

# SKARDU

Baltistan is a mountain-packed region in the Northern areas of Pakistan, along the Indus River between the Karakoram Mountains and Deosai Plateau. It is also known as "Little Tibet". Skardu, its capital is the starting point for some of the best trekking and mountaineering in the world. Natives here are called Baltis and live in multi-story antique houses made of stone and wood. Clustered round the houses are apricot, peach, mulberry and apple trees festooned with grape vines. The area is fairly rich in popular and willow. Baltistan has **four** known valleys famous for their extravagant beauty and magnificence. These are Shigar, Skardu, Rondou, and Basho. The famous lake of Baltistan, "Satpara" is 8 km north of Skardu town. It is surrounded by sky-high glacial mountains mirrored in its crystal clear water. The lake has a fairy-tale island in the middle which is easily accessible by boat. The second beautiful lake "Upper Kachura" is 38 km from Skardu town, which has on its banks the "Shangrila Resort".



# GILGIT

Gilgit, the land of silk, is the scenic home to the rugged but hospitable tribes of Northern areas. This strategic land sits in a wide irrigated bowl guarded by Centurion Mountains. The city's proximity to China makes it a commercial centre for Chinese goods like lustrous silk and spices. The bazaars are full of life, always bustling and colorful. Mongols, Tajiks, Kirghiz, Chinese, Afghans and other Central Asians parade the streets, each wearing their own distinctive clothes. Gilgit is where polo is still played in the traditional way. From the 3rd to the 11th century, Gilgit was a part of the Buddhist settlements; inscriptions can be found all over the region e.g the famous "Kargha Buddha". In the early 8th century, three powers China, Arabia and Tibet converged into this region. After several clashes, this region was left with seven kingdoms and five different languages. In the 13th century, Marco Polo called the area "Noisy with kingdoms". The eighth wonder of the world, the Karakoram Highway is 15-hours drive from Pakistan's capital Islamabad, which follows the fabled Silk Route. On the other hand a simple one-hour flight will bring you to this land of unspoiled natural beauty.



# THE LAND OF LEGENDS HUNZA

Hunza valley is stretched over 110 km and is surrounded by huge mountains. The terrain varies from 1500 m to 8000 m. Eternal snow lush green orchards, silent streams, gusty rivers and the emerald green meadows are some of the charms which have made Hunza famous among tourists from all over the world. The entire valley is dominated by the famous Rakposhi peak (7788 m) which glitters like a diamond against the blue sky. This is a land of peace, tranquility, fruits and legendary tales.



# THE LAND OF MAJESTIC MOUNTAINS CHITRAL

The unspoiled valley of Chitral, a former princely mountain state bordering Afghanistan, has much to offer to the tourists in the form of a unique ancient culture, high mountains and hospitable people. The Kafir Kalash tribe, who are nature worshippers, live in three of the many serene and beautiful valleys that remain locked up in the lofty snow-capped peaks of the Hindukash mountains which connect Chitral with Afghanistan and through it with the central Asian statu of former USSR. In fact, at one point the famous Wakhan corridor separates Chitral from Tajikistan in central Asia by only 25 km. The Chitralis are peace loving-people, fond of music, dancing and very proud of their unique culture. The game of polo also originated from this region, where it is still played in a no-rule, free style. A polo match is played on the highest polo ground of the world, Shandur, in the first week of July when the polo teams of the rival mountainous states of Gilgit and Chitral flex their muscles to prove their superiority over one another. Chitral offers excellent trekking opportunities for the adventure seekers. The Tirich Mir mountain at 7772 m rises among scores of unclimbed peaks above 6000 m. There are numerous treks connecting the Hindukash mountains of Chitral to the Karakoram mountains of Gilgit. The Hot Spring valley, 40 km from Chitral town is besides the Kalash valley, another popular spot both for a bath in the sulphur springs as well as for trout fishing in its mountain streams. The Kalash valley, the home of about 4000 Kafirs (Non-Muslims) living in about 20 villages. "Kafir" means infidel and "Kalash" black. The Chitrali people call them kafir Kalash because they are non-Muslims and women of these tribe wear black hair-dresses, which flow down their backs. The Kalash women do not observe pardah. They are also famous for their dances. The Kalash valley celebrates spring festival "Chilim Jash or Joshi" from 13 to 16 May every year. The summer festival "Utchal" is celebrated from 18 to 21 August. The Autumn Festival "Phoo" is held around mid-October. The Winter Festival "Chaumos or Chitrimas" is celebrated from 8 to 21 December.



# KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

Pakistan though a young nation, inherited a long history and spectrum of unique cultures and civilizations. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stands high among other provinces as the guardian of ancient cultures and modern civilization. The exquisite art culture of Gandhara, some two thousands years ago, prospered here and now presents a plethora of beautiful sites and wonderful monuments of the period. The province has been known by different names like Chanrene and Gandhara in its long and chequered history till it became NWFP due to its location during the British period in 1901. The province is most strategically located and touches many regions including Punjab, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, China and Tajikistan.



# map OF NORTHERN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA & GILGIT BALTISTAN



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# BALTISTAN

The Northern Areas of Pakistan are a rocky wilderness of 2700 sq. miles (about 68000 sq Km) containing the biggest cluster of majestic mountains anywhere in the world and the biggest glaciers anywhere outside the Polar region. The mighty Himalayas come advancing into this region from India, Tibet, Nepal, and north of them spread the more localized but still majestic the Karakoram, both heading northeast while in between flows the mighty Indus River. Along the Indus are many lovely valleys, on the main river and in the path of its tributaries, the breath taking combination of towering peaks, deep and steep gorges, moonlit lakes, cool streams, rapid rivers, glaciers and fairy meadows. Northern Pakistan has the most beautiful and mighty mountains on earth. From the forbidding heights of the five peaks, which are over 8000 m, to the dozens that are over 7000 m high, all have one thing in common, they are majestic, mystical and magical. K-2, the King of Karakoram, is the second highest peak in the world at (8611m). Nanga Parbat 8126 m is the 9th highest peak in the world. Many legends and superstitious stories have been spun around this peak, but it is rightly known as the "Killer Mountain".



# KAGHAN VALLEY

Kaghan Valley is the most beautiful and picturesque 160 km long valley, embraced by lower Himalayan hills covered in forests of huge Himalayan pines. The 4173m Babusar Pass at its head was the only link to Northern Areas from rest of Pakistan until the Karakoram Highway was built. One of the country's most popular holiday spots, the area offers best trekking trails, light walks, fishing and family outings to its spectacular lakes and flower filled hill sides. The main attraction of Kaghan valley is "NARAN". This town is situated on the bank of Kunhar River at an altitude of 2498m at point where the valley widens. The river is wider and quieter here. The famous lake, Saif-ul-Muluk is 10 km from Naran at an altitude 3500 m. The lake provides an excellent view of the Malika Parbat (5290 m). There is a charming legend about a Prince called "Saif-ul-Muluk" who fell in love with a fairy of the lake. The lake is named after the prince.



# THE LAND OF ALPINE WONDERS SWAT

Swat is a land of magnificent scenic beauty and rich historical past. Its lush fertile valleys, towering mountains, rushing streams, ice cold lakes, fruit orchards and flower-filled slopes are some of the gifts nature has bestowed upon this ancient land. In the North, mountains rise and squeeze the river. Pine forested snow-capped peaks are dominated by 5918 m high sites. Swat offers some of the best trekking and fishing sites. The region has been a fairly civilized place for 35 centuries and its archaeological sites range from prehistoric caves to Aryan to Buddhist, Hindu Shahi Monasteries. Buddhism flourished (550 B.C - 200 A.D) and Swat boasts of having more than 1200 monasteries at one time. Its valleys were invaded time and again by warhorse and bone chilling clash of swords and shields. It is the land where great generals of the world like Alexander, Mehmood Ghaznavi, great Mughals, Babar & Akbar fought their battles of conquest. It is the land that was desired, admired and loved equally well by saints, spies, artisans and kings. This lovely mountain-locked region is now well connected with other parts of the country by air or by road. Swat museum offers interesting antiques of the Gandhara period. The real beauty of Swat region is in its upper valleys, Kalam (7000 ft), Mataltan, Mahodand, Atrur and Gabral. No doubt there is a lot to explore in beautiful Swat.



The physical features that separate the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Central/Western Asia from each other, such as the Hindukush Range, the passes like the Khyber, Tochi etc. are also located in the province. The Khyber Pass, a tourists wonder, is the largest and the most renowned of the passes. It is over 56km long and connects the valley of Peshawar on its east, with Jalalabad in Afghanistan, on the west, and Torkham as the Pakistani border checkpoint. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is mainly inhabited by the Pakhtun, designating as such a person who speaks Pakhto. This proud race makes up one of the world's largest tribal societies, where each clan guards its own territory and honour. The mountainous northern region and expansive southern plains of the province are mostly non-Pakhtun, being home to diverse ethnic groups and languages.

# PAKISTAN

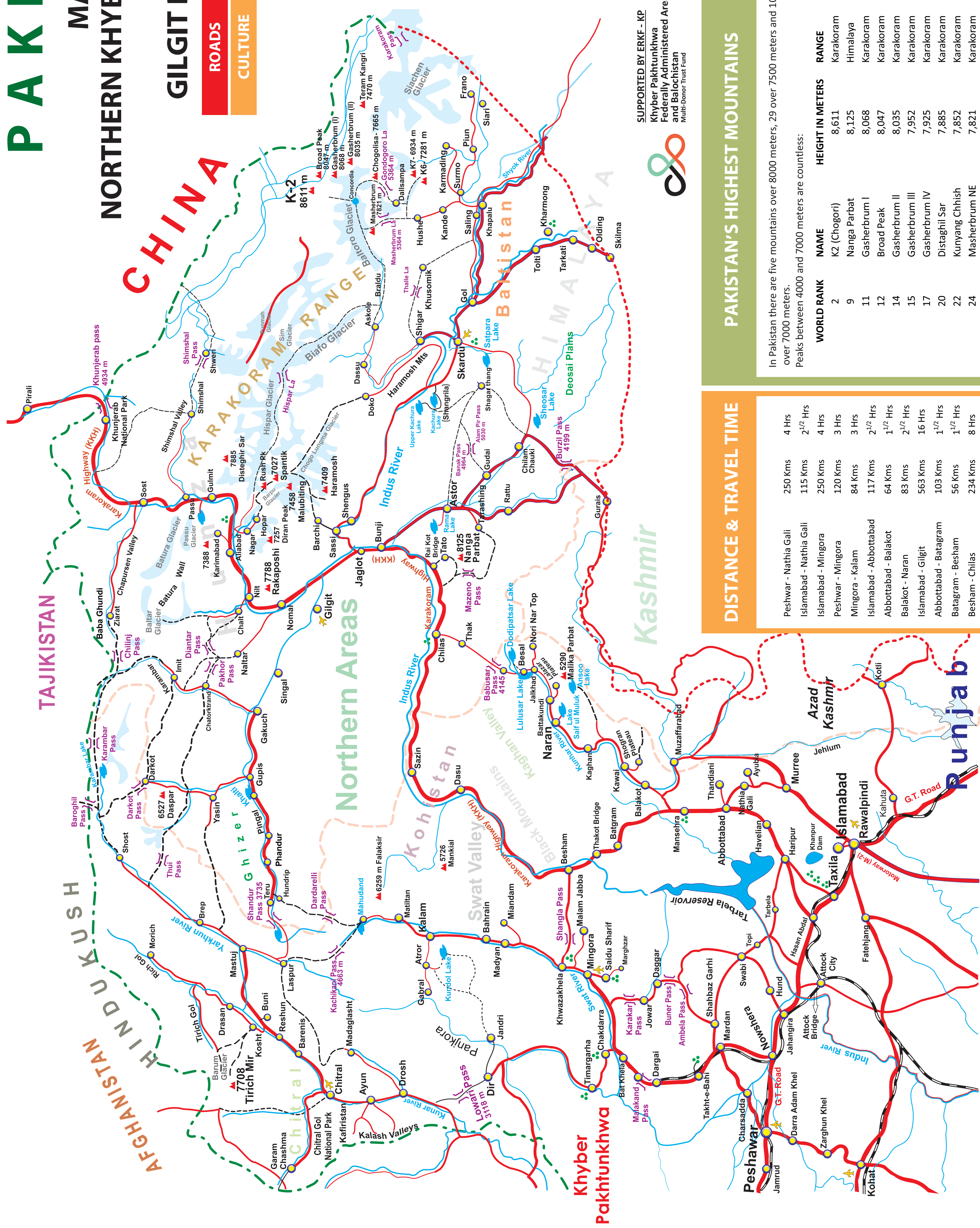
## MAP OF NORTHERN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA & GILGIT BALTISTAN

**ROADS**  
**CULTURE**

**HOTELS**  
**HISTORY**

### LEGEND

- City/Town/Valley
- Airport
- Mountains
- Passes / La
- Archaeological Sites
- Lakes
- Main Roads
- Jeep Roads
- International Boundary
- Railway Track
- Rivers
- Treks
- Glacier
- Northern Areas



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and Balochistan  
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### PAKISTAN'S HIGHEST MOUNTAINS

In Pakistan there are five mountains over 8000 meters, 29 over 7500 meters and 108 over 7000 meters. Peaks between 4000 and 7000 meters are countless:

WORLD RANK	NAME	HEIGHT IN METERS	RANGE
2	K2 (Chogori)	8,611	Karakoram
9	Nanga Parbat	8,125	Himalaya
11	Gasherbrum I	8,068	Karakoram
12	Broad Peak	8,047	Karakoram
14	Gasherbrum II	8,035	Karakoram
15	Gasherbrum III	7,952	Karakoram
17	Gasherbrum IV	7,925	Karakoram
20	Distaghil Sar	7,885	Karakoram
22	Kunyang Chhish	7,852	Karakoram
24	Masherbrum NE	7,821	Karakoram
27	Rakaposhi	7,788	Karakoram
28	Batura I	7,795	Karakoram
29	Kanjut Sar	7,760	Karakoram
33	Saltoro Kangri	7,742	Karakoram
36	Trivur	7,720	Karakoram
41	Tirich Mir	7,708	Hindukush
46	Chogolisa	7,654	Karakoram
49	Shispur (Batura)	7,611	Karakoram
58	Skyang Kangri	7,544	Karakoram

### DISTANCE & TRAVEL TIME

Route	Distance (Kms)	Travel Time (Hrs)
Peshawar - Nathia Gali	250	4
Islamabad - Nathia Gali	115	2 1/2
Islamabad - Mingora	250	4
Peshawar - Mingora	120	3
Mingora - Kalam	84	3
Islamabad - Abbottabad	117	2 1/2
Abbottabad - Balakot	64	1 1/2
Balakot - Naran	83	2 1/2
Islamabad - Gilgit	563	16
Abbottabad - Batagram	103	1 1/2
Batagram - Besham	56	1 1/2
Besham - Chilas	234	8
Chilas - Skardu	306	8
Gilgit - Skardu	218	6
Gilgit - Karimabad	112	2 1/2
Karimabad - Sost	86	2 1/2
Sost - Khunjab Pass	86	2 1/2
Islamabad - Skardu	771	21
Islamabad - Khunjab Pass	918	23

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