally required for the out-and-back K2 Base Camp trek. Gondogoro La (about 5,585 m) requires mountaineering boots, crampons, harness, helmet, fixed-rope competence and a qualified high-altitude team. Snow, rockfall, weather, rope condition and guide assessment determine whether it is attempted.

Access and support

The journey begins in Islamabad, normally with a weather-dependent flight to Skardu. A rough 4WD road leads through Shigar and the Braldu valley to Askole. A licensed operator arranges permits, park formalities, guide, cook, porters, food, group camp equipment and emergency communications.



Baltistan is the cultural and operational gateway to the K2 region.

Route stages and acclimatisation

Stage	Altitude	Time	Terrain / purpose
Skardu-Askole	3,050 m	6-8 hr drive	Rough mountain road; final permanent settlement
Askole-Jhola	3,150 m	6-7 hr	Braldu trail via Korofong and Biafo junction
Jhola-Paiju	3,420 m	6-7 hr	Dry exposed valley; last substantial green camp
Paiju rest	3,420 m	Rest day	Hydration, recovery and load preparation
Paiju-Khoburtse	3,760 m	6-8 hr	Moraine and first major glacier travel
Khoburtse-Urdukas	4,050 m	4-6 hr	Uneven moraine to terraced camp
Urdukas-Goro II	4,300 m	6-7 hr	Central Baltoro; camp may be on ice
Goro II-Concordia	4,600 m	5-7 hr	High glacier with K2 and Broad Peak views
K2 Base Camp return	~5,150 m	10-12 hr	Long Godwin-Austen Glacier excursion

Altitude health

A measured plan normally includes acclimatisation in Skardu, a rest day at Paiju and flexibility at Concordia. Report headache, nausea, unusual fatigue, dizziness, breathlessness at rest or poor coordination immediately. Worsening symptoms require descent; medication must not be used to force continued ascent.

Weather planning ranges

Area	Day	Night
Skardu / lower valleys	18-30 C	8-16 C
Paiju-Urdukas	8-20 C	0-8 C
Goro II / Concordia	0-12 C	-10 to 0 C

These are planning ranges, not forecasts. Wind chill, snow and storms can make high camps substantially colder.

Equipment, safety and responsible trekking

Personal trekking equipment
- Waterproof broken-in boots
- Sleeping bag around -15 C comfort
- Base, insulation and waterproof layers
- Warm hat, sun hat and gloves
- Trekking poles, gaiters and glacier sunglasses
- Headlamp, bottles and purification backup
- High-SPF sun and lip protection
- Waterproof duffel and daypack

Gondogoro La only
- Approved harness and locking carabiners
- Helmet and technical gloves
- Mountaineering boots and fitted crampons
- Ice axe and specified rope equipment
- Previous instruction and fixed-rope competence

The expedition leader may exclude an underprepared participant from the crossing.

Safety checklist

- Train for consecutive uphill and downhill days, not only single-day distance.
- Test boots, sleeping system and waterproof layers before arriving in Pakistan.
- Carry insurance covering trekking above 5,200 m, treatment and emergency evacuation.
- Keep weather and flight buffer days before the international departure.
- Never leave camp or walk on the glacier without informing the guide.
- Accept route changes, turnaround and descent decisions immediately.

Permits, guides and porters

The Baltoro lies within a regulated border and protected mountain region. Foreign visitors should use a licensed Pakistani operator and reconfirm current permissions, fees and security procedures. Ethical operations should confirm porter load limits, wages, food, equipment, insurance arrangements and welfare.

Camp life and environmental care

Use treated or boiled water, maintain strict hand hygiene and disclose dietary requirements in advance. Carry batteries, wipes, packaging and other non-biodegradable waste back to Skardu. Use designated campsites and toilets and follow Central Karakoram National Park instructions.

Emergency reality

Helicopter evacuation depends on weather, aircraft availability, permissions, payment guarantees and a safe landing location. It is not an on-demand service. Satellite communication improves coordination but does not guarantee rescue.

Before booking

Confirm	Why it matters
Operator licence and permits	The route is regulated and cannot be treated as an independent trek.
Guide and communication plan	Glacier conditions and camps change every season.
Porter allocation and baggage limit	Avoid last-minute load disputes and support fair welfare standards.
Insurance altitude wording	General policies may exclude high-altitude trekking.
Flight and road contingency	Islamabad-Skardu flights remain weather dependent.
Gondogoro La terms	The pass is optional, technical and never guaranteed.

Plan with Experience Pakistan

See the 21-day K2 Base Camp & Gondogoro La Expedition at experiencepak.com, or send your preferred dates, group size, previous altitude experience and technical background through the Plan Your Journey page.

Official resources

Gilgit-Baltistan Tourism: visitgilgitbaltistan.gov.pk
Pakistan Meteorological Department: pmd.gov.pk
Pakistan Online Visa System: visa.nadra.gov.pk
Alpine Club of Pakistan: alpineclub.org.pk

IMPORTANT: Routes, altitudes, temperatures and walking times are approximate. Glacier, river, road, permit and campsite conditions change. Reconfirm all operational details locally; the on-site guide's safety assessment always takes priority.