



PAKISTAN
THE CIVILIZATION OF THE INDUS VALLEY
VALLEY TO THE ROOF OF THE WORLD

October 20 - November 14, 2024
Led by Tour Lecturer Iain Shearer

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, We will visit mountain villages to meet the hardy souls that live in a stunningly beautiful landscape under harsh conditions. Travel the Karakoram Highway through high-mountain valleys and passes. Explore ancient archaeological sites and wander through the streets of interesting and culturally enriched cities.

Ihab Zaki
Managing Director

Sunday, October 20

Arrive in Islamabad (NORTH PAKISTAN)



Upon arrival in **Islamabad**, meet and transfer to *Roomy Hotel* or similar for check-in. After a short rest, head out on a short city tour, beginning with a visit 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. It was designed by the Turkish designer Vedat Dalokay and reflected 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. Then head for a panoramic view of Islamabad, then continue to **Pir Sohawa**, and enjoy lunch and view of Islamabad. Return to *Hotel* for a free evening, dinner & overnight. **(L,D)**

Note: Standard check-in time is 3:00 pm. If you arrive on October 19 or early morning of October 20, an extra Hotel night needs to be booked.

Monday, October 21

Islamabad



After breakfast, head for a city tour, starting with a visit the **Pakistan monument** and the **Heritage Museum**, also known as "Lok Virsa Museum", which the National Institute of Folk & Traditional Heritage manages. It is a museum of the history and culture of Pakistan, located on the Shakarparian Hills. Have a glimpse of Pakistan's history and culture under one roof. After the visit, drive through government buildings, including the **Supreme court** of Pakistan, the **Prime Minister's house**, the **Parliament building**, and the **Presidential Palace** until the arrival at *Kabul Restaurant* for Lunch. After Lunch, visit *Railway Museum* at *Golda Sharif* and return to *Hotel*. Gather for a drink in a suitable place and have a brief discussion, then head for dinner before returning to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, October 22

Islamabad - Skardu



After breakfast, transfer to the airport for our flight to Skardu and upon arrival, meet with local team, waiting

with comfortable 4x4 car take you on an exciting trip. Enjoy lunch, stroll through **Skardu Bazaar**, and then have a short visit to **the K2 museum**, visit the *Manttal Buddha*, one of the largest rock with a relief sculpture of Buddha in Baltistan, which dates back to the 8th century. This Buddha Rock is one of the most important relics of Buddhism in the region. Continue the drive to Shigar, and upon arrival, transfer to *Shigar Fort Residence* for check-in. known as *Fong-Khar*, which in the local language means the "Palace on the Rock" , built in the 17th century by the Raja of the Amacha Dynasty of Shigar and restored by Aga Khan Cultural Service Pakistan (AKCSP-P), the Pakistan arm of the Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme. Shigar Fort Residence is a unique heritage guesthouse that offers guests the opportunity to experience the restored original architecture of the 17th Century Raja Fort Palace, while enjoying the modern amenities and services of a luxury guest house. The complex at Shigar comprises of the 400-year-old Fort / Palace and two more recent buildings, the "Old House" and the "Garden House". The former Palace of the Raja of Shigar has been transformed into a 20 room heritage guesthouse, with the grand audience hall serving as a museum of Balti culture and featuring select examples of fine woodcarvings, as well as other heritage objects. Dinner and overnight at the *Fort*. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, October 23

Skardu



After breakfast, continue the visits to other cultural sites, including **Amboriq Mosque**, a 14th-century mosque representing the first Islamic religious monument in the Shigar Valley built by Iranian artisans traveling with the Kashmiri preacher, Syed Ali Hamdani. The Mosque, opulently decorated with carved motifs, has strong structural foundations using the traditional cribbage and cator' technique. Also, visit **Khilingrong Mosque**, which was constructed in the earlier 17th century. In the afternoon, continue the drive through the Shigar valley and return to the *Fort* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, October 24
Skardu - Hunza (7 hrs.)



After Breakfast, begin the drive along the Indus river to Gilgit stopping en route to visit the meeting point of the world three mountain ranges, then Continue the drive to **Gilgit**. After lunch, continue to Karimabad Hunza with several stop. Upon arrival **Karimabad Hunza**, continue to **Altit**, a small neighboring valley and transfer to the *Hotel* and after freshen up, head to visit the historic **Altit Fort**. This historic small fort perched on a rocky outcrop high above the Hunza River - the only river that cuts through the width of the mighty Karakoram. The fort's balcony overlooks a village of mud houses with flat rooftops used as extra work areas for drying fruit etc. Prince Charles and Camilla visited Altit Fort along with Prince Karim Aga Khan when it was still being restored in October of 2006. Transfer to *Serena Altit Hunza* or similar for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, October 25
Hunza



Begin the day with a visit to **Baltit fort**, an ancient fort in the Hunza valley founded in the 8th CE. It has been on the UNESCO World Heritage tentative list since 2004. Also visit the **local handicraft center** by a local Organization, KADO Karakoram Area Development Organization. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant, where you will experience the traditional cuisine, authentic food, and the warmth of the people. Then head to **Karimabad Bazaar** for some free time and then return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, October 26
Hunza - Passu (7.5 hrs.)



After breakfast, begin the day with an excursion to **Khunjerab Pass**, boarding with China, then continue the drive to **Passu**, enjoying the landscape, the beautiful scenery that is changing so dramatically, and having opportunities to enjoy wildlife and take some photos. Enjoy a picnic lunch along the way and upon arrival in Passu, transfer to the *Hotel* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, October 27
Passu - Gilgit (2.5 hrs.)



Enjoy breakfast, then begin the drive back to **Gilgit** Stopping en route for few photo. Stop at Hussani suspension bridge, as from this point one can see a spectacular view of Passu Cons & Hunza river. Have a short boat ride on the attabad lake. Our last stop before Gilgit will be at Chinese Graveyard. Upon arrival, head to

visit **Karga Budha**, a large Buddha image carved on a rock clip in Tibetan style during the 7th century. Make a short visit to **George Hyward Grave**, located near Aga Khan Shahi polo ground in 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 the Great Game played between the two imperial powers, Russia, and British Empires.

Stroll through **Gilgit Bazaar**, an interesting bazaar that trades in all kinds, including 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 the Karakoram highway on the Pakistani side. Many Chinese who died during that time are also laid to rest around this monument. Upon arrival in **Gilgit**, transfer to the *Serena Gilgit Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, October 28
Gilgit - Malamjaba (10 hrs.)



After breakfast, begin the long but fascinating journey again, following Indus until we reach **Besham**. Continue to the most beautiful part of Swat Valley, the **Summer Capital of Wali** of Swat Malam Jabba. Enjoy the evening at the most beautiful scene at PC Resort of Malamjaba overlooking the lush green pine forest and unspoiled nature, then transfer to *Pearl Continental Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, October 29
Malamjaba - Swat Valley



After breakfast, begin the day with a drive to the **Jehanabad Buddha** for a visit. It is a seated Buddha carved into a high rock face of reddish color rises on the hillside to the southwest of Jehanabad (Shakhorai) village. Continue the drive to **swat city** and upon arrival, transfer to the *Hotel* for check-in, then head to take a **chairlift** to the top of Malamjaba and see the stunning view of the city then return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, October 30
Swat Valley



Begin the day with a visit to the **Swat Museum**, which was constructed by the Wali of Swat State in 1958 in collaboration with the Italian mission but later, it was refurbished in 2011 & 2014. Head to **Saidu Stupa**, a sacred

area of Buddhists located near the city of Saidu Sharif at the foot of the mountains that separate the river valley Saidu from the river Jambil for a visit. Continue the drive to **Budhkara**, recognized as the monastery of Ta-Lo, mentioned by Sung Yun (520 AD), visited and described by the Chinese Buddhist pilgrims of the 5th, 6th, and 7th centuries AC. In the afternoon, head to visit the **Mingora Bazaar**, famous for its crafts and shawls. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, October 31

Swat Valley - Peshawar (4 hrs.)



After breakfast, begin the drive to Peshawar, the center of Gangharan civilization via **Mardan**, where we will visit the ancient **Takht-i-Bahi**, "Throne of the Water Spring," the archaeological site of an ancient, well-preserved Buddhist Monastery. This spectacular UNESCO World Heritage Site was founded during the 1st century A.D. Not far from Mardan is the historic village of Shahbaz Garhi. At an altitude of 964 feet, this village is surrounded by mountains and has a river that runs through the village. Continue the drive to **Peshawar**, and upon arrival, transfer to *Peshawar Serena Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, November 01

Peshawar



Begin a full-day tour of the city 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 & very interesting Tikka restaurants, the **Khayber Bazaar**, 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. Enjoy dinner at a traditional hotel in the city, then return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, November 02

Peshawar - Islamabad (3.5 hrs.)



Begin the day with a morning drive from Peshawar, along the **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 stopping. Visit **Taxila**, one of the subcontinent's most important archaeological treasures and the **Taxila National Museum**, where you will 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. In the afternoon we will visit the famous Raja bazar in Rawalpindi. Upon arrival in Islamabad, transfer to *Roomy Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner, & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, November 03

Islamabad - Lahore (5.5 hrs.)



Begin the drive to Lahore, stopping en route to visit **Hindu Tempal Katas Raj**. In the village of Kitas there are extensive Satghara Hindu temples, centered around a large pool and spring. According to legend, the pool was formed of tears from Siva's eye as he wept over the death of his wife Parvati. Tear from his second eye fell near Amjer in Rajasthan forming a second pool. The oldest temple on the hill overlooking the complex has a narrow staircase inside which leads up onto the top of the roof overlooking the site and a very good view of the surrounding hills. After the visit transfer to *Flatties Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, November 04

Lahore



After breakfast, begin the day with a visit to **Wazir Khan Mosque**, the **Shahi Hammam** (Royal Bath), and the 17th-century **Badshahi Mosque**. This marble structure is an example of some of the most aesthetically pleasing architecture of the Moghul period. Continue to **Lahore Fort**, locally known as "Shahi Qilla." Built-in 1631 by Shah Jahan as a private apartment for his empress, it has several

pavilions, including Shish Mahal, the Palace of Mirrors. Visit the **Samadhi of Ranjit Singh**, a 19th-century building housing the funerary urn of this ruler, and the **Gurdwara Dera Sahib temple**, which marks the spot where Guru Arjun Dev, the 5th-century guru of Sikhism, died. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, November 05

Lahore



Begin the day with a visit to the **Lahore Museum**, Pakistan's largest museum. Established in 1894 and contains fine examples of Mughal and Sikh doorways and woodwork and has an extensive collection of paintings dating back to the Mughal, Sikh, and British periods. There are also collections of musical instruments, ancient jewelry, textiles, pottery, and armor.

After lunch, head to the **Shalimar Gardens** before heading to the **flag-lowering ceremony** at the Wagah border with India, known as the Beating Retreat Border Ceremony; it is famous worldwide and the subject of many "YouTube" videos. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, November 06

Lahore - Multan (5.5 hrs.)



After an early breakfast, drive to **Multan**, stopping en route at **Harappa**, founded over 5,000 years ago. It is one of the world's earliest cities. Visit the **archaeological site** and the **museum**. **Upon arrival in Multan**, transfer to *Hotel One* or similar for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, November 07

Multan - Bahawalpur (2.5 hrs.)



Begin the morning with a drive to **Bahawalpur**, stopping en route at a **factory** that produces the famous blue pottery of Multan. Visit the **tombs of Sheik Baha-ud-din Zakariya** and **Shah Rukn-e-Alam**. Rukn-e-Alam was an eminent Sufi saint from Multan and the grandson and successor of Baha-ud-din Zakariya. He was buried in his grandfather's mausoleum but later transferred to the present mausoleum, which dates from the 14th century. His tomb is a pilgrimage site, drawing over 100,000 pilgrims a year. Visit **Hussain Agahi Bazar**, a huge market full of local colors, before your transfer to *Hotel One* or similar for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, November 08

Bahawalpur



Begin a full-day tour of **Bahawalpur** with a visit to the **Cholistan Desert**, locally known as "Rohi," the **Deraward Fort**, a large square fortress in Yazman Tehsil. Visit the town of **Uch Sharif**, believed to have been founded by Alexander the Great during his invasion of the Indus Valley and renowned for the extensive tile work of its shrines dedicated to Muslim mystics. If time permits, we may visit the famous **library** of the **Abbasi family**. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, November 09

Bahawalpur - Sukkur (6.5 hrs.)



After breakfast, begin the drive to Sukkur through motorway M5. Head to the **Hindu shrine** near the town of Sukkur for a visit. The Sadh Belo shrine gets its name from "Sadh Belo" or a "Hermitage of a Monk," the **Lodhy Barrage** was built on the Indus River during the British Raj in the early 20th century. It is the largest single irrigation network of its kind in the world, providing water to Sindh Province. The name Barrage borrowed from the French word "barrier," meaning "To bar." Also, visit the famous **Hindu pilgrimage center** of Sadh Belo. This beautiful temple, considered sacred for Hindu pilgrims, sits on an island on the Indus River. Upon arrival, transfer to *Hotel One* or similar for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, November 10

Sukkur - Ladkana (2.5 hrs.)



Begin the day with a drive to the **Kot Deji** archaeological site and visit the famous **fort** of the state of Khairpur. This site stands on one of the rare outcroppings of limestone part of the Rohri Hills to the north. The site dates from 3500 to 2500 BC and has two distinct parts. Excavation of the upper level revealed pottery of the Harappan civilization, while the lower levels exposed evidence of an unknown pre-Harappan culture, designated as Kot Deji. Later explore the famous archaeological site of Mohenjo-Daro, one of the most important archaeological sites in South Asia and one of the best preserved and restored prehistoric sites in the world. Built in 2500BC, it was one of the largest settlements of the ancient Indus Valley and contemporaneous with ancient Egypt and Minoan Crete. The site was first excavated by the Indian Archaeological Survey team under Sir John Marshall in 1922 and 1931, and then by Sir Mortimer Wheeler in 1947. Now in the hands of the Pakistan Archaeological Survey team and supported by UNESCO, the site is excellently presented. Tour the **great bath**, the **granary**, the **College square** and **Pillared Hall**, **private homes**, and the

Mohenjo-Daro Museum. Transfer to *Sambara Inn* or similar for check-in , dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, November 11

Ladkana - Hyderabad (5.5 hrs.)



After breakfast, begin the drive to Larkana and when we arrive, head to visit the impressive **Shrine of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar**, as the 13th century Sufi saint and religious poet Syed Usman Marvandi was known. His writings are still celebrated in present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan. After the visit, transfer to *Indus Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, November 12

Hyderabad - Karachi (5.5 hrs.)



After breakfast, begin the drive to **Karachi**, stopping en route at **Thatta**, the medieval capital of Sindh. Visit the 17th-century **Grand Mosque of Shah Jahan**, a gift he made in recognition of the hospitality he received in Thatta while seeking refuge from his father, Jahangir. The mosque is a contemporary of Shah Jahan's famous Taj Mahal in Agra, India. Visit the **Historical Monuments** at Makli, one of Pakistan's most visually stunning archaeological sites. Covering over 9.3 miles and said to contain over one million tombs, it is considered the world's largest necropolis. Tour the **tombs of Jam Nizammudin, Isa Khan Tarkhan, Jan Baba, and Diwan Shurfa Khan**. Finally, visit the **Chokondhi** to view the tombs that are thought to be from the 13th - 16th century and are attributed to the Jokhio and Baluch tribes. These superbly carved sandstone tombs are built out of rectangular slabs placed one on top of the other in a pyramidal fashion, some reaching 13 feet in height. They stretch for several miles along a low ridge with two large domed mausoleums in the center. This style of tomb is found only in the Sindh and Baluchistan provinces, particularly along the coast of Makran, and their intricate designs are still applied to the textiles, pottery, jewelry, and woodcarving in those regions. Transfer to *Pearl Continental Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, November 13

Karachi



After breakfast, begin the tour of **Karachi** with a visit to the **Mausoleum of Muhammad Ali Jinnah**, the founder of Pakistan. Then continue to the **National Museum of Pakistan** with its numerous galleries. The museum features many artifacts, including objects from the pre and ancient history of the region (5000 to 1500 BC). After lunch, visit the **Saddar Bazaar** (Empress Market) & Zainab

Market. Later visit the **Mohatta Palace Museum** near Clifton Beach, where unique collections of art and textiles are on display. The Mohatta Palace was built in 1927 by Shivratan Chandraratan Mohatta, a Hindu Marwari merchant from modern-day Rajasthan in India. Return to the Hotel for dinner & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, November 14

Karachi - USA

Or continue to Afghanistan



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:

Moderately Rigorous Touring: 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. Elevations vary from 5,000 to 10,000 feet, and the Khunjerab Pass is 16,000 feet high. The hotels and lodges are comfortable, but some need more luxuries provided in the West. Security checkpoints can be annoying, but travelers must be flexible and patient. Many roads need to be in a better state of repair; journeys can be long and tiring. Appreciate the flexibility and accepting any necessary changes. By signing up for this tour, you acknowledge your complete understanding and acceptance of all terms & 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): \$11,495.00

Per person sharing in double occupancy

Single Supplement: \$1,295.00

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

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

Britain and Ireland in 2008. Iain has led lecture tours across the Maghreb, the Arab Middle East, Iran, and Central Asia, and was the author for Lonely Planet guides to Saudi Arabia and Hajj (2009) and to Western and Northeastern Iran (2012).

Your Tour Lecturer, Iain Shearer... He has worked as an archaeologist in the UK, Afghanistan, Caucasus, North Africa, the Balkans, Central Asia, China, Pakistan, India, and the Arab Middle East over the last 25 years. Educated and trained at the Institute of Archaeology University College London, he is the former Sackler Scholar for Afghanistan and Iran at The British Museum and made a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great



Tour Includes:

- Airport/hotel/airport transfers.
- Accommodation in Hotels mentioned or similar.
- All meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch and D: Dinner).
- Travel by modern & air-conditioned motor coach.
- Sightseeing in each city as per the itinerary.
- Escort of 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.
- Entry fees to Museums, forts and National Park Areas or any taxes, and any other applicable taxes on any service.
- Visa support letter and approval.
- 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/Karachi & Islamabad/USA.
- Pakistan Visa (approx. \$160.00 - subject to change).
- Beverages with or without meals.
- Any required pre arrival & pre departure PCR tests.
- 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 protection insurance. (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

Trip Grade

III Challenging: Parts of the trip are physically challenging, involve some hiking on unpaved terrain or in sand. There may be long drives on rough roads; weather conditions with high heat (in the 90's). You may have simple picnic lunches, primitive bathroom facilities along the road and remoteness from modern towns or cities.

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.)

