



PERUVIAN ANDES ADVENTURES

CIRCUIT OF THE CORDILLERA HUAYHUASH with Siula Grande

15 days trekking

Grade: Hard

The Cordillera Huayhuash Circuit has been nominated in several guidebooks as one of the classic trekking circuits of the world.

The Huayhuash is a compact, rugged range of jagged, vertical summits, including the second highest peak in Peru, Yerupajá Grande (6634m), as well as half a dozen other peaks above six thousand metres.

Every day on this trek, hikers are treated to awesome views of towering snow capped peaks, glaciers and turquoise-blue trout-filled lakes. There are 8 passes to cross on this spectacular trek, the highest (Cuyoc) at 5000m.

Our 15 day trek features a visit to the Base Camp of Siula Grande, made famous by the epic Joe Simpson book and film "Touching The Void".



Siula Lakes

Important Note: *In June 2009 the Huayhuash Community of Huayllapa closed access for trekkers to the Calinca Valley and Cutatambo. This is where the Siula Grande Base Camp is located. The community did this to protect the grazing for their cattle which are in the Calinca Valley. The trip to Siula Grande Base*

Camp has become so popular with trekkers that the number of trekking donkeys in the valley are decimating the grazing and causing damage to the fragile environment there. It is important that all trekking agencies respect the wishes of the local communities, as the whole of the Huayhuash Circuit is over private community-owned land.

At some times the community will permit groups to enter the Calinca valley to camp and visit Siula Grande Base Camp, but access is not guaranteed and the community will not make a decision on granting access until groups actually arrive in the area. It is not possible to request permission to enter before we depart from Huaraz.

If at the time your trek approaches Siula Base Camp, access is not permitted, we will camp in the Huanacpatay Valley and hike to the top of the San Antonio Pass from which we can see Siula Grande and the Base Camp.

There WILL be an extra charge in fees to pay to the community to camp in the Calinca Valley.

Note 1 Grading: *There are some demanding days of hiking on this trek and the length of the trek and the number of high passes warrants a grade of Hard. You do need to have a good level of fitness and be comfortable with hiking a sustained uphill climb of two to three hours, and be able to manage prolonged descents from passes, with some short sections on loose & uneven ground.*

Most trekking options in the Cordillera Huayhuash & Blanca should be considered to be physically demanding owing to the altitude (you are above 4000m for the duration of the treks) and the mountainous nature of the terrain. Trails on this trek are often steep – both ascending or descending and can be slippery & rocky in places. If you do not think you can enjoy this type of trekking, let us know and we can suggest some easier options

Note 2: *Walking times are average hiking times. The altitude affects people differently. Some people will be faster than the indicated times and others will be much slower*

Day 1: Huaraz to Llamac via Chiquián by road

We drive from Huaraz to Chiquián, enjoying distant views of the awesome Huayhuash range from afar. From Chiquián we descend to a cactus-and-scrub environment and continue to the village of Llamac (3300m) where we set up our first camp. 4 to 5 hours drive 156kms. Camp is a short distance from the village.



Llamac

Day 2: Hike Llamac to Cuartel Huain

We walk gradually up the Quebrada Llamac valley along the course of the Rio Llamac, passing through the small villages of Pocpa and Pallca. In 2005 a new road between Llamac and Cuartel Huain was completed, and for much of the way we follow this rarely-used road; the scenery is so interesting & beautiful that the road is barely noticed anyway. Today is a relaxing hike with no steep ascents; it is also an extremely valuable extra acclimatisation day before crossing our first pass tomorrow. Beyond Pallca, the way opens up into a wide U-shaped grassy valley with rolling hills and flanked by broad expanses of *quenua* (polylepis sp.) forest. We camp at Cuartel Huain (4200m).

Approx. 18kms

6 to 7 hours walking



Rio Llamac



Quartelhuain

Note: If you do not wish to hike from Llamac to Quartelhuain, you can choose to drive direct from Huaraz to Quartelhuain and camp there the first night. You **MUST** however have at least three days in Huaraz doing day hikes for acclimatisation for this option. To drive from Huaraz 3070m to Quartelhuain 4200m direct is an altitude gain of 1130m in a single day. If you are not already well acclimatised, the chance of becoming ill with altitude problems on the first days of trekking is high. The extra day gained can be spent as either;

Day 3: Cuartel Huain to Laguna Mitucocha via Cacanán Punta pass

This morning we cross our first pass, Cacanán Punta (4700m). Here, at the Continental Divide, we sometimes observe the Andean Condor flying overhead. We descend to the Jalca plain and on to our camp at the beautiful Laguna Mitucocha lake (4220m), located at the foot of the stunning Jirishanka Grande peak, and those of its neighbours Rondoy and Ninashanca. If you have the energy, there's the option this afternoon of walking around the lake or up to one of the nearby hanging valleys. [In 2013 season the local community have requested that groups do not camp next to the lake to protect the grass for their animals in the area. The campsite is now 15 minutes hike down river from the lake in a flat area](#)

Approx. 12kms
6 hours' hiking.



Cacanán Pass



Mitucocha Lake

Day 4: Laguna Mitucocha lake to Laguna Carhuacocha lake, via Punta Carhuac pass

We traverse the Jalca floodplain then ascend south to the Paso de Carhuac pass (4650m). From here an awesome panorama suddenly comes into view; a row of Huayhuash giants: Yerupajá Grande, the second highest mountain in Peru, Yerupajá Chico(6121m) and Siulá Grande (6344m), of "Touching the Void" fame. From here we descend to our camp at the large Laguna Carhuacocha lake (4150m), with the chance en route of spotting Viscacha rodents among the moronic debris. From our camp we look directly up the lake to the peaks and ice fields of the famous Siula Grande, Yerupajá Grande and Chico and Jirishanka Chico.

Approx. 12kms
6 hours



Carhuacocha lake

Day 5: Free day at Laguna Carhuacocha for Rest or a Day Hike

We spend an extra night in this idyllic spot to enjoy our spectacular surroundings. You could take a half-day hike around the lake, maybe taking in a hanging valley at the foot of Jirishanka Chico, or a day hike up to the three glacial fed lakes at the base of Siula Grande. Alternatively, have a rest day or catch some trout for dinner!



Siula Lakes

Day 6: Laguna Carhuacocha lake to Huayhuash or Laguna Carnicero lake

We leave Laguna Carhuacocha behind heading east, then turning up a side valley, ascend southwards towards the Paso Carnicero pass (4600m). It is not a difficult climb, although we will still feel the altitude. We make an easy descent to camp either at the isolated Laguna Carnicero (or Juraucocha) lake (4400m) or 30 minutes further on at another camp among a sprinkling of local farm houses in the open Huayhuash Valley (4330m)

Approx. 12kms

5 to 6 hours

Note: *Weather permitting, we can take the alternative, more demanding and spectacular route via the glacial lakes of Siula and Quesillococha at the foot of Siula Grande, which then ascends, steeply at times, to a 4800m pass. The views of the mountains and glaciers during the ascent are very close and spectacular, and we often see avalanche ice floating in the lakes. The descent to Laguna Carnicero and Huayhuash takes us across - or around - a vast flood plain of "cushion grass". Those with sharp eyes may spot the graceful, elusive Vicuña - wild progenitor of the Alpaca - which live hereabouts. 7 to 8 hours, approx. 14kms*



Carnicero Pass

Day 7: Huayhuash or Laguna Carnicero to Viconga camp

We climb to the Portachuelo de Huayhuash pass (4750m) on a steady gradient. From here, looking southeast, we see a new collection of nearby snow peaks; this is the Cordillera Raura range and the nearby snow peak of Leon Huacanan. We descend to and skirt around the large Laguna Viconga lake – look out for Alpacas - before walking up the valley for ½ hour to set up camp (4480m). There are some very open air hot springs near Viconga, so a hot bath could certainly be appreciated!

Approx. 12kms

6½ hours.

(Bring a swimsuit + 5 soles entrance fee)



Lunch Stop at Viconga Lake



Hot Springs Viconga

Day 8: Paso Punta Cuyoc to Huanacpatay

Today we cross our highest pass, Punta Cuyoc, with a sustained uphill hike of 2 to 3 hours to a breathtaking 5000m. The panoramas here are stunning: to the southeast the sharply serrated ridge of the Cordillera Raura is seen, and to the north, several of the giants of the Huayhuash range are seen from a new perspective. Sarapo (6127m) is also seen for the first time. The initial 50m of the descent is quite steep and loose, becoming easier as we continue descending quickly to the broad Quebrada Huanacpatay valley, where we stop for lunch. We then have a relaxing and easy hike down the valley to our camp (4300m).

Approx. 8kms

6 hours



Cuyoc Pass

Day 9: Huanacpatay Camp to Cutatambo, via Cerro San Antonio

From camp we climb to a pass on Cerro San Antonio. This is a demanding day with some steep hiking, but by now you should be well acclimatised and feeling strong at altitude. After 2 hours we are on the top of the pass at 4800m, with fantastic views of all the giants of the Cordillera Huayhuash and the 3 lakes of Sarapococha, Santa Rosa & Jurau. We can also see the Siula Glacier which Joe Simpson crawled down in his epic battle for survival, and we see Siula Base Camp quite clearly in the distance. The descent is initially steep, but safe, on scree for around 100m. We then follow a cattle trail winding down to Lake Jaurau and finally to our camp in the Quebrada Calinca at Cutatambo (4100m).

Approx 10 kms

5 to 6 hours.



Pass Cerro Antonio

Day 10: Free day for exploration

Today we can walk past the base camp of Siula Grande (Joe Simpson – "Touching The Void") and visit the glacial lakes of Sarapococha and Santa Rosa, before returning to camp for lunch and a relaxing afternoon.



Siula Grande Glacier

Note: *If we are not permitted to enter the Calinca Valley, we spend an extra night at our Huanacpatay camp and do a day hike up to the Cerro San Antonio pass. This is a demanding day with some steep hiking, but by now you should be well acclimatised and feeling strong at altitude. After 2 hours we are on the top of the pass at 4800m, with fantastic views of all the giant peaks of the Cordillera Huayhuash and the 3 lakes of Sarapococha, Santa Rosa & Jurau. We can see the Siula Glacier which Joe Simpson crawled down in his epic battle for survival, and we see Siula Base Camp quite clearly in the distance. We will spend the extra day either with a rest day at Huanacpatay or we will hike into the Rasac valley near Laguna Jahuacocha and spend a night there. Rasac valley is a remote valley surrounded by mountains and a beautiful spot to camp. A decision will be made at the time between the guide and group members as to how to spend the extra day.*

Day 11: Cutatambo to Huatiac via Huayllapa Village

We walk back down the Quebrada Calinca valley, which becomes the agricultural Quebrada Huayllapa valley (the first sign of crops for over a week). We continue until, just before the tiny village of Huayllapa 3600m (the first village since Llamac and last before we return to Llamac), we begin a hard climb in the afternoon of about 2 to 2½ hours to our campsite high up on the flat pasture of Huatiac (4350m).

Approx. 16kms

7 hours.



Donkey Train



Huayllapa Village

Day 12: Huatiac to Cashpapampa, via the Punta Tapush Pass

An easier day, we cross the Punta Tapush pass (4750m), then descend past Laguna Susucocha before reaching our flat campsite at Cashpapampa (4500m).

Approx. 9kms

3 to 4 hours.

Note: From the top of the pass there is an option to climb about another 100m and take a different route into camp.

Day 13: Hike to Laguna Jahuacocha lake via Yaucha Pass

We set off from our Cashpapampa camp and after a half hour's descent, turn east and climb to the Punta Yaucha pass (4800m). During the descent the peaks of Rondoy, Jirishanca, Yerupajá, Rasac (6017m) and Sacra come into view. We follow the Quebrada Huacrish valley to its confluence with the Quebrada Jahuacocha valley and descend on zig-zags to our picturesque camp at the head of the beautiful Laguna Jahuacocha (4150m). Across the lake from our camp we enjoy one of the best panoramas in the Andes; the west faces of the highest peaks in the range rising dramatically skyward. There are Jirishanca, Yerupajá Grande with its vast snaking glacier, Yerupajá Chico and Rondoy.

Approx. 11kms

4 hours



Yaucha Pass



Laguna Jahuacocha

Day 14: Extra Day at Laguna Jahuacocha

We stay at Jahuacocha for some rest & relaxation and maybe a touch of trout fishing. You may choose to take an optional day hike to Laguna Solteracocha (4120m), a moraine-enclosed glacial lake beyond Jahuacocha, and then further towards Punta Sambuya pass (4750m) at the base of Nevado Rondoy peak for some truly awesome close-up views of Yerupajá, Jirishanca and Rondoy. Or if you want a more demanding hike, we can climb up Cerro Amarrillo peak (5000m) for views over the whole Huayhuash range and down into Cuartel Huain where we camped on our second night. The latter is a tough day hike and on the top you walk along an exposed section of ridge. There is also a short section of the descent on shingle scree, but it is worth the effort for the breathtaking views.



Laguna Jahuacocha



Sambuya Pass

Day 15: Walk from Jahuacocha to Llamac via the Llamac pass. Drive to Huaraz

After an early start and gentle descent for an hour, we start our gradual climb to the final pass, Pampa Llamac (4300m), from where we have our final views of much of the Huayhuash range. Then it is a long descent back to the Llamac valley and the village of Llamac. In Llamac the bus will be waiting to take us back to Huaraz and your hotel for that long-awaited hot shower!! We arrive in Huaraz at about 06:00pm.

Approx. 14kms

5½ to 6 hours

There are options to do this trek route in 13 or 14 days, just check with us

Hiking Hours & Kms Hiked:

Hiking hours are estimated times including rest breaks and lunch stop. Times are for our average groups based on past experience. Some people may be much faster and others slower.

Kms hiked are estimated.

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.



Llamac Pass

Copy:

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