



SERENA HOTELS
SAFARI LODGES • HOTELS • RESORTS

Spellbinding ESCAPES

YOUR KARAKORAM HOLIDAY EXPERIENCE

Capturing the history, culture & natural beauty of the Karakoram! 6 days / 5 nights



EXPERIENCE SERENA HOTELS. EXPERIENCE GILGIT-BALTISTAN

GILGIT-BALTISTAN – HUNZA & GILGIT

Gilgit-Baltistan is, perhaps, the most spectacular region of Pakistan in terms of its geography and scenic beauty. It is strategically close to the heart of Central Asia and is the hub of the world's greatest mountain ranges. **The Karakoram, The Himalaya, The Hindukush, and The Pamir** radiate out from this centre like spokes on a wheel. These mountains have carefully guarded Pakistan's frontiers with China, India, Afghanistan and across the narrow Wakhan corridor. Rich in history, culture and natural beauty the area has been visited for centuries by travellers; both modern day tourists and ancient travellers from the Silk Road. It also remained for many years a focal point of political and military rivalries amongst the Russian, British and Chinese empires.

This experience through Gilgit-Baltistan has been tailor made for those travellers wanting to immerse themselves in the culture, history and natural heritage of the Gilgit & Hunza region. The journey takes you through the Karakoram mountain range along the famous Karakoram Highway from Gilgit to as far north as the Khunjerab Pass. You will be dazzled with stunning landscapes, a vast amount of award winning historical & religious sites, amazing architecture, some of the friendliest people and most welcoming hospitality in Pakistan.

You are sure to leave with a suitcase full of magical moments & stories and a yearning to return!

YOUR HOLIDAY EXPERIENCE WILL TAKE YOU TO:

- ✓ Gilgit
- ✓ Naltar
- ✓ Karimabad (incl. Altit, Baltit & Ganish)
- ✓ Hoper Nagar
- ✓ Gulmit
- ✓ Borith Lake
- ✓ Passu Glacier
- ✓ Khunjerab Pass

THE FACTS

- ✓ Officially named Gilgit-Baltistan in 2009 (formerly Northern Areas)
- ✓ Gilgit is the capital of Gilgit-Baltistan
- ✓ The four languages in Gilgit, Hunza & Nagar are Shina, Burushaski, Wakhi & Domaaki the language of black smiths & musicians.
- ✓ 90% of the population make their living from sustainable farming
- ✓ The outstanding literacy rate in the Hunza valley of 95% is one of the highest in Pakistan.
- ✓ The building of the Karakorum Highway in the late 1970's opened up Gilgit, Nagar & Hunza to the outside world


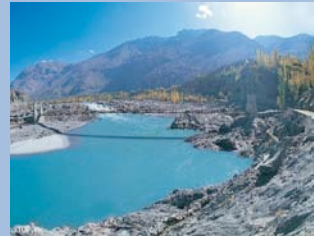
THE TRIVIA



- ✓ Hunza & Nagar were both formerly princely states; maintaining relationships with the rulers of Kashgar (Xinjiang) and Srinagar (Kashmir).
- ✓ Gilgit's ancient name was *Sargin*, later to be known as *Gilit*, and it is still called *Gilit* or *Sargin-Gilit* by local people.
- ✓ During the restoration of Baltit Fort by the Aga Khan Cultural Services Pakistan – the fort was dismantled into thousands of individual pieces of stone & wood and rebuilt. Amazing!
- ✓ In the late 19th century Hunza became embroiled in the Great Game, the rivalry between Britain and Russia for control of the northern approaches to India.
- ✓ The Hunza valley is popularly believed to be the inspiration for the mythical valley of Shangri-la in James Hilton's 1933 novel *Lost Horizon*.
- ✓ The Hunza-Nagar Campaign was fought in 1891 by troops of the British Raj against the princely states of Hunza and Nagar. It is known as the "Anglo-Brusho War" and two Victoria Crosses were won.

OUR FAVOURITE THINGS TO DO:

1. Consider coming in July to see the famous freestyle Shandur Polo Tournament – the highest polo field in the world!
2. Purchase locally made Hunza honey & homemade apricot jam – a great gift to take home!
3. Try a slice of Hunza walnut cake from Karimabad Bazaar (seriously delicious)
4. Pluck fresh apricots from the abundant trees – they just don't get any fresher!
5. Put your hiking boots on & stretch your legs - this is a walker's paradise.
6. Carpet Shopping – support Karimabad community initiatives and purchase a locally made carpet from either the Sharma centre or Hunza Carpet Centre.
7. Visit Hunza in April during the cherry blossom season – you will be blown away by the beauty or visit in Autumn (November) – incredible colours!


NAME: Capturing the culture, history & natural beauty of the Karakoram – a journey through Gilgit & Hunza
LENGTH OF TIME: 6 days / 5 nights with options to extend
BEST TIME TO TRAVEL: Anytime from April through to November!

Day	Destination / Drive time	Accommodation Details	Activities & Highlights	Optional Experiences Plus Our Top Tips!	Visual Reflection
1	Gilgit (50 minute scenic flight)	Gilgit Serena Hotel (GSH) (Full board) – Standard Room Click here for more information Supplement: Upgrade yourself to a deluxe room or really spoil yourself and take one of the two suites.	Get your camera’s charged and ready for a journey of awe inspiring scenery. Stretch your legs & breathe in the fresh mountain air along the water channel high above the city of Gilgit – an easy walk with incredible views over the entire valley (2 to 3 hour walk). There is the option to drive for those that prefer a less demanding journey. Victory monument of Taj Mughul - an Ismaili ruler from Badakhshan who came to Gilgit Baltistan during the midst of 13 th century AD. 7 th century Kargah Buddha rock carving – The local legend about the Buddha tells of a man devouring an ogress called Yakhshini who lived at Kargah.	Top Tip #1: Ask for a seat on the right hand side of the plane for best photo opportunities. Top Tip #2: Learn a few words of Shina – the local language. Hello <i>Assalamu Alikum</i> Goodbye <i>Khuda yar</i> How are you? <i>Jek Hall ban</i> Thank you <i>Ju nu</i> How much is it? <i>Anu Kachak kay han</i> Explore the local bazaar – Chinese & handicraft markets or watch a spot of Polo – Game of the Kings! Ask for the timings of the local matches or plan your trip around the famous annual Shandur Polo Tournament! See our Shandur Polo Experience for more details.	 View of Rakaposhi from SGH  Gilgit Valley

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2	Karimabad – Central Hunza (2 ½ hour drive)	<p>Hunza Baltit Inn (Full board) – Standard Room Click here for more information</p> <p>Supplement: Upgrade yourself to a deluxe room or really spoil yourself and take one of the three luxury tents.</p>	<p>Journey along the famous Karakoram Highway (KKH) with its breathtaking scenery. As you travel you will follow the path of the ancient southern Silk Road and learn about high mountain agriculture?</p> <p>60km from Gilgit you will pass the point at Chalt where two continental plates collide! The Indian Subcontinent plate collides with the Asian Plate.</p> <p>Soak up the magnificent valley of Karimabad over a delicious lunch of local delicacies at the Baltit Inn cafe.</p> <p>Be transformed back 700 years and explore the royal seat of the ruler of Hunza – the Tibetan influenced UNESCO award winning Baltit Fort.</p> <p>Walk the cobbled streets of the old settlement of Baltit. Be welcomed by local Hunza hospitality (something they are famous for) in some of the oldest homes in Hunza. Hear tales of life prior to the opening of the Karakoram Highway.</p>	<p>Top Tip #3: Request room number 301 & 302 (they are the bigger ones) or alternatively request one of the luxury tents – they have fantastic views & offer more privacy!</p> <p>Top Tip #4: Learn a few words of the local Central Hunza language Burushashki. The locals will really appreciate it.</p> <p>Hello <i>Assalamu Alikum</i> Goodbye <i>Khuda Say Hawala</i> How are you? <i>Bey Hall bi la</i> Thank you <i>Ju Na</i> How much is it? <i>Goosai baroomar bi</i></p> <p>Top Tip #5: Support local Hunza enterprises and purchase local dried fruit & nuts, honey, handicrafts, carpets and a whole lot more.</p>	 <p>Incredible vistas along the KKH</p>  <p>Traverse the old Silk Road!</p>

SOME OF OUR FAVOURITE BOOKS TO READ BEFORE OR DURING YOUR TRIP:

- ✓ *Language Hunting in the Karakoram* by E.O Lorimer
- ✓ *Karakoram in Transition: Culture, Development , and Ecology in the Hunza Valley* by Hermann Kreutzmann
- ✓ *The Making of a Frontier: Five Years' Experiences and Adventures in Gilgit, Hunza, Nagar, Chitral, and the Eastern Hindu-Kush* by George Algernon
- ✓ *Cooking in Hunza* by Marta Luchsinger, Julie Flowerday, Mareille Paley & Matthieu Paley. The book is available at the Gilgit Serena Hotel, Hunza Baltit Inn, Altit Fort
- ✓ *The Great Game* by Peter Hopkirk
- ✓ *Pakistan Trekking Guide: Himalaya, Karakoram and Hindu Kush* by Isobel Shaw

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3	Central Hunza	<p>Hunza Baltit Inn (Full board) – Standard Room Click here for more information</p> <p>Supplement: Upgrade yourself to a deluxe room or really spoil yourself and take one of the three luxury tents.</p>	<p>Visit the oldest settlement in the Hunza valley – Ganish. Some 1000 years old and the recipient of many UNESCO awards for the superb heritage conservation & development work completed by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture through their Historic Cities Programme.</p> <p>The Sacred Rocks of Hunza – famous archeological site recording 2000 years of travels along the Silk Road to and from China. The inscriptions are in Kharaoshti, Brahmi, Gupta, Sogdian & Tibetan and depict many an Ibex.</p> <p>Explore the very first fort and birthplace of the Hunza Kingdom - Altit Fort and its surrounding settlement of Altit Khun. Another award winning heritage asset that has been restored with thanks to the Aga Khan Cultural Services, Pakistan.</p> <p>Enjoy traditional Hunza food in Altit Fort’s ancient Kha Basi garden café - abundant with apricot trees.</p> <p>Head to the charming hamlet of Duikar – watch the sunset over Rakaposhi, Golden Peak, Diran, Lady Finger & Ultar peaks.</p> <p>After dinner talk on the history of music in Hunza & the music community of Mominabad. To be followed by a local classical music performance.</p> <p>Hear some of the local folk stories under the stars!</p>	<p>Pre breakfast walk to Queen Victoria’s monument – 2 hours return.</p> <p>Top Tip #6: In Ganish ask about the ancient refrigeration system that preserves one their most precious food stuffs – butter!</p> <p>Top Tip #7: Order a local dish called Baling-e-decherum (Crushed walnut pancakes with freshly ground walnuts and cooked on the fire!)</p> <p>Top Tip #8: Whilst on a tour of Altit Fort enquire about the Hunza Women’s Social Enterprise (WSE). A direct outcome of the restoration and rehabilitation of Altit Khun & Altit Fort. WSE – known as ‘CIQAM’ meaning green in Burushashki stands for progress and prosperity, employs over 90 under privileged women who have been trained in 7 different skill areas including carpentry, masonry, electrification, plumbing, surveying & furniture design.</p> <p>For the more energetic you can hike up to Duikar from Altit Fort. (1 ½ hours walk)</p>	 <p>Traditional Hunza Food - apricots, walnuts & buckwheat are key ingredients</p>  <p>Musicians from Hunza playing the Sumai.</p>  <p>A female carpenter from the Women’s Social Enterprise supported by the Aga Khan Cultural Services, Pakistan</p>

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4	Gulmit & the Gojal Valley - Upper Hunza (Full Day Trip)	<p>Hunza Baltit Inn (Full board) – Standard Room Click here for more information</p> <p>Supplement: Upgrade yourself to a deluxe room or really spoil yourself and take one of the three luxury tents.</p>	<p>An early start today!</p> <p>Travel by boat across Attabad Lake – created in 2010 by the devastating landslide. This 26km long lake offers an amazing experience with breathtaking scenery.</p> <p>First stop Gulmit in the Gojal Valley - surrounded by mountains, glaciers & Attabad lake.</p> <p>Al Aryn community School - the first school in Pakistan to focus on preserving the linguistic heritage of the area teaching the local Wakhi language. Meet the students and learn why this school is so innovative.</p> <p>Visit the old winter residence of the ruling Mir of Hunza, now home to a women’s carpet weaving initiative.</p> <p>Lunch at the picturesque Borith Lake with views of Ultar Peak (6,735m). Afternoon walk to view Passu Glacier.</p> <p>Journey back to Karimabad.</p>	<p>Top Tip #9: Language time - learn a little bit of Wakhi before you arrive. The locals & school children will really appreciate it. Here is a start: Hello <i>Assalamu Alikeum</i> Goodbye <i>Ye bafe borni</i> How are you? <i>Cheez holi</i> Thank you <i>Shobashe</i> How much is it? <i>Yem mi Xhomrer</i></p> <p>Top Tip #10: Responsible Giving - If you have any spare books or magazines (English or Urdu) the library & students of Al Aryn school would be hugely appreciative. They also need sports equipment such as cricket bats, footballs, netballs, basketballs etc.</p> <p>Top Tip #11: For the more energetic head up to the site and ruins of Ondra Fort and walk across the Ghulkin / Black Glacier to Borith Lake (3 hour trip incl. 1 ½ hours hike)</p> <p>Top Tip #12: Bring something warm & water proof – on the return trip the wind on the lake picks up and it can be very chilly and sometimes wet.</p>	 <p>Attabad Lake – created in 2010</p>  <p>Girls from Al Aryn School, Gulmit wearing traditional Hunza hats.</p>
5	Gilgit (2 ½ hour’s drive)	<p>Gilgit Serena Hotel (GSH) (Half board) – Standard Room Click here for more information</p> <p>Supplement: Upgrade yourself to a deluxe room or really spoil yourself and take one of the two suites.</p>	<p>Visit the Sharma Carpet Centre – a wonderful social development project for special men in Hunza and the Hunza Carpet Centre.</p> <p>Traditional lunch at Hidden Paradise Restaurant with the famous Hunza food i.e. Lutfi Ali. Lutfi will cook up a storm for you and share with you over lunch the history of food in the Hunza valley.</p> <p>Drive back to Gilgit along the Karakoram Highway. Evening of leisure.</p>	<p>Full day to day. No time for anything else.</p> <p>Top Tip #13: Stock up on apricot kernel oil from the Hunza Bazaar – known for its therapeutic properties it is rich in natural vitamins (especially Vitamins A and E essential for our skin), linoleic, oleic and other essential fatty acids, minerals and other nutrients.</p> <p>Locals take a spoonful of apricot oil every day in the winter to keep them warm and to help their joints through the harsh winter climate.</p>	 <p>Sharma Centre for Special Men, Hunza</p>  <p>Ladies hard at work weaving carpets</p>

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6	Islamabad (50 minute flight)	Homeward bound! Or perhaps you would like to stay on and explore Beautiful Baltistan with Serena Hotels. How about staying in the recently renovated Khaplu Palace & Residence or the historic Shigar Fort Residence? We can tailor make an experience of a life time that you will never forget. Just let us know!	It is time to leave the incredible Karakoram!	Up, up and away! Top Tip # 13: Ask to sit on the left hand side of the aero plane – it is the best side to take pics of the over 8000 meters Nanga Parbat and the mountainous wonderland below you.	 <p>A mountainous wonderland from the aeroplane.</p>

OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL TRIPS:

Consider extending your stay to explore more of Beautiful Gilgit-Baltistan.

- ✓ Hopper Valley - add 1 day extra
- ✓ Ghizer Valley - add 1 day extra
- ✓ The best of Beautiful Baltistan – add 10 days (Refer to our Beautiful Baltistan Experience)
- ✓ Ghizer Valley, Mastuj & Chitral - add 5 days extra (Refer to our Hindukush Experience)

LET THE PICTURES DO THE TALKING



Awe inspiring scenes along the Karakoram Highway



Serena Gilgit Hotel



7th century Kargah Buddha rock carving, Gilgit



Award winning 700 year old Baltit Fort



View of Lady Finger & Hunza Peaks



The Sacred Rocks of Hunza



Boating on Attabad Lake to Gulmit, Gojal Valley



The watcher at Altit Fort, Hunza



School boys in traditional Wakhi Costume
Al Aryn School, Gulmit



A caravan serai on the old silk route, Ganish



Rupikutz & Mamorokutz Mosques of Ganish
UNESCO award winning restorations



View from Eagles Nest, Duikar to Golden Peak

To book your Karakoram Experience call us on +92 (051) 111-133-133 or email at holidays@serena.com.pk
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