

# Rush Lake

After a long journey of 46-hours I reached my destination guest house, Hoper Inn at Nagar Valley in the Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan. I was to continue trek for the next 7 days towards Pakistan's highest altitude Rush Lake (4697-M). I left from Rawalpindi at 6:30 pm one day before Eid and reached Gilgit next day after a 20:30 hours long bus ride. Then next three - hours I continued to travel in a mini Van to Aliabad, Hunza Valley on main KKH Road which leads to China via Khunjab Pass (4693-M).

Next day after breakfast, one guide approached me and demanded Rs.8000 for Rush Lake Trek which I flatly denied and set off alone on my 1st day trekking around 7 a.m. On my way to Rush Lake, my first encounter was with Baulter Glacier which was widened nearly 500 meter and took half hour to cross. After continuous hiking another glacier called Barpu Glacier was standing before me, it was more widened and dreadful than the previous one. Resultantly, I got lost in this glacier and stranded for nearly 2 and half hour to find the trail. Nevertheless, I managed to find my way. I made my first camp in the Mulharai valley, where I met two young brothers and their uncle who were shepherd. They had the job to get the milk, yogurt and butter and later convert it into cooking oil (Desi Ghee) in a traditional way. I enjoyed and also took bath at nearby flowing stream in a cold freezing water directly coming somewhere from glacier.

On my 2nd day trekking I moved upwards to Bericho Kor (3300-M) where a straight trek of 70-80 degree on a boulder ridge leads to Rush Lake, but unfortunately, I could not follow this trek and found myself alone in the wilderness. I continued my trekking further upwards in this valley up to Chukutans by 5-hours and 3-hours back at Usai Miling and where I made my 2nd camping. Indeed, I was alone in this 26-km long valley in wilderness except 2 younger brothers and their uncle who were living at Mulharai. They told me that three days earlier, one sheep was attacked and eaten by a bear. Later on, some local tourists also disclosed that WWF also released nearly seven snow leopards in these highland mountain areas in order to save their breed.

On my 3rd day alone, I was rather pessimist due to my failure to reach Rush Lake. I was resting when some tourists appeared on the scene who were trekking towards Rush Lake. They camped at Bericho Kor where actually a trek leads to Rush Lake. Usually all trekkers including foreigners with their porters were on way to Rush Lake (3494-M) were camping at Bericho Kor.

On Day 4, after our breakfast with salty tea and local traditional thick chapatti, we start our trekking with a straight upwards trek nearly 70-80 degree on same mountain boulder ridge. It was very difficult and dangerous to stand on a boulder ridge during a momentary stay in order to balance breathe and to relax body. This is a steep climb the trail rises in a series of zigzags directly behind camp gaining 700m up a dry and dusty path with few places to stop and rest. The trail leads directly to the crest of the ridge that separates the Barpu Glacier from Hispar to the North. The trail turns southwards and follows the broad crest of this ridge over less steep group for a further 350m to reach the campsite at Chiden Harai. The views of the peaks above the Barpu Glacier were outstanding. It was also necessary to cling on boulder ridge trail and to keep your feelings in good command and control to avoid any unfortunate incident.

After 6-hours trekking I succeeded to reach our base and after 10-hours continuous hiking I found my fellows who made their camp at Chiden Harai, exactly 2-hours further was Rush Lake. I made my 4th camp beside them.

As soon we reached at Rush Lake, we were so mesmerized due to surrounding of high altitudes with icy peaks. The lake also remains covered with snow for 9 months and only 3 months its water shines under the light of sun. It was our luck that the weather was quite sunny but the temperature was really cold and freezing. We stayed here nearly 2 hours and took pictures and to the surprise of my fellow trekkers, I swam in the ever so gorgeous Rush Lake, located nearly 16000 feet elevation in the cold freezing water. All the local friends were so stunned about my thrilling activity.

At night we cooked Biryani.

So, on the 6th day in this valley I bid goodbye to all my amazing mates and the family of two sons whom I found mid-way gave me dried apricot and almond as a gift. I took local van where my seat was already reserved from Hopar village to Gigit via Nagar-Hunza valley and arrived at Gilgit. Luckily after 10 minutes I found a direct Flying Coach from Gilgit to Rawalpindi via Babusar Pass and Naran Kaghan Valley. I arrived in Rawalpindi and further next 5 hours traveling from Rawalpindi to Lahore, I finally reached home safe and sound after 10 days of my excursion.

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