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EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEYS ACROSS PAKISTAN

SHIMSHAL PASS TREK GUIDE

Shimshal Valley & High Pamir · Upper Hunza · Pakistan

A practical field guide to the gorge route, high-altitude camps, Wakhi pastoral landscape, equipment and local support from Shimshal village to Shuwert.

Starting altitude	Shimshal: approx. 3,100 m
Maximum altitude	Shimshal Pass: approx. 4,735 m
Typical trek	7–8 trekking days
Difficulty	Challenging · 4 of 5
Best season	Late June to September
Support	Experienced Shimshali guide essential

Reviewed September 2026. Route, bridges, camps, water and weather must be reconfirmed locally before departure.

Overview

The Shimshal Pass Trek follows a traditional passage from Shimshal village through the Pamir-e-Tang gorge to Shuijerab and across the pass into the high pastures around Shuwert. Shimshal is a Wakhi mountain community at about 3,100 metres, known for climbers, guides and high-altitude workers. Beyond the village, the route enters a living pastoral landscape used seasonally for yaks, sheep and goats.

This is a remote trek with exposed paths, bridges, river terrain and no road access beyond Shimshal. The local guide's daily assessment takes priority over a fixed itinerary or downloaded GPS track.

Quick facts

Location	Shimshal Valley, Gojal, Upper Hunza, Gilgit-Baltistan
Road approach	Local jeep from the Karakoram Highway near Passu; commonly 3–5 hours
Road history	The approximately 50 km jeep road opened in 2003
Highest point	Shimshal Pass, commonly stated around 4,735 m
Terrain	Gorge, cliff paths, bridges, scree, pasture and high plateau
Accommodation	Guesthouse/homestay in Shimshal; camping on the trek
Daily walking	Usually 5–9 hours
Mobile coverage	Limited in the village; generally absent on the route

Altitude and temperatures

Allow a full acclimatisation day in Shimshal. Persistent headache, nausea, dizziness, unusual fatigue, breathlessness at rest or poor coordination must be reported immediately; worsening symptoms require descent.

Late June–July: Shimshal may be 12–26°C by day; high camps often 3–15°C by day and -5 to +4°C overnight. **August:** generally warmer, though storms and cold wind remain possible. **September:** often clearer but shorter and colder, with high-camp nights around -10 to 0°C. These are planning ranges, not forecasts.

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A sensible 8-day trekking framework

Before trek	Acclimatisation walk and village briefing in Shimshal.
Day 1	Shimshal to Ghar Sar: river terraces and narrowing gorge, usually 6–7 hours.
Day 2	Ghar Sar to Wuch Furzin: bridges and cliff-side paths, usually 6–8 hours.
Day 3	Wuch Furzin to Shuijerab through Arbab Purian and summer-pasture country.
Day 4	Cross Shimshal Pass (approx. 4,735 m) and continue to Shuwert.
Day 5	Flexible exploration and acclimatisation day around the Pamir plateau.
Day 6	Recross the pass and descend; the guide may divide the long stage.
Day 7	Continue through the lower gorge with careful pacing.
Day 8	Return to Shimshal and recover in village lodging.

Local team and camp life

• **Guide:** current knowledge of bridges, river sections, camps, water and pastoral activity is essential.

• **Porters:** carry group equipment, food and agreed baggage under fair load limits.

• **Cook/assistant:** recommended because there are no shops or permanent lodges beyond Shimshal.

• **Water:** sources can be seasonal; every supply must be treated.

• **Communication:** agree satellite or other emergency arrangements before departure.

Difficulty and preparation

This challenging trek involves consecutive long days, narrow and exposed paths, remote camping and sustained altitude. Previous multi-day trekking is strongly recommended. Train with hill walking, stair climbing, leg strength and back-to-back hiking days. Trekking poles are highly useful.

Best season

Late June and July usually bring long daylight and active summer pastures. **August** often has established camps but meltwater and rain can affect rivers and slopes. **September** may offer clearer light and fewer visitors, with colder nights and increasing snow risk. October to May is not the normal season.

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Safety and essential equipment

Footwear	Broken-in waterproof trekking boots and camp footwear.
Layers	Base layers, fleece, insulated jacket and waterproof shell.
Sun protection	UV sunglasses, brimmed hat, high-SPF sunscreen and lip protection.
Camp sleep	Sub-zero sleeping bag, insulated mat and headlamp.
Walking kit	Trekking poles, 25–35 litre daypack and two-litre water capacity.
Insurance	Must cover trekking to at least 4,800 m, treatment and evacuation in Pakistan.

• Stay together on gorge paths, bridges and river sections.

• Never push past worsening altitude symptoms; descent is the priority.

• Carry reserve food, first aid and communication appropriate to the operating plan.

• Allow road and weather flexibility before international flights.

Wakhi pastoral heritage

Shuwert and the surrounding Pamir are part of Shimshal's living cultural landscape. Seasonal herding, stone shelters and collective maintenance of routes remain important. The Wakhi concept of *nomus* has been studied as collective giving through which useful infrastructure may honour loved ones. Ask before entering shelters or photographing people, keep drones grounded without permission, avoid disturbing livestock and pack out all non-biodegradable waste.

Official and research resources

Gilgit-Baltistan Tourism: visitgilgitbaltistan.gov.pk
Pakistan Meteorological Department: weather.gov.pk
Gilgit-Baltistan Rescue 1122: rescue1122.gog.pk
Pakistan Online Visa System: visa.nadra.gov.pk
Cultural research: haujournal.org, "The social life of pathways"

Plan with Experience Pakistan

Our EP-009 journey combines Shimshal acclimatisation, village heritage, a supported trek and flexible Islamabad–Gilgit–Passu transport.

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Editorial note: All altitudes, durations, temperatures and stages are estimates. Current conditions and the guide's on-site assessment take priority.

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