



NORTH PAKISTAN
A JOURNEY THROUGH THE HINDUKUSH,
HIMALAYAS, & KARAKORAM MOUNTIAN
RANGES

May 17 - June 02, 2025
Led by Local Guide

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. Many fascinating ancient archaeological and UNESCO World Heritage sites are 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; and = 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. You will visit Swat Valley, with its Buddhist legacy and amazing scenery, and Peshawar, one of those fabled ancient cities that has captured western imagination since immemorial. 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

Friday, May 17

Arrive in Islamabad (PAKISTAN)



Upon arrival in **Islamabad**, meet and transfer to *Roomy Hotel* for check-in and have a free day at leisure and overnight.

Note: Standard check in time is 3:00 pm. If you arrive on May 16 or in the early morning of May 17, an extra hotel night needs to be booked.

Saturday, May 18

Islamabad



Morning free at leisure, then meet at the beautiful Zamana Restaurant inside the hotel for lunch. After lunch, head for a city tour, starting with a visit to the **Heritage Museum**, also known as Lok Virsa Museum, which is managed by the National Institute of Folk & Traditional Heritage. It is a museum of history and culture of Pakistan, located on the Shakarparian Hills. You will have a glimpse of the history and the culture of Pakistan under one roof. After the visit, drive through government buildings including the **Supreme court** of Pakistan, the **Prime Minister house**, **Parliament building** and the **Presidential Palace**. Then we will arrive at **Faisal Mosque**, named after the King of Saudi Arabia, who founded the construction of the Mosque. It was designed by the Turkish designer Vedat Dalokay and reflects modern designs but also shows the Islamic principles of design with the 8-sided main halls that look like an Arab desert tent instead of constructing Traditional domes. Gather for a drink and a brief discussion then head for dinner at one of the most elegant restaurants in town, before returning to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, May 19

Islamabad - Naran (6 hrs.)



Enjoy breakfast, and then begin the drive to **Naran** via Naran Kaghan road and upon arrival transfer to *Grey Wall Nanan Lodge* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Note: If Babusar Pass is not opened, we will drive from Islamabad to Chilas via Karakoram highway (KKH). (approx. 8hrs.)

Monday, May 20

Naran - Gilgit (5 hrs.)



After breakfast, begin the day with a drive to **Gilgit** via Babusar pass and through the most beautiful Naran Kaghan road landscapes. Upon arrival, transfer to *Serena Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Note: If the Babusar Pass is not opened, we will drive from Chilas to Gilgit via Karakoram highway (KKH). (approx. 2.5hrs.)

Tuesday, May 21

Gilgit - Hunza (2 hrs.)



After breakfast, begin the day with a drive to **Hunza** with some photo stops on the way and lunch at Rakaposhi viewpoint. Start the visits with the newly restored monument related to the recent history of **Gilgit Baltistan region**, where we will be traveling for several days. Start this historic journey of several mountain Kingdoms at **Chinar Bagh**, where an old monument has been recently restored in memory of those martyrs who lost their lives, during the freedom against Dogras, the forces of Maharaja of Kashmir, an interesting episode of larger so-called Great Game between Imperial powers. Then continue to visit **Karga Budha**, a large Buddha image carved on a rock clip, in Tibetan style during the 7th century AD.

Make a short visit to **George Hyward Grave** located near Aga Khan Shahi polo ground Gilgit. On a bright July morning in 1870, the British explorer George Hayward was brutally murdered high in the Hindu Kush. Who was he, what had brought him to this wild spot and why was he killed? His remains were exhumed from the murder

scene and buried at this British cemetery. An interesting story of Great Game played between the two imperial powers Russia and British Empires.

Stroll through the **Gilgit Bazar**, which is an interesting bazar trading in all kinds of Pakistani and Chinese goods in various new and old markets. Our next stop will be at a memorial built in memory of Chinese road engineers and workers who died during the construction of Karakoram highway on the Pakistan side. Many Chinese who died during that time are also laid to rest around this monument. Every mile of this road cost one human life and it runs for hundreds of miles through this most difficult mountain terrain. Upon arrival in **Hunza**, transfer to *Serena Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, May 22

Hunza



Begin the day with a visit to **Baltit fort**, an ancient fort in the Hunza valley that was founded in the 8th century. It has been on the UNESCO World Heritage tentative list since 2004. Also visit the **local handicraft center** by Karakoram Area Development Organization. "KADO", the local **weaving**, and **vegetable dye workshop**, which is known as Hunza Carpet. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant, where we will experience the authentic food and the warmth of the people. Head to **Karimabad Bazaar** for some free time and then head to *Serena Garden* for a BBQ dinner (weather permitting) before returning to the *Hotel* for your overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, May 23

Hunza (Hopper Valley Nager)



Enjoy breakfast and then begin the day by visiting a small, centuries old **settlement**; it has old **wooden mosques** and a small **watchtower**, which has been restored by Aga Khan Trust for Culture. Head to visit **Haldekish sacred rock carving** and **pictograms**. Enjoy an excursion to **Hopper** in Nager Valley, then return to Karimabad and enjoy the sunset and mountain panorama before returning to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight **(B,L,D)**

Friday, May 24

Hunza - Gulmit



After breakfast, head for an excursion to **Khunjerab Pass** boarding with China and then continue the drive to **Passu** enjoying the landscape, having photo opportunities and enjoy the beautiful scenery that is changing so dramatically. Enjoy picnic lunch along the way and then transfer to *Silk Route Lodge* or similar for check-in, free afternoon at leisure and overnight at the *Hotel*. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, May 25

Passu - Gilgit (3hrs.)



After breakfast, begin the day with a visit to the cross **Hussaini hanging bridge**, which was built during the British rule in the village of Shishkat in Gojal. Drive to **Lake Attaabad**, also known as Gojal Lake, which was created in 2010 by a landslide. The lake has become a tourist attraction for its unique blue color and dramatic mountain scenery. Continue the drive to **Gilgit** and transfer to the *Serena Gilgit Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, May 26

Gilgit - Kachura (3.5hrs.)



After an early Breakfast, drive to **Baltistan** and stay at the beautiful *Shangrila Resort* nestled around a beautiful round shape glacial lake. Today before we enter the narrow Indus Gorge, we will be able to see a beautiful view of **Nanga Parbat**, above 8000 meters.

After Lunch, begin an excursion to upper **Kachura Lake**, which is located at a short distance from the resort. Upper Kachura Lake is of clear water and has a depth of 230 feet. The beauty of the Upper Kachura Lake is unparalleled. Upon your return, we will walk through the unspoiled beautiful **Village of Kachura**, enjoy the landscape, and get the opportunity to interact with the local people in the village. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, May 27

Kachura - Skardu - Khapulo (6.5 hrs.)



Begin the day with a drive to **Skardu**, the capital of Baltistan, with some photo stops on the way. Enjoy lunch then we will stroll through **Skardu Bazaar**, and a short visit to **K2 Museum**. Continue the drive along the Indus and follow Shyok River to **Khaplu**, a city that serves as the administrative capital of the Ghanche, as District of Gilgit. Upon arrival, transfer to *Khaplu Fort Residence* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, May 28

Khapulo (Machulo) (1 hr.)



Begin the day with a drive to **Machlu** stopping en route to visit the majestic **Mashabrum** towering over Hushe valley. It is a beautiful village with nicely carved terraced fields and an amazing old cluster village with the wooden mosques and houses in Tibetan style of architecture and prominent Buddhist influence. Return to the *Hotel* for lunch and in the afternoon head out to visit **Khapulo Fort**

Museum, and then drive back to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, May 29

Khapulo - Shigar (3 hrs.)



Begin the day with a drive to **Shigar** visiting en route the oldest **Mosque of Khaplu**, known as “Chaqchan Mosque”, which is one of the most famous and oldest mosques built by Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani in 1370 A.D. It is said that it used to be a Buddhist worship place, some 700 years ago and later converted into a mosque. After lunch, visit **Shigar Fort**, built in the 17th century by the Raja of Amacha Dynasty of Shigar and it has been restored by Aga Khan Cultural Service Pakistan (AKCSP-P), the Pakistan arm of the Aga Khan Historic Cities Program. Continue the visits to other cultural sites including **Amboriq Mosque**; a 14th century mosque represents the first Islamic religious monument in the Shigar Valley built by Iranian artisans who were traveling with the Kashmiri preacher, Syed Ali Hamdani. The Mosque, which is opulently decorated with carved motifs, has strong structural foundations using the traditional cribbage and cator’ technique. In addition, you will visit **Khilingrong Mosque**, which was constructed in the earlier years of 17th century. Transfer to the *Hotel* for check-in and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, May 30

Shigar



Begin the day with an excursion to the **Shigar Valley**, along the Baraldo River and walk in the beautiful unspoiled villages on the way. Stop at a nice **local school** to meet the Balti children. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant then head to watch a **Polo** Match where we will taste a bit of history on the polo grounds at Shigar! Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, May 31

Shigar - Islamabad



After breakfast, transfer to the airport for our 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)**

Saturday, June 01

Islamabad



Begin the drive to the historic town of **Taxila**. This city has seen many empires since the time of Alexander and the Persians before him. This was an established city, a center of learning, trade, commerce, and agriculture. As a

result, it has attracted many invaders and changed many hands since then. Today it is the center of a military industrial complex, besides being an important archeological town having dozens of ancient sites.

Visit **Dhamarajika Stupa Museum**, which was built by Mauryan Empire’s Ashoka the great and then visit **Sirkap**, a city built in 180 BCE by Indo Greeks also known as the Bactrian Greeks. Enjoy lunch, and then return to the *Hotel*, free afternoon at leisure, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, June 02

Islamabad - USA



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 be helpful 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.



Tour Cost (Land Only): \$8,495.00

Per person sharing in double occupancy

Single Supplement: \$945.00

Price based on group size minimum of 6 participants and maximum of 12 participants

Trip Grade: III Lodging Level: **.****



Tour Includes:

- Airport/Hotel/Airport transfers.
- Accommodation at mentioned *Hotels* or similar.
- All 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.
- 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).

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.
- Travel insurance (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED).

Trip Grade

III Moderately Rigorous - Some hikes, slightly more demanding walks at or to sites, and high elevations (5,000-16,000 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.).

