[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Pp-semi-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-semi-indef) [Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [Template:Infobox mountain](/wiki/Template:Infobox_mountain)

**K2**, also known as **Mount Godwin-Austen**, and Chhogori (چھوغوری) [Balti](/wiki/Balti_language),[[1]](#cite_note-1) is the [second highest mountain](/wiki/List_of_highest_mountains#List) in the world, after [Mount Everest](/wiki/Mount_Everest), at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) above sea level. It is located on the China-Pakistan border[[2]](#cite_note-2) between [Baltistan](/wiki/Baltistan), in the [Gilgit–Baltistan](/wiki/Gilgit–Baltistan) region of northern [Pakistan](/wiki/Pakistan), and the [Taxkorgan Tajik Autonomous County](/wiki/Taxkorgan_Tajik_Autonomous_County) of [Xinjiang](/wiki/Xinjiang), China.<ref name=britannica/> K2 is the highest point of the [Karakoram](/wiki/Karakoram) range and the highest point in both [Pakistan](/wiki/Pakistan) and Xinjiang.

K2 is known as the *Savage Mountain* due to the extreme difficulty of ascent. It has the second-highest fatality rate among the [eight thousanders](/wiki/Eight_thousander). With around 300 successful summits and 80 fatalities, about one person dies on the mountain for every four who summit.[[3]](#cite_note-3) It is more difficult and hazardous to reach the peak of K2 from the Chinese side; thus, it is usually climbed from the Pakistani side. Unlike [Annapurna](/wiki/Annapurna_I_Main), the mountain with the highest fatality-to-summit rate (191 summits and 61 fatalities),[[4]](#cite_note-4) or the other eight thousanders, K2 has never been climbed during [winter](/wiki/Winter).[[5]](#cite_note-5)

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## Name[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[thumb|left|Montgomerie's original sketch in which he applied the notation K2](/wiki/File:K2_by_Montgomery.jpg) The name K2 is derived from the notation used by the [Great Trigonometric Survey](/wiki/Great_Trigonometric_Survey) of [British India](/wiki/British_India). [Thomas Montgomerie](/wiki/Thomas_George_Montgomerie) made the first survey of the Karakoram from [Mount Haramukh](/wiki/Mount_Haramukh), some [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) to the south, and sketched the two most prominent peaks, labeling them K1 and K2.[[6]](#cite_note-6) The policy of the Great Trigonometric Survey was to use local names for mountains wherever possible[[7]](#cite_note-7) and K1 was found to be known locally as [Masherbrum](/wiki/Masherbrum). K2, however, appeared not to have acquired a local name, possibly due to its remoteness. The mountain is not visible from [Askole](/wiki/Askole), the last village to the south, or from the nearest habitation to the north, and is only fleetingly glimpsed from the end of the [Baltoro Glacier](/wiki/Baltoro_Glacier), beyond which few local people would have ventured.[[8]](#cite_note-8) The name *Chogori*, derived from two [Balti](/wiki/Balti_language) words, *chhogo* ("big") and *ri* ("mountain") (چھوغوری)[[9]](#cite_note-9) has been suggested as a local name,<ref name=et-names>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> but evidence for its widespread use is scant. It may have been a compound name invented by Western explorers[[10]](#cite_note-10) or simply a bemused reply to the question "What's that called?"[[8]](#cite_note-8) It does, however, form the basis for the name *Qogir* ([Template:Zh](/wiki/Template:Zh)) by which Chinese authorities officially refer to the peak. Other local names have been suggested including *Lamba Pahar* ("Tall Mountain" in Urdu) and *Dapsang*, but are not widely used.[[8]](#cite_note-8) Lacking a local name, the name *Mount Godwin-Austen* was suggested, in honor of [Henry Godwin-Austen](/wiki/Henry_Haversham_Godwin-Austen), an early explorer of the area, and while the name was rejected by the [Royal Geographical Society](/wiki/Royal_Geographical_Society),[[8]](#cite_note-8) it was used on several maps, and continues to be used occasionally.[[11]](#cite_note-11)[[12]](#cite_note-12) The surveyor's mark, K2, therefore continues to be the name by which the mountain is commonly known. It is now also used in the [Balti language](/wiki/Balti_language), rendered as *Kechu* or *Ketu*[[10]](#cite_note-10)[[13]](#cite_note-13) ([Template:Lang-ur](/wiki/Template:Lang-ur)). The Italian climber [Fosco Maraini](/wiki/Fosco_Maraini) argued in his account of the ascent of [Gasherbrum IV](/wiki/Gasherbrum_IV) that while the name of K2 owes its origin to chance, its clipped, impersonal nature is highly appropriate for so remote and challenging a mountain. He concluded that it was ...[[14]](#cite_note-14) [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

Andre Weil named [K3 surfaces](/wiki/K3_surface) in mathematics partly after the mountain K2.

## Geographical setting[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[thumb|Virtual flight around K2](/wiki/File:K2-Animation_280611_DLR-Logo_1280x720.ogv) K2 lies in the northwestern [Karakoram Range](/wiki/Karakoram_Range). It is located in the [Baltistan](/wiki/Baltistan) region of [Gilgit–Baltistan](/wiki/Gilgit–Baltistan), Pakistan and the [Taxkorgan Tajik Autonomous County](/wiki/Taxkorgan_Tajik_Autonomous_County) of [Xinjiang](/wiki/Xinjiang), China.[Template:Efn](/wiki/Template:Efn) The [Tarim sedimentary basin](/wiki/Tarim_basin) borders the range on the north and the [Lesser Himalayas](/wiki/Lesser_Himalayas) on the south. Melt waters from vast glaciers, such as those south and east of K2, feed agriculture in the valleys and contribute significantly to the regional fresh-water supply.

K2 is merely [ranked 22nd](/wiki/List_of_peaks_by_prominence) by [topographic prominence](/wiki/Topographic_prominence), a measure of a mountain's independent stature, because it is part of the same extended area of uplift (including the Karakoram, the Tibetan Plateau, and the Himalaya) as [Mount Everest](/wiki/Mount_Everest), in that it is possible to follow a path from K2 to Everest that goes no lower than [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), at [Mustang Lo](/wiki/Mustang_(kingdom)). Many other peaks, that are far lower than K2, are more independent in this sense. It is, however, the most prominent peak within the Karakoram range.<ref name=peaklist/>

K2 is notable for its local relief as well as its total height. It stands over [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) above much of the glacial valley bottoms at its base. It is a consistently steep pyramid, dropping quickly in almost all directions. The north side is the steepest: there it rises over [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) above the K2 (Qogir) Glacier in only [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of horizontal distance. In most directions, it achieves over [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of vertical relief in less than [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[15]](#cite_note-15) A 1986 expedition led by [George Wallerstein](/wiki/George_Wallerstein)[[16]](#cite_note-16) made an inaccurate measurement incorrectly showing that K2 was taller than Mount Everest, and therefore the tallest mountain in the world. A corrected measurement was made in 1987, but by that point the claim that K2 was the tallest mountain in the world had already made it into many news reports and reference works.[[17]](#cite_note-17)

## Geology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

The mountains of K2 and [Broad Peak](/wiki/Broad_Peak), and the area westward to the lower reaches of Sarpo Laggo glacier consist of [metamorphic rocks](/wiki/Metamorphic_rock), known as the *K2 Gneiss* and part of the Karakroam Metamorphic Complex.[[18]](#cite_note-18)[[19]](#cite_note-19) The K2 Gneiss consists of a mixture of [orthogneiss](/wiki/Orthogneiss) and [biotite](/wiki/Biotite)-rich [paragneiss](/wiki/Paragneiss). On the south and southeast face of K2, the orthogneiss consists of a mixture of a strongly [foliated](/wiki/Foliation_(geology)) [plagioclase](/wiki/Plagioclase)-[hornblende](/wiki/Hornblende) [gneiss](/wiki/Gneiss) and a biotite-hornblende-[K-feldspar](/wiki/K-feldspar) orthogneiss, which has been intruded by [garnet](/wiki/Garnet)-[mica](/wiki/Mica) [leucogranitic](/wiki/Leucogranite) [dikes](/wiki/Dike_(geology)). In places, the paragneisses include [clinopyroxene](/wiki/Clinopyroxene)-hornblende-bearing [psammites](/wiki/Psammite), [garnet](/wiki/Garnet) (grossular)-[diopside](/wiki/Diopside) [marbles](/wiki/Marble), and biotite-[graphite](/wiki/Graphite) [phyllites](/wiki/Phyllite). Near the memorial to the climbers, who have died on K2, above Base Camp on the south spur, thin impure marbles with quartzites and mica schists, called the *Gilkey-Puchoz sequence*, are interbanded within the orthogneisses. On the west face of Broad Peak and south spur of K2, [lamprophyre](/wiki/Lamprophyre) dikes, which consist of clinopyroxene and biotite-[porphyritic](/wiki/Porphyritic) [vogesites](/wiki/Vogesite) and [minettes](/wiki/Lamprophyre), have intruded the K2 gneiss. The K2 Gneiss is separated from the surrounding [sedimentary](/wiki/Sedimentary) and metasedimentary rocks of the surrounding Karakroam Metamorphic Complex by [normal faults](/wiki/Fault_(geology)). For example, a fault separates the K2 gneiss of the east face of K2 from [limestones](/wiki/Limestone) and [slates](/wiki/Slate) comprising nearby [Skyang Kangri](/wiki/Skyang_Kangri).[[18]](#cite_note-18)[[20]](#cite_note-20) [40Ar/39Ar ages](/wiki/Argon–argon_dating) of 115 to 120 million years ago obtained from and geochemical analyses of the K2 Gneiss demonstrate that it is a metamorphosed, older, [Cretaceous](/wiki/Cretaceous), pre-collisional [granite](/wiki/Granite). The granitic precursor ([protolith](/wiki/Protolith)) to the K2 Gneiss originated as the result of the production of large bodies of [magma](/wiki/Magma) by a northward-dipping [subduction zone](/wiki/Subduction_zone) along what was the [continental margin](/wiki/Continental_margin) of Asia at that time and their intrusion as [batholiths](/wiki/Batholith) into its lower [continental crust](/wiki/Continental_crust). During the initial collision of the Asia and Indian plates, this granitic batholith was buried to depths of about [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) or more, highly metamorphosed, highly deformed, and partially remelted during the Eocene Period to form gneiss. Later, the K2 Gneiss was then intruded by leucogranite dikes and finally exhumed and uplifted along major breakback thrust faults during post-Miocene time. The K2 Gneiss was exposed as the entire K2-Broad Peak-Gasherbrum range experienced rapid uplift with which erosion rates have been unable to keep pace.[[18]](#cite_note-18)[[21]](#cite_note-21)

## Climbing history[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

### Early attempts[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[thumb|right|upright|The west face of K2 taken from the Savoia Glacier, on the 1909 expedition](/wiki/File:K2_West_1909.jpg) The mountain was first surveyed by a European survey team in 1856. Team member [Thomas Montgomerie](/wiki/Thomas_George_Montgomerie) designated the mountain "K2" for being the second peak of the Karakoram range. The other peaks were originally named K1, K3, K4, and K5, but were eventually renamed [Masherbrum](/wiki/Masherbrum), [Gasherbrum IV](/wiki/Gasherbrum_IV), [Gasherbrum II](/wiki/Gasherbrum_II), and [Gasherbrum I](/wiki/Gasherbrum_I), respectively.[[22]](#cite_note-22) In 1892, [Martin Conway](/wiki/Martin_Conway,_1st_Baron_Conway_of_Allington) led a British expedition that reached "[Concordia](/wiki/Concordia_(Karakoram))" on the [Baltoro Glacier](/wiki/Baltoro_Glacier).[[23]](#cite_note-23) The first serious attempt to climb K2 was undertaken in 1902 by [Oscar Eckenstein](/wiki/Oscar_Eckenstein), [Aleister Crowley](/wiki/Aleister_Crowley), [Jules Jacot-Guillarmod](/wiki/Jules_Jacot-Guillarmod), Heinrich Pfannl, Victor Wessely, and Guy Knowles via the Northeast Ridge. In the early 1900s, modern transportation did not exist: it took "fourteen days just to reach the foot of the mountain".<ref name=hermetic/> After five serious and costly attempts, the team reached [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)<ref name=k2climb/>—although considering the difficulty of the challenge, and the lack of modern climbing equipment or weatherproof fabrics, Crowley's statement that "neither man nor beast was injured" highlights the pioneering spirit and bravery of the attempt. The failures were also attributed to sickness (Crowley was suffering the residual effects of [malaria](/wiki/Malaria)), a combination of questionable physical training, personality conflicts, and poor weather conditions—of 68 days spent on K2 (at the time, the record for the longest time spent at such an altitude) only eight provided clear weather.[[24]](#cite_note-24) [Template:AnchorThe](/wiki/Template:Anchor) next expedition to K2, in 1909, led by [Prince Luigi Amedeo, Duke of the Abruzzi](/wiki/Prince_Luigi_Amedeo,_Duke_of_the_Abruzzi), reached an elevation of around [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) on the South East Spur, now known as the [*Abruzzi Spur*](/wiki/Abruzzi_Spur) (or Abruzzi Ridge). This would eventually become part of the standard route but was abandoned at the time due to its steepness and difficulty. After trying and failing to find a feasible alternative route on the West Ridge or the North East Ridge, the Duke declared that K2 would never be climbed, and the team switched its attention to [Chogolisa](/wiki/Chogolisa), where the Duke came within [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of the summit before being driven back by a storm.[[25]](#cite_note-25) [thumb|upright|K2 from the east, photographed during the 1909 expedition](/wiki/File:K2_East_Face_1909.jpg) The next attempt on K2 was not made until 1938, when an American expedition led by [Charles Houston](/wiki/Charles_Snead_Houston) made a reconnaissance of the mountain. They concluded that the Abruzzi Spur was the most practical route and reached a height of around [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) before turning back due to diminishing supplies and the threat of bad weather.[[26]](#cite_note-26)[[27]](#cite_note-27) The following year, an expedition led by [Fritz Wiessner](/wiki/Fritz_Wiessner) came within [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of the summit but ended in disaster when Dudley Wolfe, Pasang Kikuli, Pasang Kitar, and Pintso disappeared high on the mountain.[[28]](#cite_note-28)[[29]](#cite_note-29) Charles Houston returned to K2 to lead the [1953 American expedition](/wiki/Third_American_Karakoram_Expedition). The expedition failed due to a storm that pinned the team down for 10 days at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), during which time [Art Gilkey](/wiki/Art_Gilkey) became critically ill. A desperate retreat followed, during which [Pete Schoening](/wiki/Pete_Schoening) saved almost the entire team during a mass fall, and Gilkey was killed, either in an avalanche or in a deliberate attempt to avoid burdening his companions. Despite the failure and tragedy, the courage shown by the team has given the expedition iconic status in mountaineering history.[[30]](#cite_note-30)[[31]](#cite_note-31)[[32]](#cite_note-32)

### Success and repeats[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Compagnoni_summit_K2.jpg)[Achille Compagnoni](/wiki/Achille_Compagnoni) on K2's summit on the first ascent (31 July 1954) An Italian expedition finally succeeded in ascending to the summit of K2 via the Abruzzi Spur on 31 July 1954. The expedition was led by [Ardito Desio](/wiki/Ardito_Desio), and the two climbers who reached the summit were [Lino Lacedelli](/wiki/Lino_Lacedelli) and [Achille Compagnoni](/wiki/Achille_Compagnoni). The team included a Pakistani member, Colonel Muhammad Ata-ullah, who had been a part of the 1953 American expedition. Also on the expedition were [Walter Bonatti](/wiki/Walter_Bonatti) and Pakistani Hunza porter [Amir Mehdi](/wiki/Amir_Mehdi), who both proved vital to the expedition's success in that they carried [oxygen tanks](/wiki/Oxygen_tank) to [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) for Lacedelli and Compagnoni. The ascent is controversial because Lacedelli and Compagnoni established their camp at a higher elevation than originally agreed with Medhi and Bonatti. It being too dark to ascend or descend, Medhi and Bonatti were forced to overnight without shelter above 8,000 meters leaving the oxygen tanks behind as requested when they descended. Bonatti and Mehdi survived, but Mehdi was hospitalized for months and had to have his toes amputated because of frostbite. Efforts in the 1950s to suppress these facts to protect Lacedelli and Compagnoni's reputations as Italian national heroes were later brought to light. It was also revealed that the moving of the camp was deliberate, a move apparently made because Compagnoni feared being outshone by the younger Bonatti. Bonatti was given the blame for Medhi's hospitalization.[[33]](#cite_note-33) On 9 August 1977, 23 years after the Italian expedition, [Ichiro Yoshizawa](/wiki/Ichiro_Yoshizawa) led the second successful ascent, with [Ashraf Aman](/wiki/Ashraf_Aman) as the first native Pakistani climber. The Japanese expedition took the Abruzzi Spur, and used more than 1,500 porters.[[34]](#cite_note-34) The third ascent of K2 was in 1978, via a new route, the long and [corniced](/wiki/Cornice_(climbing)) Northeast Ridge. The top of the route traversed left across the East Face to avoid a vertical [headwall](/wiki/Headwall) and joined the uppermost part of the Abruzzi route. This ascent was made by an American team, led by [James Whittaker](/wiki/Jim_Whittaker); the summit party was [Louis Reichardt](/wiki/Louis_Reichardt), [Jim Wickwire](/wiki/Jim_Wickwire), [John Roskelley](/wiki/John_Roskelley), and [Rick Ridgeway](/wiki/Rick_Ridgeway). Wickwire endured an overnight [bivouac](/wiki/Bivouac_shelter) about [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) below the summit, one of the highest bivouacs in history. This ascent was emotional for the American team, as they saw themselves as completing a task that had been begun by the 1938 team forty years earlier.[[35]](#cite_note-35) [Template:AnchorAnother](/wiki/Template:Anchor) notable Japanese ascent was that of the difficult [North Ridge](/wiki/#North_Ridge) on the Chinese side of the peak in 1982. A team from the [Mountaineering Association of Japan](/wiki/Mountaineering_Association_of_Japan) led by Isao Shinkai and Masatsugo Konishi put three members, Naoe Sakashita, Hiroshi Yoshino, and Yukihiro Yanagisawa, on the summit on 14 August. However Yanagisawa fell and died on the descent. Four other members of the team achieved the summit the next day.[[36]](#cite_note-36) The first climber to reach the summit of K2 twice was [Czech](/wiki/Czechs) climber Josef Rakoncaj. Rakoncaj was a member of the 1983 Italian expedition led by Francesco Santon, which made the second successful ascent of the North Ridge (31 July 1983). Three years later, on 5 July 1986, he reached the summit via the Abruzzi Spur (double with Broad Peak West Face solo) as a member of Agostino da Polenza's international expedition.

The first woman to summit K2 was [Pole](/wiki/Poland) [Wanda Rutkiewicz](/wiki/Wanda_Rutkiewicz) on 23 June 1986.

In 1986, two [Polish](/wiki/Poland) expeditions climbed via two new routes, the Magic Line and the Polish Line. This second has not yet been repeated.

In 2004 the Spanish climber [Carlos Soria Fontán](/wiki/Carlos_Soria_Fontán) became the oldest person ever to summit K2, at the age of 65.<ref name=k2summiters/>

The peak has now been climbed by almost all of its ridges. Although the [summit](/wiki/Summit_(topography)) of [Everest](/wiki/Mount_Everest) is at a higher altitude, K2 is a much more difficult and dangerous climb, due in part to its more inclement weather and comparatively greater height from base to peak. The mountain is believed by many to be the world's most difficult and dangerous climb, hence its nickname "the Savage Mountain". It, and the surrounding peaks, have claimed more lives than any others.[[37]](#cite_note-37) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), only 302 people have completed the ascent,[[38]](#cite_note-38) compared with over 2,700 who have ascended Everest. At least 80 (as of September 2010) people have died attempting the climb. Thirteen climbers from several expeditions died in the [1986 K2 Disaster](/wiki/1986_K2_Disaster). Another six mountaineers died on 13 August 1995, while eleven climbers died in the [2008 K2 disaster](/wiki/2008_K2_disaster).

### Recent attempts[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

2008

On 1 August 2008, [a group of climbers went missing](/wiki/2008_K2_Disaster) after a large piece of ice fell during an avalanche, taking out the fixed ropes on part of the route; four climbers were rescued, but 11, including [Gerard McDonnell](/wiki/Gerard_McDonnell), the first Irish person to reach the summit, were confirmed dead.<ref name=cnn\_2008\_0803/>

2009

Despite several attempts, nobody reached the summit.

2010

On 6 August 2010, [Fredrik Ericsson](/wiki/Fredrik_Ericsson), who intended to ski from the summit, joined [Gerlinde Kaltenbrunner](/wiki/Gerlinde_Kaltenbrunner) on the way to the summit of K2. Ericsson fell [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) and was killed. Kaltenbrunner aborted her summit attempt.[[39]](#cite_note-39):Despite several attempts, nobody reached the summit.

2011

On 23 August 2011, a team of four climbers reached the summit of K2 from the North side. [Gerlinde Kaltenbrunner](/wiki/Gerlinde_Kaltenbrunner) became the first woman to complete all 14 [eight-thousanders](/wiki/Eight-thousander) without supplemental [oxygen](/wiki/Oxygen).[[40]](#cite_note-40) Kazakhs [Maxut Zhumayev](/wiki/Maxut_Zhumayev) and [Vassiliy Pivtsov](/wiki/Vassiliy_Pivtsov) completed their [eight-thousanders](/wiki/Eight-thousander) quest. The fourth team member was [Dariusz Załuski](/wiki/Dariusz_Załuski) from Poland.[[41]](#cite_note-41);2012: The year started with a Russian team aiming for a first winter ascent. The expedition ended with the death of [Vitaly Gorelik](/wiki/Vitaly_Gorelik) due to frostbite and pneumonia. The Russian team cancelled the ascent.[[42]](#cite_note-42) In the summer season, K2 saw a record crowd standing on its summit—28 climbers in a single day—bringing the total for the year to 30.[[43]](#cite_note-43);2013: On 28 July 2013, two New Zealanders, [Marty Schmidt](/wiki/Marty_Schmidt) and his son Denali, died after an avalanche destroyed their camp. A guide had reached the camp they were at, but said they were nowhere to be seen and the campsite tent showed signs of having been hit by an avalanche. British climber Adrian Hayes, who was with the group, later posted on his Facebook page that the campsite had been wiped out.<ref name=guardian\_2013\_0730/>

2014

On 26 July 2014, the first team of Pakistani climbers scaled K2. There are six Pakistani and three Italian climbers in the expedition, called K2 60 Years Later, according to BBC. Previously, K2 had only been summited by individual Pakistanis as part of international expeditions.[[44]](#cite_note-44):On 27 July 2014, [Garrett Madison](/wiki/Garrett_Madison) led a team of three American climbers and six Sherpas to summit K2.[[45]](#cite_note-45)[[46]](#cite_note-46)

## Climbing routes and difficulties[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[thumb|right|upright=1.2|The major routes to have been climbed on the south side of the mountain. A: West Ridge; B: West Face; C: Southwest Pillar; D: South Face; E: South-southeast Spur; F: Abruzzi Spur](/wiki/File:K2_south_routes.svg) There are a number of routes on K2, of somewhat different character, but they all share some key difficulties. First is the extreme high altitude and resulting lack of oxygen: there is only one-third as much oxygen available to a climber on the summit of K2 as there is at sea level.<ref name=alt\_calc/> Second is the propensity of the mountain to experience extreme storms of several days' duration, which have resulted in many of the deaths on the peak. Third is the steep, exposed, and committing nature of all routes on the mountain, which makes retreat more difficult, especially during a storm. Despite many attempts there have been no successful winter ascents. All major climbing routes lie on the Pakistani side, which is also where base camp is located.

### Abruzzi Spur[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

The standard route of ascent, used far more than any other route (75% of all climbers use this route) is the Abruzzi Spur,[[47]](#cite_note-47)[[48]](#cite_note-48) located on the Pakistani side, [first attempted](/wiki/#Notable2) by [Prince Luigi Amedeo, Duke of the Abruzzi](/wiki/Prince_Luigi_Amedeo,_Duke_of_the_Abruzzi) in 1909. This is the southeast ridge of the peak, rising above the [Godwin Austen Glacier](/wiki/Godwin_Austen_Glacier). The spur proper begins at an altitude of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), where Advanced Base Camp is usually placed. The route follows an alternating series of rock ribs, snow/ice fields, and some technical [rock climbing](/wiki/Rock_climbing) on two famous features, "House's Chimney" and the "Black Pyramid." Above the Black Pyramid, dangerously exposed and difficult to navigate slopes lead to the easily visible "Shoulder", and thence to the summit. The last major obstacle is a narrow [couloir](/wiki/Couloir) known as the "[Bottleneck](/wiki/Bottleneck_(K2))", which places climbers dangerously close to a wall of [seracs](/wiki/Serac) which form an ice cliff to the east of the summit. It was partly due to the collapse of one of these seracs around 2001 that no climbers summitted the peak in 2002 and 2003.[[49]](#cite_note-49) On 1 August 2008, 11 climbers from several expeditions died during [a series of accidents](/wiki/August_2008_K2_climbing_accident),<ref name=cnn\_2008\_0803/><ref name=bbc\_2008\_0803/> including several ice falls in the Bottleneck.

### North Ridge[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[thumb|right|The north side of K2. The North Ridge is in the centre of the picture.](/wiki/File:K2_Nordseite.jpg) Almost opposite from the Abruzzi Spur is the North Ridge,[[47]](#cite_note-47)[[48]](#cite_note-48) which ascends the Chinese side of the peak. It is rarely climbed, partly due to very difficult access, involving crossing the [Shaksgam River](/wiki/Shaksgam_River), which is a hazardous undertaking.[[50]](#cite_note-50) In contrast to the crowds of climbers and trekkers at the Abruzzi basecamp, usually at most two teams are encamped below the North Ridge. This route, more technically difficult than the Abruzzi, ascends a long, steep, primarily rock ridge to high on the mountain—Camp IV, the "Eagle's Nest" at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)—and then crosses a dangerously slide-prone hanging [glacier](/wiki/Glacier) by a leftward climbing traverse, to reach a snow couloir which accesses the summit.

Besides the [original Japanese ascent](/wiki/#Notable1), a notable ascent of the North Ridge was the one in 1990 by Greg Child, Greg Mortimer, and Steve Swenson, which was done [alpine style](/wiki/Alpine_style) above Camp 2, though using some [fixed ropes](/wiki/Fixed_rope) already put in place by a Japanese team.[[50]](#cite_note-50)

### Other routes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

Because 75% of people who climb K2 use the Abruzzi Spur, these listed routes are rarely climbed. No one has climbed the East Face of the mountain, due to the instability of the snow and ice formations on that side.

Northeast Ridge

Long and corniced; finishes on uppermost part of Abruzzi route, first climbed by a 4-man American team in September 1978.

West Ridge

First climbed in 1981. This route starts on the distant Negrotto Glacier and, it goes through unpredictable bands of rock and snowfields.

Southwest Pillar or "Magic Line"

Very technical, and second most demanding. First climbed in 1986 by the Polish-Slovak trio Piasecki-Wróż-Božik. Since then Jordi Corominas from Spain was the only successful climber on this route (he summitted in 2004), despite many other attempts.

South Face or "Polish Line" or "Central Rib"

Extremely exposed, most demanding and most dangerous. In July 1986, [Jerzy Kukuczka](/wiki/Jerzy_Kukuczka) and [Tadeusz Piotrowski](/wiki/Tadeusz_Piotrowski_(mountaineer)) summitted on this route. Piotrowski was killed while descending. The route starts off the first part of the Southwest Pillar, and then deviates into a totally exposed, snow-covered cliff area, then through a gully known as "The Hockey Stick", and then goes up to yet another exposed cliff-face, and the route continues through yet another extremely exposed section all the way up to the point where the route joins with the Abruzzi Spur about 1,000 feet before the summit. [Reinhold Messner](/wiki/Reinhold_Messner) called it a suicidal route and so far, no one has repeated Kukuczka and Piotrowski's achievement. "The route is so avalanche-prone, that no one else has ever considered a new attempt."[[51]](#cite_note-51)[[52]](#cite_note-52)