

Spantik

Pakistan – Karakoram

Asia | 7,027m



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Those who attempt to climb the little-known **Spantik** in the mighty Karakoram touch base with the pioneers of yesteryear. Well-known mountain explorers such as Fanny and William Bullock-Workman were equally drawn to the mystical allure and remoteness of this mountain as early as 1906.

The location of this peak in the heavily glaciated, fertile Hunza region of the **Karakoram mountains** must surely make this one of the most spectacular mountain objectives on earth. Trekking and climbing through the second highest mountain range in the world, as you gain altitude towards Spantik's 7,027m summit you are rewarded with incredible views of famous Hunza and Karakoram giants, Nanga Parbat and K2 amongst them.

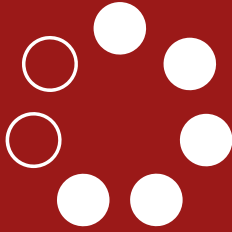
Spantik presents a unique opportunity to **climb above 7,000 metres** in a safe and straightforward expedition. The common route, as pioneered by the German team of Karl Kramer in 1955, follows the spectacular south-east ridge, encounters few technical obstacles (graded PD) and enjoys a very high success rate.

This **fully-supported expedition** provides you with a chance to not only test yourself at altitudes above 7,000 metres but also offers a fantastic introduction to this incredible mountain area, its friendly people and fascinating culture. In comparison to other expeditions of this duration, the Karakoram is still a relatively inexpensive place to climb, but the treks are just as rewarding.

Spantik

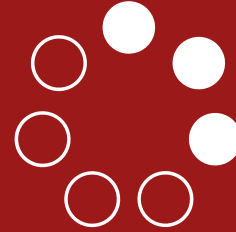
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Physical – P5

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 – T3

May involve harder scrambling or some trekking and climbing with ropes. If snow is encountered then glacier travel with ropes, ice axes and crampons will be necessary. Basic climbing skills are ideal, but these will also be taught (and certainly practiced) during the expedition and pre-summit phase.

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



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ITINERARY

DAY 1 : Depart UK

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

DAY 2 : Arrival in Islamabad, fly to Skardu

On arrival in Islamabad we will either connect to an internal flight to Skardu in Gilgit-Baltistan or, if the weather is such that the flights are unavailable, we start our journey to the Karakoram on the spectacular Karakoram Highway (KKH).

We will be advised by our local guides, but we may also need to visit the offices of the Ministry of Tourism before we depart in order to receive an official briefing about the expedition.

Weather permitting; we take the early morning flight to Skardu. We generally have around an 80% chance of flying (the weather in this area is changeable and so we can't predict whether the flights will be allowed), but if scheduled the one-hour flight gives breathtaking views of the Rupal and Diamir faces of Nanga Parbat. If we are able to fly, we will spend the remainder of the day in Skardu. The town is the major trekking and expedition hub in the Karakoram, and we will have the opportunity to visit its many bazaars, known for their hand-woven woollen cloth and elaborate, colourful embroidered local gowns. We can also take a stroll up the hill to the ancient Alexandria Fort that overlooks the town. The sight of the mighty Indus below, snaking across the wide alluvial plain, gives us a peek into the scenery we have in store.

If taking the Karakoram Highway, we prepare for a simply astonishing two-day journey. The KKH was once an ancient Silk Road, but is now an international highway connecting Pakistan, along with 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, which will allow us to capture a glimpse into the everyday world of these mountain people.

Depending on the weather, from the road we still have the chance of some incredible views of the mighty Nanga Parbat, the ninth highest mountain in the world. Plus, you will experience first-hand the engineering achievement of this road. Cut deeply into the side of mountains and high above the Indus River, there are few roads to compete – it is, for many, a highlight of the trip and a truly exciting way to start this expedition.

(LD)

ITINERARY

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)

DAY 4 : Drive from Skardu to Arandu village camp. (2770m) Drive: 5-6 hrs

After an early breakfast we will begin the jeep safari towards the first camp of our expedition. Soon after leaving Skardu, a suspension bridge crosses the mighty Indus River at the settlement of Thorego. From here the road runs through sand dunes before climbing over the steep shoulder of a mountain from where the entire Shigar Valley and confluence of the Braldu and Basha Rivers can be seen: previous expeditions have described this drive as being both utterly enchanting and spectacular. The road then descends to the village of Shigar and from here we follow the west bank of the river. After a few hours drive we will take a short break at Chu Tron to see the hot sulphur springs, before continuing up the valley to the village of Doko. From here, we follow a four-wheel drive track to Arandu, located at the snout of the Chogo Lungma Glacier, where we strike camp for the night.

(BLD)

DAY 5 : Trek to Chogo Brangsa Camp. (3,300m) 5-6 hrs

From Arandu, we begin to follow the north side of the Chogo Lungma Glacier along to the summer settlement of Bukhum. A well-defined path climbs up steadily for about 600 metres and after crossing a few glacial streams we arrive at our camp.

(BLD)

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DAY 6 : Trek to Bolocho Glacier Camp. (3,800m) 7-8 hrs

We will be up early for breakfast to mark the start of this long trekking day. Our trek to the Spantik base camp continues along the north side of the glacier and we will pass through the settlement of Gharincho and then on around a small lake. Today we get excellent views of both Spantik and Laila Peaks until we reach Bolocho Glacier Camp, situated at the base of its namesake glacier in a grassy spot adjacent to a small, clear stream.

(BLD)

DAY 7 : Trek To Spantik Basecamp. (4,340m) 6-7 hrs

Another early start will see us leave our valley camp and climb up the Chogo Lungma Glacier. In total we will climb around 600 metres on the icy back of the glacier to reach the Spantik basecamp. Our home for this section of the expedition is located at the bottom of a small ridge, leading to our main route the SE ridge, and is spectacularly situated on a moving terminal moraine: you will sleep, eat and live on dynamic ice and rock.

(BLD)

DAY 8 : Spantik basecamp. (4,340m)

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)

DAY 9-23 : Acclimatisation and ascend Spantik (4,340m – 7,027m)

We have allocated a generous two-week timeframe in which to complete our ascent of Spantik. This period will allow for optimal acclimatisation before the summit push is made and for any potential bad weather delays.

Our route along the southeast ridge was first climbed in 1955 by a German team, led by Karl Kramer. Nearly 8 kms long and following undulating and varied alpine terrain, our route will in general be a snow and ice climb and will follow moderately angled snow slopes of 30 degrees or less, with short sections of 40 degrees. At a few points, the ridge is narrow, with the sides dropping away thousands of metres to the glaciers below; otherwise the ridge is around the width of a tennis court. Fixed line will be put in place to safeguard the more technical sections of the climb.

Three camps will be established along the SE ridge route. Each of the camps will be located in a safe place and stocked by our own team (with the help of our high-altitude porters), giving us space to rest before making the final summit push.

The Climb

Camp 1 (5100m), 5 hrs:

The route from base camp to camp 1 is initially on grass, before climbing a solid rocky ridge, camp 1 is located just before the snowline.

Camp 2 (5650m), 4-5 hrs:

The climb from camps 1 to 2 is mostly on moderately angled snow but will require the occasional crevasse to be crossed.

Camp 3 (6295m), 5-6 hrs:

This camp is situated on a wide plateau that affords incredible views over the Hindu Kush and Karakoram. The climb from camp 2 to camp 3 includes the steepest slopes on which fixed line will be placed for security for our ascent and descent.

The climb from camp 3 to the summit of Spantik usually takes around 7 to 8 hours and will be climbed alpine style, with the expedition group divided into rope teams.

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DAY 24 : Spantik basecamp

Today will be a rest day spent recovering from the climb, a day in which to take in the surrounding atmosphere after what will no doubt have been an incredibly rewarding couple of weeks climbing. We will begin packing for the journey home.

(BLD)

DAY 25-27 : Return trek and drive to Skardu, via Arandu

The next two days will see us descend the route we initially took up towards Spantik. In the main, we will be retracing our steps, though with renewed vigour as the oxygen levels increase as we descend! We will skirt back down the edge of the Bolucho Glacier, and through the settlements of Gharincho and Bukhum, busy now in the summer with trekkers passing through. From here, the path follows back along the Chogo Lungma Glacier and the various meltwater streams until we reach Arandu. There, we will meet our vehicles and give our tired feet a well-deserved rest as we drive the rest of the way back to Skardu.

(BLD)

DAY 28 : 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.

(B)

DAY 29 : 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.

(B)

DAY 30 : Arrive UK

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

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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 15kg. 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

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 x 2

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. You will need 2 sleeping bags, along with 2 sleeping mats, to use for the rotations.

Sleeping mat

We would recommend a full length self-inflating mat, eg. Thermarest, rather than a 3/4 length mat. You will need 2 sleeping mats, along with 2 sleeping bags, to use for the rotations.

Sleeping bag liner

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

KIT LIST

Headwear

Warm headgear x 2

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

Base layer x 3

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 2

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

Long sleeved T- shirt

The sun can be extremely intense – we would recommend a collared, long sleeved shirt or t-shirt, for protection on the hotter days.

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 pair or, better still, liner gloves for lower altitudes and evenings as well as a thicker pair like ski gloves 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.

Waterproof mitts

A great addition for an added windproof or waterproof layer, to fit either over your down mitts high up or your gloves lower down, especially as down ceases to work when it gets wet and takes a long time to dry. Synthetic fill dries much more quickly.

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

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.

KIT LIST

Waterproof overtrousers

Along with the waterproof jacket, these are an essential piece of kit to keep you dry. They should also be Goretex and hardshell.

Long Johns x 2

An essential thermal insulation layer for your legs.

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. Commonly known as 'plastics', 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 8000s, La Sportiva Spantik or more specialised 8,000m boots such as Olympus Mons are suitable. Make sure that your boots fit with 2 pairs of socks for added warmth, with room to wiggle your toes. Avoid trying to break in the boots by training in them, they will break you! Wear them around the house instead, to get used to the weight and feel.

Approach boots /shoes

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.

Trekking socks x 4

Lighter weight merino wool is a good option. Going for a single layer or wearing two pairs is a personal choice.

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.

High altitude inner socks

Lightweight inner socks. Merino wool is advisable.

Spare laces

Just in case.

Gaiters

Protect the tops of your footwear from harsh conditions and provide some added insulation.

KIT LIST

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. Not ice climbing crampons.

Ice axe

A walking ice axe between 55cm and 65cm. Go to an outdoor shop and try different ones for weight and size so that you get one that feels good to you.

Trekking poles

These tend to be a personal preference, but help with your stability and can dampen the pressure on the knees coming downhill.

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 2

Shoulder length, sewn.

Jumars x 2

Ascender, left or right handed, depending on your preference. One to use and one as a spare.

Descending devices

Figure of eight descender.

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. If you're using tablets, it's worth taking neutraliser or using Silver Chloride as it has little taste.

Insulated mug

A great addition for hot drinks at the higher camps.

Small thermal flask

Always nice on summit night when it's cold.

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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, antiseptic, rehydration sachets and any muscle rubs you wish to use.

Personal medication

Keep this in your daysack.

Miscellaneous

Head torch

We recommend Petzl head torches. Bring spare batteries.

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.

KIT LIST

Penknife (optional)

Sewing kit (optional)

Hand warmers

For summit day

Snacks

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

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

You'll need to apply for a visa for Pakistan at least a month before travel – you can apply at your nearest Embassy, but it's easiest to apply online: <https://visa.nadra.gov.pk/tourist-visa/> A 90-day, single entry visa for a UK trekker is currently US \$60, but do check for the updated info. The 360 office crew can assist you with any various documentation that may be required.

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. You may wish to bring extra for additional spending such as beers or souvenirs and to cover meals not included in the expedition price.

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.

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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.

FAQ'S

Food and Drink

What is the food like on the mountain?

Food on the trek is excellent and designed to stimulate your appetite and keep you going, despite frequent altitude-induced loss of appetite.

The meals on the mountain are 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.

Alongside well-balanced meals, with the aim to give you carbohydrate-loaded meals to give you plenty of energy for the trek, tea and coffee, as well as drinking water, will be provided with the meals and in camp.

You can expect the trek menu to consist of the following, or similar:

Breakfast: Paratha (local breads), jam, honey, porridge and 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, will only be available towards the start and end of the trek. At other times tinned meat is used.

Dessert: custard, jelly and tinned fruit.

Snacks of sweets, chocolate bars and nuts will

I have food allergies, can these be catered for?

Absolutely, please inform the office of any allergies or intolerances and we will ensure that these are taken into account on the trek and the local teams have all of the information necessary.

Where does the drinking water come from?

Filtered, bottled water is provided in the towns on your first and last days. During the trek, drinking water is sourced from streams or springs, and this glacier water, though fresh, is additionally purified by boiling and by treating the water with purification chemicals.

How often is fresh water available for replenishing during the day?

Drinking water is available at the campsites and so before leaving each morning you'll have the opportunity to refill your bottles and bladders. There are also opportunities to replenish at stops en route during walking days at suitable streams or glacier flows. Your expedition leader will, in consultation with the local guide, determine if the water you source will need treating or boiling.

We would advise having sufficient water bottles/camelbaks to carry 3 litres of water.

FAQ'S

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.

Is all my accommodation included in the price?

All accommodation is included in the price of the expedition as per the itinerary.

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.

Will I have to share a tent on this expedition?

It will be necessary to share a tent with one of your team members at all stages of this expedition. The primary reason for this is that most altitude related symptoms manifest themselves at night (further information is included below under 'Health and Safety'), therefore having a tent buddy to keep an eye on you is hugely reassuring.

How does tent sharing work? And how big are the tents?

Tent share is organised according to gender and, where possible, age groups, but chat to us if you have any concerns. If you are climbing with a friend or partner then you will be able to share tents and if you're a group we'll ask you to make your own arrangements. If you have joined the team by yourself then it is likely you will be sharing a tent with your pre-assigned room buddy unless prior arrangements have been made. We use high quality, spacious 3-man tents throughout the expedition, and these will be shared between 2 people to provide extra space for your comfort.

FAQ'S

Will the camp be freshly set up or will we be staying at existing camps at a set site on the way up?

Your local ground crew will be setting up your tents for you along the way, on both the trek and the climb. On some occasions they will love to see you give them some help to speed up this process, particularly in bad weather or in case of late arrival into camp.

Will my kit be safe at BC when I climb?

Yes, your kit is safe in your tent but we do advise to bring locks for your kit bags when flying, which can be used on your bags in your tents to be doubly sure.

Health and Safety

What is the risk in climbing this peak?

The very nature of climbing a 7,000m peak is risky. Although there are risks associated with climbing any mountain, whether it is Kilimanjaro, Mont Blanc or Aconcagua, the risks on a 7,000m peak are considerably greater, primarily due to 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 specialised wilderness first aid – and they carry the necessary equipment and medicine throughout. 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!

What happens to toilet waste on the mountain?

CKNP (Central Karakoram National Park) is responsible for sanitation of campsites, plus they collect a fee from all groups to keep the area clean.

FAQ'S

What happens if there is a problem on the mountain?

All our leaders are in communication with each other by phone and radio. (VHS and/or Motorola.) In the majority of 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. Our 360 Pakistan crew 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.

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

All our Guides, Expedition Leaders and High Altitude Porters have attained the highest qualifications and training available in their respective countries to not only deal 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 such as antibiotics to treat infections.

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 this is high altitude sickness – AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness). Symptoms for this can include headaches, nausea and vomiting.

This sounds quite dramatic 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 a 7,000m peak and, although we assess each client's personal situation carefully, we also further consider the compounding effects of dehydration brought on by excessive vomiting and loss of appetite.

FAQ'S

What can I do to help prevent AMS?

In most cases AMS can be avoided by the following: drink plenty of water, walk slowly, stay warm and eat well – and listen and talk to your guides.

We recommend that you familiarise yourself with the various effects 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 guides how you feel. Our guides have seen every condition that the mountain produces, and they will always know how to deal with problems.

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 Guide 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.

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.

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.

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

We advocate a little bit of self-help on the trek. 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 the duration of the 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. Foot powder in your socks every morning is great for preventing blisters.

Generally, the best approach to packing your first aid kit is to include such basic medications as if you would on a family or personal holiday.

Your 360 Expedition Leader and/or a local porter (we call the ambulance man!) will carry a very comprehensive first aid kit which 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 FA kit as compact and light as possible.

FAQ'S

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.

What happens if I need to leave the expedition early?

If a climber needs to leave early for whichever reason, medical or personal, the Expedition Leader and guide team will deal with the matter with utmost competency and discretion. Further arrangements will be made with the assistance of our 360 teams in Islamabad and Europe to arrange every detail of the journey back off 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.

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 to 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. Give the 360 office a call if you have any questions!

Your guides will check your equipment whilst in Skardu or Islamabad and will advise as to what is suitable or not. A quick trip to the local gear shops may be needed to buy or rent any last essential items.

FAQ'S

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

Our leaders 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 the walk to BC as the temperature can be warm. Ensure that you apply sun protection frequently. Sunglasses are worn for most of the trek into BC as well as sun hats.

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

Waterproofs should be to hand, especially during the acclimatisation phase of the expedition. Spantik 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 carried with you at all times below ABC.

What do your guides and high-altitude porters wear on summit day?

On summit day it gets cold and temperatures of -30°C are not unusual. Typically, our guides wear 2 sets of base layers (long johns), a fleece mid layer (top and bottom) and a thin down jacket on the torso. Over the top of this they wear a down jacket. In windy conditions a Gortex shell could be considered.

On their hands they'll wear a thin layer of fleece or silk gloves over which a thicker set of gloves are worn. Over the top of these two layers a large set of mittens (down recommended) are worn. Hand warmers inside the mittens are also advised.

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 pair of thin inner socks and one pair of thick. Foot warmers recommended. On summit day your guides will also wear snow goggles.

Over the top of your clothing you will also wear a climbing harness and you will be attached to a rope for high passes/summit day.

FAQ'S

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 7,000m 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 8000s, La Sportiva Spantik or specialized 8,000m boots are such as Olympus Mons are suitable. 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.

Crampons are worn for the majority of the time you spend above BC 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

Are down jackets necessary?

They are essential and are worth their weight in gold on summit day. a 4-season down jacket is necessary for the climbing phase of this expedition. We recommend a down jacket with at least 800 grams of down fill.

How much weight will I be carrying on the climb?

The weight of your pack will usually not exceed 15 kg. We carefully scrutinise every item carried on "carry days" between camps and encourage a minimalist approach. Our high-altitude porters will be moving camping, kitchen and group equipment between camps.

During the climb you will only be carrying your own sleeping equipment, clothing, down equipment and personal climbing equipment. Some climbers may carry more or less as per their strength and fitness. Additional loads are to be carried by high altitude porters who carry 20kg maximum.

FAQ'S

What type of rucksack should I use for this expedition?

A rucksack is worn by the climber at all times during both the trek in phase to BC and on the mountain itself above BC. A good all-round size to accommodate both phases of this expedition is around 70 L capacity. An enormous array of rucksack types and models exist on the market today. It is worth considering expedition specific rucksacks rather than travel rucksacks. Expedition rucksacks tend to have fewer frills and are of more durable construction and are lighter in weight. It is 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.

On the climb you should aim to carry a very light rucksack. A 60-70L sack is ideal as a rucksack for both trek and climb but for the road journey to BC and for the trek to BC a smaller (around 40L capacity) rucksack can be used.

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. For the climb your porters will carry tents, fixed rope, group cooking equipment, fuel and their own climbing and survival equipment.

What should I carry inside my daysack?

Depending on the day, 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, sun glasses, 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.

For the mountain phase the basic content of the rucksack is rearranged to be compatible with the demands of the next phase. It will 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. By this stage your rucksack will weigh around the 10-15 kg mark.

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 BC by porters and mules.

What do the porters carry? What is the correct porter weight?

High-altitude porters carry around 20kg of team equipment and their own equipment.

FAQ'S

Can we get porters to help carry personal loads if we need them?

Yes. Low-altitude porters on the trek and high-altitude porters for the climb can carry your equipment should it be to your advantage to summit this mountain. If you wish to have a private high-altitude porter you need to inform us well in advance as they may not be available at the last moment.

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 4-season sleeping bag can be enhanced by using an inner silk or fleece bag (or similar).

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. For best results, wear as little as possible when inside your sleeping bag. Our guides will often only wear a set of thermals in their bag. It is important for the bag to trap the heat and by wearing multiple layers of clothing your clothing will trap this heat and your bag will not function properly.

FAQ'S

Is it possible to rent equipment before I go?

The cost of equipment, particularly at this level, can be a major deterrent for people coming onto trips in the first place. However, we advocate the use of personal equipment whenever possible. This is particularly important for the use of boots and high-altitude clothing. Alternatively, things you don't currently have can be hired cost effectively from our partners at [Outdoor Hire](#) or sourced cheaply through our reliable contacts in Islamabad, though do be aware that only limited sizes may be available.

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

Pakistan is a conservative Muslim country. Your guide will likely dress in light cotton long sleeve shirts and trousers during the city and trek phase of this expedition to observe local custom.

The Climb

Do you have a Western Leader on this expedition?

We are proud of our 360 leader teams, both western and local. They both work hard in different roles and in combination increase the value of your experience immeasurably. Costs could be cut by employing a local leader only but we feel including a western leader is vital for your experience. The training and medical qualifications needed to become a trek guide is much more vigorous and comprehensive in the west than in Nepal. Your western leader knows our comprehensive medical kit inside out and can advise and help you according to the latest updated western protocol should a medical problem occur. Furthermore, they see your travel experience through your eyes. They equally are tourists and very empathetic to your concerns because your concerns are theirs. Should you wish to discuss a medical or personal problem with someone who understands the nuances of your own language than you will find them there for you. Furthermore, they are with you for the entire itinerary, from the second you arrive at the airport, for all city tours, meals and every step of the trek. They will become your source of friendship, guidance and professional decision making and since working in Nepal is equally exciting for them, they will appreciate the wonders you will experience the same way as you.

FAQ'S

Why choose 360 Expeditions for this 7,000m expedition?

One of many reasons to choose our expedition company lies in the experience and competence of the team joining the expedition and managing the expedition on the mountain with you. Your Expedition Leaders are professionals and want to ensure that you get the best possible chance of topping out. Plus, you will have continual support right from the word go from a seamless, professional and hugely dedicated office crew, which means that you can concentrate on the climb without distraction and loss of time. Our entire 360 team work hard to make sure that you reach the summit.

When comparing expedition companies, it is important to look beyond the price and consider the inclusions. We offer a Spantik expedition package which contains many more than the expected inclusions and there are no hidden costs. We don't compromise on the quality of our service by skimping on added luxuries which enhance the expedition experience.

As standard, we provide experienced and qualified western guides, a dedicated world-class Balti team, seamless logistical management both in country and prior to departure, small group sizes, modern climbing equipment and safe client to guide ratios. Beyond this, it is the host of additional inclusions and services, such as our unique individualised ascent strategy, which makes this expedition truly a life-changing experience.

Is there a basecamp manager?

We employ the services of a professional Basecamp Manager whose sole purpose is to assure the seamless running of the camp facilities and the logistics on the mountain. He does not participate in the ascent but is on 24-hour standby via VHS radio to facilitate the safe running of the expedition and throughout the ascent period. He is in daily communication with the offices in Islamabad and Europe to source weather forecasting, pass on messages and to update the progress of the expedition.

Spantik

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 7,027m

FAQ'S

What does a typical climbing day look like?

The day starts between 5 and 6 am, with you and your tent mate making a tea or coffee whilst still in your sleeping bag. As you get up you need to pack all your sleeping and climbing gear into your rucksack, before cooking your breakfast on the gas stoves provided. We aim to leave camp before the sun gets too hot and climbing conditions become uncomfortable. On the way to the next camp we will stop regularly to enjoy the scenery, take photos, chat to the high-altitude porters and keep hydrated. A quick lunch is usually in a safe spot where we can admire the view. Lunch on the climb generally comprises of snacks rather than a three-course meal! There are usually another few hour's climbing before you arrive at the next camp mid to late afternoon. This leaves an hour or so to explore around the camp and to get sufficient ice or snow to melt into water for both dinner and the next day's climb. Although it rapidly gets chilly in the evenings it is usually warm enough to sit around the camps chatting about the day whilst dinner is cooking and a cup of tea is prepared.

What experience should I have before I attempt this climb?

You will need to be thoroughly familiar with all the necessary skills needed to climb a mountain of this magnitude. Appropriate time spent on high altitude mountains such as Aconcagua, Mera Peak or Island Peak as well as alpine routes such as Mont Blanc or Pico de Aneto prior to coming to Spantik are a basic requirement to join the expedition. Alpine climbing techniques should NOT be learned for the first time on the mountain.

How fit do I need to be for this expedition?

To climb Spantik it helps to be as fit as possible. Having a good level of fitness will allow you to enjoy the expedition far more and increase your chances of reaching the summit.

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 as a whole. This expedition is gruelling and will be physically demanding. We have rated it as P5, T4 for level of fitness needed. Please check our fitness chart and recommended training regime. Several excellent training plans can also be found online to prepare you. We also recommend the thorough advice offered by [UpHill Athlete](#) too.

FAQ'S

What do I need to carry on the climb?

We will have the support of high-altitude porters however there will be a need for climbers to assist them by carrying their own personal equipment between camps. (sleeping bags, spare clothing etc). Tents and other group equipment will be carried by the porters.

What is the climber to guide ratio?

Your 360 Guide will be available for trekking and the ascent. We employ both Balti trekking guides, cooks and basecamp managers for the trek into basecamp and for the ascent we allow a 3:1 high altitude porter (HAP) ratio.

Overseeing the entire expedition will be your 360 Guide. If deemed necessary, more porters will be employed for the summit push.

How many climbers are on this expedition?

We try to limit the expedition team between 6 to 8 climbers. The only exception to this is if the team are an organised climbing club or a group of friends who wish to climb together.

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) but cool to very cold (especially with wind chill) high on the mountain. Night-time temperatures are cold (possibly as low as -25°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 3 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.

FAQ'S

Travel

What is the best air route to my destination?

Detailed flight information will be sent to you upon registration. We are ATOL licensed and ensure the most direct route with a reputable airline. 360 Expeditions carefully consider weight restrictions imposed by various airlines for a 7,000m peak expedition such as Spantik.

On some occasions, climbers prefer to take responsibility for their own flights. If this is the case than 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 when booking if you wish to make your own travel arrangements to and from Islamabad or if you wish to travel on different dates.

Where do I meet my Balti guides?

Your Balti Guide will meet you at the airport on your arrival.

Insurance

Do I need special insurance for this expedition?

You must carry individual travel insurance to take part in the expedition. We cannot take you on the mountain without proof of insurance.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate insurance for your intended trip, including medical evacuation and coverage up to the maximum altitude of this expedition.

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.

Spantik

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 7,027m

FAQ'S

Visas

Are there any entry or Visa requirements?

Yes, you'll need a visa for Pakistan, and you'll need to get this at least a month before travel – either from your nearest Pakistani embassy or (the simplest way!) online. Head to the Pakistan visa page [here](#) – processing usually takes 7-10 working days, and costs vary between nationalities, though a single entry, 90-day tourist visa for a UK trekker is currently US \$60. The 360 office crew can assist you with the various documentation that may be required for some nationalities.

Do remember that your passport should be valid for at least 6 months after the final day of travel and you should have at least two blank pages in your passport.

Training

Tips on how a climber can maximise their chances of success – Part 1

The 360 Expedition training programs have been devised to be expedition specific. Use these as a guide, but also feel free to contact us for individual advice on how to incorporate the best fitness program with your own lifestyle.

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

The essential idea in order to prepare for a mountain such as Spantik is to increase the intensity of the exercise you do by small increments over 8-12 months before you leave for the expedition. Concentrate on cardiovascular workouts during the initial weeks by taking short runs when time allows 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 800-1000 meters of ascent. As you get stronger, increase this rate of exercise and the duration by walking every weekend and running 5km every second day, for example.

Since this is a mountaineering expedition, we further encourage you to increase your climbing efficiency and use of climbing equipment (crampons, ice-axes) by undertaking winter walks / 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.

FAQ'S

Tips on how a climber can maximise their chances of success – Part 2

A focused regime will not only prepare your body for carrying minor loads but will harden your body against the big days on the mountain itself. In addition, the weekend walks will help break in your boots and get you used to your equipment for the trekking stage of the expedition. In combination, this will 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.

Furthermore, being familiar with moving over ice and glaciated ground will be beneficial when joining this expedition.

Contact the 360 office for further details and to discuss your individual background. This helps us to formulate a training strategy that best suits the demands of your daily life. Additionally, ask our team about pre-acclimatisation on smaller mountains prior to your departure for Spantik.

Several excellent training plans can also be found online to prepare you for this ascent. Check the thorough advice offered by [UpHill Athlete](#).

Finance

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'!

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.

FAQ'S

How much do we tip our local crew?

Our local crew work extremely hard to ensure that your expedition runs well. While tipping is not compulsory, once someone sees the hard work the crew provides, tipping will seem the least one can do to say thank you. Tipping recommendations are provided with our joining notes but as a general rule we suggest around \$250 per client for the entire local crew to be shared amongst them. Tipping the 360 Leader is entirely at your discretion.

It is also normal to tip each of the porters on the way in/out (usually USD5 per porter for their services) – you might not have the same porters going in as on your return.

Am I correct in thinking we only need to take US Dollars with us?

The local currency is the Pakistani rupee but the rates to the dollar can be unstable and, in the past, have fluctuated widely. American dollars are readily recognised and are easily converted to the local currency. Upon arrival there will always be a bureau de change at the airport and generally these provide a better rate of exchange than your hotel. For most situations when buying gifts or small goods such as drinks or snacks the use of small denomination US dollars is not a problem, but getting change for a \$20USD bill when buying a \$1 USD drink may be a challenge. Larger bills are good for tipping your local crew at the end of the expedition and a sufficient amount should be carried with you. Your 360 leader will advise you in the pre-expedition brief as to what is the correct amount to take on the trip with you.

FAQ'S

What additional spending money will we need?

The amount of money you will need depends on how many presents you wish to buy or if you want to purchase soft drinks or snacks on the trek or in town. As a basic rule of thumb, US \$100-\$200 should be more than adequate for any expedition spending.

Pakistan is a relatively cheap place and, when indulging in the local custom of haggling, goods can be bought for excellent value for money. Your 360 leader will be happy to point out the relative bargains, suitable prices and where to get the best value for money. The only other cash you'll need to consider taking with you on this expedition is the local crew tips.

Communications and Electronics

Can I contact the other climbers joining the expedition? How about the leader?

You can always call our offices and one of the leaders will contact you as soon as they get off the hill. For this expedition we will be holding a pre-expedition meeting in plenty of time before the expedition is due to take place. This is to aid you with any questions you may have and to meet your team members. We feel it is important that you have already struck up a friendship with your team before leaving rather than setting off from the airport as total strangers.

What is phone coverage like?

Reliable phone coverage only exists in towns and on the KKH. Beyond that, we rely on satellite phones which will be available for your use, but will have a charge attached to them.

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

Your 360 Leader 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, and we will do our best to pass these messages on to the team – though do be aware that our satellite phone is with the guide for emergencies. We do 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.

Are there facilities for charging electronics on the mountain?

There are solar charging facilities at basecamp, and we would also advise bringing your own personal power banks. We recommend [PowerTraveller](#).

FAQ'S

Will there be phone signal during the trek/climb?

You will be able to get 4G in Skardu town, but there is no 4G reception at basecamp, or higher up on the mountain.

Your 360 leader will have a satellite phone with them but this is for emergency use and to keep the office informed of the group's progress / be in touch should an emergency arise.

Will I be able to use the 360 sat phone?

Your 360 leader will have a Thuraya satellite phone with them on the expedition, but this is for safety reasons, emergency response and 360 updates to keep the office informed of the group's progress and to be in touch should an emergency arise.

Some climbers prefer to hire/bring their own personal satellite phones so they can keep in touch with loved ones and update social media. Whereas we encourage the benefits of switching off from the modern world, we do understand that, for some, this is a comfort and a necessity. For Spantik, we would recommend Thuraya as we have found they have the best coverage in this region. This may of course change and so we would advise you research the best option for your personal circumstances, if you did want to take your own sat phone out to Pakistan with you.

Spantik

Pakistan – Karakoram | Asia | 7,027m



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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

360[°] EXPEDITIONS



"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.