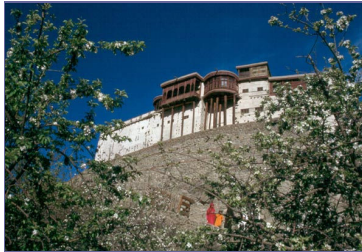


# WILD FRONTIERS



## Mountain Blossom (3 Cups of Tea) Tour Pakistan

Pakistan is a country close to our hearts... and for good reason. Home to some of the most spectacular mountain scenery in the world, thriving cities, colourful markets and warm hospitality, a trip to this part of the world is bound to excite even the most worldly travellers. Having run trips here for more than a decade, we understand the political complexities of travelling to this fascinating country and our paramount consideration has always been the safety of our clients. Despite the negative images painted by the press, we believe that most areas in Pakistan - particularly around Chitral and the mountains of the north - pose little or no danger within the current climate. Our itineraries therefore focus on these intriguing locations, giving intrepid travellers the chance to experience these unspoilt lands and cultures that have remained unchanged for centuries.

3 Cups of Tea; One Man's Mission to Promote Peace...One School at a Time, tells the emotional story of how Greg Mortenson's unsuccessful mountaineering climb changed his life forever. From an unsuccessful attempt on K2, he then dreamed of building schools and educating children in some of the most remote and hostile parts of the world. With over 70 schools now running in Pakistan and Afghanistan, his story outlines the highs and lows of a modern crusader. On our Mountain Blossom Tour we travel to the area that first inspired Greg - through Hazara, Baltistan and Hunza - to capture the spring in all its beauty. All in all a great Pakistan itinerary for anyone that enjoys springtime in the mountains.

**"For a long time I'd wanted to visit northern Pakistan and was rewarded with a holiday that exceeded expectations throughout."** *Kate Tracey*

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Epic flight over the Himalayas to Skardu
- Visit Hunza as the blossom is in bloom
- Visiting local families
- Walking at Fairy Meadows
- Travelling the epic Karakoram Highway

Duration: 16 Days

Average group size: 5 - 12

Start: Sat 28 Apr 12

Finish: Sun 13 May 12



WILD FRONTIERS Adventure Travel Ltd Tel: 00 44 (0) 20 7736 3968 Fax: 00 44 (0) 20 7751 0710  
Email: [info@wildfrontiers.co.uk](mailto:info@wildfrontiers.co.uk) Website: [www.wildfrontiers.co.uk](http://www.wildfrontiers.co.uk)

# Why Wild Frontiers?

As a young, innovative company, Wild Frontiers is delighted to have been voted one of the 'Top 10 Tour Operators' by the readers of both Wanderlust and National Geographic Adventure. We are frequently asked what makes us different from other tour operators, and feel that the factors below answer this important question.

**The Traveller's Ethos:** WF is a company that has been set up by travellers for travellers, and our ethos is to help adventurous souls get to incredible and inaccessible places in safety and as much comfort as local conditions allow. We are firm believers that travelling is all about the experience and it's the details that make the trip - we specialise in drawing on our own extensive local knowledge and array of contacts to give our clients the very best experience possible.

**Personal Service:** Our London office is manned by experienced expedition leaders and every trip we run stems from their extensive knowledge - in short, we run the kind of trips that as passionate travellers, we like to do ourselves! When you ring our office, you can be guaranteed to chat to someone that knows the trips and the terrain, and is able to offer sound and practical advice.

**Authentic Experiences:** Our unique, original itineraries allow our clients to take journeys that venture beneath the surface of the region. Unlike the plethora of 'world specialists' out there who purport to know a hundred destinations, we concentrate on the locations we know and love. We don't run the same tour over and over, thus running the risk of creating a 'tourist circuit' and spoiling untouched regions. Instead, we rarely run any tour more than a couple of times a year and they are on routes we have discovered for ourselves, meaning we are able to give a truly authentic, off-the-beaten-track experience.

**Be the First:** Our style of travel is all about exploration, and nothing excites us more than opening up new routes to genuine travellers. We keep abreast of new destinations and are often the first to return to places that have vanished from the tourist map. We were the first back into Pakistan after 9/11, the first to return to Kashmir after a decade of tourist isolation, and the first to run a commercial travel trip to Afghanistan for almost 30 years. Since then we have helped bring Colombia, Yemen and Georgia back into the tourist fold, specialising in groundbreaking reconnaissance trips and imaginative expeditions.

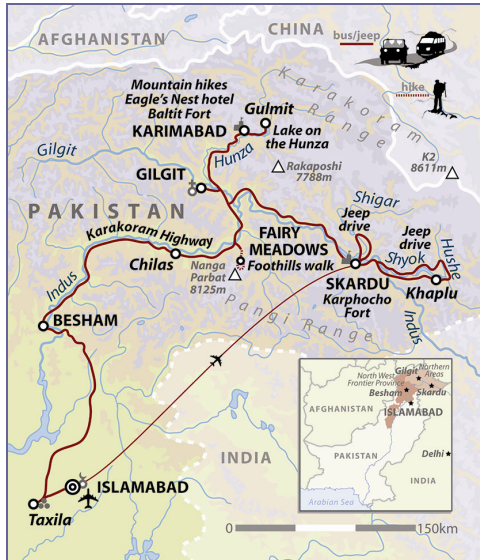
**Small Group Size:** We believe it is imperative to keep the group sizes small. Most trips are limited to a maximum of approximately 12 travellers, thus giving you more access to fragile cultures, better opportunities to interact with local people, and the knowledge you are making less of an impact while there.

**Cost of Tours:** We believe in an honest, upfront pricing system so you know exactly what the tour will cost before you book. We avoid local payments, 'optional extras' or forcing our clients to split every meal bill. Our tours are provided on a predominantly full board basis, with mineral water, government permits, entrance fees and transport all included.

**Added Value:** We aim to give our clients the very best (not the least expensive) experience through whatever facilities are available to us. We always try to provide accommodation that is interesting, characterful and convenient, and transport - another important part of any tour - that is as varied and comfortable as possible.

**Our Clients:** Your companions can make or break a trip, and it's lucky therefore that our clients are our greatest asset. Travelling to remote regions is not for everyone, and as such we tend to attract open-minded travellers looking for genuine experiences, and a desire to reach those hard to get to places.

**Responsible Travel:** Awarded 5 star status by AITO (Association of Independent Tour Operators), responsible tourism has always been an integral part of our company ethos and our adventures are designed with the local people, culture and eco-system in mind. For further details please refer to the RT section on this dossier.



**Day 1: Tour starts in Islamabad:** Accommodation is available from tonight, though those on the suggested group flight will not arrive until the early hours of Day 2.  
*Hotel (no meals)*

**Day 2: Islamabad:** After a morning to rest we will go on a sightseeing tour of the Pakistani capital, including a trip to the excellent Loc Versa cultural museum, the Faizal Mosque and the Margalla viewpoint. If there is time we might travel the short distance to Rawalpindi to take a stroll down Raja Bazaar. Dinner will be at a local restaurant.  
*Hotel (B, L, D)*

**Day 3: Islamabad - Skardu (Shigar):** After an early breakfast we will transfer to the airport for our flight to Skardu. We realise travel itineraries are apt to overuse superlatives, but to call this trip spectacular would be a major understatement! As you fly up from the plains into what is arguably the world's most impressive mountain scenery, you will be left speechless by the scale and magnificence of some of Earth's highest peaks. On arrival in Skardu we shall proceed to the lovely Shigar Fort, a stunning heritage hotel where we will spend the next two nights. After lunch we take a jeep tour of Shigar Valley, giving us our first glimpse of the blossoming fruit trees.  
*Shigar Fort (B, L, D)*

**Day 4: Shigar - Hushe Valley - Shigar:** Today the adventure really begins as we hop in open top jeeps and follow the Shyok and Hushe Rivers into the heart of the Karakoram. Draining an enormous area of the eastern Karakoram, much of which is now in India, the Shyok and Hushe rivers cut a spectacular trail into this eastern most part of Baltistan. At Khaplu, the most prosperous of the ancient Balti kingdoms, we will take lunch surrounded by some of the world's longest glaciers - the Baltoro, being the most well known. After some time to explore we return to Shigar Fort.  
*Shigar Fort (B, L, D)*

**Day 5: Skardu:** Today we spend all day in and around Skardu, and have the chance to go on local walks, as well as visiting the famous Karphocho Fort, a spectacular 16<sup>th</sup> century lair perched on the eastern end of the Skardu rock. We may also be lucky and get the chance to see a game of polo.  
*Hotel (B, L, D)*

**Day 6: Skardu - Gilgit:** Today we will take a day long drive to Gilgit. Following the Indus most of the way, this is a hugely impressive journey. We will take a late lunch before arriving into Gilgit where we can visit the British Cemetery.  
*Serena Hotel (B, L, D)*

**Day 7: Gilgit - Karimabad:** Today we drive north on the KKH to Karimabad, in the famed Hunza valley. On arrival we will have the chance to explore this laid back town and admire the mountains that surround it. We stay at the Eagles Nest Hotel. This amazing hotel is situated, as the name suggests, 3,000m above sea level, 500m above the valley floor with panoramic views of seven 7,000m peaks!  
*Eagles Nest Hotel (B, L, D)*

**Day 8: Karimabad - Gulmit - Karimabad:** After breakfast we will travel up to the Karakoram Highway to visit the new formed Lake at Gulmit. A massive landslide in early 2010 blocked the Hunza river which has now formed a beautiful azure lake. We will spend the day visiting the village of Gulmit where we can visit a women's co-operative and visit some local friends for tea. In the afternoon we return to Karimabad.  
*Eagles Nest Hotel (B, L, D)*

**Day 9: Karimabad:** Another full day in Karimabad for more walks, up to the shepherd's meadows or down into town for some shopping, or to take a sightseeing trip to the famous Baltit fort, recently restored by UNESCO to a fantastic standard. By the time this trip goes, hopefully Altit fort - currently undergoing restoration - will also be finished. This is probably where the best of the spring blossom will be found.  
*Eagles Nest Hotel (B, L, D)*

**Day 10: Karimabad:** Wake at around 05.30 to watch the rising sun turn the peak of Rakaposhi flamingo pink... if you want! Spending all day at this wonderful location we can go for walks along the water channels or on a more demanding 5 hour trek to the Ultar glacier view point. Alternatively it is a great place to relax and wallow in the spring sunshine, reading, writing, painting or taking photos.  
*Eagles Nest Hotel (B, L, D)*

**Day 11: Karimabad - Gilgit:** Today we will start our drive back down the KKH to Gilgit. Taking lunch on the way we will arrive in town mid-afternoon giving plenty of time to explore - hopefully we can catch a game of polo if there's a match, before checking into our hotel, the lovely Serena, situated on the outskirts of town.  
*Serena Hotel (B, L, D)*

**Day 12: Gilgit - Fairy Meadows:** From Gilgit we will rejoin the KKH as far as Raikot Bridge, where we will turn off up into the hills, and in the lee of the staggering Nanga Parbat - or Naked Mountain (the 8,100m peak and massif that marks the western end of the Himalayas) - we will stay at the Fairy Meadows. There are rustic log cabins here, all of which have commanding views of the great mountain, but there is no road... so to get there we must walk about 3 or so hours. This is truly one of the most magical places on earth. On arrival we will check into the huts, have lunch and relax, and in the afternoon we will be able to go on short walks around the area.  
*Cabin (B, L, D)*

**Day 13: Fairy Meadows:** All day for a good walk through the forested foothills of the massif to the Beyal Camp and

back. This will not be too strenuous, as we will run along the contours rather than straight up, but it will be spectacular. Anyone wanting a more relaxed time can simply stay at the meadows, which is a lovely place to unwind. We will take a packed lunch and have dinner back at Fairy Meadows.  
*Cabin (B, L, D)*

**Day 14: Fairy Meadows - Besham:** After breakfast we will walk back down to the road head and from here rejoin the KKH, and crack on through Chilas and on to Besham. When many people hear of the Karakoram Highway they think they are going to travel on a four-lane motorway with nothing particular to look at. This is, however, one of the most spectacular roads on earth, carving its way unbelievably along the Indus Valley - at times the road is 500m above the river! You will not be bored, we promise! We will arrive at Besham in the late afternoon and check into our hotel.  
*Hotel (B, L, D)*

**Day 15: Besham - Islamabad:** Leaving early we will continue down the KKH to Taxila and take lunch at the PTDC restaurant. We will then have the chance to visit the exceptional museum and the best two sites of this ancient Gandharan University town, before finishing our journey in Islamabad. Arriving in the late afternoon there will be plenty of time for last minute shopping before having dinner.  
*Hotel (B, L, D)*

**Day 16: Islamabad:** The tour ends with breakfast at the hotel.  
*(B)*

### Warning!

The British Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) sometimes advises against certain parts of this itinerary. Before choosing to join this trip you should first read the relevant sections of their website ([www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)). If travelling from the UK you will also need insurance that is not FCO sensitive. For more information, please see the Insurance section below or contact us.

### Wild Extensions:

Arrive early to adjust to a new time zone or just to get a feel for the country before your tour starts. Explore the country after your tour on a bespoke Wild Extension or just allow a few days to relax afterwards. Maybe choose all of the above and get cheaper flights mid-week?

- The most obvious extension is to Lahore, to see this famous old Moghul city and the 'Closing of the Gate' ceremony.
- Another possibility is to fly up to Chitral to spend some time with the Kalash.
- Other extensions could be made to Murree, Mohanjadaro or Multan

Contact the office for extension specifics.

### TOUR DETAILS

Tour Code: PAK/B

**Tour price:** All our tours are priced on a LAND ONLY basis, giving you maximum flexibility when deciding how to get to and from your tour.

**Single Supplements:** Due to the nature of tourism in Pakistan, it can be difficult to guarantee single rooms in many locations. Single rooms should be available for all nights of the tour but if for any reason this is not the case, we will reimburse you for any nights when you are required to share.

**Flights:** If you would like us to send you a quote for the suggested tour flight (see GETTING THERE) or on any alternative flight that may suit you better, please let us know.

In all cases, for the latest prices, please refer to our website or contact the office.

**Please remember that all Wild Frontiers tour prices mean NO hidden extras, NO local payments or kitty and NO compulsory single supplements.**

### WHAT IS INCLUDED?

- Full services of a Wild Frontiers Tour Leader with local guides and drivers.
- Meal plan as detailed in the itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner) with mineral water as required.
- All transport as outlined in the itinerary.
- All accommodation
- All entrance fees, as per itinerary.

### WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED?

- Visas (if necessary)
- Local airport taxes
- Tips
- Beverages & any costs of a personal nature.
- International Flights
- Airport transfers (unless booking suggested flights through WF office)

### GETTING THERE

For this trip our suggested flights (subject to change) are:

28APR EK8 LHR-DXB 08:40/18:30  
28APR EK614 DXB-ISB 22:15/02:20+1  
13MAY EK615 ISB-DXB 03:40/05:50  
13MAY EK1 DXB-LHR 07:45/12:15

Key

LHR - London Heathrow

DXB - Dubai

ISB - Islamabad

EK - Emirates

**NB** If you wish to arrange your own flights you are completely free to do so and in this case we can arrange any transfers or supplementary accommodation that you may require.

Please note that if you are making your own flight arrangements, we recommend that you only purchase flights that are totally flexible and refundable as due to the nature of adventure travel, itineraries can change at any time. For more information, please refer to our booking conditions.

## PRACTICALITIES

**Accommodation** will be in small hotels and guesthouses with Western style bathrooms and in Fairy Meadows lovely - if basic - log cabins

Any accommodation mentioned in the itinerary is subject to availability and if not available substitutes will be of a similar quality.

**Transport** will be in a combination of a coaster, jeeps & an internal flight.

### **Trip Grading:**

Adventure Rating ❖❖❖❖❖

Comfort Grade ❖❖❖❖❖

Fitness Level ❖❖❖❖❖

Cultural Interest ❖❖❖❖❖

Please note that this grading is an indication only and should you have any concerns please contact the office.

### **Fitness...**

Anyone in a decent state of health will enjoy this trip. There is a fair bit of walking on this trip but it is nearly all optional. The only bit that isn't, is the walk up to Fairy Meadows, which though a little tough, should be manageable to most.

### **It may sound obvious but...**

Wild Frontiers tours are not always for everyone and it is important to us that the tour you choose is the most suitable. Please therefore take time to read the dossier carefully. All our tours are graded to give an overall picture of the trip but these are only guidelines and you should check the daily itinerary. Should you have any concerns about your ability to partake in any aspect of the tour then please contact the office.

**Insurance:** Insurance that provides cover for emergency repatriation in case of a medical emergency is compulsory for all tours. You should be aware that many standard insurance policies may not cover you adequately for all aspects of a Wild Frontiers trip and so we strongly recommend that you purchase a suitably designed insurance policy. One such policy is the "Wild Frontiers" policy underwritten by Travel & General Insurance Company plc, which is available

to UK and Republic of Ireland residents through our website or via the insurance company direct on 0845 408 0583. Under this policy there are two different levels of cover available and for this trip the minimum requirement would be the Standard\* policy.

### **Cover explained:**

**Standard policy:** a comprehensive travel insurance policy that provides cover for all Wild Frontiers activities, including trekking up to 6,000m. This policy does not provide cover for travel to areas where the FCO is advising against all or all but essential travel.

**Elite policy:** provides the same comprehensive level of cover as the standard policy. In addition the Elite policy also provides cover for travel to areas where the FCO is advising against all or all but essential travel. The policy will not provide cover for any claims arising from or relating to the reasons why the FCO is advising against travel.

If purchasing the Elite policy you also have the option to **extend the cover** provided by the policy to include cover for claims arising from a terrorist act in an area where the FCO is advising against travel. You can add this cover to your policy when purchasing online or over the telephone.

These policies are only available to those travelling on a Wild Frontiers holiday.

For more information and to purchase your policy online please visit the Insurance section of our website.

The cover is underwritten by the International Insurance Company of Hannover Limited (IICH), who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority (FSA). Wild Frontiers Limited is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Travel & General Insurance Company plc, details of which can be found at the FSA's website [www.fsa.gov.uk](http://www.fsa.gov.uk).

If you do decide to purchase alternative insurance, then you must ensure that it covers you for every aspect of this trip.

\*Travel & General have confirmed that the Standard insurance policy (see Insurance section above) is sufficient for this trip even though some parts of the trip contravene FCO advice. If you have alternative insurance you should check with your insurer that your cover is adequate.

**Visas:** Visas are necessary for many of the destinations we travel to and while we aim to provide you with the most up-to-date information, requirements frequently change and as such we advise that you check with the relevant embassies or contact our recommended visa agency, Travcour (020 7223 5295) [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) for the latest advice.

For this tour, UK passport holders currently require a visa for Pakistan.

Non-UK passport holders should contact the relevant embassies for individual requirements.

**NB, it should also be noted that anyone with a passport showing evidence of having visited Israel (including having entered or left Jordan/Egypt from posts which are known to border Israel) are likely to be denied a visa for Pakistan.**

Further details will be sent out to you on booking, however ensuring that correct and valid visas are obtained remains the sole responsibility of the client.

**Responsible Travel:** Responsible travel and sustainable tourism are fundamental ideas that Wild Frontiers has been committed to since our birth. It is our strong belief that these words should not be simply 'tagged on' to dossiers and websites but should be at the very core of each trip, and our adventures are therefore designed with the local people, culture and eco-system in mind. We believe that a successful trip not only delivers a unique and unsurpassable journey for our clients, but that it also benefits the peoples whose lands we are privileged to visit.

**The Wild Frontiers Foundation:** In order to facilitate an enduring support structure for the communities we visit, and to show a commitment to these values, Wild Frontiers has set up a charitable foundation through which we

can channel funds to both existing NGOs and our own development projects. In addition to organising ethically sensitive tours, having our own charitable foundation allows us to raise money - through the cost of our tours, charity trips and fund raising events - which can then be used to fund various projects in education, sanitation, reforestation and a number of other important issues facing developing communities. Wherever possible we are happy for our clients to visit these projects to see for themselves where and how this money is being spent. For a comprehensive list of all partner NGOs please visit our website. Should you wish to donate to the foundation please contact the office for details.

**The Environment:** Trying to do our bit for the environment, in 2005 we were among the first UK-based travel companies to automatically offset every client's international flight (if booked with us) with a payment to Carbon Clear to help promote sustainable energy.

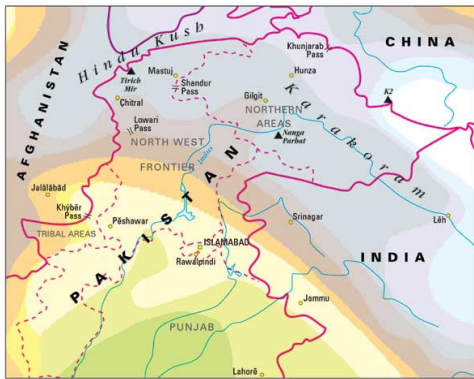
**Foreign Commonwealth Office (FCO):** The FCO Travel advice highlights potential hazards people might experience when travelling abroad. Given the nature of destinations offered by Wild Frontiers it is inevitable that from time to time some itineraries contravene this advice - particularly here in Pakistan. Whilst WF takes the safety and security of its clients extremely seriously, we will not necessarily cancel a trip because of the FCO advice. It is recommended therefore that clients check this advice before booking and contact us if they have any queries or concerns. Please see our website for further information.

**Climate:** The weather conditions can be extremely varied. In the mountains of Pakistan, where you will often be travelling at heights of up to 3,000 metres, even in the middle of summer it can turn bitter; at the same time the temperature in Islamabad could be nudging 40 degrees. But all things being equal this trip is run at a time of year when the weather should be very pleasant pretty much everywhere.

**Further information:**

When you make a confirmed booking with Wild Frontiers we will send you our confirmation pack with complete pre-departure information giving you details on visas, health and vaccinations, packing lists, suggested reading on the region, insurance, photography and other useful tips to make your trip more enjoyable.

**PAKISTAN - THE FACTS**



**Skardu:** Skardu is the main town of Baltistan, situated along the wide bank of the river Indus. Used as a base from where to reach some of the highest peaks in the world, Skardu is very popular with mountaineering expeditions. It is equally popular with high altitude trekkers who trek to Baltoro Glacier, K-2 Base Camp and Concordia. Skardu has a character all of its own and has very interesting scenery and is surrounded by dry, rugged mountains and sand dunes. The Indus becomes wide and still at this point.



**Shigar:** Shigar is a beautiful village just a few miles north of Skardu with picturesque terraced fields growing all sorts of crops. Shigar was once a small kingdom and the Shigar fort was once the residential fort of the local ruler. Recently the Aga Khan showed interest in the fort, which has now been renovated

to an exquisite hotel and it is here that we stay.

**KKH:** The Karakoram Highway, or KKH in short, is the greatest wonder of modern Pakistan. It is one of the most spectacular roads in the world connecting Pakistan to China. It twists through three great mountain ranges - the Himalayas, Karakoram and Pamir - following one of the ancient silk routes along the valleys of the Indus, Gilgit and Hunza rivers to the Chinese border at the Khunjerab Pass. It then crosses the high Central Asian plateau before winding down through the Pamirs to Kashgar, at the Western edge of the Taklamakan Desert. By this route, Chinese silks, ceramics, lacquer-work, bronze, iron, fur and spices travelled south and west, while the wool, linen, ivory, gold, silver, precious and semi-precious stones, asbestos and glass of South Asia and the west travelled north and east.



**Hunza and Gilgit:** There is a saying in Hunza: A house without a view is like a house without a roof. All homes, and hotels, have sensational panoramas of this most majestic valley. Three hours north of Gilgit, on the famous Karakoram Highway, Hunza is quite simply one of the most impressive places you're ever likely to see. In spring, when cherry and apple blossom soak the trees and in autumn, when the colours turn from green to rich amber, ochre and gold, the scene is simply breath taking. With the local inhabitants often living to over a hundred years old, there's little wonder Victorians regarded this spectacular valley as an earthly Shangri La.

**Fairy Meadows:** Pakistan is blessed with areas of matchless beauty and Fairy Meadows can be considered as one of the most beautiful locations in the region. A visit to Fairy Meadows requires a hike of approximately three hours but the views of Nanga Parbat, the 8,000m plus Killer

Mountain, are very rewarding. You will have the best views of Nanga Parbat from Fairy Meadows, while sitting in your wonderful log cabin.



**How to book:**

In order to confirm your booking we need to have a completed signed booking form for each client together with a £400 deposit per person. You can either return your booking form to us by post or by booking online at [www.wildfrontiers.co.uk](http://www.wildfrontiers.co.uk)

You can contact the office by email to [info@wildfrontiers.co.uk](mailto:info@wildfrontiers.co.uk) or we are very happy to take your call on 020 7736 3968.

Wild Frontiers is a fully licensed and bonded tour operator and our ATOL number is 5975. You can book your holiday with Wild Frontiers in complete confidence that all monies you pay to us for your tour are fully protected.

We are also bonded with the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO). AITO members comply with the highest standards of consumer protection. Every AITO holiday is backed not only by AITO's Quality Charter but also by full financial protection.

We do recommend that you take out adequate travel insurance at the time of booking in the event that you are no longer able to travel as all deposits are non-refundable - full booking conditions can be found on the booking form and online at our website.