

THE KARAKORAM MOUNTAINS

A PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR BY AYTEK CETIN



*Where light meets the eternal peaks of the Karakoram
at K6-K7 Base Camp...*

JUNE 2027



AYTEK CETIN

THE KARAKORAM MOUNTAINS

JOURNEY OVERVIEW

Welcome to an extraordinary adventure in one of the most dramatic and awe-inspiring landscapes on Earth, the Karakoram Mountains of Gilgit-Baltistan, northern Pakistan.

Here, razor-sharp peaks pierce the sky, glaciers flow through silent valleys, and the light transforms every hour into a new masterpiece.

It's a land where wilderness still feels pure, powerful, and untouched, a place that humbles and inspires in equal measure.

On this expedition, I'll take you deep into one of the most breathtaking and lesser-known corners of the Karakoram, the K6-K7 Base Camp.

Before reaching it, we'll journey through vast valleys framed by towering peaks, cross landscapes sculpted by wind and time, and witness the surreal beauty of the high-altitude desert.

A highlight of our journey will be the helicopter flight into the heart of the Karakoram, taking us directly to the remote K6-K7 Base Camp, surrounded by some of the most majestic peaks on Earth.

It's a moment of pure awe: soaring above glaciers and endless ridges before landing in a world of granite, ice, and silence.

This experience blends adventure and artistry, reaching remote locations by 4x4, on foot, and from the air, always chasing the most beautiful light.

Together with local guides who know these mountains better than anyone, I'll lead you through an unforgettable journey, one that celebrates creativity, discovery, and the rare feeling of standing among the giants of the Earth.

We'll capture dramatic light, create powerful images, and collect memories that will stay with us long after we leave the mountains behind.

THE KARAKORAM MOUNTAINS

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Explore the Untamed Karakoram

Discover one of the most awe-inspiring mountain regions on Earth, a land of granite towers, endless glaciers, and surreal light.

K6-K7 Base Camp Experience

Our journey leads to the magnificent K6-K7 Base Camp, a hidden alpine realm surrounded by some of the sharpest and most elegant peaks in the Karakoram.

Desert Ridges Surrounded by Mountain Ranges

Before reaching the base camp, we'll photograph the striking sand dunes framed by dark, rugged mountain ranges — a surreal contrast between warm desert tones and the deep shadows of the Karakoram.

The Nangma Valley

We'll also visit Nangma Valley, one of the most spectacular valleys in the Karakoram, known for its dramatic granite spires and breathtaking compositions at sunrise and sunset.

Helicopter Access to the Base Camp

We'll reach the K6-K7 Base Camp by helicopter, not only to save time, but also to access this remote alpine zone that would otherwise require a demanding multi-day approach through challenging glacial terrain.

Guided by Experience

Accompanied by local experts and myself, you'll be guided safely through the region—learning to read light, anticipate weather, and compose powerful mountain imagery.

Exceptional Meals in the Wild

Enjoy freshly prepared meals by our mountain chef whenever we camp, a comforting reward after long days in the field.

A Journey Beyond Photography

Beyond technique and composition, this expedition is about connection to the mountains, the silence, and the rare feeling of standing where few have ever been.

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ITINERARY

Day 1 – Arrival in Skardu (≈ 2,200 m)

We'll meet at Skardu Airport by 11:00 a.m. and transfer to our hotel.

During the afternoon, we'll prepare trekking documents and obtain the necessary permits for the upcoming journey.

Later, after a short drive, we'll head to the nearby sand dunes surrounded by mountains to photograph the sunset, our first taste of Karakoram light.



As the sun sets, the desert of Skardu turns to gold, our first encounter with the Karakoram light.

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ITINERARY

Day 2 – Skardu to Khaplu (≈ 2,600 m)

After a three-hour drive, we'll arrive in Khaplu and check in to our hotel. The area is home to the Haldi Cones, offering excellent photographic opportunities. We'll take advantage of the afternoon light to capture these elegant formations and create some of our first memorable images of the journey.



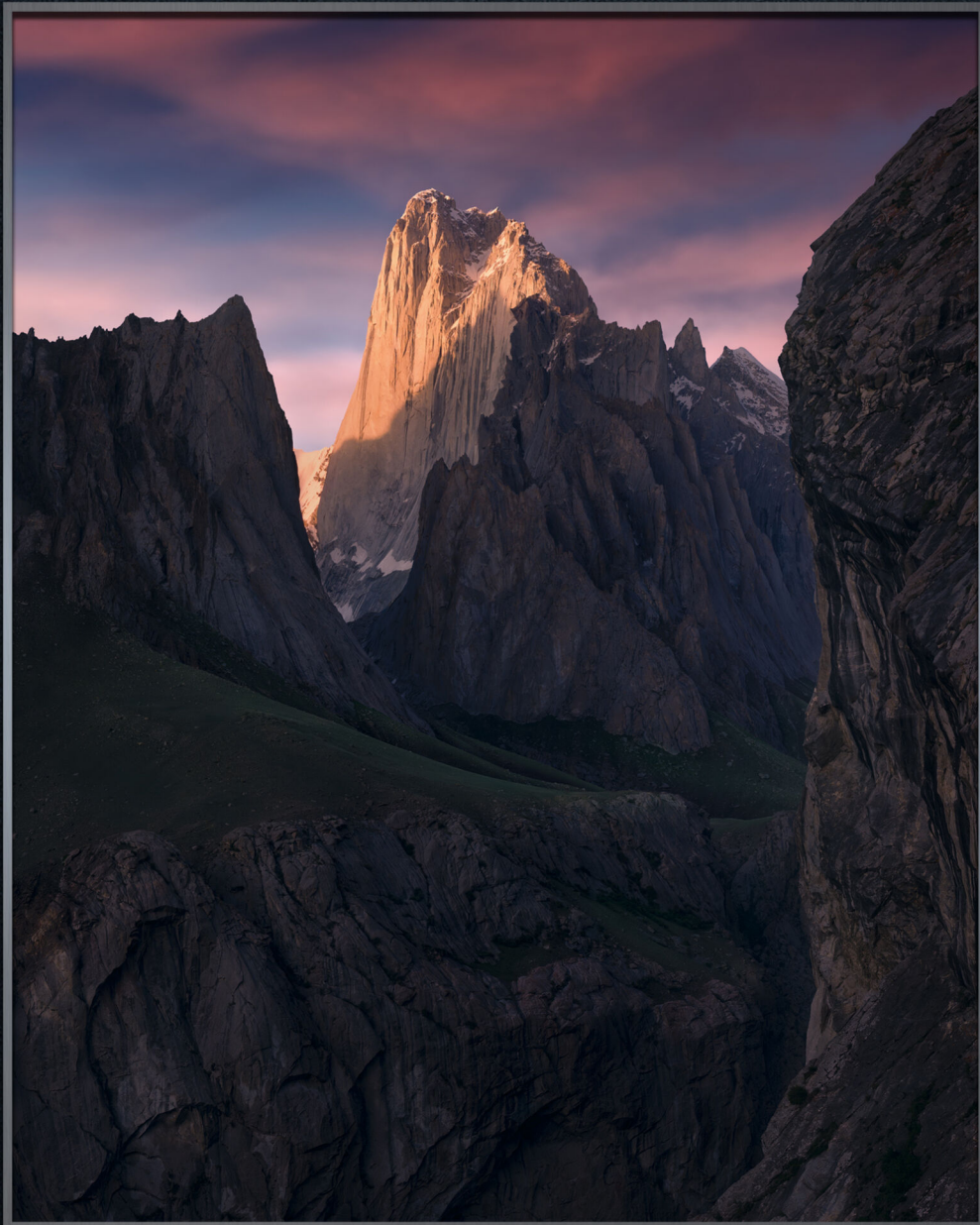
From the heart of the valley, the Haldi Cones shoot upward, sharp, silent, and defiant.

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ITINERARY

Day 3 – Khaplu to Kanday – Minhulu Broq (≈ 3,560 m)

After a two-hour drive to Kanday, we'll trek toward our first campsite at Minhulu Broq, set at the entrance of the stunning Nangma Valley. As evening falls, we'll send the drone above our camp to capture Amin Brakk — a towering monolith of granite and light, glowing in the last warmth of the Karakoram sun.



Amin Brakk — a monolith of granite and light, timeless and untamed.

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ITINERARY

Day 4 –5 Mingulu Broq to Nangma Valley (≈ 3,900 m)

After an early sunrise shoot at Mingulu Broq, we'll begin a 2.5-hour hike toward the legendary Nangma Valley.

As we move higher into the valley, the walls of granite rise around us like cathedrals of stone, every turn revealing a new frame waiting to be captured.

We'll spend the following day here, fully immersed in the beauty of Nangma. From the first light of dawn to the last glow of sunset, we'll photograph the changing moods of the valley, chasing light, experimenting with compositions, and creating some of the most impactful frames of the expedition.

Throughout our stay, I'll be there to help you find the strongest compositions and make the most of the light, ensuring you capture the true spirit of this remarkable place.

Between our shooting sessions, we'll enjoy delicious meals prepared by our talented mountain chef, the perfect reward after long, fulfilling days in the field.

And when night falls, those who wish can stay out for night-sky photography, capturing millions of stars above one of the most inspiring valleys in the Karakoram.



*Amid the silence of Nangma Valley, the glacier carves its way through stone and time
a frozen force beneath the watch of granite giants.*

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ITINERARY

Images from the Day 4 –5 Nangma Valley



As the sun begins to set, the great spire of Nangma rises above our camp, radiant and unyielding — a monument of light and stone.

At dawn, the peaks of Nangma burn with golden light, rising above the roaring waters beside our camp.



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ITINERARY

Day 6 – Nangma to Hushe (≈ 3,050 m)

After two inspiring days in the Nangma Valley, as we leave the granite walls of Nangma behind, the landscape opens up once again, vast valleys and distant ridges leading us toward new horizons.

We'll begin a 4.5-hour hike back toward Kanday, taking in the ever-changing scenery along the way.

From Kanday, we'll take a short 4x4 drive to the Hushe Valley, where we'll settle into our guesthouse.

In the evening, we'll head out for a drone and landscape session, capturing the warm light over the impressive mountain scenery of the Hushe Valley and the dramatic peaks that define it.

Day 7-8 – Hushe to Saicho (Charakusa Valley, ≈ 3,250 m)

After flying our drones at sunrise over the Hushe Valley, we'll begin a three-hour hike toward our next campsite in Saicho, located in the heart of the stunning Charakusa Valley. We'll spend two nights here, surrounded by jagged peaks and glacier-fed rivers that define the wild spirit of the Karakoram.

Over these days, we'll explore the valley on foot and from above, flying our drones to capture the sweeping lines of the ridges and the ever-changing light.

This is a place where patience and timing truly pay off, offering endless opportunities to create breathtaking compositions.



From above Saicho, the glacier winds its way toward the distant walls of K6 and Link Sar - a frozen realm where light lingers at the edge of night

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ITINERARY

Images from the Day 7-8 Saicho, Charakusa Valley



*As the sun descends over Saicho, Sebas Tower ignites through the mist-
a spire of fire and shadow, born from the heart of the Karakoram.*

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ITINERARY

Images from the Day 7-8 Saicho, Charakusa Valley



*Above the drifting clouds, K7 dominates the horizon,
vast, solemn, and eternal, its ridges glowing faintly in the evening light.*

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ITINERARY

Images from the Day 7–8 Saicho, Charakusa Valley



As evening settles over the range, a sharp peak near K6 rises through the mist its ridge glowing softly in the fading light, with Farhad and Shirin faintly visible in front.

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ITINERARY

Day 9-10 – K6-K7 Base Camp (≈ 4,250 m)

After our sunrise session in Saicho, our helicopter will arrive to take us deep into the high Karakoram. We'll fly directly to the K6-K7 Base Camp, surrounded by some of the most extraordinary peaks in the entire range, including K6 (7,282 m) and K7 (6,934 m), the needle-sharp Farhad and Shirin Peaks, the pyramid-shaped Naysir Brakk (Niza Peak, 5,800 m), the striking Drifika Peak (6,447 m) with its flawless triangular form, and the mighty Link Sar (7,041 m) rising dramatically right behind our camp.

For the next two days, we'll camp here and photograph these breathtaking mountains from every angle, using both cameras and drones to frame wildflowers, small glacial lakes, and mountain streams in the foreground, while capturing the grand scale of the peaks rising above.

Every direction offers a new sense of wonder: the light dances across granite faces, clouds drift through the summits, and time seems to stand still.

The atmosphere here feels timeless, powerful, serene, and humbling.

This is where the expedition reaches its creative peak, a place to pause, to admire, and to create images that truly define the spirit of this journey.



At sunset, the mighty K6 stands over a landscape of wildflowers and flowing streams, a serene contrast between power and grace in the heart of the Karakoram.

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ITINERARY

Day 9–10 – K6–K7 Base Camp ($\approx$ 4,250 m)

The glacier winds below the towering face of K6, its frozen curves reflecting the power and grandeur of the Karakoram.



Photo by Kübra Sevim Çınar — Edited by Aytek Çetin

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ITINERARY

Day 9–10 – K6–K7 Base Camp (≈ 4,250 m)

Within the K6 Glacier, calm lakes reflect the harsh beauty of ice and stone.



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ITINERARY

Day 9-10 – K6-K7 Base Camp ($\approx 4,250$ m)

Above our camp, the wildflowers of the Karakoram bloom beneath the razor-sharp peaks of Farhad & Shirin a scene where softness and strength meet in perfect harmony.



Different kinds of wildflowers bring color and life to the valley floor, blooming beneath the dramatic spires of the Karakoram.

THE KARAKORAM MOUNTAINS

ITINERARY

Day 9-10 – K6-K7 Base Camp (≈ 4,250 m)



After a two-hour hike from camp, we'll reach a breathtaking vantage point facing Farhad Peak its sharp summit towering above the glacier, a scene that captures the raw spirit of the Karakoram.

Below our camp, wildflowers bloom among the rocks, their gentle colors softening the rugged skyline of Farhad and Shirin, a quiet harmony beneath the towering peaks of the Karakoram.



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ITINERARY

Day 9–10 – K6–K7 Base Camp (≈ 4,250 m)

NAYSER BRAKK (Niza Peak)

At our base camp rises Naysir Brakk (Niza Peak), a perfect granite pyramid catching the light like a blade of gold. Towering and timeless, it embodies the raw grace and grandeur of the Karakoram.



The pyramid-shaped Naysir Brakk reveals its magic at sunrise and sunset, when the mountain glows with shifting colors and the valley falls silent beneath its light.

THE KARAKORAM MOUNTAINS

ITINERARY

Day 9-10 – K6-K7 Base Camp (≈ 4,250 m)

DRIFIKA PEAK

Drifika Peak, one of the most striking summits of the Karakoram, rises with sculpted perfection above the valley. Seen from the drone, its sharp ridges and sweeping glaciers create a breathtaking spectacle, a mountain made for light, shadow, and extraordinary photographs.



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ITINERARY

Day 11 – Base Camp to Saicho – Khaplu (≈ 2,600 m)

On the 11th day of our photographic journey, after capturing the first light over the base camp, our helicopter will arrive to take us back to Saicho. From there, we'll begin a three-hour hike to reach the Hushe Valley, followed by a 4x4 drive returning us to Khaplu.

After days spent high among glaciers and towering peaks, the comfort of our hotel in Khaplu will feel especially rewarding. Those who still feel the pull of the light can join an optional sunset session near Khaplu, a calm yet inspiring chance to photograph the golden glow over the valley before settling in for a relaxing evening back at the hotel.



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ITINERARY

Day 12 – Khaplu to Skardu (≈ 2,300 m)

This morning, we'll photograph the Haldi Cones at sunrise, capturing their elegant shapes in the soft morning light. After breakfast, we'll enjoy a comfortable 3.5-hour drive back to Skardu, today's journey requires no hiking, giving us time to relax and take in the ever-changing mountain scenery along the way.

In the late afternoon, we'll venture into the cold desert of Skardu, where waves of golden sand meet the dark ridges of distant peaks. As the sun sinks low, the light paints the dunes in soft amber tones, a mesmerizing scene and a perfect finale to our journey in the Karakoram. If weather and timing allow, we may return the next morning for one final sunrise among these surreal landscapes before our departure.

Day 13 – Departure to Islamabad

After breakfast, we'll transfer to the airport for our flight back to Islamabad, carrying with us not only unforgettable photographs but also memories that will last a lifetime.

As we leave the Karakoram behind, the spirit of these mountains, their silence, their power, and their beauty will stay with us.

It's never truly goodbye, only the promise of future journeys and new horizons waiting to be explored.



As the sun sinks behind the Karakoram, the dunes of Skardu fall into shadow and light, a tranquil symphony of gold, blue, and silence unfolding across the desert.

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What to Bring for the Tour

In the Karakoram, the weather writes its own story, mornings can be crisp and cool, while afternoons often bring warmth and sun. Packing wisely will help you stay comfortable and focused on what truly matters: creating extraordinary photographs.

I recommend **mid-hiking boots** for stability and support on mixed terrain, and a few **breathable t-shirts** for the daytime. Bring a **rain jacket** for unpredictable mountain showers, a light **down jacket** for chilly evenings, and a **fleece** layer for the early hours when the air feels sharp and clear.

For comfort during our hikes, **hiking poles** will ease the hikes, and **hiking socks** will help prevent blisters. Add **gloves**, a **beanie**, and a **hat** to keep you warm and protected, along with **sunglasses** and **50 SPF sunscreen** essential under the intense high-altitude light.

Carry a personal **water bottle** (at least 1.5 L) to stay hydrated throughout the day, and a **head torch** for pre-dawn starts or night photography sessions. Finally, pack a pair of **slippers or sandals**, a small luxury after a long day in the mountains.

Pack light, prepare smart, and you'll be ready for everything the Karakoram has to offer from glacial dawns to golden sunsets, every moment waiting to be captured.

During our camping days, you'll also need a **sleeping bag** rated to -10°C comfort and an insulated **sleeping mat**, both essential for warmth and a good night's rest in the thin mountain air.

Camera & Drone Recommendations

To capture the dramatic scale and depth of the Karakoram, having the right tools will make all the difference.

A **wide-angle** lens (around 14–15mm) is essential for powerful foregrounds and sweeping mountain compositions. Pair it with a **mid-range zoom**, and most importantly, a **telephoto lens**, anything above 200mm will allow you to isolate distant peaks and create truly impactful images. If you have access to longer glass, such as 400mm or 500mm, it will be a real advantage in this landscape.

Bring at least three **camera batteries**, as cold mornings and long shooting days can drain power faster than expected.

A **drone** is highly recommended for this tour, especially one with a zoom lens, which opens up an entirely new perspective on the glaciers and peaks. Again, plan for three drone batteries to make the most of each flying opportunity.

A tripod is optional, but can be useful for low-light or long-exposure work around camp.

In the Karakoram, the light changes by the minute, the better prepared you are, the more magic you'll bring home.

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Tour Price: € 12,750

Deposit: € 3000

Group Size: 4 People

Tour Difficulty: Moderate

INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

- Domestic flight tickets (Islamabad to Skardu and return)
 - All in-tour transportation by 4x4 cars with drivers and fuel
 - Airport transfers
 - Helicopter flight to K6-K7 Basecamp
 - Accommodations: hotel & guesthouse & camping
 - Food: three meals a day with refreshments
 - Government trekking permit fees
 - Environment / waste management fees
 - National park fee
 - Campsite fees
 - Camping gear
 - Local Guides
 - Porters
 - Helping staff (cook & helper)
 - Photography guiding and technical help by **Aytek Çetin**
 - Aytek's +15 photo editing videos from previous trips
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NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

- International flights
- Medication, evacuation and rescue etc. in emergencies
 - Insurance
- Personal expenses and any extras not included in the list of inclusions
 - Tips

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FAQ

About the Expedition

How physically demanding is this photography expedition?

This expedition is moderately demanding, ideal for those with some hiking experience and a basic level of fitness. Daily hikes last around 2 to 4.5 hours with gradual elevation gain, and our porters carry the heavy equipment, so you'll only need your camera gear. It's an adventure designed for photographers, not endurance athletes.

What is the maximum altitude we'll reach during the tour?

The highest point of our journey is K6-K7 Base Camp at around 4,250 meters (13,940 feet). The ascent is gradual, allowing for natural acclimatization along the way.

How long are the daily hikes, and are there any rest days?

Most hiking days range between 2.5 to 4.5 hours, following a steady and comfortable pace. In Skardu, there's no hiking, while in Khaplu, we'll take a short 15-minute walk to reach our shooting location. At Saicho (Day 8), we'll have a relaxed exploration day with brief walks focused on photography rather than distance. Overall, the itinerary is well balanced, allowing time for both rest and immersion in the landscape.

How will altitude acclimatization be managed during the expedition?

The itinerary is carefully designed to ensure a gradual and comfortable acclimatization to higher altitudes, with plenty of time for rest and adaptation. We'll begin our journey in Skardu and Khaplu at moderate elevations before moving higher, allowing the body to adjust naturally.

Since the ascent to K6-K7 Base Camp is made by helicopter, participants will already be well-acclimatized, making the transition smooth and safe.

If desired, participants may also consult their doctor beforehand about taking altitude-acclimatization medication such as Diamox, which can help reduce potential side effects.

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FAQ

Photography & Guidance

What type of photography guidance will be provided during the tour?

Throughout the expedition, I'll share my full experience and knowledge in the field, helping you refine your vision and capture powerful compositions. I'll assist you in identifying the strongest frames, mastering techniques such as focus stacking, and making the most of changing light and conditions. Whether you're seeking creative inspiration or technical improvement, I'll be there to guide you every step of the way.

Can participants receive feedback on their images during the trip?

Yes, absolutely. During our stays, we'll set aside dedicated time for image review and feedback sessions. On the days we stay at hotels, we'll also hold photo editing sessions, where I'll share tips and techniques to enhance drama, strengthen mood, and bring more power and depth to your photographs, an inspiring way to elevate your work while reliving the day's adventures.

Is this tour suitable for both amateur and professional photographers?

Absolutely. This expedition is designed for photographers of all levels, from passionate beginners to seasoned professionals. With expert on-field guidance, capturing incredible images in these breathtaking landscapes will come naturally. Even non-photographers who simply love mountains and the outdoors are welcome to join and enjoy the experience.

Accommodation & Logistics

What type of accommodation will we stay in during the trip?

We'll stay in a mix of comfortable hotels and guesthouses on certain days, and well-equipped mountain camps during the expedition. This balance allows us to enjoy both the comfort of local hospitality and the unforgettable experience of camping amid the wild beauty of the Karakoram.

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FAQ

Accommodation & Logistics

Are there bathroom and shower facilities during the camping days?

During camping days, portable toilet facilities will be available for your comfort. However, there will be no regular shower facilities in the wilderness. That said, in certain camp areas where clean mountain streams are accessible, participants may use them for basic personal washing if they wish.

How is the food and water provided in the mountains?

During hotel stays, you'll be able to choose from a restaurant menu offering a wide variety of delicious local and international dishes. While camping, our mountain chef will prepare fresh, nourishing meals with a balanced mix of proteins and carbohydrates, keeping you energized throughout the expedition. For drinking water, we'll use clean mountain sources, and purification tablets will be available for anyone who prefers extra safety.

Will there be electricity or charging options during the trek?

Yes, during the camping days, we'll have a portable generator available at the campsites, allowing you to charge your camera batteries, drone, and other equipment as much as you need. You'll also be able to use your laptop for editing or backing up your photos during the expedition.

How much weight can porters carry, and what should I pack personally?

Our porters will carry all camping gear, tents, kitchen equipment, and your one XL-sized duffel bag, along with a small additional bag if needed.

During the hikes, you'll only need to carry your own camera backpack, allowing you to walk comfortably and focus entirely on capturing the stunning landscapes around you.

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FAQ

Travel & Safety

Are there any special visa types or permits required for this trip?

For this expedition, you'll need to apply for a trekking visa rather than a standard tourist visa. Once your reservation is confirmed, we'll provide you with the official invitation letter and all required supporting documents for your application. You can then complete your trekking visa application directly through the official Pakistan visa website.

How long does it take to get the trekking visa?

The trekking visa process can take up to two months, depending on embassy workload and season. For that reason, we strongly recommend completing your visa application and required documents several months before the expedition to ensure a smooth approval process.

How reliable are the helicopter transfers to K6-K7 Base Camp?

The helicopter transfers are operated by licensed and highly experienced pilots who regularly fly in the Karakoram region. Flights are always scheduled based on safe weather conditions, as safety is our top priority. The K6-K7 Base Camp sits at around 4,250 meters, which is not considered extreme altitude, making the flight and landing conditions both safe and well within normal limits for mountain operations.

What happens if the weather prevents helicopter flights?

Since our expedition takes place during the summer season, weather-related disruptions are very rare. If conditions prevent the helicopter from flying safely, we'll wait and retry the next day when the weather clears. In the unlikely event that the helicopter cannot operate at all, we'll explore the surrounding valleys and peaks, discovering spectacular new locations and compositions that are equally rewarding photographically. No matter the situation, you'll still experience the raw beauty and dramatic spirit of the Karakoram.

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FAQ

Travel & Safety

Is travel insurance required, and what should it cover?

We kindly ask all participants to obtain travel health insurance that clearly includes coverage for high-altitude trekking (up to at least Base Camp elevation) and emergency medical evacuation by helicopter or air ambulance, subject to approval by the insurer's emergency assistance team.

Please note that many adventure insurers require pre-authorization before arranging any evacuation, so make sure to confirm this detail with your provider in advance.

Is it safe to travel in northern Pakistan?

Yes, the Gilgit-Baltistan region of northern Pakistan is considered safe and welcoming for travelers, especially for those visiting the mountain areas.

The local people are known for their warm hospitality, kindness, and genuine curiosity, often greeting visitors with smiles and tea. Throughout the journey, you'll feel a strong sense of peace, respect, and connection, it's a place where guests are truly made to feel at home.

Weather

What will the weather be like during the expedition?

Since our journey takes place in the summer months, we can generally expect pleasant and stable weather. At higher elevations, occasional rain or brief snow showers may occur, but such moments often bring the most beautiful light and atmosphere for photography.

As in all mountain regions, weather can sometimes surprise us yet that unpredictability is part of what makes the Karakoram so alive and inspiring.

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A Personal Note from Aytek

There are places that stay with you forever, the Karakoram is one of them. It's not only about the peaks, the light, or the adventure itself, but the feeling of being part of something greater than yourself.

In these wild and quiet mountains, you begin to see the world and your art in a different way.

Every sunrise becomes more than a photo opportunity; it's a reminder of how alive this planet still is.

I would be honored to share this experience with you, to guide, to create, and to witness the extraordinary together.

Let's stand side by side beneath these giants and bring home not just photographs, but memories that will last a lifetime.

See you in the Karakoram,

Aytek Çetin