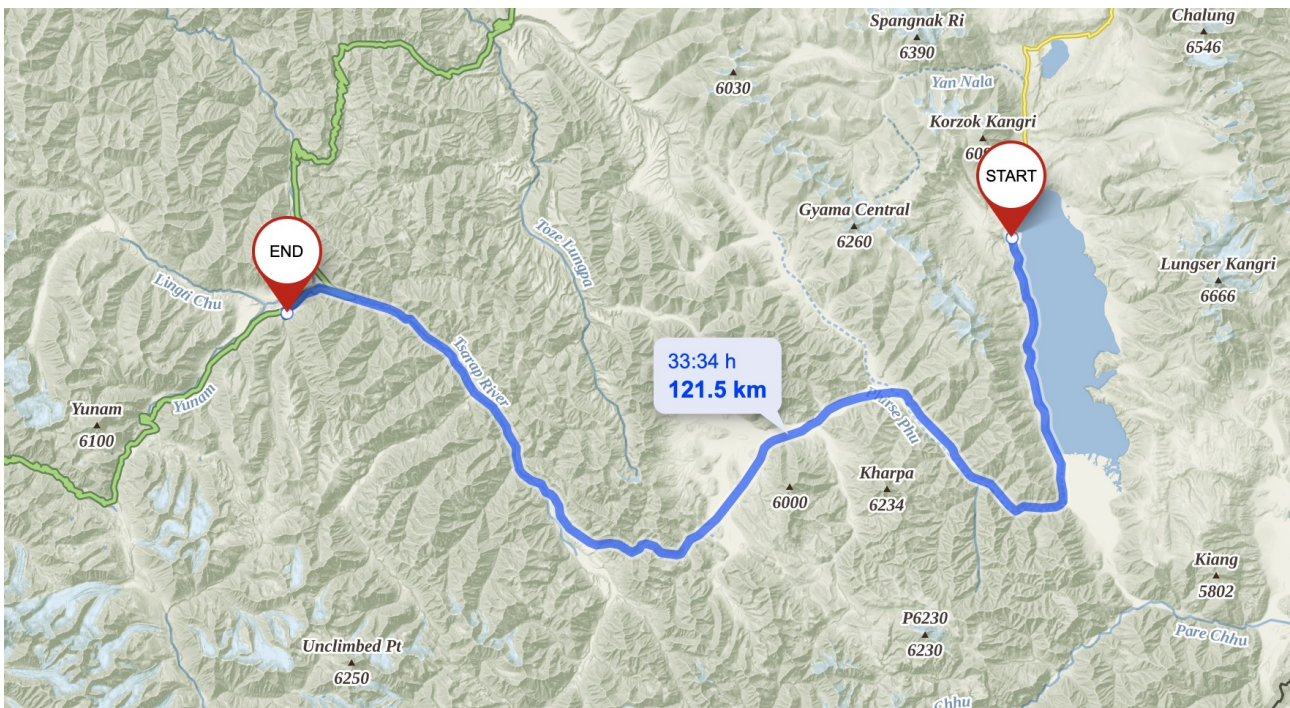




Trekking Korzok-Sarchu

Duration: 8 days
 Season: August - September
 Difficulty: medium – difficult



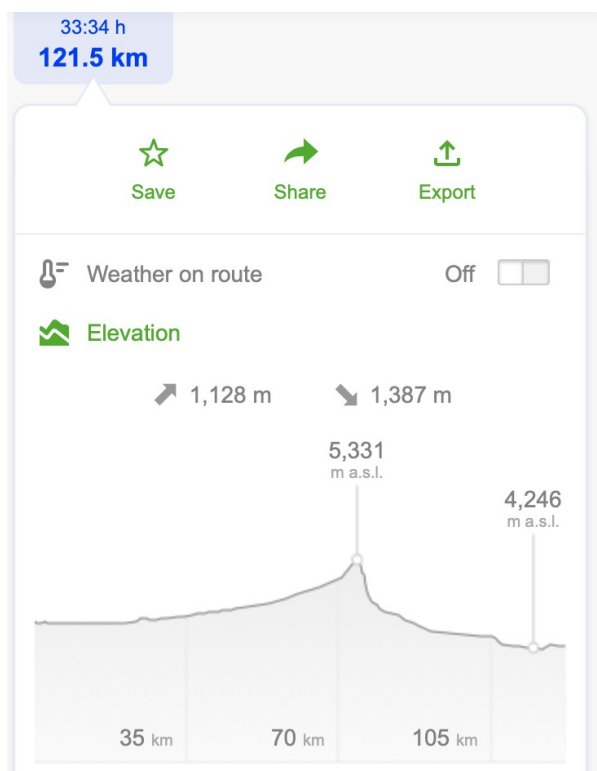
This trek is something truly special. It leads—like no other—through a vast region where hardly



any human being ever sets foot. Very few trekking groups do this route (only 1–3 per year), and even nomads are not to be found here. The Tsarap and Zogoang Rivers can have quite high water levels from June to August, making their crossings (too) difficult at times. Due to the constant high altitude, cold temperatures in September, frequent headwinds, the absence of well-defined paths, and numerous river crossings, this trek is physically demanding. Proper acclimatization is absolutely essential! The reward is a fascinating sense of remoteness and untouched wilderness—an experience rarely found elsewhere. The trek also offers great landscape variety and opportunities for wildlife observation—especially kiangs, which are often seen.

The trek can be combined with the Zanskar route from Tangtse to Sarchu, or the one from Phuktal to Gata Loops, or as an extension of the Rumtse–Tsomoriri route, or with other options around Lake Tsomoriri. It can easily be done in either direction (though the pass ascent is said to be more strenuous in the reverse direction).

Elevation, time, and distance profile according to Mapy:



Day 1

Korzok – Kiangdam

Start: 4.535 m

Finish: 4.535 m

Distance: 23 km

up: 115 m

down: 115 m

estimated hiking time: 6:15 hrs.

Two small rises need to be crossed, both offering wonderful views over the lake. Behind Korzok, you'll be accompanied by up to 30 mani walls. The trail is clearly visible but can be tiring at times

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due to soft sand. The southern end of the lake forms a large river delta with a beautiful grassy area near the shore. A herd of kiangs can almost always be seen here, and various bird species can also be observed. Since the Tsomoriri–Kibber trek also passes through this area, there may still be a bit of “traffic” here.

Day 2

Kiangdam – Latho Gongma

Start: 4.535 m

Finish: 4.650 m

Distance: 20,7 km

up: 200 m

down: 85 m

estimated hiking time: 5,5 hrs.

On the right, the trail climbs up to a ridge, marking the entrance into a narrow gorge (surefootedness and a head for heights required). On some rocks along the path, you can spot ancient petroglyphs. The gorge winds its way through the landscape, gradually opening up with each bend. The path stays on the right side of the valley the entire time. Strong headwinds are often encountered here. Latho Gongma lies just beyond a ridge marked with prayer flags.



Day 3

Latho Gongma - Kiangshisa

Start: 4.650 m

Finish: 4.760 m

Distance: 14 km

up: 140 m

down: 30 m

estimated hiking time: 4 hrs.

After about an hour, you reach Manechan, the last "settlement" along a recognizable path. Here,

you turn left into the wide valley and immediately cross the large river. Several easier river crossings follow. The valley is very broad, and it doesn't matter much which side you walk on. From this point, there is no longer a defined trail. Strong headwinds are also common here. To the left, behind the impressive Kharpa massif (6,170 m), which you've now half-circled, lies the campsite of Kiangshisa.

Day 4

Kiangshisa – Kum Tso

Start: 4.760 m

Finish: 4.960 m

Distance: 14 km

up: 200 m

down: 0 m

estimated hiking time: 4 hrs.

The trail leads through a vast, open highland landscape, shaped by scree slopes and alpine meadows. With every step, the scenery becomes more barren—and all the more striking—as rugged mountains frame the quiet high-altitude valley. At the end, you reach the small, turquoise-colored Kum Tso lake, which lies peacefully nestled between rounded hills. The camp is set up on the lake's shore—a quiet, often windy place with fantastic views of the surrounding plains and peaks. Especially at dusk, Kum Tso feels magical, as the light reflects on the water and deep silence settles over the landscape.



Day 5

Kum Tso - Camp

Start: 4.960 m

Finish: 4.780 m

Pass: Pangpo-la 5.346 m

Distance: 10 km
up: 385 m
down: 565 m
estimated hiking time: 5 hrs.

The path follows a small stream steadily uphill. At the fork, keep to the right, and soon you reach the wide, almost inconspicuous pass. The descent is considerably more demanding than the ascent. It leads steeply down through thick scree into a maze of gorges. Cairns provide some orientation, but you'll largely have to find your own way. Even the horses struggle here. In one of the gorges, you reach a river, which you follow downstream. After about a third of the way, a small plateau opens up—a potential campsite.



Day 6 **Camp – Malung Chu**

Start: 4.780 m
Finish: 4.455 m
Distance: 14,5 km
up: 30 m
down: 345 m
estimated hiking time: 5 hrs.

The route continues down the gorge, frequently switching riverbanks—mostly by jumping, sometimes by wading. There's a lot of scrambling and route-finding involved. Horses often struggle here and need guidance and distance between them. Further down, the gorge opens into a wide valley, where you turn northwest. Here, you meet the Tsarap Chu. The trail follows a vast, barren valley, alternating between rocky sections and expansive upland plateaus. The route is mostly dry, with few shady spots. The river often branches out, has tributaries, and spreads across the entire width of the valley, so it doesn't matter whether you walk on the left or right—you'll have to cross it regardless. Just before Malung Chu, a fascinating gorge has been carved into the rock on the

left. There are several possible camping spots along the way.

Day 7

Malung Chu – Tsarap Chu Camp

Start: 4.455 m

Finish: 4.300 m

Distance: 13,5 km

up: 90 m

down: 240 m

estimated hiking time: 4 hrs.

The route continues gently down the wide valley, interrupted repeatedly by river crossings. The sandstone and rock formations on both sides are fascinating. The terrain features gentle ascents and descents, offering a diverse panorama despite the open expanses. When a plateau-like area suitable for good camping appears on both riverbanks, you will have reached today's endpoint—beyond this point, no excellent camping spots remain. By then, the river has become so wide that it can no longer be crossed easily.

Day 8

Tsarap Chu Camp – Thingting Khurd

Start: 4.300 m

Finish: 4.250 m

Distance: 9 km

up: 170 m

down: 220 m

estimated hiking time: 4 hrs.

The river flows into a kind of gorge, and you scramble along its edge over riverside rocks. The right side tends to be a bit easier, though this may vary from year to year. You'll need to find your own way through. After about three-quarters of the distance, cairns appear on the left side—this is where you must cross at the latest, and then you'll reach a clear trail high above the riverbed. Follow this path until you reach the bridge at Thingting Khurd. From there, it's another 7 km along the road to Sarchu.

