



PERUVIAN ANDES ADVENTURES

LAGUNA 69 & SANTA CRUZ TREK

4 or 5 days trekking

Grade: Medium to Hard

Highest Point: 4750m

Combine a trek of the famous Santa Cruz Circuit with a hike up to the pristine high alpine lake of Laguna 69

The trek offers some of the most amazing mountain scenery in the Cordillera Blanca - with spectacular views of the beautiful Laguna 69, snow-covered mountains, vertical rock walls, turquoise lakes and the challenging Punta Union pass (4750m), along with the opportunity to meet local villagers and see their traditional farming methods – all condensed into a relatively short trek or 4 or 5 days

Note: *We grade the trek as medium to hard as the trekking starts with a steep hike up a zig zag trail to Laguna 69 at 4500m on the first day of the trek. Then there is a 2½ to 3 hour hike to a high pass at 4750m, as well as a long descent from that pass. For those choosing the 4 day option, there is a long hike down the valley of up to 8 hours on the final day of the trek.*

The high altitude makes the hiking harder than a similar trek at lower altitude. You do need to be well acclimatised to the altitude and have at least a medium level of fitness to enjoy this trek. To enjoy this trek, you should also have some experience of hill-walking, and be able to hike a 6 to 7 hour day. If you do not have a reasonable level of fitness, you may struggle on this trek

Day A: Arrive Huaraz (3090m)

Day B & C: Huaraz / Acclimatisation days with day hikes to higher altitudes (two days – 3 nights minimum is highly recommended for acclimatisation)

Day 1: Drive to Llanganuco Lakes, Hike to Laguna 69 and then back to camp by Llanganuco Lakes at Yurakcoral

Travel by our private vehicle car for 2 ½ hours from Huaraz past the beautiful Llanganuco Lakes and then to Cebollapampa (3850m). You start the walk from Cebollapampa by following the valley for some 40 minutes, then climb continuously on a zig zag track for about 2 hour 40 minutes to Laguna 69, a beautiful lake of the most brilliant blue colour (4500m). The lake is surrounded by the mountains Chacaraju and Pisco which leave reflections on the lake. On the return walk you look directly towards the mountains Huascarán, Chopicalqui and Yanapaccha. Return the same way descending all the way to the trail start at Cebollapampa and then walk about 20 minutes more down to a campsite named Yurakcoral (3850m) situated at the head of the Llanganuco Lakes where we camp the night
Approx 6 hours hike up and back



Hiking to Laguna 69



Laguna 69

Llanganuco Lakes

Day 2: Drive to Vaqueria & hike up Huaripampa Valley to Paria

Drive from Yuracorral Camp upwards to the Portachuelo de Llanganuco road pass (4767m). Here we stop to enjoy views of a number of spectacular high Andean peaks, including Huascarán, Huandoy (6395m) and Chopicalqui (6,345m), as well as the Llanganuco lakes a kilometre below us.



Portachuelo Pass

We descend to Vaqueria (3600m), arriving after one hour drive. We meet our donkey drivers, equipment is loaded onto donkeys and we start trekking. We enjoy a relaxed, gradually ascending hike which takes us initially through the agricultural settlements of the Huaripampa valley, where we will encounter many friendly local children and observe the traditional village way of life and its farming methods close-up. We then leave civilization behind and enter the wilderness of the Huascarán National Park to camp in a secluded valley at Paria (3900m).

Approx. 7kms

4 hours hike

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



Huaripampa Valley

Day 3: Hike from Paria to Taullipampa via the Punta Union Pass

Today is a hard day, with fitness and acclimatisation levels put to the test. Nevertheless, we take our time and have plenty of rest breaks as we undertake a sustained ascent of 3 hours to a narrow notch in a granite wall. This is the pass over the Continental Divide, Punta Union (4750m). The imposing nearby Taulliraju, a jagged snow-capped mountain, dominates the skyline while to the north and northwest, Rinrihirca and Quitaraju loom large, and in the distance to the west we glimpse the blue Jatuncocha lake a long way down the Quebrada Santa Cruz valley. After admiring the views and taking photos, we enjoy an easy zig zag trail down to our camp in a meadow at Taullipampa (4254m).

Approx. 13kms

6 to 7 hours.



Punta Union Pass



Santa Cruz Valley & Jatuncocha Lake



Taullipampa Campsite



Punta Union Pass – Taulliraju Behind

4 DAY TREK:

Day 4: Hike via Alpamayo Viewpoint to Cashapampa. Drive to Huaraz

A long day. We take a brief but rewarding detour to a viewpoint up to the Quebrada Arhuaycocha, a hanging valley from which we enjoy sensational close-up views of the famous, and beautiful, Nevado Alpamayo snow peak (once voted the most beautiful mountain in the world), as well as the Nevado Quitaraju and Artesonraju peaks. We then have a long downhill hike on a good trail along the Quebrada Santa Cruz valley to Cashapampa village (2900m). The first part of the hike after descending down to the trail from Quebrada Arhuaycocha we cross an area of barren washout where in the year 2014 an avalanche coming off Artesonraju caused a flash flood that washed out the upper part of the Santa Cruz Valley, destroying the trail and also completely burying the shallow lake named Ichicocha which has now disappeared. We then are on a good trail again, traversing around the Lake Jatuncocha and descending beside a tumbling river until Cashapampa Village.

Approx. 17kms

8 to 9 hours hiking

In Cashapampa our private vehicle will be waiting for us & we return to Huaraz (97kms & 3 hours drive).



Hiking Q. Arhuaycocha towards Alpamayo



Laguna Jatuncocha

5 DAY TREK – SPLITS THE LONG FINAL DAY OF 4 DAY TREK INTO TWO SHORTER AND EASY DAYS:

Day 4: Hike via Alpamayo Base Camp to Llamacorral

We can hike further up the Quebrada Arhuaycocha (see day 4 above) all the way to Alpamayo Base Camp from where climbers start their ascent of Alpamayo. There usually are some climbers base camps set up there and sometimes we can see groups of climbers making their way up or descending down from Alpamayo Base Camp. We can take a short 30 minute hike up to Lake Arhuaycocha from Base Camp, before descending back down the valley and hiking past Laguna Jatuncocha to our camp at Llamacorral
Approx 11 kms to Base Camp & then to Llamacorral (3750m)
6 to 7 hours



Laguna Arhuaycocha

Day 5: Hike Llamacorrall Down to Cashapampa & Drive Back to Huaraz

An easy down valley hike on a good trail, following the fast flowing Santa Cruz river to the village of Cashapampa where our private vehicle will be waiting to take us back to Huaraz
Approx 8 ½ kms

Approx 4 to 5 hours hike

97kms and 3 hour drive back to Huaraz



Note: Special Interest

If you choose to do this trek, you will be helping and contributing to improving the economic situation for the local people of the villages of Colcabamba and Vaqueria at the start of the trek.

Because of local politics, the donkey drivers from these villages are not permitted to work on any treks other than those starting from Vaqueria. The work as donkey drivers is a vital source of cash income for the people who live in these villages, and without this work they have very little cash with which to improve their lives and educate their children.

Classic examples are two of our favourite donkey drivers, the brothers Victor and Cirillo Mendez from Vaqueria. These two men are extremely hardworking, honest and loyal. Victor is working hard to support his eldest daughter who is at university in Huaraz studying to be a nurse. Victor's vision is to educate both his daughters so that they can advance and not be trapped into the hard and difficult lives of mountain living people.

Matt & Jolene from Canada who did this trek in October 2009 with Victor said:
Donkey driver. - We'll take Victor anytime!. He's great



Cirillo



Victor

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.

Copy:

This information and photographs have been prepared by and is confidential to Peruvian Andes Adventures. We are aware that several agencies in Huaraz have copied and plagiarised information that we have invested considerable time and financial resources in developing to provide quality information to our clients. If you receive information & photos from other companies that are identical or very similar to this provided by us, it is very likely to have been copied without permission