



PAKISTAN REVISITED WITH CHITRAL FESTIVAL THE LAST OF THE PAGAN TRIBES AND THE NORTHWEST FRONTIER

May 09 - May 24, 2025

Led by Lecturer Dr. Nidaullah Sehrai

Can be combined with North Pakistan tour (May 17 - June 02, 2025) **OR**
Afghanistan tour (May 22 - June 05, 2025)

Pakistan, a country located on the western side of the Indo-Gangetic Plains, has a rich, diverse terrain consisting of high mountain ranges, plateaus, and the Indus River Plain. Its long history includes a section of the ancient Silk Road (Karakoram Highway) that runs through the country over the famous Khyber Pass. There are many fascinating ancient archaeological and UNESCO World Heritage sites waiting to be discovered. On this amazing adventure, you will visit mountain villages to meet the hardy souls that live in a stunningly beautiful landscape under harsh conditions. On this amazing journey along the Northwest Frontier, you will drive through mesmerizing natural scenery, to the ancient kingdom of Chitral. Here we will attend the annual celebrations of the Kalash tribe before heading on over the Shandur Pass to one of the most spectacular drives on earth. Your visit to Swat Valley with its Buddhist legacy and amazing scenery as well as Peshawar, one of those fabled ancient cities will fascinate you. On your way back to Islamabad, you will have the perfect culmination of the tour visiting the Buddhist University town of Taxila.

Ihab Zaki
Managing Director

Thursday, May 09

Arrive in Islamabad (PAKISTAN)



Upon arrival in Islamabad, meet and transfer to *Roomy Hotel* or similar for check-in. After a short rest, head out on a city tour, beginning with a visit to **Lok Virsa Museum** to learn about Pakistan's history and culture. Drive past the city's modern streets and buildings to **Faisal Mosque**, a contemporary mosque built in the shape of a Bedouin tent. This mosque is the largest in Pakistan and does not have a dome, a typical feature of an Islamic Mosque. Then head to the **Shakarparian Gardens** for a panoramic view of Islamabad, continue to **Pir Sohawa**, and enjoy dinner and scenic views at the Monal Restaurant. Return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(D)**
Note: For convenience, the night of May 09 is included for immediate check-in upon the early morning arrival.

Friday, May 10

Islamabad - Peshawar



Begin the day with a morning drive to **Peshawar**, the capital of Khaibar Pakhtoon Khwa (KPK), stopping en route to visit **Taxila**, one of the subcontinent's most important archaeological treasures. Visit the **Taxila National Museum** and see some of the best Gandharan art excavated from this region, as well as a detailed collection of stone, terra-cotta, metals, and precious stone dating back to the 6th century B.C. Drive to Peshawar (the center of Gandharan civilization) along **Grand Trunk Road**, one of Asia's oldest and longest roads. This ancient road, linking India and Central Asia for centuries, allowed traders to buy and sell their goods and invaders to conquer lands. You can still see traces of this ancient trade in the fortresses and ancient caravanserais (roadside inns). One of these structures is the **Attock Fort**, built by Emperor Akbar in the 1580s and dominating the Indus Gorge. Due to its strategic location, the Pakistan Army currently occupies it, and all invaders from the north must stop as they prepare to cross the Indus. Sher Shah Suri's Caravanserai can be found below the fort. Upon arrival in Peshawar, transfer to *Serena Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner, & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, May 11

Peshawar



Begin a full-day tour of **Peshawar**, which has traditionally been linked to its frontier location, close to the historic Khyber Pass. Today, it is a large, rapidly developing, and growing city. Mughal Emperor Babar built the fortified stronghold of Bala Hissar, the most imposing landmark in the city, in the early 16th century. It was a royal residence for the Afghan Durrani Dynasty until it was captured and damaged in 1834. The fort was rebuilt with mud by the Sikhs and further preserved by the British, and the Frontier Corps currently occupy it and is currently closed to the public, but there is a small museum and excellent views of the city from the ramparts. Another interesting part of the Old City is **Namak Mandi**, famous for its street food and very interesting Tikka restaurants, the **Khayber Bazaar**, and perhaps the most fascinating, **Qissa Khawani Bazaar**, known as the "street of storytellers." **Chowk Yadgar** lies at the heart of the Old City.

Originally a memorial to Colonel C Hasting, it was replaced by a plaza and memorial to the Indo-Pak war of 1965. **Androon-shehar Bazaar**, meaning "inner city," houses silver and goldsmiths selling a wide range of ethnic, antique, and modern jewelry. In addition, visit the 17th-century **Mohbat Khan Mosque**, an iconic site in Peshawar with a white marble façade then return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, May 12

Peshawar - Swat Valley



After breakfast, begin the day with a drive to **Swat Valley** via the newly built Swat Motorway. On the way, see the largest Stupa in Swat, known as **Shangerdar Stupa**, probably built to house the relics Buddha received by the king of Swat Utrasena in the first century BCE. After lunch, head to visit **Swat Museum** and **Butkara 1**. The first stupa was probably built during the era of Mauryan King Ashoka 268-232 BCE and has been rebuilt several times. Head to visit **Mingora Bazaar**, famous for its handicrafts and shawls. Transfer to *Swat Serena Hotel* for check-in and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, May 13
Swat Valley - Ayon



Begin the day by passing through the Lower Swat Valley, across the Swat River to the **Dir District**, and then continue through Lawari Tunnel. Drive to **Ghahrat Gol** (2 miles) and through Winston Churchill Picket at Chakdara. Head to **Chitral** via Dir, through the Lawari tunnel into Chitral Valley. This is the residence of a family which ruled a tiny principality before Chitral Valley was integrated into Pakistan. The rocky outcrop on which the home is built has the Chitral River swirling below.

Relax at the end of this day's drive in the lovely gardens. Chitral is a fascinating place offering the sheer natural beauty of the Hindu Kush Mountain range, which is dominated by Tirich Mir Mountain (25,282 feet). It is home to the Chitrali people, who speak the Indo-European Khowar language, and the semi-nomadic Wakhi-speaking people, the friendliest and most interesting people in the Kalash Valley. In upper Chitral, there are Ismaili Muslims, and similar to the Hunza, they are very open, peaceful, and friendly. Historically, Chitral has been an independent princely state. The pagan tribes of Kalash Valley worship a pantheon of gods and goddesses and hold exuberant festivals inspired by the seasons and the farming year. Continue to **Ayon** and upon arrival transfer to *Ayon Fort* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, May 14
Ayon (Berir village)



Spend the day witnessing more of the Chilam Joshi Festival. Later, explore the village of **Ayon**, then return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, May 15
Ayon - Bamboret



Begin the day with a drive to **Bamboret**, the largest of the three valleys in the Kalash Valley, During the colorful event that lasts for several days, you will see people dancing, drinking wine, and celebrating the arrival of spring. This is also when young couples announce their new partners. Upon arrival transfer to a *Family Guesthouse in Bamboret* for check-in & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, May 16
Bamboret - Chitral



Head to the Chitral and visit the **Chitral Bazaar** and **Chitral Fort**, situated on the banks of the Chitral River. The fort has a commanding position on the river and is believed to have been built by Raja Nadir Shah in the 14th Century. Transfer to the *Hindu Kush Heights Hotel* or similar for check-in, rest, and enjoy lunch. In the afternoon, head to the **Chitral Museum**, built to preserve Chitral's rich cultural heritage. The museum displays cultural items dating back to as early as the 12th Century, such as costumes, jewelry, weapons such as guns, daggers, swords, musical instruments, and household objects. An archaeological gallery also contains old pieces

from the Kalash valley, such as pottery, arrowheads, and jewelry. Return to the *Guesthouse* and enjoy the evening and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, May 17
Chitral



Enjoy breakfast and then drive to Chitral **Gol national Park** where the day will be spent. The park was the private property of the former htar of Chitral until 1983 and it has been in dispute since then. The Birmoghlasht part of the park is where the former Mehtar's Summer Fort is. At the time of existence of the Chitral State, the Mehtar and his family used to stay in the summer. The fort was constructed in such a way that it overlooked the entire city. Enjoy a picnic lunch at the government rest house. then continue the tour in the park, which is home to Snow leopard, Kashmir Markhor, Siberian ibex, Black bear, Himalayan Griffon vulture, Golden Eagle, Peregrine falcon, and Himalayan snowcock are some of the area's most popular wildlife species. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, May 18
Chitral - Mastuj



After breakfast, begin the day with a drive to **Mastuj**, which was once the seat of power of the independent Kushwaqt principality, which in its heyday, reached across into the Gilgit River valley. **Mastuj fort**, similar in style to the one in Chitral town, is still occupied by Colonel Khushwat ul Mulk, the son of Shuja ul Mulk, who was mad Mehtar of Chitral by the British in 1895, following the siege of Chitral fort. The setting is beautiful, with the village spread across a large alluvial fan. Bubbling streams and irrigation channels run through golden fields of wheat and barley lined with towering poplar trees, shimmering in the sun and wind, while apricot trees are scattered all around the village. Transfer to *Mastuj Castle Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, May 19
Mastuj - Gupis



After an early breakfast, begin the day with a drive to **Gupis Valley** with its beautiful landscapes and breathtaking views. Upon arrival, transfer to *Blossom Inn Hotel* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, May 20
Gupis - Gilgit



Begin the morning with an exploration of the beautiful **Phandar Lake** and later drive to **Gupis**, an important town of Ghizer, one of the ten districts of the Gilgit-Baltistan Region of Pakistan. After lunch, continue to **Gilgit** and transfer to *Serena Gilgit Hotel* or similar for check-in and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Note: For those doing the North Pakistan tour, we will be driving to Hunza and the visit to Manserah will take place later on the tour.

Tuesday, May 21
Gilgit - Kachura Skardu



After Breakfast, begin the drive to **Kachura Sikardu** and upon arrival, transfer to *Shangrila Resort* for check-in, enjoy lunch and then head for a short excursion of **upper Kachura village** and see the beautiful village life and upper **Kachura Lake**. Return to the *Resort* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, May 22
Kachura Skardu - Islamabad



After breakfast, head to the airport for your flight to **Islamabad** and upon arrival transfer to *Roomy Hotel* or similar for check-in, free afternoon at leisure or enjoy shopping at the sumpper market and Jinnah supper market. Dinner and overnight at the *Hotel*. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, May 23
Islamabad - USA



Begin the day with a visit to **Pakistan National Museum of art**, visit to **Golda Sharif Shrine** and **historic Train station**. Enjoy a farewell lunch at Monal restaurant then return to *Roomy Hotel*, free afternoon at leisure, dinner and overnight at the *Hotel*. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, May 24
Islamabad - USA



After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight back to the US. **(B)**

"We reserve the right to change the order of activities/visits or sites due to unexpected events such as flight cancellations or changes of schedule, or any other reasons beyond our control. We will do our best to ensure that any necessary changes when/if needed to meet the needs of our clients".



Special Trip Remarks:

Anyone joining this trip must understand that in many places, the tourist infrastructure (roads, restaurants, and bathrooms) is very primitive. Some days are long and hard, and the level of services will not match those offered in most tourist locations. The hotels and lodges are comfortable, but some lack the luxuries provided in the West. Security checkpoints can be annoying, but travelers must be flexible and patient. Many roads are in a bad state of repair, and journeys can be long and tiring. It will help if you are flexible and accept any necessary changes. By signing up for this tour, you acknowledge your complete understanding and acceptance of all terms and conditions and assert that you are in good physical and mental health and that you will maintain an open mind, a sense of adventure, and a tolerant and patient spirit during all aspects of the tour. Recommended departure date from the USA is May 7th, 2024, to arrive early morning May 9th. The night of May 8th is included to allow immediate check-in if arrival is the first hours on May 9th.



Tour Cost (Land Only): \$8,995.00

Per person sharing in double occupancy

Single Supplement: \$995.00

Price based on group size minimum of 6 participants and maximum of 14 participants

Trip Grade: III Lodging Level: **-****

About your Lecturer, Dr. Nidaullah Sehrai ... He got MA and PhD degrees from the University of Peshawar. Immediately after his graduation in 1993, he joined 'Travel Waljis Pvt Ltd' as a 'Tourist Guide'. The same year he was appointed as pioneer Curator, 'Pakistan Maritime Museum, Karachi', wherefrom he resigned in 1998 due to his selection as 'Lecturer-cum-Assistant Curator' by the University of Peshawar. Since then, he has been teaching at the Department of Archaeology, Peshawar University, various courses: Art, Architecture and Archaeology of Prehistoric, Indus/Harappan Civilization, Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic periods, as well as Museum Studies/Cultural Heritage Management. He has been supervising BS, MS/MPhil, and PhD students at

the classroom, while in the prescribed practical he is guiding and lecturing them on the archaeological sites, tombs, temple ad museums throughout the country. Besides teaching, he is Curator of the 'Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, University of Peshawar'. He has also headed the 'Peshawar Museum' as a Curator for three years and as the 'Director of the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums', Government of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province on deputation. He participated in a number of national and international conferences, seminars, and workshops. He has delivered lectures at various institutions in Germany and Switzerland, while representing University of Peshawar at 'Gandhara Art Exhibition' held in there. He gave lectures at Singapore Management University, University of Peking, China, as a visiting scholar. He has published articles in journals of national and international repute on Gandhara art and Museum Management. Apart from general public and students, he has conducted head of states, ambassadors, monks, and high government officials from in and aboard at different museums and archaeological sites in of Pakistan.



Tour Includes:

- Airport/Hotel/Airport transfers.
- Accommodation at mentioned *Hotels* or similar.
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch and D: Dinner).
- Transportation by minibus with A/C and 4x4 vehicles on part of the tour in the mountains.
- Entrance fees to all sites, museums, forts, and National Parks including any applicable taxes on any services.
- Escort of tour lecturer throughout the trip (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).
- Service of Gov't licensed, experienced and English-speaking guides, drivers, any porters needed, any support staff, during the trip.
- Visa support letter/documents.
- Water on the bus on touring days.
- Gratuities to guide, drivers, and porters (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).

Trip Grade

III Moderately Rigorous - Some hikes, slightly more demanding walks at or to sites, and high elevations (5,000-11,000 feet). Comfortable but busy schedule and some very long rides.

Lodging Level:

★★-★★★★ Basic to Superior - Lodges and hotels with additional amenities, refined service, and comfort level acceptable to western standards (2 or 4 stars in some small cities and a few 5 stars-luxury properties in the larger cities.)

Tour does not include:

- International airfare USA - Islamabad - USA.
- Pakistan Visa (approx. \$160.00 - subject to change).
- Beverages with or without meals.
- Items of a personal nature (camera fees, laundry, emails, excess luggage, etc.).
- Transfers if not arriving/departing on scheduled flights/tour dates.
- Dayroom/overnights necessitated by changes in airline schedules.
- Trip surcharge to operate below required minimum participants.
- Gratuities to your Lecturer (optional).
- 1Travel insurance (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

