

Camp Pakshif River (2980m) - Ghorif (2115m)

Distance: 17km

Ascent: 790m

Descent: 1635m

Trail: Moderate - clear and vague trails

Accommodation

Camp or unofficial homestay Ghorif

The approach to Pakshif-Ghorif Pass should be snow-free by mid-July. However, shepherds start using this pass as early as late May. The pass itself is fairly easy, with only a short steep section with loose gravel near the top. In this section there are multiple routes leading to the pass. The descent to the south is clear and easy.

Following the main route down the South Pakshif Gorge requires you to cross the river. You can stay entirely on the left bank, but the terrain is very rough and unpleasant and will add up to one hour to the trip. But this is an option if you are not comfortable with the river crossing. In early summer, cross the snow bridge at 3210 meters to the right bank. In late summer when that snow bridge collapses or is melted, cross the river at about 3180 meters in the flattest area. You will be in knee-high water. Cross back to the left bank on the snow bridge at 3120 meters (early summer) or upriver at 3150 meters (late summer).

The Birch Forest ("Jangali Khadang") at 2660 meters is an area with multiple cattle grazing tracks that can lead you astray. The Kurdara stream has carved a deep trench through the middle of this forest that may be a difficult but not dangerous crossing in high water. But this may change if it is raining or an extreme heat day in early summer. Right before the forest there is a flood and landslide zone of almost 200 meters where the trail has been destroyed. The trail will be clear as soon as you enter the forest.

After the birch forest until Ghorif there are no obstacles. Ghorif has a gate just before the village to keep out the livestock. Make sure to leave the gate as you found it (if closed, close it behind you).

The entire area after the pass has the stinging plant yughan. Do not wear shorts here.

On the north side of the pass there is a good spring at 3255 meters. On the descent from the pass to the south there are multiple small streams you can take clear water from. Aside from the main river (which may be silty depending on the time of day or season), the best source of water will be far downriver at the Dashti Rabot meadows at 2150 meters. All side streams upriver may be too silty to drink or filter until the fall when temperatures drop.

The south Pakshif Gorge will likely have active sheep camps until late summer. All shepherds here have multiple guardian dogs. The main camp is at 3050 meters.

Ghorif has a guesthouse for the shepherds and their supply caravaneers. You may be invited to stay the night here (dinner probably; breakfast probably not). They will refuse payment.

Camping options include the meadows at Dashti Rabot or riverside at 2115 meters 2km upriver from Ghorif.