



Snow Lake Hispar La Trek



Hello team!

Welcome to the Epic team for the Snow Lake Hispar La Trek in Pakistan. This is a multi-day expedition-style trek of the highest caliber and a truly unique adventure experience.

We will be heading deep inside the legendary Central Karakoram National Park—a land steeped in mystery, mountaineering legend, towering granite peaks, and endless glaciers to witness firsthand the amazing natural landscapes found beneath some of the world's tallest mountains.

We are beyond stoked to welcome you to Pakistan!

This information pack is LOADED with everything you need to start preparing yourself for the journey ahead.

Please read this entire document thoroughly as there are many important details to take note of.

This information pack will be your primary trip resource and one you can keep circling back to in preparation for the Snow Lake Hispar La Trek during the months ahead.

Table of contents.

- 3** **VISA ARRANGEMENTS**
General information
- 5** **FLIGHTS**
When do I need to get there
- 7** **ACCOMMODATION**
What kind of accommodation to expect
- 7** **FOOD**
Daily Meals Examples and Snacks
- 8** **EXPEDITION SAFETY**
and Travel Insurance
- 10** **MONEY**
How much to bring and Tipping FAQ
- 10** **INTERNET ACCESS**
WiFi and SIM Cards
- 11** **MEETING THE PEOPLE**
Being Culturally Sensitive
- 14** **WEATHER CONDITIONS**
In Cities and During the Trek
- 15** **WHAT TO PACK**
Packing list and Porter allowance
- 16** **FINAL NOTES**
Early client departure protocol, Liability Waiver and Paying the Balance

Getting ready to experience Pakistan

A few months prior to the trip, we will be sending you a number of Google forms and documents to return in order to collect the necessary information from you.

Please do your best to fill in and return these in a timely manner.

Visa arrangements - general information

- All team members coming on the Snow Lake Trek trip MUST apply for a [Pakistani Trekking and Mountaineering Visa](#) (maximum 4 months in advance, preferably no later than 2 months before the trip). The trekking visa is different from the standard tourist visa, thus you will NOT be applying for a tourist visa.
- We will provide you with the documentation you need to apply for the visa.
- Visa fees are NOT included in the tour price and it is your responsibility to obtain the correct visa in a timely manner from Pakistan Immigration/NADRA.
- Most nationalities can apply for a visa under the new E-visa scheme. Guests can use [this link](#) to apply for their Pakistani E-visa.
- Epic will issue every guest a Letter of Invitation (LOI) to Pakistan and other supporting documents (Pakistani guide licenses, accommodation reservation documents, NIC numbers (Pakistani tax id #), etc needed to apply for the visa.
- The E-visa process is much quicker than applying directly at a Pakistani consulate/embassy. However, you can still apply at an embassy if need be.
- Once all of the proper paperwork is submitted online, the Evisa is typically granted within 3-4 weeks. It is possible that the Pakistani authorities may ask you for additional documents to submit (like bank records, proof of employment, etc).
- Whilst we can provide you with advice, support, and the necessary documents, we have no influence whatsoever over the outcome of your visa application. However, so far all of our clients have had their visas approved with no problems.
- If you have not already submitted a copy of your passport to Epic, please do so ASAP

Visa Length

- Visas are typically issued for 30, 60, or 90 days and are almost always single-entry visas.
- Generally you will have 6 months from the date the visa is issued to "start" the visa, ie, enter Pakistan.
- Make it clear on the online application when you intend to enter Pakistan so that your visa will be valid long enough from the date of issue for you to be able to enter Pakistan.
- You must enter Pakistan before the visa validity expires.
- Double-check the expiry date of your own passport! Make sure it is valid for at least the next year.

Spending Extra Time in Pakistan

If you want to spend extra time in Pakistan before or at the end of the trip - this is no problem!

Some areas of Pakistan are off-limits to tourists (like Kashmir and sensitive military zones) and you will not be allowed to enter them without a special permit (NOC) which Epic guests would need to arrange on their own.

- Guests can easily enter Pakistan and travel independently in the days before the start/finish of the tour.
- Guests do NOT have to enter or leave Pakistan on the exact days shown on the Epic itinerary/LOI. Guests will have to leave Pakistan prior to visa expiry.
- Most nationalities visiting Pakistan on a tourist visa/ trekking/ mountaineering visa are allowed to overstay their visa for up to two weeks for free, no questions asked. Epic staff has verified that this procedure is true. Staying beyond two weeks will levy a fee, but is still allowed. If you plan on overstaying the visa dates beyond two weeks, we recommend that you get a [visa extension](#) in Lahore or Islamabad.

VISA Timeline and Process

- Submit a copy of your passport to Epic.
- Pay your final trip balance
- Epic will issue supporting documents
- Apply for your Visa 3 months or less before the start of the trip
- Buy plane tickets (some consulates may require you to provide proof of travel along with the visa application).
- Visa Obtained
- Buy travel insurance
- Get excited for the Karakoram range!

LOI & Supporting Documents

- As mentioned, Epic will be providing you with a Letter of Invitation (LOI), supporting documents, itinerary, hotel reservation documents, and other bits of documentation.
- You will be required to submit these documents when applying for your visa.
- Because we are trekking in a restricted area, all participants will be applying for the **TREKKING AND MOUNTAINEERING VISA** - not the standard tourist visa.
- Do submit all the documents we send to you with your application.

- DO NOT TRY TO APPLY FOR THE VISA ON YOUR OWN WITHOUT FIRST OBTAINING THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION FOR US.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you are asked to do an in-person interview for your visa, please consult us before going to your interview as we have had experience with this in the past and we know how to best prepare you to achieve the ideal result: your visa being granted. However, since the E-visa system was introduced, we haven't had a guest get called in for an interview.

Travel history

You may be required to provide a travel history as part of your visa application.

- In the case of Epic staff, the visa form was woefully inadequate to list all of the countries we have visited so we typed it up on an additional sheet of A4 which seemed to be appreciated.
- This is very onerous but it is worth taking the time to do correctly. Please note that **if you have ever visited Israel or India we advise that you do NOT declare this** unless you have an Israeli stamp or visa in your passport in which you should declare it.
- Epic does not know whether this will actually influence the outcome of the application but the two countries do not have formal, diplomatic relations of any kind.
- Here is an example of a travel history document:

COUNTRY	DATE	PURPOSE	LENGTH OF STAY
New Zealand	2/1/2016-8/3/2017	Working Holiday, Tourism	15 months
Australia	5/12/2016-10/12/2016	Tourism	5 days
Malaysia	9/3/2017 - 30/3/2017	Tourism	3 weeks
Nepal	31/3/2017 - 12/5/2017	Tourism, trekking	6 weeks
France	13/5/2017 - 25/7/2017	Family	2 months +
UK (England, Wales, Scotland)	25/7/2017-25/9/2017	Tourism, trekking	2 months
USA	27/9/2017- 29/11/2017	Family	2 months
France	27/11/2017 - Current	Work, Live, Family	Ongoing

Flights to Pakistan

Arrival Airport: Islamabad (ISB)

Departure Airport: Islamabad (ISB)

You will need to book your round trip flights into/out of *Islamabad* International Airport. Islamabad (the capital of Pakistan) is a major city in Pakistan and as such is very well connected. We advise that you arrive in Pakistan a day or two before the tour starts. This is so that clients can shake off any jet lag they may be experiencing, and also to give all clients more of a time window in case of schedule changes or flight delays.

Note : Included tour accommodation does not start until the evening of day 1. If you arrive in Pakistan in the days before the tour starts, you will need to arrange and pay for your own accommodation. We can help make suggestions for you if you'd like or we can book you into the same hotel as our guides.

Suggestion: Whilst we do factor in delays as part of our itinerary, sometimes in Pakistan the delays can extend longer than anticipated. For booking your return flight home, it is a good idea to give yourself an extra day or two beyond the end date of the tour in the event our travel back to Islamabad is severely delayed due to weather or road closures. That way you will not stress out about potentially missing your flight home in case of delays beyond our control. Please note that all Epic services will end on the last day of the tour.

Connections and Flights

- If you are coming from Australia, New Zealand or South East Asia, some good flight connections are available from Kuala Lumpur (KLIA) and there are currently affordable flights from Bangkok via KL to Islamabad.
- If you are traveling from elsewhere, connecting via Dubai, Oman, Abu Dhabi or Istanbul are good options to investigate.
- We recommend checking Skyscanner, Secret Flying and Kiwi for flights.
- These airline connections may be helpful to some, keep in mind these are just suggestions, there are many other airlines, some flying direct, to choose from :

Istanbul to Islamabad	Turkish Airlines
London to Islamabad	Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), Turkish Airlines
Sydney to Islamabad	Etihad Airlines, Emirates
Kuala Lumpur to Islamabad	Thai Airways, Emirates
Dubai to Islamabad	Emirates
Doha to Islamabad	Qatar Airlines
Abu Dhabi	Etihad Airlines

When do you need to arrive?

- To experience the full itinerary, you need to be in the hotel/meeting place and be rested by the morning of day 1. We will confirm the exact time and meeting place just prior to the start of the tour.
- We advise that you arrive in Pakistan one day before the tour starts. That way you can get a good night's rest before we depart for the start of the tour the next day.
- The tour ends on day 21 and with the exception of breakfast and arranging airport transfers, no services are included this day, so it makes sense to try and leave by the evening. Checkout from the hotel is midday on day 21.

Accommodation on the Snow Lake Trek

- Prices are based on the sharing of rooms/tents and single (same-sex) members of the group will typically be put together. We will be using nice guesthouses/hotels that offer very comfortable, but simple, facilities.
- Sometimes rooms might be without air-conditioning (although the rooms in Islamabad will definitely have AC). In Skardu, the more basic rooms have fans, but no AC.
- Once we arrive in Askole to start the trek, our accommodation will be in tents until we return back to Skardu. The tents are high quality, waterproof, and comfortable.
- If you wish to bring and carry your own tent, make sure it is sturdy enough for rocky glacier terrain, potentially high winds, and snowfall. Inform us if you'd like to bring your own tent.
- If you would like your own hotel room in Skardu and Islamabad only, the extra cost is \$200.

Note: Any item(s) that you do not want to bring on the trek can be safely stored with our team in Skardu before leaving for the trek.

Single Room Supplement Costs: If you would like to reserve a single hotel room and a private tent for the trek, the cost is \$600.

Food on the Snow Lake Trek

- Food in Pakistan can be fairly repetitive – there's a lot of daal (lentils), chicken, goat, chapati, roti, potatoes, veggies, noodles, and rice. We will try to mix this up where possible (especially in the cities) by taking you to some great restaurants.
- Food whilst camping will be the best possible quality, but please have realistic expectations of what our camp cooks can deliver. There won't be any lasagne and red wine (unless you bring the wine), but the food will be healthy and tasty.

DAILY MEALS

- Breakfast: Typically includes an omelet/fried eggs, fried Pakistani bread (paratha), jam, nutella, butter, and chai/coffee. Sometimes we have a delicious hot porridge as well. Want to win the heart of your guide? Bring a pound of your favorite coffee from your country to share with the group.
- Lunch: Will include a mix of local bread, tinned fish, biscuits, crackers, cheese, and chai. There will almost always be a noodle soup course (lunch and dinner).
- Dinner: Is always the main event of the day and will be a mix of vegetables, rice, noodle dishes, daal, meat (mutton or chicken), chapati, and other tasty dishes served up by our experienced cook.

WE REQUEST THAT EVERY CLIENT BRING AT LEAST 1 POUND (500 GRAMS) OF COFFEE FROM THEIR HOME COUNTRY.

Note: In general, the food in Pakistan is SPICY (especially in Punjab). Again, we always try to accommodate dietary needs, but keep in mind that options can be limited at times if you can't tolerate spicy food. There will ALWAYS be some decent vegetarian and non-spicy items, but you also need to have realistic expectations regarding Pakistani cuisine, which can be meat-heavy, and SPICY.

Let us know early on if you have any diet restrictions/preferences. If you are vegetarian/vegan, you might want to consider bringing some of your own food (for snacks/breakfast stuff), as it can be very difficult to cater to individuals in a big group, though we always do our best.

The Snow Lake Trek requires a lot of energy output each day and a big part of our job is keeping everybody well nourished, happy, and energized.

Personal Snacks on the Snow Lake Trek

- If you have done some hiking before (all of you should have experience), then you know how important snacks are! Whilst Epic Expeditions does provide some snacks, it is always a great idea to bring some of your favorite trekking snacks from your home country.
- The availability of quality snack food in Skardu is very limited. Bring your favorite assortment of snacks and chow down during trail breaks. Nuts, jerky, energy gels, Cliff bars, dark chocolate, superfood powder, bliss balls... These are all solid snack foods.
- Choose high calorie, low weight snack foods.
- In Skardu, you can find things like cookies/biscuits, crackers, milk chocolate (will melt in your bag), chips, dried fruits/nuts, but zero western style trekking food.

Staying Safe on This Tour

- You may have guessed, but this adventure tour carries a certain amount of risk since we are trekking DEEP into the mountains in a developing country. This is not your average holiday per se. There will be no cocktails on the beach, sorry about that :)
- Guest Safety is Epic Expeditions' #1 priority and our experienced ground team does everything within their power to set our group up for a safe adventure.
- The name of the game is safety first and injury prevention.
- In case of emergency, your Epic Expeditions trip leader is equipped with a satellite communication device AND a satellite phone. Both of these have communication capabilities to contact outside emergency first responders from any place in Pakistan.
- Guests are able to use the satellite phone for personal calls on occasion at the rate of \$10/minute (paid in cash on the ground).

Travel Insurance for Pakistan

- **It is Mandatory for every trip participant to take out a travel membership with Global Rescue** or to have an equivalent like Garmin SAR. This is because they are one of the few companies that organize helicopter evacuations in Pakistan in the case of an emergency. Note that this is NOT full medical travel insurance. Global Rescue also offers full medical travel insurance, but the important policy to take out is a Global Rescue Membership. They also offer great travel insurance.
- If you don't want to go with Global Rescue for medical travel insurance, that's fine - but again, all members MUST have the Global Rescue Membership that covers helicopter evacuations. See other recommendations here.

- You will need to prove you have insurance by providing a photocopy of your policy. You also need to sign a waiver (mentioned previously) releasing the guides, Epic Expeditions and our partners in Pakistan of any liability.
- There are lots of insurance companies on the market but many will not cover trips to Pakistan - we recommend that you use [World Nomads](#) and their explorer plan- they specialize in covering travel to unusual destinations. It is important to note exclusions for things like injuries at certain altitudes.

Medical Consideration

Vaccination (pre covid times we are talking about) can be a contentious issue and ultimately down to the decision of an individual. There are some vaccinations that are recommended for travel to Pakistan so please consult with a travel clinic for further advice. For reference, most of our clients do not get any extra vaccinations prior to coming to Pakistan.

There is very little dengue or malaria risk in Northern Pakistan and you should not need to take antimalarials for this trip. We will be in the low to no risk area throughout the entire expedition.

General Information on health considerations while traveling in Pakistan.

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/pakistan>

If you are ARRIVING into Pakistan from a Yellow Fever area, immigration stipulates you hold a Yellow Fever Certificate proving you have received the vaccination.

Altitude Sickness: AMS/HAPE/HACE

Altitude sickness symptoms can be a problem for some people, when sleeping above 3500 meters. Staying hydrated, well fed, warm, and not over exerting yourself on the hikes will go a long way to keeping yourself feeling good. There is the option to take altitude sickness medication. Diamox is the most commonly used [AMS](#) (acute mountain sickness) drug on the market. Diamox works as a preventative measure though, so if you do plan to take it, you will need to start your pill regimen a few days before we set off on our hike. Talk to your doctor about the side effects of using Diamox.

More severe symptoms generally occur at over 12,000 ft (3,600 m). Acute mountain sickness can progress to high altitude [pulmonary edema](#) (HAPE) or high altitude cerebral [edema](#) (HACE). Both of these conditions are quite rare at the altitudes where we will be going. All the same, it is best to have had some experience previously with being at altitude for an extended period so you know how your body handles altitude. For our purposes though, most people will just find it a little harder to breathe and that is it. It is very rare to experience severe systems at the altitudes we cover during this exped.

The two main serious altitude sickness complications are high altitude edemas of the lungs and brain. High altitude cerebral edema (HACE): A lack of oxygen causes fluid to leak through tiny blood vessels into the brain, which leads to swelling. Usually, HACE occurs when a person stays at high altitude (7000+ meters) for at least one week.

If you feel you are struggling significantly with the altitude at any point, it is vital you let your guide know.

Again, both of these conditions are extremely rare and are much more common for mountaineers sleeping at altitudes above 7,000 and 8,000 meters for extended periods, so please don't worry yourself too much.

- The highest point on the Snow Lake Trek is Hispar La Pass @5,128 meters.
- The highest sleeping altitude is around 4700 meters.

Money In Pakistan

- ATMs are common in Islamabad but less common (or non-existent) once we head to Skardu. We have experienced issues finding working ATMs once we leave the cities and we recommend that you change/withdraw your money before we head up into the mountains.
- We also recommend that instead of relying on your ATM card, bring foreign cash and change it in the city (if the money changer is open at the airport). USD, Euro, and British Pounds are all fine. Make sure to bring notes that are free from any defects. The money changers like PERFECT banknotes.
- If you use an ATM, keep in mind that this may be your only opportunity to withdraw cash until we return to Islamabad in several weeks' time.
- Pakistan is a cash-based economy and you will not be able to use your debit/credit card to purchase things.

As to how much money you should bring, here are some costs for you to take into account...

- Souvenirs vary in price from a couple of dollars up to \$100, depending on what you are buying and how good you are at haggling.
- Soft drinks and water are about fifty cents to \$1.
- A meal will set you back between \$3 - \$8.

Money Recommendation: If you take out the rupee equivalent of \$200-250 USD for personal expenses, you should have more than enough to pay for your extra nights' hotel accommodation, buy meals during free time, buy extra drinks, etc.

See the note on tipping in the next section of this document. It is always better to have MORE cash than you think you need, just in case. You can always change the Pakistani rupees back to your preferred currency at the end of the trip if need be.

When we return to Islamabad at the end of the tour, you will have a chance to get out more cash should you need it (for shopping, tipping staff, last-minute purchases, etc).

Tipping In Pakistan

Epic Expeditions staff including our ground team in Pakistan go above and beyond for guests before, during, and after the trip to make sure that everyone has the best possible trekking experience imaginable. So how do you show your guides some love? Well, besides bringing coffee, tipping is the next best option.

Note: There is a strong tipping culture in Pakistan and our clients are expected to tip our staff and the local porters and cooks we use as a matter of industry and cultural standard.

Below we have included the industry standard recommendation to offer our staff some additional compensation based on your overall experience and keeping in mind the length of the trip and how hard we work to ensure you have an incredible time in Pakistan. Show your staff some love!

A generous tipping budget to cover all your bases is around \$450 USD for the entire trip. Again, please keep in mind that this trip is 21 days and our staff go above and beyond to keep you safe, happy, and having the experience of your life.

TIPPING RECOMMENDATIONS

- Lead Epic Guide (1): \$150 - 200 per guest. (paid in dollars/euros/local currency)
- Assistant Local Guide (1): \$100 per guest (paid in rupees)
- Lead Cook: \$50 per guest (paid in rupees)
- Porters: \$100 per guest (this will go into a group pool, you are not tipping per porter) - (paid in rupees)
- All staff can be tipped PKR or USD (local currency is preferred)

Note: At the start of the trip, each team member is expected to contribute \$250 USD to the team tip pool that will go directly to porters, cooks, assistant guides, drivers, etc. Your lead guide can be tipped at the end of the trip.

SIM Cards and Internet Access in Pakistan

- Foreigners can obtain SIM cards in Pakistan but the procedure is slightly complicated.
- There are several major networks in Pakistan: Zong, Telenor, and SCOM. SCOM works the best in Gilgit-Baltistan (and does not work well at all in Punjab).
- Once we start the trek though, there will be zero cell/wifi reception. In our opinion, it's not worth getting a SIM card as our hotels in Islamabad and Skardu should have wifi. The wifi in Skardu however comes and goes sporadically as when it is around, it is slower than molasses.
- SIM cards cost about 2000 rupees with a data plan.
- All foreigners need to obtain SIM cards from the various companies' main offices.
- You will need your passport, visa, and to give your fingerprints in order to get a SIM.
- Keep in mind that this trip is a chance for our guests to unplug and fully embrace a proper digital detox.
- The internet situation in Pakistan is spotty at best, so please have realistic expectations regarding wifi and internet speeds/access.

Meeting the People - Being Culturally Sensitive

- Pakistan is an Islamic country but it is not a theocracy. This means that state and religion are institutionally separated and Pakistani law is based on British common law, rather than Sharia (Islamic) Law.

- While socially conservative, most of the population consider themselves to be moderate and secular Muslims tolerant of other religions. Hijabs are not obligatory, burkas are very rare (at least in the areas of the country we are visiting).
- For the majority of this trip, our group will be interacting with the people in Baltistan, many of whom are accustomed to seeing foreigners occasionally do to the long legacy of foreign expeditions and mountaineering in the area.
- In general, it is best not to discuss politics or religion with locals, at least not as a topic of conversation when you first meet them. If appropriate and if you have gotten to know an individual on a deeper level, it is fine to discuss those topics.
- Use common social sense and please try not to push your personal political/religious agendas onto other guests or local people.
- Please don't bring up the topics of Israel, Osama Bin Laden, or the Taliban with local people, unless you have gotten to know them well.
- Local people will be genuinely curious about your life, what you do for work, your family (if you are male they will almost certainly ask if you're married and how many kids you have), and about life in the West. Taking the time to connect with locals and share life experiences will only add to the overall experience of your journey along the Snow Lake Trek.

Gender Roles in Pakistan

- Guests will note that there is limited mixing of the sexes in Pakistan. Men tend to hang out with other men and women with women. You will also note that when locals approach foreigners, they tend to separate themselves on gender grounds; Pakistani men want pictures with the guys (and foreign women) in our groups and the women with the girls in the group!
- Although Pakistan is very safe and whilst women do sometimes encounter issues here while traveling independently, it is not nearly as challenging a place to travel as a woman as, say, India or Morocco.
- On the Snow Lake Trek, however, the local guides and porters are used to being around foreign men and women. We all eat meals together as a group and women have the same standing and respect from the porters and guides as the men.
- Some local porters (who may or may not speak any English) may not make conversation and or eye contact with foreign females. This is nothing against all of you ladies, it is more of a cultural thing common across Pakistan.

Balti Culture

- Pakistan has only existed as a nation for 70+ years and remains deeply tribal. As such the cultures, attitudes and even appearances of the population vary from one region to the next. For example, in Baltistan, the people there tend to be pretty conservative, yet within the younger (male) generation western dress and a little bit of English language skills are common.
- Each region in Pakistan also has its own language although the official languages throughout the country are Urdu and English.
- In Baltistan, local people speak Balti; a Tibetic language. In addition to being spoken in Baltistan, Balti is also used in the Nubra Valley of Leh district and in the Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir, India.

- Balti is quite different from Standard Tibetan. Many sounds of Old Tibetan that were lost in Standard Tibetan are retained in the Balti language. It also has a simple pitch accent system only in multisyllabic words, while Standard Tibetan has a complex and distinct pitch system that includes tone contour.
- Pakistanis are for the most part extremely friendly, helpful and respectful folks. Most are delighted to see foreigners enjoying their country and many will want to speak with you and take photographs - many many selfies... with your permission of course! This selfie phenomenon doesn't really apply to our time trekking in the mountains.

About the Guides

This tour group is accompanied by Epic guides who have vast experience operating in this region. For more information about our guides, visit our [meet the team](#) page on our website.

What To Pack for the Snow Lake Trek

This "What to Pack" chapter is one of the most important sections of this entire information pack, so please take the time to read over everything thoroughly and make sure you are prepared with the right gear when the time comes to head to the mountains in Pakistan.

It's extremely important that you bring the right gear for this trip, as it is tough to pick up quality supplies in Pakistan.

- The weather will at times be cold and, especially above 4,000 meters, you will want to be comfortable so it's worth spending money on quality warm gear. Likewise it can be hot, very sunny, pleasant and comfortable for a majority of the trek. It's always best to be prepared for a variety of climates and temperature fluctuations.
- For the first few days of the trek, it will be hot, dusty, and exposed to the fierce Karakoram sun.
- From above 4000 meters and above, we will likely experience freezing or below-freezing temperatures at night. Keep in mind that it can snow anytime, especially above 3,500 meters, though July/August is when the mountain weather is the most stable.
- In general, try to pack light, but pack enough to be comfortable for nearly two weeks in the mountains. Try to select pieces that will layer well together, and that can be easily added and removed with the changing temperatures.
- Ladies, wearing super short shorts and your sports bra whilst hiking isn't really appropriate for Pakistan. Keep in mind that local people are not used to seeing women in revealing clothing. Please try to keep your breasts (cleavage) and legs covered. However, if there is a little skin showing here and there, it will not be problematic.
- Each guest has a 20- kilo (44 pounds) porter allowance. If your duffle bag weighs more than 20 kilos, you will need to pay for the additional weight.
- For everything else needed during the day (whilst trekking), guests will carry their own daypack, water, snacks, etc.
- Epic Expeditions appreciates that trekking gear can be expensive. Guests don't need to spend a fortune on expensive gear, but again there are certain items that need to be high quality (hiking boots, a sleeping bag, warm clothing, etc).

Weather Conditions & the Snow Lake Trek

As you should know by now, the weather in the Karakoram mountain range can be highly variable. We will be traversing through a number of different climatic zones so it is a good idea to know what to expect at each point.

- **Islamabad** - Hot and humid with the potential for monsoon rain events. Average temperatures: High: 35°C / 95° F Low: 24°C / 76° F.
- **Skardu** - Warm to hot during the day, but not humid. Dusty, especially along the main bazaar road. Cooler and pleasant at night. Potential for wind and dust storms. July is the warmest month in Skardu. High: 23°C / 73.4° F Low: 10°C / 50° F. The sun is stronger in the mountains so temps. feel hotter than they actually are.
- **3,000 - 3,500 Meters** - Hot, dusty, exposed during the day. Cooler at night, but not freezing typically. Potential for snow around 3500 meters, but very unlikely. Possible cloud cover developing at any elevation.
- **3,500 - 4,500 Meters** - Daily temperatures remain warm, though mornings and evenings are cooler. Above 4000 meters temperatures can easily drop below freezing at night and early morning. Rain, snow, cloud cover are all possible at any time. More ice is present on the Glacier.
- **4,500 - 5,600 Meters** - Freezing temperatures at night and cool to cold temperatures during the day with periods of warm sunshine possible. Rain, snow, cloud cover are all possible at any time. Deep snow is likely on the trail between Snow Lake and Hispar La. Trekking on gritty ice and snow much of the way along the Biafo glacier. Potentially heavy snow pack on the ascent/descent of Hispar La. Coldest possible temperatures to expect hover around -10°C/14°F.

Full Gear Kit List

Please note that Epic DOES NOT rent any personal gear or equipment. There are two small gear shops in Skardu that have a limited selection of outdoor equipment where you can purchase things last minute. If possible, come with everything you need for the trek from abroad and don't rely on the limited stock of local shops.

Note: Every team member has a 20 kilo porter allowance: This bag is where the majority of your stuff will be; sleeping bag, clothing, alpine boots, crampons, helmet, harness, sleeping pad, excess snacks, etc.



PACKS & BAGGAGE

- Expedition Duffel Bag
- Day Trekking Backpack with rain cover

ESSENTIAL PERSONAL GEAR

- 0F \ -17C Sleeping Bag
- Inflating Sleeping Pad
- Inflatable Camp Pillow
- Sleeping Bag Liner

SPECIALTY EQUIPMENT

- Trekking Poles
- Helmet
- Crampons
- Headlamp
- Harness
- Grayl Filter Bottle
- Gaiters
- Large Wide Mouth Water bottle

BOOTS & FOOTWEAR

- Trekking Boots
- Alpine Boots (B1/B2)
- Camp Shoes
- Sandals/Tevas/Keens

OTHER PERSONAL GEAR

- Dry Bags
- Polarized Sunglasses
- Personal First Aid Kit
- Power Bank
- Chargers/Phone Cable

TOILETRIES

- Toothbrush, Toothpaste
- Sun Cream (50 spf+)
- Spf Lip Balm
- Biodegradable Soap
- Personal First Aid Kit
- Deodorant
- Wet wipes
- Fast Drying Microfiber Travel Towel

CLOTHING LAYER SYSTEMS

- Rain Shell Pants
- Hard Shell/Rain Jacket
- Fleece
- Base Layer Top
- Base Layer Bottoms
- Sun Hat and Beanie
- Buff and Bandana
- Gloves Mid Weight
- Trekking Shirts
- Trekking Pants
- Synthetic Multisport Pants
- Merinos Trekking Socks
- Underwear / Bras
- Mid weight Down Jacket
- Heavy Weight / Hi Loft Down Jacket

Early client departure protocol

In the event that a trip participant needs to leave the planned trip itinerary early due to illness, injury, family emergency, personal reasons, or simply because they want to, etc then there are a few things to note:

Should a trip participant choose to leave the planned itinerary early for any reason, from the moment they leave the tour, all expenses from that point onwards are the responsibility of the trip participant. This includes, but is not limited to, hotels/accommodation, transportation, emergency helicopter evacuation, internal flights (even if we have purchased you a flight for the trip you are attending), meals, airport transfer, guide services - everything that is normally covered by Epic during your tour is no longer covered once a trip participant decides to leave.

Once the decision has been made to leave the tour, the trip participant must sign an "Early Departure Waiver Form" - formally releasing Epic Expeditions of any further obligations to fulfill our tour/guide/transport/logistics services.

That said, in an emergency situation or in case of severe illness, Epic Expeditions staff will do everything within our means to aid the trip participant until they are in a safe/stable condition. When possible, Epic staff can also help you book new accommodation, flights, transport, etc when possible - but all of these expenses are for the trip participant to pay.

Point being, our staff will always be available to the best of our ability to facilitate the logistics of your departure, should you choose to leave the trip early.

Liability waiver

All tour participants will be required to sign an industry-standard waiver releasing Epic Expeditions from liability related to any aspect of this trip. Waivers are usually issued on day 1 of the tour at our first team briefing. If you would like to request a copy of the waiver in advance, please email us.

Paying the balance

Final balance payments will be due approximately 3-4 months before the tour begins. If you have a balance owing we will advise you of how and when to pay this. Please remember that deposits are non-refundable.

If you would like to pay the balance sooner, please email us!

Again, we are very excited to get to meet you in person in Pakistan soon!
The Epic Team

