

# SPICE ROADS





## CYCLING



## BIKING PAKISTAN'S KARAKORAM HIGHWAY

Tour Code  
**PAK-KAP**

**15** DAYS  
**14** NIGHTS

	Destinations	Pakistan
	Tour Meets Tour Ends	Islamabad Islamabad/Rawalpindi
	Fly in to Fly out of	Islamabad International Airport (ISB) Islamabad International Airport (ISB)
	Group Size Minimum Age	2-16 riders 18 (on scheduled departures)

## ACTIVITY PROFILE



<b>10</b> Cycling days	<b>560</b> km Total cycling distance
<b>56</b> km Avg distance / day	<b>m</b> Avg climbing / day

## PRICING



Price	US\$ 2,450
Bike Hire (Mountain Bike)	US\$ 195
Single Supplement	US\$ 550

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ SpiceRoads jersey
- ✓ Water bottle
- ✓ Domestic flights
- ✓ Support vehicle
- ✓ Guide(s)
- ✓ Meals (as indicated)
- ✓ Airport pick up
- ✓ Airport drop off
- ✓ Accommodation
- ✓ Snacks and drinks
- ✓ Entrance fees

## WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- ✗ International flights
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Alcohol
- ✗ Tips

## DEPARTURES



16 June - 30 June 2019  
11 August - 25 August 2019  
15 September - 29 September 2019  
09 August - 23 August 2020

## TRIP PROFILE

We will cycle 560 km over 10 days of riding. This is a tough trip due to the altitude and the terrain. We spend three nights at 2,600 m in Khaplu acclimatizing and slowly increase our activity level during those days to prepare for the passes ahead.

We'll stay in hotels wherever possible and, for four nights, we'll be camping due to the remoteness of the terrain. Two of these overnights will be at 4,200 m, so it can get cold at night. It is the combination of conditions: altitude, weather, topography, and overall environment that makes this a challenging tour and a test of sustained riding. Remember, all our tours are vehicle supported allowing cyclists the option to get into the van as needed.

**Suitability:** This trip is designed for the experienced cyclist. The lack of oxygen at the high altitudes we'll be cycling, as well as the climbs we'll be doing, means that this is a tough trip that you'll enjoy much more if you have a good level of stamina and fitness. The distances and gradient each day are not extreme but getting into the best shape possible for the trip will ensure you get the most from your holiday.

**Biking Conditions:** The road surfaces are a mix of paved and dirt roads, but in high altitude conditions of extreme weather, there will be patches where the road has disintegrated and will be potholed or even gravel.

**Travel:** It is not dangerous to travel in Gilgit-Balistan province. Our route avoids troubled regions altogether. Please remember that the news media tends to emphasize the few trouble spots because these make more sensational news. Our itinerary has been kept flexible to handle things like land slides or bad weather that can delay flights. As this is an adventurous holiday, you will need to be prepared to be flexible when necessary, and we will do our best to adhere to the original itinerary should there be unexpected events.



## Day 1 Arrive in Islamabad/Rawalpindi

You will be met at the airport for a 30-minute transfer to our hotel in Rawalpindi. The city of Rawalpindi is a garrison town established under the British Raj, and it is still the headquarters of the Pakistani Army. The city is rather sprawling with enormous and complicated bazaars where you can easily get lost, but they are great fun to explore and everyone is extremely friendly. We meet up in the evening for a trip briefing and then have dinner.



Hotel de Papée



Dinner

## Day 2 Skardu - Khaplu

After breakfast, we head to the airport for our flight to Skardu. This short, but spectacular, one-hour flight skirts past the breath-taking Rupal and Dia-mir faces of Nanga Parbat. It is even possible to catch a fleeting glimpse of K2 and the other high peaks of the Baltoro in the distance. After lunch in town, we continue our journey, which will take 2 to 3 hours by jeep on a spectacular road beside the Indus to the village of Khaplu. At 2600 m, we will begin our acclimation in this village of stone houses. We check into our hotel located high above the village with magnificent views over the rock spires and towers that mark the entrance to the Hushe Valley.



Karakoram Lodge Khaplu



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## Day 3 Khaplu - Thalley Brok - Khaplu

As part of our acclimation, we will spend our day at the lovely settlement of Khaplu, with its stunning views across the broad valley of the Shyok to the Batura Spires. Depending on how we feel, we will either take a short cycle, 16 km, on a part-finished jeep road up to a lake where the views of the Karakoram peaks are superb. If we are acclimating well, we'll go for a longer cycle, 50 km, up the Thalley Valley, where the landscape varies from the sands of the Indus Valley to high snow-capped peaks. Returning to our ho-tel in Khaplu, there will be time to explore the old polo field and the beautiful, 600-year-old Rajah's Palace.



Karakoram Lodge Khaplu



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 50km

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## Day 4 Khaplu - Hushe - Khaplu

Testing out our lungs, we will have an undulating ride as we cross a number of nullahs, or small river valleys, until we reach the beginning of the Hushe River Valley. Here the road gradually ascends to Hushe Village on a rough jeep track. Hushe is the highest village in the area at 3,100 m (10,200 ft) and is the last permanent habitation in this area, with the huge bulk of Masher-brum (also known as K1) at 7,821 m (25,659 ft) dominating the valley to the north. After lunch, it is nearly all downhill, as we ride back to our hotel in Khaplu.



Karakoram Lodge Khaplu



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 60km

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## Day 5 Khaplu - Skardu

Following the eastern banks of the Shyok River to Kiris, the once wild jeep track has now been tarred, resulting in an excellent biking road. With hardly any traffic but passing through a succession of small, lush villages set against a backdrop of dramatic mountains, this road is perfect for riding. Beyond Kiris and the confluence of the Shyok and Indus Rivers, the landscape becomes more barren but unforgettable. It is a full day's ride to our hotel in Skardu, although there will be time to explore this wild west bazaar town, which is the gateway for all expeditions to K2, the second highest mountain in the world.



Summit Hotel Skardu



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 100km

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## Day 6 Skardu - Deosai Plateau

It is a relatively decent tarmac road out of Skardu, which climbs steeply to the beautiful Satpara Lake and continues up on to the Deosai Plateau. It's a hard slog of around 35 km with a 2,000-m climb to reach the start of the plateau, where the terrain levels out. Our aim is to reach the start of the national park and set up our camp (4,100 m) close to a lake.



Tented Camp



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 50km

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## Day 7 Across the Deosai Plateau

Now on the Deosai Plateau proper, it's only a short climb up to the Chachur Pass (4,200 m / 13,780 ft). There is only a rough dirt jeep track to follow now, with the occasional small river crossing. Beyond Sheosar Lake, our route turns into a downhill blast. We aim for a side jeep road, which has a short climb up to the village of Tarashing. Here, we camp (4,200 m) in the shadow of the Rupal Face of Nanga Parbat, the ninth highest mountain in the world.

 Tented Camp  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

 Ride 60km

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## Day 8 Deosai Plateau - Astor - Muskin

We have time for a short exploration in the morning before we leave the Deosai with a fantastic descent to the small bazaar town of Astor. We then enter a narrow gorge that descends to the mighty Indus River. Depending on our progress, we will look for a camp somewhere in the shade around Muskin.

 Tented Camp  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

 Ride 60km

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## Day 9 Muskin - Gilgit

More downhill biking into the roaring Indus Valley, where we eventually cross the river and climb onto its western bank to reach the Karakoram Highway. It's then a rolling route that winds its way to Gilgit. Here, we check in to a comfortable inn that has a relaxing garden shaded by poplars and chinar, or plane tree. Gilgit is another fascinating town, and our first chance to take in the sights and sounds of the Hunza at the bazaar, as well as enjoy our first shower for a few days.

 Chinar Inn  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

 Ride 50km

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## Day 10 Gilgit - Karimabad

Today is our first day off the bikes in seven days! We load our bikes onto the support vehicles for a drive up the Karakoram Highway to the Hunza Valley, a journey of about 4 hours. On the way, we stop off at a café below Rakaposhi, which at 7,788 m (25,552 ft) is the 29th highest mountain on earth. Rakaposhi was first climbed in 1958 by a British expedition that included George Banks and Tom Patey. The glacier spilling down from its flanks reaches almost to the road. Once we arrive in Karimabad, we explore this old capital city and the dramatic Balti and Alti Forts. These 700-year-old forts were occupied by the former Mirs of Hunza and were inhabited until 1945. Once in a state of disrepair, these Tibetan-influenced forts have since been restored and provide a perfect window into the lives of the Mirs.

 Hunza View Hotel  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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## Day 11 Karimabad - Hoper - Karimabad



We explore Hunza's once rival state of Nagar. We bike down to the Karakoram Highway and cross it for a stunning ride through the Nagar Valley. We cycle on an old jeep road that follows the Hispar River to the village of Nagar and climb gradually upwards for 800 m to a spectacular viewpoint above the village of Hopar, which lies at the end of the jeep road and the start of the jagged Bualtar Glacier. There we have a well-earned lunch at the "Hopar Hilton", and if you have the energy, it is worth taking a short walk above Hopar for a magnificent view of the Bualtar Glacier and the surrounding peaks of the Karakoram. Retracing our tracks to Karimabad, it is downhill all the way, well nearly. From the highway there is a last short climb to Karimabad, which should finish you off nicely!



Hunza View Hotel



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 30km

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## Day 12 Karimabad - Chalt

Back on the Karakoram Highway, we drop down to the Shia village of Chalt. This first hour is one of the most relaxed and beautiful sections of our trip, being a constant downhill, cycling through small villages shaded by poplar trees and all overshadowed by the huge white bulk of Rakaposhi. Just past Minapin, we again leave the main road and cross the river to join part of the original Silk Road caravan route. Home to various fruit trees, you should try the local specialty of nuts from the inside of apricot kernels. We celebrate our last night's camping within the gardens of the Mir's house at Chalt.



Tented Camp



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 40km

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## Day 13 Chalt - Gilgit

From Chalt, we again join the Karakoram Highway, but only for a short while, as we soon re-cross the river on a wild foot bridge and join the old road to Gilgit from Naltar. We follow the river to Gilgit, arriving in time for a late lunch at our hotel. There will be plenty of time in the afternoon to do some shopping or simply to relax. Gilgit has an interesting bazaar, full of trade goods from China and Afghanistan.



PTDC Gilgit



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 60km

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## Day 14 Gilgit - Rawalpindi

After an early breakfast, we go to Gilgit Airport and catch the flight to Islamabad. It is a short transfer to our hotel in Rawalpindi from Islamabad Airport. The afternoon is free to explore the bustling Raja Bazaar.



Hotel de Papée



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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## Day 15 Depart Islamabad/Rawalpindi

After breakfast, we'll transfer you to the airport for onward travel.



Breakfast

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## **NUTS & BOLTS**

### **Bikes**

Because some people can't imagine going on a trip without their own beloved bicycle, we do not provide them as part of this tour. However, you are able to hire bikes locally for the price listed in the tour pricing section. The bikes are well-known makes of mountain bikes with lightweight alloy frames, 24- to 27-speed gearing, v-brakes, and Shimano components and front suspension. If you bring your own bike, please make sure it is a mountain bike, preferably with front suspension, and that it is in good mechanical order.

### **Bike Repairs**

Basic spares and tools are carried by the guide and on the support vehicle, though we cannot guarantee having spares for every conceivable problem. Carrying a basic tool kit, a spare tube and a pump while riding is recommended.

### **Safety**

Wearing a helmet is required on all our biking adventures and is non negotiable. If you do not wear a helmet you will not be allowed to cycle. Your tour leader is trained in first aid and emergency rescue, but to a large degree you must be responsible for your own safety while riding. It is therefore compulsory that you take out travel insurance that will cover you for a mountain biking tour.

### **Guides**

You will be led by a local English-speaking guide and if the group is 9 people or more we will add another guide to the tour. All our guides are well informed in the history, culture and religions of the area where you are biking and are skilled at passing that knowledge on to you. Your guide is also medically trained and an experienced cyclist, able to handle most minor repairs en route.

## **THE NITTY GRITTY**

### **Passports and Visas**

Please make sure that your passport is still valid for at least six months at the end of the tour and that you have at least one blank visa page available.

Visitors from 24 countries can now enjoy a multiple-entry 30-day visa on arrival in Pakistan. This applies to nationals of the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, China, Japan, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Greece, Belgium, Austria, Finland, Iceland, Korea, Portugal, Singapore, Thailand, and Luxemburg.

For all other nationalities a visa is required when you travel to Pakistan and fees vary depending on nationality. Please contact your local Pakistani embassy or consulate for full requirements.

### **Health**

The only compulsory vaccination is for yellow fever and proof of vaccination will only be required if you've visited a country in the yellow-fever zone within six days prior to entering Pakistan. However, we strongly recommend that you are vaccinated against Typhoid, Hepatitis A and B, tetanus and polio. Please speak to your doctor/physician for the most recent information.

### **Weather**

Temperatures and climate vary according to the altitude. The summer days are warm with brilliant blue skies (max. 25°C/77°F to min. 10°C/50°F), but the weather in mountainous areas can be very unpredictable. Come prepared for cold evenings and though the Karakorum range is quite dry, there is still the possibility of rain. It may be

very warm in the valleys. Early morning starts and descents at altitude will be more comfortable with proper gear on.

## **Altitude**

Travelers to the Karakorum range may suffer breathlessness and headaches before becoming acclimatized. It is important to take things lightly at first and to drink plenty of water. When climbing high passes, you may experience headaches, mild nausea or lack of appetite until your body adjusts to the elevation. These symptoms generally disappear after a few days.

## **Accommodation**

In cities and towns we will stay in comfortable accommodation, with the highlight being the Hilltop Hotel in Karimabad with views to Rakaposhi Peak. We camp for four nights and sleeping bags, ground pads and tents are provided. A mess tent, toilet tent and shower tents are also provided. All accommodation described in the itinerary are included in the tour cost.

## **Dress**

With respect to the local culture males and females should wear baggy clothes. Females especially should avoid tight fitting pants and shorts, or tight-fitting shirts. We suggest wearing loose garments that de-emphasize curves.

## **Food**

Meals are included in the itinerary where B = breakfast, L = lunch, and D = dinner. While camping meals will be prepared by the cooking team on the support staff and feature Pakistani and Western-style cuisine. Any special dietary requirements can also be catered for as well. Please let us know at the time of booking.

## **Drink**

Keeping you completely hydrated is a job we take very seriously. Cold water and energy-restoring drinks are included in the tour price while riding. Soft drinks and other beverages during meals are not included. Beer and alcohol are available in Pakistan for foreigners but may be difficult to obtain in small villages.

## **Solo Travelers**

SpiceRoads does not require you to pay a surcharge for travelling alone. We will arrange for you to share accommodation with another traveller of the same gender and if we can not match you up we will provide a single room at no extra charge. If you prefer not to share a single supplement is payable to guarantee your own room. The cost of the single supplement is listed above.

## **Extra Expenses**

We recommend that you tuck away a few extra dollars a day for incidentals. Included entrance fees are those for the listed sites and national parks that are part of the itinerary. Any other site fees are not included.

## **Money**

The currency is the rupee (Rs) and there are ATMs in Islamabad/Rawalpindi that take international cards. However, you should definitely not rely on ATMs as your sole source of cash and we suggest you change money in Islamabad and carry cash or travellers cheques as backup in case the power goes down, the ATM is out of order, or you lose or break your plastic. There's little difference between official and black-market exchange rates. US dollars are the most widely accepted currency, followed by UK pounds and euros. You usually have to present your passport whenever you change money.

## **GENERAL BOOKING INFO**



## Booking

If this is the tour for you here's what you need to do to confirm your place: Read our [Booking Conditions](#)

From the tour page click the 'Book Now' link. All departures for this tour will appear, just select the date you'd like to travel. There is a minimum number of participants (usually 2) required to enable the trip to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to Depart'. Once a trip is guaranteed to depart you are free to book your flights and make other travel arrangements. If you are unsure about the trip status, please [email us](#) or call our office. For the next steps you'll need to know the names of the people traveling and have either a Visa or a MasterCard. If you wish you can also provide extra details such as passport numbers, height, or you can add that later by logging into [Manage My Trip](#) (we'll set up an account for you automatically if you don't already have one). However, if you wish to get a children's discount, please do fill out the date of birth of the riders. If you are having any problems, [please send us an email](#), or give us a call (+66 2 381 7490) and one of our travel specialists will assist you with your booking.

## Deposit

For Long Tours (7 days or more) to guarantee your place we require a 30% or 500 USD deposit, whichever is the greater. For Short Tours (6 days or less) we require full payment to guarantee your place. We also require that you take out [travel insurance](#) when you book your holiday. Besides covering you during your holiday it will also enable you to claim for any money that you have paid to us, including your deposit, should you have to cancel your trip.

## Balance

Full payment must be paid 45 days before the departure date with fees for any bicycle rental(s), single supplement(s) and extra hotel nights. Our confirmation will include personal details you provided us (including your flight information), visa application advice, a packing suggestion list and a detailed tour itinerary. It will also include a checklist to ensure you get everything ready for your holiday.

## Cancellation Policy

On the rare occasions when we, SpiceRoads, must cancel a trip, all payments received to date will be 100% refunded, which constitutes full settlement. There will be absolutely no deductions. If you, the client, must cancel your reservation, your cancellation fee will be determined according to when you cancel. For full details, please read our [cancellation policy](#).

## Loyalty Riders Club

For those who have been on several long tours with us we reward customer loyalty by offering repeat customers a special discount off the tour price (excludes single supplement and bike rental). If this is your fourth scheduled tour or more you will receive a 5% discount. If this is your eighth scheduled tour or more we will extend a 10% discount. The discount will be reflected in your online booking, but please contact us if any questions. Loyalty discounts can not be used in conjunction with any other offer. Note: Only tours of 7 days or more will be applicable for loyalty discount.

## International Flights

International flights, to and from the start and finish points are not included in the tour price. Once your tour is Guaranteed to Depart you can book your flight. Please contact us for advice before arranging flights for the best arrival and departure times. We would only cancel a trip for an extreme circumstance, but in that case, where we cancel your trip, we cannot be liable for losses incurred relating to any flight booking you have made. Please claim any losses from your [travel insurance](#) that you acquired when you booked your holiday.

## Newsletter

Our adventure travel [e-newsletter](#) is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from SpiceRoads, be sure to subscribe.

The information in this document is given in good faith, and covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip. Please note that the itinerary is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances, however, we will always do our best to adhere to this original itinerary

## CONTACT US

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