

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram

Asia | 6,280m



360 
EXPEDITIONS

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There are few mountains more impressive than the enormous towers of the Trango group in the Karakoram range of Pakistan. Their vast size, featuring the world's highest vertical walls, perfect golden granite and enormous scope for both classic alpine climbing and technical big wall routes has been the drawcard for the world's top alpinists for many years.

Now it's your turn to step into the realm of classic high-altitude alpinism and attempt the group's mightiest summit, the **Great Trango Tower** (6,280 meters).

Our attempt of the Great Trango Tower will be via the classic NW Face route pioneered by Americans Andy Selters and Scott Woolums in 1984. 360 ran a successful expedition to the Great Trango Tower in 2017 and found this

long alpine route to be very achievable by a team comprising of a 360 guide and a competent experienced client. This expedition now features as a highlight in 360's more adventurous Uncharted Expeditions.

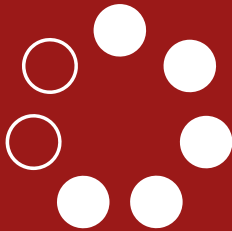
Within this comprehensive itinerary you will find a seamless ascent strategy and detailed information about the mountain and the route from the guides who know this mountain intimately.

This superb itinerary is suitable for those who have a solid background in both rock and ice climbing and preferably have independently climbed Alpine routes graded to level TD in difficulty. The guide to client ratio is a maximum of 1 to 2.

Great Trango Tower

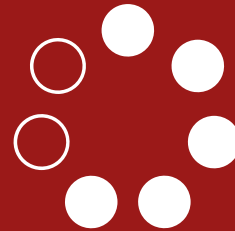
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Physical – P5

Superlative fitness is called for. Regular, long and intense physical training is required for preparation. Expect long days on the hill of 10-15 hours in testing weather conditions (especially summit day) carrying up to 15-20kg in weight, and/or pulling a pulk with exceptional weight.



Technical – T5

Competent Alpine climbing ability. Should be comfortable on Scottish Winter III ground or Alpine AD. Complete understanding and confidence in use of your technical kit will be required.

Please note that the grading system used is a rough guide only.



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Pakistan - Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m



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Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

ITINERARY

DAY 1 : Depart UK, arrive Islamabad

We most likely meet our guide for our trek at the airport. Depart London Heathrow in the morning and fly to Islamabad International Airport.

DAY 2 : Fly or drive to Skardu

Today we will either fly to Skardu in Gilgit-Baltistan, or if necessary we'll start our journey to the Karakoram on the spectacular Karakoram highway.

Weather permitting, we'll take the early morning flight to Skardu. The chances of flying are usually good (80% possibility) and the one-hour flight is nothing short of spectacular with breathtakingly views of the Rupal and Diamir faces of Nanga Parbat. After the flight we'll spend the remainder of the day sightseeing in Skardu. The city is the major trekking and expedition hub in the Karakoram. Visit its many bazars known for their hand-woven woollen cloth and elaborate, colourful embroidered local gowns, or take a stroll up the hill to the ancient Alexandria Fort overlooking the town. The awesome sight of the mighty Indus sprawling across the wide alluvial plain beneath you is an indication of the visual pleasures in store for you.

If taking the Karakoram Highway, prepare for a simply astonishing two-day journey along what was once an ancient Silk Road and now an international highway connecting Pakistan and the entire Indian subcontinent to China. Traversed for centuries by traders and travellers alike, the route will take us into a region rarely visited by modern expeditions and will allow us to capture a glimpse into the everyday world of these hardy mountain people.

Despite not being able to fly you will still be able to get incredible views of the mighty Nanga Parbat, the 9th highest mountain in the world. Plus, you will experience first-hand what an astonishing engineering achievement this road is. Cut deeply into the side of mountains and high above the Indus river there simply is no road like it. This road is for many one of the treasured highlights of their journey through the Karakoram.

(BLD)

DAY 3 : Sightseeing in Skardu or continuing along the KKH

This astonishingly diverse region is the home of the Balti people, originally of Tibetan descent. Before the arrival of Islam the people of this area practised shamanism and Buddhism, and the retention of many pre-Islamic traits makes this an intriguing part of Pakistan.

Skardu itself is a dusty fort town of bazaars, stores and ancient polo fields grazed by a variety of livestock. It is the main stop-off before the mountains, with rustic hotels and second-hand shops for climbers, and it usually fills with trekkers and mountaineers during the summer.

Our free day in Skardu might also present us with a chance to take a jeep ride up to the beautiful Satpara Lake. A prominent rock inscription of the Lord Buddha on the drive to Satpara is a reminder of the important influence of Buddhism to this area before the arrival of Islam.

If we are continuing our drive along the KKH, we will depart from Chilas and we will have the opportunity to experience the rugged though beautiful scenery as we arrive by road into Skardu.

(BLD)

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

ITINERARY

DAY 4 : Drive from Skardu to Askole (3,048m)

Leaving Skardu we set out by jeep for a 6–8 hour drive to Askole. Initially, friendly Balti farmers and waving school children enliven your journey through the colourful and fertile settlements of the Shigar Valley but once we reach the confluence of the Braldu and Shigar valley the scenery changes from green and fertile to the more desert landscape typical of these mountains.

Throughout the drive snow-capped 5000-meter peaks rise around us with lush oasis visible where streams run down and cross the now more rugged track. Sometimes landslides may make it necessary to walk short sections of the road.

Askole is a single street of wooden houses flanked by vibrant fields of wheat and potatoes and dotted by apricot and mulberry orchards. This drive, like its big brother the KKH, reveals a hugely human aspect to the expedition and highlights the hospitality of the Balti people.

Drive: 6–8 hrs

(BLD)

DAY 5 : Trek to Jhola camp (3,305m)

A gentle and beautiful start marks the start of this incredible trek. Leaving Askole village behind we initially walk along lanes and through fields where we'll see friendly local Balti people going about their daily lives, but it doesn't take long before the Karakoram begins to reveal itself; jagged peaks, stark snow-capped mountains and sheer cliff faces, begin to dominate the landscape. A suspension bridge crosses the Baltoro river which rushes from the glacier's snout near the small oasis at Korofong.

From Korofong we follow the path up a side valley and cross the river on a good bridge that replaces the old trolley system or "jhola" that was previously used by both locals and expeditions alike. From here we have views of Bakhor Das (5,809m), its impressive summit a rocky fist standing above its base. It is often referred to as K2 by local villagers. In the distance the needles of Paiju Peak are visible. Our first night on the trek to basecamp affords great views of what's to come.

Trekking time: 8 – 9 hours

Trekking distance: 24km

(BLD)

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

ITINERARY

DAY 6 : Trek to Paiju camp (3420m)

We make an early start today and take a path that is sometimes loose and occasionally flooded in places, we may need to take off our boots to wade across (sandals come in handy!). Our objective today is Paiju camp, a green oasis nestled beneath the striking granite spire of Paiju Peak (6,611m). At our high point we have jaw-dropping views of the Baltoro Glacier and the granite peaks of the Trango and Cathedral groups, on a clear day it is even possible to see K2. Much has been done recently by the local Balti community to remove rubbish and human waste from both the trail and the camps ahead to restore this incredible landscape to its natural splendour.

Trekking time: 7 – 8 hours

Trekking distance: 21km

(BLD)

DAY 7 : Ascent of Baltoro Glacier and trek to Great Trango tower basecamp (3,970m)

From our camp at Paiju we walk one hour to the snout of the Baltoro Glacier where an enormous amount of melt water pours from deeply within the ice. Here we climb up a rocky path onto its icy back. The trail undulates as we climb over the buckling moraine strewn surface of this permanently flowing glacier and we gradually work our way across the glacier to its south side.

Here the moraine is more stable as it is held together by colourful vegetation which receive their moisture from many spring fed streams. After a further hour we reach the point where the Trango Glacier meets the Baltoro and say goodbye to this great natural wonder. We have a short break, don crampons and rope up for the complex glacier climb to basecamp still a further 4 hours of walking from the terminus of the Baltoro.

Basecamp is located across the Trango glacier directly underneath Trango 2 and near a beautifully clear glacier lake. The start of the route to our camp1 is the obvious gully directly above camp. Trango basecamp is at 3970m.

Trekking time: 7 – 8 hours

Trekking distance: 15km

(BLD)

DAY 8 : Great Trango tower basecamp (3,970m)

Today will be a rest and acclimatisation day at basecamp, time to take in our surroundings, go on a short acclimatisation walk, and rest ready for the next days trekking.

(BLD)

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

ITINERARY

DAY 9-14 : Acclimatisation and climbing days

We aim to take the same hybrid expedition/alpine climbing approach to climbing this mountain as we practice on Aconcagua and Elbrus. This expedition is not supported by Sherpa or high-altitude porters and the onus will be on the team to carry their own equipment to the higher camps. Please refer to the FAQs for a detailed route description.

A typical ascent profile looks like this.

- Carry/acclimatisation day to C1 (4,750m) from BC, descend to BC to sleep
- Climb to C1 and occupy C1 for one night
- Climb to C2 (two places possible at 5320m and 5,570m respectively)
- Summit push (6,280m) and descend to C1
- Descend to BC and rest
- Contingency day (BLD)

DAY 15 : Rest day in basecamp

A well-deserved day of rest and reflection after an action-packed summit push. Today we celebrate our success with our Balti team who spend the day preparing a delicious local dinner.

Our mule or porter team arrive into camp and join the party as we prepare for our trek home.

(BLD)

DAY 17 : Korofoung

Today we bypass Jhola camp (day 5) and continue to the oasis of Korofoung.

Trekking time: 7 – 8 hours

(BLD)

DAY 18 : Askole and Skardu

An early start will see us head back to civilisation. Today we trek back to Askole and drive to Skardu where we stay in a nice hotel and enjoy a fine restaurant dinner.

Trekking time: 7 – 8 hours

Trekking distance: 5 – 6 hours

(BLD)

DAY 19 : Fly to Islamabad

Today we will plan to fly from Skardu to Islamabad. As long as the weather holds, we will arrive in time to check in at our hotel, located again in the centre of Islamabad and celebrate our climb and ascent with a great meal in a locally loved restaurant.

Depending on the flight arrivals, we may have time for a short trip into central Islamabad or its twin city, Rawalpindi for some sightseeing.

(BD)

DAY 20 : Arrive UK

Possible day flight to UK (previous night's accommodation included) or arrive after an overnight flight.

(BD)

DAY 21 : Contingency day

This day will allow for any delays due to weather. In the case that the flight to Islamabad is cancelled we will remain in Skardu for an additional day. If this is the case then we will have the chance to do some additional sightseeing and it will give us the opportunity to scout out any final souvenirs.

Possible night flight departing from Islamabad to your home country. Islamabad Airport transfers will be provided.

(BLD)

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan - Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m



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Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

KIT LIST

Bags & Packs

Duffel bag 120ltr-140ltr

One or two large duffel bags of 120L or more (some climbers manage with one, others need two) to transport your kit out to Pakistan and then up to Spantik basecamp. Suitcases and wheeled bags are NOT suitable

Expedition rucksack

Approximately 70-80L to take your kit from basecamp to higher camps, carrying up to 20kg. Make sure it has a waterproof cover.

Daysack

30 – 40L for flights and road transfers. You can use your expedition rucksack instead if you do not want to take this pack. Some do, some don't, it's a personal choice.

Drybags

Nylon rolltop bags that keep fresh clothing and other important items like your passports and electronics dry in the event of a total downpour that could seep into your kitbag. Good for quarantining old socks! Please note that Pakistan has now banned plastic bags. In any case, we would always advise buying reusable and sustainable nylon rolltop bags for keeping your kit dry.

Small kit bag or light bag

This is for any kit you intend to leave at the hotel and could even simply be a heavy duty plastic bag if necessary, as you will be taking it home with you. Do note that Pakistan have banned the sale of single-use plastic bags so if you have something reusable this would be preferable.

Padlocks x 2

For use on your kit bag during travel and on the expedition, plus any bag you may leave at the hotel.

Sleeping Gear

5 Season sleeping bag

A 5-season bag with a comfort rating to -25°C is essential. Down is lighter, though more expensive than synthetic. Remember that ratings may vary between manufacturers.

Sleeping mat

We would recommend a full length self-inflating mat, eg. Thermarest, rather than a 3/4 length mat.

Sleeping bag liner

A liner will help keep your sleeping bag clean and provide extra warmth. Silk is best for keeping your sleeping bag clean and you a little warmer.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

KIT LIST

Headwear

Warm headgear

This can be a warm hat, beanie or balaclava – anything to reduce the heat loss from your head.

Wide brimmed hat

Keeps the sun off exposed areas such as your ears, or the nape of your neck.

Sunglasses

A Category-4 wrap around style is highly recommended. These sunglasses allow for the highest available protection against harmful UV light found at altitude and from glare from snow and sand surfaces. It's worth spending money on good UV filters. Julbo is our preferred supplier.

Ski goggles

We'd recommend Category-3 for days when it may be snowing and very windy. Generally very useful on summit day.

Sunblock

We'd advise factor 50 for trekking – but otherwise buy the highest SPF you can find, as UV intensifies with altitude. Ensure you have enough for the full trek, plus smaller tubes for pockets whilst trekking.

Buff/Scarf

Essential for protection from the sun and dust.

Lip salve

Sun cream generally does not work on your lips and they are very susceptible to burning without proper protection, so it's important to also have high SPF lipsalve. We would recommend bringing a few, you will need plenty of SPF!

Upper Body

Long sleeved T- shirt x 2

The sun can be extremely intense – we would recommend a collared, long sleeved shirt or t-shirt, for protection on the hotter days. Long sleeves are recommended to conform to Pakistan's cultural norms and to act as sun protection.

Base layer x 2

This is the layer closest to the skin and its principle function is to draw or wick moisture and sweat away from the skin. You can also get thermal base layers for use at higher altitudes that provide an additional insulating layer while still drawing away sweat during times of high exertion.

Mid layer x 1

These are typically lightweight microfleece or similar technology that provide varying degrees of warmth and insulation without being overly bulky or heavy to pack.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

KIT LIST

Soft Shell (optional)

Optional – These should be windproof (not all are) and insulative. They are mostly made of soft polyester and sometimes resemble a neoprene finish which makes them very mobile and comfortable to wear. Be aware that while they do offer a degree of weather repellence, they are usually not waterproof.

Light insulated jacket

A lighter jacket such as a Primaloft or lightweight down, which can be worn at lower to mid altitudes, is a great addition to your kit and offers greater flexibility with layering.

Gilet (optional)

Optional – A great low-volume additional layer to keep your core warm, whether down, primaloft or fleece.

Waterproof top

A good Goretex hardshell jacket, with sealed seams, provides effective defence against wind and rain as your outermost layer. This should be big enough to fit over your other layers.

Down jacket

These provide the best insulation and are worth every penny. They will keep you warm down to around -25C with a couple of layers underneath, the higher the 'loft', the better. Our guides usually wear a lighter down or Primaloft jacket underneath their down jackets for greater layering on summit day

Warm gloves

Consider a light polartec or fleece liner gloves for lower altitudes and evenings, and a thicker pair of leather climbing gloves (Black Diamond Guide) for higher altitudes, that can be worn in combination with liners.

High altitude down mitts

Worn over liners for summit days on all 6,000m plus expeditions. Mitts provide more warmth than finger gloves. For extreme cold, down or Primaloft fill is recommended.

Lower Body

Trekking trousers x 2

These tend to be polyester so they dry quickly after a shower and weigh little in your pack. Consider perhaps a pair with detachable lower legs, as an alternative to shorts.

Midweight trousers

Softshell windproof or thermal lined mid weight climbing trousers. Roomy enough so that thermal leggings can still be worn underneath if necessary.

Waterproof overtrousers

Like the jacket, an essential piece of kit to stay dry and should also be Goretex.

Long Johns x 2

An essential thermal insulation layer for your legs.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

KIT LIST

Underwear

Merino or wicking material is best, we'd advise against cotton. How many pairs you take is entirely up to you!

Feet

High altitude boots

Essential on all our high altitude expeditions, as they are the only way to avoid frostbite. These boots are double, or triple layered to offer the best insulation and the warmest feet up high. Either La Sportiva G2 SMs, Scarpa Phantom 6000s, La Sportiva Spantik or specialized 8,000m boots are such as Olympus Mons are suitable. Make sure you can fit 2 pairs of socks for added warmth with room to wiggle your toes. Our team wore Scarpa Phantoms 6000 for their ascent in 2017.

Walking boots

For the trek in you will need well-worn in shoes or boots – it's a personal preference, some trekkers prefer a 4-season waterproof boots, with mid to high ankle support, while some go for a sturdier trekking/approach shoe.

Climbing shoes

Optional, will probably not be needed on the route but will come in handy for the many bouldering and rock-climbing opportunities at basecamp.

Sandals

Can be flip flops or sturdier for town, around basecamp and for river crossings.

Trekking socks x 3

Single layer or wearing 2 pairs is a personal choice and lighter weight merino wool is a good option.

High altitude socks x 3

These are especially thick to provide maximum insulation. Bring three pairs (keep one pair clean for summit day!) and wear with a thinner inner.

Spare laces

Just in case.

Gaiters

Optional, to protect the tops of your footwear from harsh conditions and provide some added insulation.

Technical Equipment

Climbing helmet

A plastic helmet is more suitable than some of the expanded foam helmets available. Make sure you try it on in a shop with a woolly/fleece hat underneath.

Crampons

12-point mountaineering crampons with anti-balling plates, they need to fit your specific plastic boots.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

KIT LIST

Ice axe x 2

Technical ice axes between 40cm and 50cm long. Go to an outdoor shop and try different ones for weight and size so that you get one that feels good to you. Quantity 2: one with adze attachment and one with hammer attachment.

Trekking poles

These tend to be a personal preference, but help with your stability and can dampen the pressure on the knees coming downhill. Used for the approach trek to basecamp and to climb to camp one.

Mountaineering harness

We recommend Petzl harnesses.

Carabiners & prussik loops x 3

Pear Shape HMS Locking Carabiners.

Prusik loops x 2

120cm lengths of 6mm diameter cord.

Sling (80cm –100cm) x 3

Shoulder length, sewn.

Jumars x 1

Ascender, left or right handed, depending on your preference.

Figure of 8

Figure of 8 or other descendeur for abseiling

Descending devices

For rappelling the Black Diamond ATC Guide is good since it can handle ropes from 7.7mm to 11mm. A Figure 8 is an old standby and works on a variety of ropes and also icy ropes. While it twists the ropes more, it is quite foolproof. You might consider both, in case you drop one of them and lose it

Technical climbing equipment for rock and ice

360 Expeditions will bring sufficient climbing equipment to complete the route but if you have the odd ice-screw, snow-stake or rock-climbing protection you want to bring along then do so. This can be taken to basecamp (by mules or porters) and may handy as spare equipment once the conditions of the route have been established and for climbing several practice routes around basecamp.

Hydration

Water bottle and insulated bottle cover

3L equivalent – a good combination is a Platypus/Camelbak along with 2 x 1L Nalgene bottles. Use the Platypus before the water starts to freeze at higher camps!

Water purification

Although generally all water is boiled, some prefer to double up and add purification tabs as well. They're always good to have in your bag.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

KIT LIST

Insulated mug

A great addition for hot drinks at the higher camps.

Small thermal flask

Always nice on summit night when it's cold.

Pee bottle (+ optional Shewee for the girls!)

A good idea if you are storm bound at higher camps. A 1L Nalgene bottle is a good option but do make sure you label it appropriately!

Toiletries

Travel towel

Travel towels from the likes of LifeSystems are perfect.

Wet wipes

Preferably biodegradable, these are great for washing when modern shower facilities become a thing of the past.

Alcohol gel

An absolute must-have for good camp hygiene.

Toilet paper

Provided on the mountain, but a spare in your daysack may be useful if you need to hide behind a rock between camps.

Nappy sacks or dog poo bags

Only needed to bag your toilet paper if you are caught short in between camps, or for keeping your rubbish tidy in your tent.

Insect repellent

For early stages and once back down.

Wash kit

Keep it simple on the mountain. Essentials are toothbrush, toothpaste and deodorant. Moisturiser is advisable, everything else is a luxury!

Medications

Personal first aid kit

Though your guide will have a comprehensive first aid kit, the 360 medical kits are designed to be used in emergencies and are akin to an A&E rather than a pharmacy on expeditions. We recommend you come prepared with useful meds for yourself such as painkillers (Ibuprofen if you can take it and Paracetamol), plus blister plasters, plasters, antiseptic, rehydration sachets and any muscle rubs you wish to use.

Personal medication

Keep this in your daysack.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

KIT LIST

Miscellaneous

Camera

Bring plenty of spare memory cards, and spare batteries – cold temperatures deplete battery power rapidly and recharging might not be possible above basecamp. The trek can be dusty so some sort of protective camera bag is advisable.

Penknife (optional)

Head torch

We recommend Petzl head torches. Bring spare batteries.

Snacks

You will be fed very well and given snacks each day however we advise bringing a small selection as a little bit of comfort. For summit night it's always good to have a few extra chunky bars for that extra boost. Energy gels and protein bars are not suitable for this expedition.

Hand warmers

For summit day

Documentation

Passport

Don't forget this! Your passport should have at least 6 months validity: ie. your passport expiry date needs to be at least six months after the final day of travel. Make sure you also have at least two blank pages.

Copy of passport

Just in case.

Passport photos x 4

We will need these to obtain your climbing and trekking permits.

Visa

For Pakistan, a visa needs to be obtained at least a month before travel from your nearest Pakistani embassy. Costs vary between nationalities. The 360-office crew can assist with the various documentation that may be required for some nationalities. Please also refer to the FAQ's.

Dental check up

We recommend you have a dental check-up before your trip. New fillings can be an issue at altitude if there is an air pocket left in the gap.

Money

We recommend you take around US\$200 – \$250 with you on to the mountain, in small denominations, to tip the Balti team. Plus, about \$200 for any extras along the way, satellite phone calls etc.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

KIT LIST

Travel insurance

Bring a copy of your own travel insurance details along with relevant contact numbers. We recommend looking into deals offered by the BMC, the Austrian Alpine Club or similar insurers. Team members should take out private insurance that covers against cancellation due to medical or personal reasons and it is important that the insurance contains coverage for medical evacuations by helicopter or other means. Many other insurance providers are available and we do recommend that you shop around to get the best cover for you on the expedition you are undertaking. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate insurance for your intended trip, which must include medical evacuation and coverage up to the maximum altitude of this expedition. Please contact the office if you have any queries about insurance for this trip.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan - Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m



Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

Pakistan

Is it safe to travel in Pakistan?

The short answer to this question is yes. Pakistan has had its share of political troubles but in recent years the British Foreign Office relaxed its advice for travellers. The Balti people are some of the friendliest most hospitable mountain people in the world. Don't expect to find the troubles of the past, gone are the famous Balti strikes and it is wonderfully clean both on the mountain and in the city.

What security measures are in place to assure my safety?

You are not travelling in any risky zones, so no measures are necessary for this expedition. If we have to travel through certain sections of the Karakoram Highway (KKH) then police might accompany you at some places, though this is due to protocol rather than necessity.

How long do we stay in Islamabad?

We stay 3 nights in a safe, modern and centrally located hotel.

How do I communicate with loved ones when in Pakistan?

While in the cities or up to the road head you will find there is mobile reception and you can use mobile networks. After that, the guide will have a satellite phone and this will be the only source of communication.

Do note that this sat phone will be for emergencies and expedition use only. Many climbers prefer to source and bring their own personal satellite phone to keep in touch with friends and family back home.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

The Climb

Who is the guide for this expedition?

[Rolfe Oostra](#) (UIML), who is leading this expedition, has been leading expeditions globally for more than 30 years. He has led expeditions to five of the 8,000m peaks: **Manaslu** (summit) in 2013; **Mount Everest** in 2007 (North Col), 2015, 2016 (summit) and 2019; **Lhotse** (no summit) in 2016; **Gasherbrum II** (summit) in 2022 as well as achieving back-to-back summits in 24 hours on **Cho Oyu** in 2016 in 2018.

He has led five unsupported expeditions to technically difficult 7,000m peaks and has guided more than seventy expeditions to 6,000m peaks (including Great Trango Tower, Ama Dablam and the Peruvian Andes). He has also completed the Bass version of the Seven Summits numerous times.

Leading an expedition of this calibre demands a thorough familiarity not only with the mountain's unique complexities but also a complete understanding of a client's individual requirements. With almost 30 years' experience in this leadership role, it is safe to say that Rolfe has what it takes to confidently deal with the demands this career entails

Which route will we be climbing the Great Trango Tower by?

Our attempt of the Great Trango Tower will be via the classic NW Face route pioneered by Americans Andy Selters and Scott Woolums in 1984.

Alpine grade: D+/TD

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

To get an idea of this climb can you give me a route description?

We include a description of our successful ascent of our proposed route in July 2017 to give you an idea of the terrain we will likely be climbing, the climbing difficulties and possible objective hazards.

Camp 1 (4-5 hours) The start of the route to camp 1 is the obvious gully directly above basecamp. The route to camp one is straight-forward with little technical difficulty (apart from the odd grade 1 scramble) but can be dangerous due to rockfall later in the day when warmer temperatures release stones which can fall onto the route, an early start is essential. Climb 800 meters up the broad ice-filled gully (reminiscent of the Canelleta found on the normal route of Aconcagua) to the large boulder just below the Nameless tower. (NT) This boulder has a wide zig-zag crack running through it and has several small tent platforms dug out beneath it. It provides valuable protection against rock and ice-fall and its position is marked by a huge cairn. Camp one is at 4750 meters..

Camp 2 (5-6 hrs or 5-8 hrs). From camp, we continue up the gully on the RHS of NT. Climb towards the obvious notch in the ridge separating NT from the GTT. Before reaching the notch, you will notice a series of slabs and rock walls on your RHS leading to an obvious tower called Little Trango (LT).

Continue climbing scree right up to the base of the slabs and climb 1 pitch of solid rock (F 4+). On top of the slab the ice begins. Initially the ice is around 50 degrees for 3 to 4 pitches but eventually kicks up to 70 to 80 degrees for 1 pitch. Above the steep icy headwall the angle drops back to 50 degrees.

To get an idea of this climb continued...

Climb well away from the obvious LHS rock-wall as this is loose and spits out rocks continuously, until you reach the obvious broad ridge. Climb the ridge on the RHS for 3 to 4 pitches until you reach a second 80-degree ice-covered headwall. Climb this for one pitch until you reach a prominent spur below Little Trango. (5320 meters) This is a great place to camp or alternatively you could camp higher (as we did on our second attempt) on the North-west ridge (5570 meters). If we chose to camp higher traverse around the base of LT (on the RHS) and continue for 250 meters up the obvious snow-slope (40 degrees) right to the well-defined ridge. There are several tiny niches amongst the precariously balanced boulders on the LHS as you reach the ridge where you might spend an anxious night. The views from the ridge to the peaks of the upper Baltoro are incredible. Beware that the NW ridge is heavily corniced.

Summit day (12-14 hrs.) Continue along the heavily corniced NW ridge until you reach a small plateau. Directly opposite you is the NE face which plummets over 3000 meters onto the Dungee glacier. This is the wall the 2 Aussies base-jumped from in the 1980's. The small plateau gradually steepens to the summit snow-slopes. Move well away from the ridge onto the snow-slopes which kick up to 70 degrees for 3 pitches. After the steep stuff, you move up to the heavily crevassed slopes below the summit ridge. Zig zag between the crevasses and delicately cross several snow-bridges keeping in line with the summit. (Prominent snow pyramid between the rocky east and west summits). Traverse to the LHS below the summit pyramid to a heavily corniced ridge. Climb along ridge 2 pitches to where the angle kicks up to 70 degrees again. (one pitch). At the top of this pitch you are on the summit ridge properly but

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

What climbing level should I be at to attempt this route?

Climbers must be able to independently climb grade D alpine routes, be competent on steep mixed terrain (rock and ice) wearing crampons and comfortably lead grade F5 on rock. This is a long multi day alpine route with several steep +70° pitches.

You mentioned Alpine climb, what does that mean?

Contrary to many guided, heavily supported climbs on 6,000-meter mountains, an ascent of the Great Trango Tower requires the climbing team to be much more self-sufficient. There are no high-altitude porters helping with daily routines above basecamp nor is there any fixed line. Each climber will have to cook his own food and melt snow for water in high camps as well as carry their own loads to the higher camps.

What is the typical climbing strategy for climbing the Great Trango Tower?

We aim to take the same hybrid expedition/alpine climbing approach to climbing this mountain as we practice on Aconcagua and Elbrus. This expedition is not supported by Sherpa or high-altitude porters and the onus will be on the team to carry their own equipment to the higher camps.

A typical ascent profile looks like this.

1. Carry/acclimatisation day to C1 (4,750 m) from BC, descend to BC to sleep.
2. Climb to C1 and occupy C1 for one night.
3. Climb to C2 (two places possible at 5320 m and 5,570 m respectively.)
4. Summit push (6,280 m) and descend to C1.
5. Descend to BC and rest.
6. Contingency day.

Who did the first ascent of the Great Trango Tower?

The Great Trango Tower, was first climbed by Americans Dennis Hennek (team leader), James Morrissey, John Roskelley, Galen Rowell, and Kim Schmitz, on July 21st, 1977 by the West Pillar.

What is the climber to guide ratio?

We employ both Balti trekking guides, cooks and basecamp managers for the trek into basecamp and for the ascent we allow a 2 climbers to 1 guide ratio.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

How many climbers are on this expedition?

We limit this expedition to two climbers. The only exception to this is if the team are an organised climbing club or a large group of friends who wish to climb together, then more guides will be employed to sustain the 2 to 1 ratio.

Kit

What gear will I need?

Please review the kit list for this expedition. While all items are required there may be times when some of the items on the gear list may not be used (such as warm weather or changing conditions). The lists are created by the guides so that climbers are prepared to summit in any conditions. The equipment list will also advise our recommended brands to consider using, based on our experience. Please do get in touch with the 360 team if you have any questions.

Can I rent equipment for this expedition?

We advocate the use of personal equipment whenever possible, and this is particularly important for the use of boots and high-altitude clothing.

However, things you don't currently have can be hired cost effectively from our partners at [Outdoor Hire](#) (in the UK) or similar specialist rental outlets in your nearest city.

What clothing should I wear at the start of the expedition?

Our guides usually start the trek wearing long, lightweight trekking trousers and wicking (non-cotton) shirts. Long trousers are recommended to act as sun protection. Shorts can also be worn on the initial few days of the road trip and for walks around Skardu as the temperature can be warm. Ensure that you apply sun protection frequently. Sunglasses are worn for most of the trek as well as sunhats.

The prevailing conditions on the trek will dictate what you will wear. If it is cold when you leave the camp in the morning, then wear your base layer plus soft shell. As things warm up take advantage of the zipper system which most trekking clothing must adjust to your own preferred temperature. If you get too warm, take a layer off.

Waterproofs are needed on hand, especially during the acclimatisation phase of the expedition. The Karakoram creates its own weather system, and it is not unusual to be caught out in an afternoon snowstorm low down on the mountain. Waterproofs should be Gortex material or similar and be always carried with you.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

My rucksack weighs a tonne, how do I go about making things easier?

We will adopt a hybrid Alpine/Expedition strategy for this route. This means that we will do two load carries to camp 1. The first time we will only carry a load to C1 and will not sleep there. This has the double benefit of both helping with our acclimatisation plus we can carry around 15 kg of equipment to this camp (mostly technical climbing equipment, double boots and high-altitude food and fuel) which we cache there. The following day we will go up again but this time it's only a one-way trip as we remain at C1 for the night. For this climb we will carry around the same weight as the previous day (mostly sleeping bag, sleeping mat, some clothes etc). Above C1 we climb alpine style but only take the absolute essentials for the ascent to the summit and 1 night in camp 2.

How heavy will my climbing pack be?

In general, climbing packs on 6,000m peaks are relatively light. You will likely be carrying 18 – 20 kg on the two occasions to camp one, though less on the trek into base camp and on summit day. While on the summit push you should be prepared to carry your personal gear for the day and some of camping equipment. Your rucksack for this part of the expedition will weigh around 10 –12 kg.

What is the best type of footwear to use for the various phases on this expedition?

There are two distinct types of footwear on this trek.

The boots used for the trekking phase to BC should be sturdy, waterproof, insulated against cold temperatures and offer adequate ankle support. (Crampon compatible B2 boots.) In addition, it is highly recommended that your boots are well worn in to prevent the formation of blisters. A range of suitable boots are on the market and further advice as to which brand names are available and their relative pros and cons can be found online or at your local gear store. If you are still stuck then please don't hesitate to get in touch with our 360 office for advice.

Double boots are essential for climbing 6,000m peaks. You will only be using your double boots for the entire mountain phase on this expedition. These boots should have a soft insulating inner bootie and a hard-plastic exterior outer boot with a high insulated exterior gaiter covering both. Either La Sportiva G2 SMs, Scarpa Phantom 6000s or La Sportiva Spantiks. Temperatures high on the mountain are usually well below -20°C and only double boots can withstand such conditions. Ensure that you have tried the boots on before you leave home and that you can wear a thin and a thick pair of socks in them and still be able to freely move your toes.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

What about crampons?

Crampons are worn for the majority of the time you spend above basecamp and for the actual summit day itself. Your crampons should preferably be of the easy “heel clip” variety (rather than the strap systems which can be fiddly). It is not necessary to use specialist technical climbing crampons, standard 12 point all round crampons such as those from Grivel will do the job very well.

What will I carry inside my daysack?

The content of your rucksack for the trekking phase should include: a fleece or light down jacket (for when taking breaks or weather changes) a full set (top and bottom) of waterproofs, sufficient water for the day, snacks, camera equipment, personal medication, mini first aid kit, sun hat, sun-cream, sunglasses, a warm hat and gloves and a head torch. Your day-to-day rucksack will weigh no more than 4-6 kg. For the trek the rest of your gear can go in your kit bag and/or larger rucksack to be carried by the porters or mules.

For the mountain phase include additional items such as sleeping bags, down clothing and personal climbing equipment which are to be carried between camps both on the ascent and descent.

Your rucksack can be filled to the brim with extra stuff (socks, down jackets etc.) before checking in at the airport to save weight and space in your hold luggage.

Our main expedition luggage will be carried to basecamp by porters and/or mules.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

What type of rucksack should I use for this expedition?

A good all-round size, approximately 80L, will accommodate both phases of this expedition. It is worth considering expedition specific rucksacks rather than travel rucksacks, and it's important that your rucksack has an adjustable waist belt to transfer the weight of your daily load onto your hips and from here onto your legs so that the strongest muscles do most of the carrying and that the shoulder straps are sufficiently padded for extra comfort. Another handy feature would be a compartment in which to fit a Camelbak or water bladder. A rucksack this size is recommended as on the climb you will need to carry the above items plus your own sleeping bag, down clothing, sleeping mat and personal climbing equipment to the higher camps and on the descent.

How warm does my sleeping bag need to be?

Sleeping bags should be rated from -20 to -40°C. From the first camp upwards, it is not unusual to experience frosty nights and a good night's sleep is important to giving you the best chance to climb this mountain. And ensure you get a sleeping bag that has this temperature rating at this comfort zone rather than as its extreme zone. Our guides take sleeping bags rated to well below -20°C to ensure that they are warm at night. A 5-season sleeping bag can be enhanced by using an inner silk or fleece bag (or similar).

The idea is to be as comfortable and warm as possible for the night and henceforth to ensure plenty of sleep for the arduous days ahead. Some climbers have found the use of a "Bivouac bag" helpful to increase the warmth of their bag.

It is important to remember that down sleeping bags work by your own body heating the down that's inside the bag. Once you have warmed up the bag, the down will retain the heat and ensure that you sleep at a temperature that's your own body temperature.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

What does the guides wear on summit day?

On summit day it gets cold and temperatures of -20C are not unusual. Typically, our guide wears two sets of base layers (long johns), a fleece mid layer (top and bottom) and thin down jacket or windstopper jacket on the torso. A thick down jacket is kept in the rucksack and used when stopping for belaying or when the weather becomes colder.

On their hands they'll wear a thin layer of fleece or silk gloves over which a thicker set of gloves are worn. A set of mittens (down recommended) is kept in the rucksack should it get colder.. Hand warmers inside the mittens are also recommended.

Their heads are covered by a thermal "beanie" hat or a thick balaclava and the hood of their down jackets. On their feet the guides wear one thin sock and one thick sock. Foot warmers recommended.

Over the top of their clothing system, they will wear a climbing harness and you will be attached to a rope for high passes/summit day.

On summit day your guides will also wear snow goggles.

What clothing is suitable for when we come back from the mountain?

Casual dress that respects the local Islamic culture is recommended for Islamabad and Skardu. Daytime temperatures are usually warm and shorts and t-shirts are fine. Evenings are generally cooler and a light fleece is recommended. A bag containing fresh clothes can be left in the hotel storage ready for your return.

The Weather

What is the best time of year to climb in the Karakoram?

The best weather is found during the period June to August when it is usually quite fair, dry and stable. Daytime temperatures are pleasantly warm in the valleys (20-30°C) whilst cool to very cold (especially with wind chill) high on the mountain. Night-time temperatures are cold (possibly as low as minus 20°C) and you should make sure you have a very warm sleeping bag. A good down jacket and good quality mitts are highly recommended.

How cold can it get?

The coldest night time temperature at camp 2 might get as low as -25°C with windchill. You will not be climbing in these low temperatures but remain inside your sleeping bag inside your tent.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

Training

How fit do I need to be for this expedition?

To climb the Great Trango Tower it helps to be as fit as possible. Hopefully by the time you book you will have a good understanding of your level of fitness and how you cope with altitude and with the discomforts of an expedition of this nature. This expedition is gruelling and will be physically demanding. We have rated it as P5, T5 for level of fitness needed. Please check our fitness chart and recommended training regime.

How can I maximise my chance of success?

High altitude mountaineering is about slack days of low activity followed by long days where every grain of stamina and every ounce of determination you possess is necessary to reach your goal.

Your best bet to prepare for a mountain such as GTT is to increase the intensity of your exercise in small increments over 8-12 months before your expedition. Concentrate on cardiovascular workouts during the initial weeks and try to spend at least 2 weekends a month going on long duration walks (longer than 8 hrs) carrying a rucksack of around 15kg and aiming for 800-1,000 meters of ascent. As you get stronger, increase this rate of exercise and the duration. eg. by walking every weekend and running 5km every second day.

We'd also encourage you to increase your climbing efficiency and use of climbing equipment by undertaking ALPINE climbs in the Scottish Highlands, Pyrenees or Alps. This will increase your body's ability to cope with the extra demands of these activities and also allows you to get familiar with the equipment you will be using on the mountain.

A focused regime will not only prepare your body for carrying minor loads but also for the big days on the mountain itself, it will help break in your boots and get you used to your equipment for the trekking stages of the expedition.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

Are you able to recommend a training plan?

A training plan / regime pay dividends when you reach base camp because even though you can't train for altitude your body will be ready for arduous days and you will be familiar with how to best use your equipment, both adding to you being able to enjoy and appreciate the mountain all the more.

Along with the tips above, an example training plan can be found at the end of the expedition brochure. We also work in partnership with the brilliant team at [Joe's Basecamp](#) – check the thorough advice offered on their website. Several excellent training plans can also be found online to prepare you for this ascent – we highly recommend those designed by [UpHill Athlete](#).

Food and Drink

What is the local food like?

Pakistani cuisine, although delicious, may not always be to everyone's taste. As such, during the trek and at basecamp we have our own chefs who create appetising, locally sourced and healthy dishes in a full catering kitchen.

What is the food like on the mountain?

Altitude can often affect your appetite, and so we aim for the food on the trek to stimulate your appetite and keep you going. The meals on the mountain are excellent – freshly cooked and nutritious, as well as varied. Local ingredients are used, and if you have any dietary requirements do let us know beforehand and the local team will do their best to cater to your needs. The menu is designed to fill you with carbohydrate-loaded meals to give you plenty of energy for the trek, as well as being well-balanced. You'll have tea and coffee, as well as drinking water, along with the meals and in camp. You can expect the trek menu to consist of the following, or similar:

Breakfast: Local breads (paratha), jams and honey, porridge and/or cooked eggs.

Lunch: crackers, cheese, sardines, biscuits.

Afternoon tea: pakora, samosa, French fries.

Dinner: Soup, rice, daal, vegetables (potato, cabbage, peas, cauliflower, carrot, etc), chapatis and salad. Fresh meat, usually chicken, is sometimes available and at other times tinned meat is used.

Dessert: custard, jelly and tinned fruit.

Above basecamp, you will boil water to cook the "boil in the bag" meals. These ready meals are of the highest standard and come in a huge variety of flavours.

Snacks of sweets, chocolate bars and nuts will also be available, but you can of course bring any of your favourite snacks with you to top these up. Choose high-energy goodies to give you a boost on those longer days!

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

What meals are provided above basecamp?

Above basecamp you will be expected to use gas stoves to boil water to cook the “boil in the bag” meals and melt sufficient ice to serve as drinking water for the following day. The ready meals are of the highest standard and come in a huge variety of flavours. Appetite is likely to be reduced as we ascend higher, but we aim to cater for every personal taste with a variety of meals to encourage essential fuel loading.

I have food allergies, can these be catered for?

Absolutely, please inform the office of your specific allergies or intolerances and we will ensure that these are considered on the trek and that the local teams have all of the information necessary.

How safe is the food and water?

As in Islamabad and Skardu, once on the trail to basecamp it is highly recommended that you stick to treated rather than tap water or drinking from streams. We provide sufficient boiled water at the beginning and end of each trekking day. You can also bring your own water treatment solution.

We will provide teas and coffees at mealtimes on the trek and at basecamp but if you want sodas, bottled waters, specialty coffees, or drinks outside of mealtimes we ask that you purchase them yourself. This is an option for the cities, towns and first part of the trek.

Do I need to bring my own snacks?

We do provide a variety of snacks alongside the meals on the mountain, but we want to make sure everyone has the food that they need. On an expedition such as this, it's always great to have your favourite snacks, particularly for early, cold mornings, or longer days.

Getting lots of calories is hugely important, so go with Gu packs, shot blocks, nuts, Snickers bars, cheese, etc... whatever it is that you know you can eat when you don't want to eat! Getting speciality and familiar food can be difficult in Pakistan so it's best you bring what you love from home.

Also, we recommend to bring a good supply of cough drops or hard candy as you might like them in the dry air. We'll have some for the team but people go through them quickly!

How often is fresh water available for replenishing during a typical trekking and climbing day?

Ample water is continuously available during the trek and at basecamp, as are hot drinks, soups and the occasional canned beverage. You will be able to refill at any time from the water supply provided in both the kitchen tent and the dining tent (hot water flasks 24 hours per day).

On the summit push your Guide will carry extra flasks of hot tea in addition to your own water supply. The use of stoves and cooking equipment will be demonstrated to you by your Guide before this happens.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

Where does the drinking water come from? On the trek and in the mountain camps?

For your stay in towns and cities and for the road journey to Skardu (if taken) filtered, bottled water is provided. On the trek, we will use locally sourced drinking water from streams, springs or nearby glacier. These are usually fresh being topped up from meltwater above or by rainfall, but we also increase their purity by treating the water with purification chemicals or by boiling it. We ensure the water is as pure as possible. At the camps there is a continuous supply of hot water for you to make hot drinks and lunches and dinners usually commence with a soup. Further, in towns ample soft drinks are available at shops, hotels and restaurants.

Accommodation

What hotels do we stay at in Islamabad?

We stay at safe, centrally-located hotels. Our choice of hotels offer comfortable rooms, classy on-site restaurants and quiet areas just a stones throw away from the bustle of Islamabad's city centre and many of the cultural sites which feature on any visitor's list of things to see.

We'll arrange visits to some of these cultural highlights when in town, as well as a visit to Rawalpindi, the twin city of Islamabad.

What if I arrive early or depart late? Is there a single room option for this expedition?

We are happy to make any arrangements scheduled outside of the trek dates: these may include personalised tours, extra hotel rooms, private airport pick-ups, early arrivals and late departures. We can also arrange private rooms. Please indicate your requirements on your application form or speak to the office beforehand and we will assist with the relevant arrangements and advise on any additional costs.

Health and Safety

What is the risk in climbing this peak?

The very nature of climbing a remote, 6000m peak is risky. Although there are risks associated with climbing any mountain whether it is Kilimanjaro, Mont Blanc or Aconcagua, the risks of climbing in the Karakoram are considerably greater primarily due to its remoteness, extreme altitude and weather conditions. Physical, mental and technical preparation will go a long way towards a safe ascent.

Furthermore, our Western guide and Balti support crew are trained in the use of medical oxygen, Gamow bags and specialized wilderness first aid equipment and medicine which we take on all our itineraries. We also carry satellite phones and radios to ensure proper communications with the outside world and between camps. In fact, we are often the first port of call when other teams have an emergency on the mountain.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

What happens if there is a problem on the mountain?

Your guide is in constant communication with basecamp via radio. In most cases of emergency rescue the problems can be attributed to slow acclimatisation or altitude and, if so, the solution is immediate descent to lower altitudes. Your guide is very experienced in dealing with any problems that may arise and our leaders have the highest standard of wilderness first aid qualifications and can handle emergencies to the highest level of competency. We also have a fully qualified high-altitude medical professional supporting the team remotely.

Am I likely to suffer from altitude sickness on this expedition?

The likelihood of getting altitude related problems are dramatically reduced on this expedition due to our carefully designed acclimatisation strategy. We have years of experience in dealing with altitude and its related problems and have devised an ascent strategy which caters for a broad spectrum of individual altitude adaptation.

Still, it is important to understand there are different types of altitude sickness and that, at times, altitude related problems can happen, and we must be able to recognise the symptoms if they occur.

The most common of these is high altitude sickness (AMS – Acute Mountain Sickness). Symptoms can vary, but generally this is just the process your body naturally goes through to adjust to the higher altitudes and the reduced partial pressure of the atmosphere. For some people the acclimatisation process takes a little longer than others. For our guides this is all part and parcel of ascending to these altitudes.

Our experienced support team will be assessing each climber's personal situation carefully. By carefully observation and communication, guides can quickly determine possible symptoms and are on hand to advise and assist.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

What can I do to help prevent AMS?

Apart from a gain in altitude, further factors which contribute to the development of AMS symptoms are an insufficient intake of water or ascending too quickly.

Your guide and incredible local team will be on hand throughout and will remind you to drink plenty of water, walk slowly, stay warm and eat well.

We recommend that you familiarise yourself with the various affects that altitude can cause. During your pre-climb briefing we will describe altitude sickness to you in detail and advise you how to cope with it. The most important thing is not to fear it, but to respect it and to know how to deal with it and, more importantly, tell your leaders how you feel.

Is there a risk of getting HACE (High Altitude Cerebral Edema) and HAPE (High Altitude Pulmonary Edema) on the mountain?

The severe forms of altitude sickness, HACE and HAPE, are extremely unlikely to occur on this expedition. However, our Leaders and Sherpa team are fully trained in recognition of the onset of these problems and will deal with them at the first sign of their development.

Should I bring Diamox on the expedition with me?

We recommend you come armed with a course of Diamox or other high-altitude drug on this expedition, though we do not recommend that take you these as a prophylactic during the trek or climb. We view Diamox as a treatment drug rather than a preventative medicine. Most adventure medics give similar advice, however we do appreciate this can be confusing, as many GPs (who aren't necessarily mountaineers) do suggest taking it as a prophylactic.

Here at 360 we pride ourselves on designing all our itineraries with acclimatisation front and centre and this expedition has been carefully designed to allow for your body to adjust to the altitude gradually, safely and comfortably. However, if you find that you are still having problems adjusting to the altitude (see our FAQ on Altitude Sickness) then your expedition leader or medic will recommend the correct course of action regarding taking Diamox.

During the ascent, we advocate that each team member carries these drugs in the same place (i.e. top LH pocket of your climbing jacket) so that if an emergency should arise then the guide or fellow team member can locate them easily.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

Should I take Diamox?

It is far preferable to take Diamox if and when needed during the course of the expedition. If you are already taking it and then start having altitude related problems you are left with few options but to descend to a more comfortable altitude which sadly often means that the summit is not attainable.

Furthermore, Diamox is a diuretic, meaning you will have to drink a lot of fluid to prevent dehydration. Of course, the upshot of this is you'll have to pee more which means you'll probably be having to get up more in the night and take cover behind rocks during the day. Another quite common side-effect is that it can cause your extremities to "buzz and tingle" including your fingers, toes and lips which can feel quite unsettling. Other side-effects can include dizziness and light headedness with loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. Although all these side-effects are manageable when you have symptoms of altitude sickness, we personally believe it is counter-intuitive to take it unless necessary.

Of course, it is totally up to you, this is just our recommendation and we're not doctors. If you do decide to take Diamox on the advice of your doctor then please do let your leader know in situ so they are aware of this. We also suggest you take the drug for a couple of days a few weeks before travelling so you can experience the symptoms before taking them during the trek.

What vaccinations do I need?

None are currently required for entry, but the following vaccinations are recommended for travel to Pakistan:

- Hepatitis A
- Typhoid
- Diphtheria
- Tetanus
- Polio

This list is not absolute and inoculation requirements can change frequently so it is important you visit your GP or local travel clinic for the latest recommendations and to ensure you are up to date on necessary vaccinations. A health certificate regarding COVID-19 may be required.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

You advocate taking a small first aid kit, what should it have in it?

We advocate a self-help principle on this expedition for minor medical problems. If you have a blister developing, for example, then please stop, take off your boot and treat it before it becomes a problem.

We would recommend your own first aid kit should contain:

Diamox, or other high-altitude drug, enough for duration of expedition; a basic blister kit, plasters, antiseptic, sun protection, your own personal medication (your luggage might not get to camp before you and so you may not be able to take your medicine according to the regime you are used to), basic pain relief (paracetamol / aspirin / ibuprofen,) and a personal course of antibiotics – two different types are preferable, as back up. Generally, the best approach to take when packing your first aid kit is to include such basic medications as if you would on a family or personal holiday.

Your guide will carry a very comprehensive first aid kit that contains a wide range of supplies and medications. They are fully trained to use whatever is needed for any emergency that may arise. We advocate keeping this in mind when packing your own first aid supplies and keeping your own first aid kit as compact and light as possible.

Is helicopter rescue possible on this expedition?

Yes, helicopters are available for rescue if weather and logistics permits. Helicopters will of course make rescues and evacuations far quicker and seamless, but we always plan and continue to plan to be self-sufficient if outside help is unavailable due to logistics and bad weather.

We take state of the art medical and rescue equipment with us and ensure all our staff on the mountain have current first aid and/or medical qualifications and have our own expedition medical specialist on standby for the duration of this expedition.

What happens if I there is an accident and I need to be evacuated?

Evacuation in the region is handled solely by the army helicopters, which operate from the Skardu army base. In the case of an evacuation, climbers would be flown to Skardu Airport, where the climber/passenger is then taken over by Mehdi to Islamabad.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

Would my evacuation be covered by insurance?

In the event the evacuation service is needed, we would liaise with your insurance company in the first instance via our local ground crew though depending on the severity of the situation the helicopter would be dispatched immediately.

It is imperative that all climbers on this have solid insurance cover that covers for a full rescue situation. In the event of an evacuation a bill will be issued to either you directly or your insurance company. In anticipation of a potential evacuation, we would advise you contact your bank prior to the expedition to let them know you are going to be in Pakistan and to please not prevent any payments on the card in relation to Askari Aviation (Pvt) Ltd.

We require all climbers on the expedition to sign a waiver to confirm they agree to pay for the costs of a helicopter rescue in the event of any injury or evacuation procedure, regardless of the outcome.

It is your responsibility to check with your insurance company all the ins and outs of a rescue and ensure they understand how rescues work in Pakistan, and to ensure that your next of kin is in understanding of this agreement in the worst case scenario.

The 360 team (both in situ and from the main 360 office) will be on hand throughout any evacuation process – to correspond with your insurance and your family where necessary.

What medical/emergency equipment do you bring on this expedition?

All our Guides and Balti crew have attained the necessary qualifications and training needed to deal not only with emergencies but also to maintain a healthy expedition from day one. For this expedition we will be bringing comprehensively supplied medical kits, emergency oxygen and Gamow bags as well as state of the art communication equipment. On the mountain our Expedition Leaders carry sufficient medical equipment to deal with localised first aid scenarios and at basecamp we have sufficient supplies to deal with longer lasting medical problems.

What happens if I need to leave the expedition early?

If a climber needs to leave early for whichever reason, medical or personal, your guide will deal with the matter with utmost competency and discretion. Further arrangements will be made with the assistance of our 360 team in Skardu and Europe to arrange every detail of the journey back from the mountain. Additional costs (transport, hotels, flights etc.) might be incurred by the climber but our 360 team will be able to assist in every detail of your departure.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

What happens to toilet waste on the mountain?

CKNP (Central Karakorum National Park) is responsible for sanitation of campsites they collect a fee from all groups to keep the area clean to finance their waste removal operation.

Sanitary toilet facilities are provided on the trek and at basecamp. The waste is carried out on mules or porters and disposed of according to current sanitation and health regulations.

Above ABC, basic toilet facilities are provided – though you'll find that your need to use the toilet will be less frequent at altitude. You will need to bring up sufficient toilet paper from ABC to cater for your individual requirements.

Travel & Insurance

What is the best air route to my destination?

International flights are not included with this expedition however we are more than willing to assist you with every detail of the journey to Pakistan. We will, for example, be able to advise you of the weight restrictions imposed by various airlines and recommend quality airlines.

Booking your own air travel allows you to have the flexibility to use frequent flyer miles as well as manage your luggage weight.

Please let us know your travel arrangements to and from Islamabad, and if you will be arriving earlier than the noted start date.

What is the baggage allowance of the internal flight from Islamabad to Skardu?

For your own comfort, travel light. Normally, airlines restrict baggage to 15kg for the Skardu flight, but you will be wearing your climbing boots and one set of trekking clothes. Normally we will travel with two duffel bags, one will go on the plane and then the second duffel travels via the KKH to Skardu. Some items can be left at the Islamabad hotel for your return.

Will I need to purchase insurance?

Yes, trip insurance is required for this expedition and it needs to cover the entire cost of the trip and include at a minimum, trip cancellation, trip interruption, medical expenses, repatriation, and evacuation for the entire length of the expedition.

Unforeseen hiccups are part of adventure travel both before and during the expedition and these can be very expensive, so every effort should be taken to account for them in advance.

Your insurance details are requested on the booking form; however, this can be arranged at a later date. 360 Expeditions will be requesting your insurance details 8 weeks before your departure. It is your responsibility to have adequate insurance, and you will not be able to join this expedition without it.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

Are there any entry or Visa requirements?

Yes. Currently, UK, US citizens and most EU nationals need to purchase Visas in advance for Pakistan. Climbers of other nationalities should check with their local embassy. Passports must be valid for at least six months after the end date of the trip and have at least two blank pages. Costs vary between nationalities. The 360 office crew can assist you with the various documentation that may be required for some nationalities.

This process has been made easier by all Pakistani embassies to encourage tourism to the country. Specialised forms might be required for some but our 360 office team and our agents in Islamabad can assist you with this.

Finance

What additional spending money will we need?

It is better to have more money than you need than not enough, while most things are covered on the trip once you land in Islamabad (check what's included/what's not included list for details) you will still need cash.

Generally, we recommend bringing US \$500 -600 plus a credit card to cover all potential expenses, including an early departure, but it is unlikely that you will need all of this.

The cash that you need to bring includes money for staff tips (See the questions on tips below), to cover expenses for a potential early departure (not often, but occasionally this occurs) for miscellaneous expenses like non-group meals, shopping, drinks around Islamabad and Skardu (sodas, specialty coffees, bottled water, alcohol), charging of devices, and snacks (meals are covered).

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

How much do we tip our local crew?

Our team of Balti local crew, work extremely hard to ensure that your expedition runs well. While tipping is not compulsory, it is always very much appreciated and adds a real value to our team.

Unlike Nepal, where tips are all separated out into summit bonuses and crew tips, in Pakistan things operate slightly differently. Generally, we suggest a minimum of \$300 per client for the entire local crew, to be shared amongst them.

Tipping the 360 Leader is entirely at your discretion.

Any tips on using credit cards in Pakistan?

We would advise you let your credit card company know you will be traveling so you can use your card (and not set off the fraud alert due to using the card in a foreign destination).

Is it ok to use American dollars in Pakistan?

The local currency is the Pakistani rupee but American dollars are readily recognised and are easily converted to the local currency. Small denominations (1s, 5s, 10s and 20s) are better and although American dollars are accepted, you can change money into rupees at when you arrive in Islamabad. Rates are generally about the same and we haven't yet encountered one that isn't legitimate. Also, there are now quite a few ATMs around town where you can use your card to take out local cash at a good rate. It is much more difficult to change money, especially large sums, once you leave Skardu.

When is the money due for this expedition? What kind of payment do you accept?

Generally, deposits are due when you book as we need in turn to book the international flights and permits well in advance. The full balance should be paid four months prior to departure. However, having said that, our aim is to get you to the top of this mountain and we understand that personal financial situations can vary. Please contact our friendly office crew to discuss a suitable payment plan should you find raising the funds to be difficult. We have been in your shoes after all and go by the motto of 'where there's a will there's a way'!

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

What is your cancellation and refund policy?

Please read 360 Expeditions' Terms and Conditions carefully before you depart. 360 Expeditions highly recommend trip cancellation insurance for all expeditions. Due to the nature and heavy costs of government and operator permits, 360 Expeditions must adhere to a stringent refund policy.

Communications and Electronics

What is phones and Wi-Fi?

We suggest picking up a local SIM card in Islamabad with a data package. Signal is reliable in Islamabad and Skardu and for the road trip on the KKH. Once on the trek to basecamp, service becomes unreliable, although it can sometimes pick up a low signal (though usually not enough to support data). You can buy a local SIM card in Islamabad. Your phone will need to be unlocked and you will need your passport to get a SIM card.

After we leave Askole the only communication possible is by satellite phone. We carry one as standard for every expedition and use it to update our 360 office on our progress and to pass on messages. The sat phone is available for emergency use but do bear in mind that this phone is an essential tool for emergencies and re-supply, and we allow limited personal talk time. Satellite phones are increasingly being bought by the climbers themselves for expeditions of this duration as this allows them to contact their family and friends whenever they want to. Cheap packages for satellite phone rental are also available in most western countries.

Great Trango Tower

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 6,280m

FAQ'S

What is your point of contact? How can my family follow my progress?

Your guide will be sending regular updates to the 360 offices to allow your family and friends to track your progress on social media.

The best place to reach a loved one is through our main 360 office. We try to organise a daily satellite call with the 360 Leader on the mountain to allow communication between the outside world and to keep our team updated with important developments occurring at home.

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TRAINING PROGRAM

To begin 6 months prior to the expedition where possible.

1. CVS: Cardiovascular exercise which is low impact such as swimming, cycling, cross trainer, rowing.

2. Weekend walk should be done over undulating terrain. Only a light rucksack needs to be carried.

3. For specific exercises it is worth doing static squats and heel raises on a regular basis to improve leg muscles prior to the trip. Static squats are especially useful to help protect the knees. Please remember that it is still important to have a well balanced workout using a variety of muscle groups.

4. It is worth winding down and resting in the week leading up to the trip, doing several light walks to keep things going.

5. When walking going at a pace of a brisk walk with a light sweat and enough to feel breathless is recommended

6. During the program, rather than step up suddenly each month (example, going for 3 one hour walks each week during the weekdays in April to 3 one and half hour walks suddenly in May) it is better to build up gradually each week so there isn't a large transition (example, going for 3 one hour walks during week 1 in April, going for 3 one hour and ten minute walks during week 2 in April, going for 3 one hour and fifteen minute walks during week 3 in April, going for 3 one hour and twenty minute walks during week 4 in April)

6. It is important you seek medical advice prior to starting any training program, especially if you are not used to regular physical exertion

All the best with your training!

MONTH 1

OPT 1

2 x 30 mins weekday walk
1 x 1 hour weekend walk
1 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 30 mins weekday walk
2 x 1 hour weekend walk
1 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 2

OPT 1

2 x 45 mins weekday walk
1 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 45 mins weekday walk
2 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 3

OPT 1

2 x 45 mins weekday walk
1 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 45 mins weekday walk
2 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 4

OPT 1

3 x 1 hour weekday walk
1 x 4 hours weekend walk
3 x 15 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 1 hour weekday walk
2 x 4 hours weekend walk
3 x 15 mins CVS

MONTH 5

OPT 1

3 x 1.5 hours weekday walk
1 x 5 hours weekend walk
3 x 20 – 25 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 1.5 hours weekday walk
2 x 5 hours weekend walk
3 x 20 – 25 mins CVS

MONTH 6

OPT 1

3 x 2 hours weekday walk
1 x 6 hours weekend walk
3 x 30 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 3 hours weekday walk
2 x 6 hours weekend walk
3 x 30 mins CVS



"Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty & well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out & loudly proclaiming 'Wow! What a Ride!' "

Dream it. Plan it. Live it.

+44(0)207 1834 360 360-expeditions.com