EXPERIENCE PAKISTAN FIELD GUIDE

Patundas Trek Guide

A concise A-Z guide to the high pasture of Ghulkin village: altitude, route, weather, glacier conditions, local support, equipment and responsible trekking.

LOCATION	START	HIGH POINT	DURATION
Ghulkin village, Gojal	Borith Lake 2,500-2,600 m	Patundas approx. 4,200 m	4-5 trekking days
BEST TIME	**WALKING**	**LEVEL**	**SUPPORT**
Mid-June to September	4-7 hours daily	Moderate-challenging	Guide essential; porters recommended

What is Patundas?

Patundas is the high alpine pasture of Ghulkin village in Gojal, Upper Hunza. It lies above the Passu and Batura glacier systems and is reached through the Borith Lake area. The route is short by Karakoram standards but involves rapid altitude gain, steep moraine, loose ground and a changing glacier crossing.

The landscape is part of Ghulkin's Wakhi pastoral tradition, not an empty wilderness. Visitors should respect local access decisions, seasonal camps, herders and livestock.

Why the route changes

Passu Glacier is dynamic. Crevasses, meltwater channels and moraine features move, so an old GPS track is not a reliable safety tool. The guide must choose the crossing after a current local assessment.

Altitude and acclimatisation

The trek gains about 1,600 metres from Borith Lake to Patundas. Spend at least two nights in Upper Hunza before starting if arriving rapidly from low altitude. Persistent headache, nausea, unusual fatigue, dizziness or poor coordination must be reported immediately; worsening symptoms require descent.

Reviewed September 2026. All altitudes, times and temperatures are approximate and must be reconfirmed before departure.

ROUTE & CONDITIONS

A sensible five-day plan

Day	Stage	Altitude / time	Conditions
1	Borith Lake to lower camp	2,600 to approx. 3,000-3,300 m 4-5 hrs	Dry slopes, steep trail, scree and moraine
2	Lower to upper approach camp	Approx. 3,500-3,800 m 5-7 hrs	Broken moraine, rough traverses and route-finding
3	Glacier crossing to Patundas	Approx. 4,180-4,200 m 5-7 hrs	Guide-selected glacier line and sustained steep ascent
4	Patundas exploration and descent	4-6 hrs, plan varies	Views, pasture, then careful descent to lower camp
5	Return to Borith Lake	3-5 hrs	Moraine descent; continue to Upper Hunza accommodation

Best time and temperatures

Period	Typical high-camp conditions	Practical note
Mid-June	About 5-16 C by day; -3 to +4 C at night	Residual snow and a less-settled crossing may affect access
July-August	About 6-18 C by day; -2 to +5 C at night	Warmest period; strong sun, meltwater and route changes remain possible
September	About 3-14 C by day; -8 to 0 C at night	Often clearer views, but shorter days and colder nights

Access and orientation

Borith Lake lies within the Ghulkin village landscape and is reached from the Karakoram Highway by the local road near Hussaini. Allow roughly 20-35 minutes from Gulmit or Passu and 2-3 hours from Karimabad, depending on roadworks and stops.

Route sequence

KKH / Hussaini junction	Borith Lake 2,500-2,600 m	Approach camps moraine	Passu Glacier local crossing	Patundas approx. 4,200 m

This sequence is for orientation only. The actual glacier line and camps are selected locally.

PRACTICAL TREKKING

Guides, porters and camp support

A local guide with recent Patundas and Passu Glacier experience is essential. The guide sets the pace, checks the crossing, monitors altitude and weather, coordinates camps and has authority to change or stop the route.

Guide	Porters	Cook / assistant
Current route knowledge, group leadership, altitude awareness and emergency decisions.	Carry shared tents, food and an agreed portion of guest baggage. Loads and welfare must be agreed before departure.	Recommended for full-service camps; manages meals, hot drinks and safe water treatment.

Responsible staffing

Confirm wages, insurance or emergency support, suitable footwear, shelter, meals and realistic loads. Porters must never be pressured onto an unsafe crossing. The exact team depends on group size, equipment and personal baggage.

Camp life

Accommodation	Meals & water	Facilities
Mountain tents; guesthouse or hotel in Upper Hunza before and after.	Breakfast, trail lunch, dinner and hot drinks on supported treks. Water must be boiled or reliably filtered.	Basic camp toilets, no electricity and unreliable or absent mobile signal.

Safety essentials

- Use a guide who has crossed the current route recently; never follow an old GPS line blindly.
- Keep the group together and follow spacing instructions on ice and loose moraine.
- Start early when advised; heat can soften snow and increase meltwater or rock movement.
- Carry first aid, reserve food and an emergency communication plan appropriate to the operation.
- Turn back when conditions deteriorate. Reaching Patundas is never more important than returning safely.
- Insurance must cover trekking to 4,200 m, emergency evacuation and the planned activities.

Packing essentials

Wear	Carry	Camp
Broken-in trekking boots; base layers; fleece; insulated jacket; waterproof shell; warm hat and gloves.	UV sunglasses; sunscreen; lip protection; trekking poles; 2-litre water capacity; personal medicine and first aid.	Sub-zero sleeping bag; headlamp; power bank; hygiene items. Technical glacier equipment is decided after route assessment.

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PLAN RESPONSIBLY

Before you book

• Who is the guide, and when did they last cross the route?

• How many porters and support staff are included?

• Which tents, meals, treated water and personal baggage allowance are provided?

• What is the alternative if the glacier crossing is unsafe?

• What insurance is required, and what emergency communication is available?

• Which road transfers and pre/post-trek accommodation are included?

Permits and documents

Requirements may change with nationality and local administration. Carry passport copies and confirm current registration, permit and insurance requirements before arrival. Remote rescue is weather-dependent and cannot be described as immediate or guaranteed.

Respecting Ghulkin's cultural landscape

Patundas belongs to Ghulkin village and forms part of the community's Wakhi seasonal pasture system. Ask before photographing people, respect herders and livestock, use established camps, keep drones grounded unless permission is clear, and pack out all non-biodegradable waste.

Frequently asked questions

Can a first-time trekker do Patundas?

A fit beginner with recent hill preparation and proper acclimatisation may manage it, but rough moraine, glacier terrain and altitude make prior multi-day hiking experience valuable.

Is it technical?

It is generally offered as a non-technical trek, but glacier conditions can require extra safety equipment or a route change. Never cross independently.

How cold can it get?

High-camp nights may fall below freezing even in summer and can approach -8 C in September.

Can it be added to a Hunza journey?

Yes. It fits naturally with Gulmit, Ghulkin, Passu and Borith Lake, provided the programme includes acclimatisation and weather flexibility.

PLAN YOUR PATUNDAS JOURNEY

Experience Pakistan Treks & Tours

Website: experiencepak.com
Email: sultanhunzai86@gmail.com
WhatsApp: +92 344 5053818

Detailed field guide: experiencepak.com/journal/patundas-trek-guide/

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