

PERUVIAN ANDES ADVENTURES

ALPAMAYO CIRCUIT TREK & PISCO CLIMB

15 trekking & climbing (option for 14 days)
Grade: Hard / good physical fitness is required



Alpamayo

This exciting longer trek & climb combo offers the best of the Cordillera Blanca: - a high altitude trek featuring the spectacular Laguna Cullicocha and Alpamayo peak followed by the challenge of climbing Pisco, rewarded for your efforts on the summit with amazing views of the surrounding highest peaks in the mountain range.

Alpamayo Trek 11 Days

Without doubt, the Cordillera Blanca range provides some of the most spectacular and varied trekking and climbing landscapes in the world. The range boasts more than 50 peaks of 5700m or higher of which some 20 surpass the 6000 metre mark. Huascarán is, at 6768m, the highest mountain in Peru while the pyramid of Alpamayo is arguably its most beautiful peak. We find within this 170km-long range, the greatest concentration of tropical-zone glaciers on earth. Turquoise glacial lakes abound and vertical granite walls rise thousands of metres into the sky.

Our Alpamayo Circuit trek weaves a route through the heart of the Cordillera Blanca, crossing a number of high passes which lead us into valleys with hugely varied mountain landscapes. The focal point of the trek is the famous Alpamayo pyramid, once voted the most beautiful mountain in the world.

Pisco Climb 5753m (18875 ft)

4 Days

Grade: PD / Moderate snow climbs – Beginner suitable – Physically hard

Pisco is an achievable climb for anyone who is well acclimatised and fit. It is a suitable climb for beginner climbers and is also a rewarding climb for experienced climbers.

Most years, there is no technical climbing on Pisco. Some years or months there are short, steep sections, some hard ice to negotiate or a crevasse to navigate around, but the guides would help you with this. Previous experience on snow and ice is not necessary. We can provide some basic instruction at Base Camp and support during the climb, but you do need to be strong to undertake this climb. From the summit you are rewarded with magnificent views of the many surrounding peaks, including the beautiful Chacaraju and massive Huascarán (6768m), the highest mountain in Peru.



Pisco Summit, Admiring Huascarán Sur + Norte & Chopicalqui

Note 1: Grading Trek This is a **HARD TREK**. You have 11 continuous days hiking at high altitude & cross several high passes via steep ascents. There are also some long, hard days. The effects of altitude make the trek more demanding than a similar trek at lower altitudes. Before taking on this trek you should be well acclimatised to altitude, have a very good level of fitness & endurance and be comfortable with sustained uphill climbs on sometimes steep terrain and prolonged descents of two to three hours, as well as short sections on loose ground. The trek involves several nights' camping, sometimes in cold conditions. We have included a rest day at Cebollapampa camp between the trek & climb

Note 2: Grading Climb: We consider the climb to be Medium to HARD because, although it is a suitable peak for beginner climbers, the altitude of 5750m does make it physically demanding. Although many guidebooks grade the climb as a "trekkers (or "trekking") peak", you are actually climbing while roped up with crampons and with an ice axe, sometimes on steep snow slopes and, of course, at high altitude. It is more difficult than similar climbs at lower altitudes. We do NOT regard any of the peaks in the Cordillera Blanca as "trekking peaks" and all climbs involve true mountaineering. The route from Base Camp to Morena Camp is on steep, loose moraine rock and it is necessary to carry your gear. The climbing on the glacier is sustained with continuous uphill and sometimes steep snow climbing made very demanding by the altitude. You should only consider this climb if you are strong, with high fitness levels and able to carry a medium weight backpack on steep terrain over rocky, loose and uneven ground.

Note 3: The routes used and the conditions on all the peaks are changing year by year, and even from month to month. The descriptions we have given are general only, and the routes used, conditions on the mountain and description of routes may change considerably by the time we are climbing. In some years depending on snow conditions there can be short sections of steep ice climbing or crevasses to negotiate around on Pisco. Conditions on all the mountains are changing

rapidly due to global warming and rapid recession of glacial ice, and descriptions of routes that you may find in some guide books can be out dated within 12 months.

Note 4: The guide in charge of your climb will be one of our local experienced & professional UIAGM International Mountain Guides.



Itinerary

Day A: Arrive Huaraz

Day B & C & D: Acclimatisation walks. We recommend 3 days of day hikes for acclimatization for this program. Our second camp on trek is high (4300 metres), followed by a tough day where we cross 2 high passes, both above 4770m. 3 day hikes to altitudes of up to 4440m will help to ensure that you are well acclimatized and fit and that you will get maximum enjoyment from your trek.

Day 1: Drive from Huaraz to Hualcayan via Caraz. Greeting Party at Hualcayan

We drive north from Huaraz, descending the vast Callejón de Huaylas valley by its paved road. We first stop to visit the memorial to Yungay, the town completely destroyed by a rock, ice and mud slide which came from the flanks of Huascarán during the 1970 earthquake. There is also time for a visit to the busy market in the small town of Caraz. We then take an unpaved road up into the mountains to our first camp at Hualcayan village (2900m), where we will be greeted by the local children. 5 hours drive including stops, 116kms.

Day 2: Hualcayan to Wishcash

We set off on a steady, continuous climb up a zig zag path to our camp at Wishcash (4300m), perched high up the mountainside. We have terrific views across the Callejón de Huaylas west to the Cordillera Negra. At night we can see the sparkling lights of the villages high up in the Cordillera Negra.

Approx. 8kms

5 hours

Day 3: Wishcash to Ruinapampa via Lake Cullicocha and the Osoruri pass

A tough day. We climb on a generally good zigzagging path to the crystal blue Laguna Cullicocha Lake (4650m). From here we enjoy a magnificent panorama; the summits of Santa Cruz (6259m), Santa Cruz Norte and Santa Cruz Chico rising steeply at the opposite end of the lake. As we continue our ascent towards the first pass, Paso Osoruri (4850m; joint-highest point on our trek), views of lakes and peaks get better and better. We then descend and climb again to Paso Vientunan (4770m), before embarking on a long switch-back descent to the depths of the Quebrada los Cedros Valley. Nearby, the terraced fields surrounding the thatch-roofed crofters' hamlet of Alpamayo are right at the agricultural limit. Soon after, we reach our camp at Ruinapampa (4050m).

Approx. 17kms

8 to 9 hours



Cullicocha Lake

Day 4: *Ruinapampa to Cruce Alpamayo*

An almost flat few hours' walk up the beautiful Cedros valley. On the way, we'll see some ruined structures and ancient standing stones. Eventually, the beautiful pyramidal form of Alpamayo (5947m) comes into view. Camp at Cruce Alpamayo (4150m). From the camp there is a view of the Northwest face of Alpamayo

Approx. 6kms

3 to 4 hours



Laguna Jancarurish & Alpamayo

Day 5: *Extra day at Cruce Alpamayo for R&R, side trips and to enjoy panoramas*

We spend another night at Cruce Alpamayo camp to greater appreciate the beauty of Alpamayo. Climb up the nearby moraine overlooking the Laguna Jancarurish glacial lake for close-up views of the Alpamayo and Jancarurish (5601m) peaks (3 hour return trip from camp). If you feel energised, you can continue upwards and onwards towards Alpamayo Base Camp (4500m). 5 to 6 hours return. If you prefer, you can simply rest in camp.

Day 6: Cruce Alpamayo to Safuna via the Cara Cara Pass

We cross the Los Cedros river and climb steadily to our next pass, the sometimes windy Cara Cara (4830m). This is the continental divide; all rivers running west head for the Pacific and those running east eventually reach the Atlantic, via the River Amazon. From here, there are great views back to the peaks of Alpamayo, Jancarurish, Quitaraju (6036m) and Laguna Jancarurish. We descend to a plateau and spend two hours on an easy traverse to a second, low pass (Mesapata; 4500m), before dropping to camp at Safuna in the Quebrada Tayapampa (4200m).

Approx 10kms

7 hours



Cara Cara Pass



Mesapata Pass

Day 7: Safuna to Jancapampa

We cross the Huillca plateau, one of few locations in the Cordillera Blanca where Alpacas are found in abundance. We ascend a narrow valley to a rocky pass, Paso Pucajirca (4600m), from which, weather permitting, we are treated to awesome views of the Pucajirca Norte snow peak (6046m). For a short time the descent is on steep scree, but it soon levels out as we continue down a shrub-filled valley, flanked by *quenua* (*polylepis* sp.) forest. We pass the beautiful tree-fringed Laguna Sactaycocha and continue our descent through rich vegetation to the broad Quebrada Jancapampa valley. We camp near the head of the valley at 3600m; directly behind camp we have views of a huge hanging glacier and waterfalls cascading down a vast horseshoe of cliff hundreds of metres high. A lot of farming

families live across the valley, and it is our first opportunity since Huallapa to meet friendly local people and curious, happy children.

Approx 14kms

7 to 8 hours



Jancapampa Camp

Day 8: Jancapampa to Lake Hucrococha, via the Tupatupa Pass

We pass adobe village houses and cultivated fields, then initially climb gradually, then more steeply, to the Tupatupa pass (4400m), with views of the big peaks of the Pucajirca/Rinrijirca massif to the west. Our trail descends via a small lake (tarn) into the broad Tuctubamba valley which we follow downstream before making a short half-hour climb to our campsite beside Laguna Hucrococha lake (3950m).

Approx. 12kms

7 hours



Laguna Hucrococha

Day 9: Laguna Hucrococha to Quebrada Huaripampa & Tuctubamba

We flank the north shore of Laguna Hucrococha then begin a long, gentle traverse of the steep, forested Hucrococha valley. At the valley head, the ascent steepens and zig-zags to the Alto de Pacaraju pass (4650m). At certain times of the year the lupins that cover the hillsides are in flower, and the scent can be intoxicating. At the top there are magnificent views of many peaks including the jagged Taulliraju which, at 5830m, towers over the pass. A rocky descent brings us to the open Quebrada Huaripampa valley and our Tuctubamba camp (3950m).

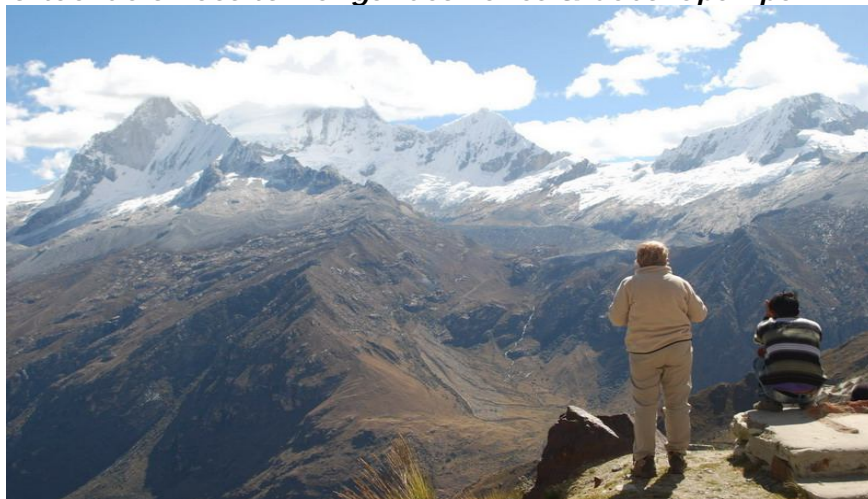
Approx 7 ½ kms

7 hours



Lupin Fields

Day 10 : Cross Portachuelo Pass to Llanganuco Lakes & Cebollapampa



Portachuelo Pass – looking across to the route up to Pisco Base Camp

An easy, relaxing walk through the lower Quebrada Huaripampa valley takes us through the scattered hamlet of Huaripampa. Here we pass several farm houses and encounter a lot of local people, including children. Sheep, goats and donkeys also abound. We then climb for an hour to the settlement of Vaquería (3600m). Approx. 9kms hiking - 5 hours walk. Our private vehicle will be waiting at Vaquería and will take us over the Portachuelo de Llanganuco pass (4767m), from which we enjoy an awesome panorama featuring several of the giant peaks of the Cordillera Blanca range. These include Huascarán (at 6768 metres, Peru's highest mountain), Huandoy (6395m) and Chopicalqui (6354m). The stunning, turquoise Llanganuco lakes can also be seen lying almost a kilometre below. We descend via a steep zig zag road to the beautiful famous lake Llanganuco where we can camp at the base of Pisco at Cebollapampa (3850m).

***Note**, you make like to bring some pens, or other small things to give to the many children that we see on the way.

Day 11: REST DAY at Cebollapampa Camp

A well deserved rest day at pleasant Cebollapampa Camp. Enjoy some delicious food and regain energy for the climbing to come ([You can choose to omit this rest day](#))

Day 12: Hike to Pisco Base Camp short day

A relaxing short hike today - our gear is loaded onto the donkeys and we climb on a good path for 2½ hours to Pisco Base Camp (4650m). There is a refugio there where you can buy beer, wine and hot

food. Rest in the afternoon. *Note: If you are a novice climber, we can organize some basic instruction in the afternoon.*



Pisco Base Camp, Pisco is Behind

Day 13: Carry Gear from Pisco Base Camp to Morena Camp



To Morena camp

Today is a short but challenging day. We climb to Morena Camp (4900m), crossing loose ground and negotiating large moraine rocks at times. The donkeys cannot come this way, so you need to carry your personal gear: climbing gear, clothes and sleeping bag. Porters carry tents, food, cooking equipment & ropes but you do need to be prepared to carry your own equipment. The ground today is uneven and rocky, and the hike commences with a steep but short hike up to the top of the moraine wall and then a short but tricky & steep descent down the other side. The rest of the way is a mixture of good path with some demanding scrambling over moraine rocks and loose ground. 3 hours.

Day 14: Morena Camp to Pisco Summit and back to Base Camp

Summit Day. We leave early and climb for about 40 minutes to an hour on moraine until we reach the glacier, where we put on crampons and rope up. For most of the route, it is not overly steep or technically difficult, although the altitude does make it a challenge. There are occasional short steep sections and hard ice, or possibly a crevasse, may need to be negotiated. Also note that since 2009 there has been a steep (60 deg.) slope of some 30m to the summit. We will of course assist you with any difficulties. We try to arrive at the summit to see the sun rise. About 5 hours to the broad summit where there is plenty of room to walk around, appreciate the amazing surrounding mountains and take photos.



From the summit you can enjoy fantastic views of the close-by peaks; many among the tallest in the Cordillera Blanca, including Huascarán (6768m), Chopicalqui (6354m), Huandoy (6160m), Chacraraju (6012m), Pirámide (5885m) and Artesonraju (6025m). We descend to Morena Camp, where we will prepare hot soup and have an hour's rest, collect our gear and return to Base Camp. 9 to 12 hours for the day.



Day 15: *Descend from Base Camp to Cebollapampa and drive back to Huaraz*

It's a 1½ to 2 hour walk down to Cebollapampa, where we meet our vehicle for a 2½-hour drive back to Huaraz.

14 days : omit the rest day at Cebollapampa

Trekking & Climbing Hours:

Climbing times are estimated times and based on our average climbing groups from past experience. Some people may be much faster and others slower.

Trek Roads: Access roads to and from treks are generally dirt mountain roads (not paved) and in some places can be bumpy. Road travel times are slower than you may expect for the kms travelled.

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