



PERUVIAN ANDES ADVENTURES

SANTA CRUZ TREK with CLIMBING THREE PEAKS ISHINCA VALLEY

12 Days Trek & climb (plus one rest day in Huaraz)



Ascending Punta Union Pass – Santa Cruz Trek

For those looking for an extended trekking & climbing trip culminating in an attempt on a 6000m peak, we offer a combination with the scenic Santa Cruz Llanganuco trek for acclimatisation followed by seven days based in beautiful Ishinca Valley and climbing three peaks

Santa Cruz Llanganuco Trek

Grade: Moderate

A classic trek within the Cordillera Blanca, the popularity of this shortish expedition is due to its spectacular mountain views, stunning blue lakes and the challenging Punta Union pass at 4750m. This trek offers an amazing variety of scenery in only 4 days and gives good acclimatisation for a climbing trip.

Three Climbs in the Ishinca Valley

Peaks:

Urus: 5495m (18028 ft)

Grade: PD- /Moderate snow climbing, physically demanding

Ishinca: 5530m (18143 ft)

Grade: PD- /Moderate snow climbing, physically demanding

Tocllaraju: 6034m (19797 ft)

Grade: D / Hard / Some steep & technical climbing – not suitable for beginners



Tocllaraju

From our base in the beautiful Ishinca Valley we can climb three peaks. Urus & Ishinca are non technical peaks which are ideal as warm up climbs, then finally we attempt 6034m Tocllaraju.

Some years, depending on amounts of snowfall, Urus involves more time climbing on a moraine ridge rather than on snow & ice, but it is nonetheless an excellent peak on which to gain further acclimatisation and strength. Ishinca is a rewarding climb for both experienced and beginner climbers, with long enjoyable slopes of good snow.

Ishinca can be climbed from two different routes. The North Face route is the left ridge as you approach the mountain and has the easiest access to reach the glacier but the actual climb is steeper with much of the climbing on 35° to 50° degrees snow and there can be some sections of hard ice. There are also many crevasses to negotiate around and a final 50m steep section to reach the summit. The alternative option is to approach the mountain via Ranrapalca & this may be preferred by less experienced snow climbers. The hike up to the glacier is tougher with some large moraine rock to climb around, but once on the glacier it is a relatively gently and pleasant snow climb on an open ridge of 25° to 30° degrees slope. There are some small crevasses but they are easily negotiated around. Only the last 2m to 3m to the summit is steep.

We climb Urus & Ishinca first to gain extra acclimatisation and fitness, then you should be ready to challenge the more technical Tocllaraju - maybe your first 6000m peak.

Tocllaraju has some sections of steep and technical climbing, and we recommend that clients have previous experience climbing on snow and ice with crampons and ice axe, and experience with belay techniques, anchor placement and descent by rappel. Tocllaraju is not a suitable climb for clients who do not have good basic climbing skills.

There are about 5 large crevasses during the route, which during the *2013 season* were safely negotiated via secure snow bridges or by jumping over them. However, the conditions of these snow

bridges may alter and the guide may make a decision to try to find an alternative route to negotiate around crevasses.

The final shoulder summit of Tocllaraju involves more technical climbing with some open crevasses to be climbed through with 2 or 3 short pitches of 30° to 45° degrees ice climbing required. After the crevasses the final obstacle is a steep and exposed bergschrund lasting around 65m with grades 60° to 70°. The guide may set up a fixed rope to climb the bergschrund. Once at the top of the bergschrund there is a gentle walk on nice snow to the summit.

Note 1: Acclimatisation & Fitness. *Climbing above 5000m is physically demanding and it is particularly important to be well acclimatised to the altitude for a 6000m peak. The Santa Cruz trek provides a good acclimatisation base for the Three Peaks program.*

The routes from Base Camps up to the glaciers on all three peaks are on steep, loose moraine rock and can be slippery. On Tocllaraju it is necessary to carry your gear up to the Morena Camp on the mountain. The climbing on the glacier is sustained with steep climbing made very demanding by the altitude. You should only consider these climbs 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 2: *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. 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.*

Tocllaraju is subject to very rapid changes in the condition of the glacier and large crevasses can open up or close within a period of just a few days.

Note 3: *Donkeys carry all equipment to Ishinca Base Camp. You carry just a light day pack. It is necessary to carry all equipment up to Tocllaraju Morena Camp. Porters carry tents, rope, food and cooking equipment, but you need to carry your own personal gear & climbing equipment.*

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 (3090m).

Day B & C: Huaraz / Acclimatisation days (two days are recommended for acclimatisation if you have the time, but one day minimum is essential)

Santa Cruz Trek

Day 1: Drive to Cashapampa. Hike up the Santa Cruz valley to Llamacorral

From Huaraz we drive along the broad Callejón de Huaylas valley to Caraz, then up to the village of Cashapampa (2900m). 3 hours. Approaching Cashapampa we have our first view of Nevado Santa Cruz, an imposing pyramidal snow peak that gives the trekking circuit its name. We begin our trek with a steady ascent through the lower Santa Cruz valley, following a tumbling river as we go. The first 2 hours are through a steep-sided gorge, with the going occasionally tough as the continuous ascent and usually hot conditions take their toll. By early afternoon, however, the gradient begins to level out and the valley to open out onto cooler *puna* grasslands as we approach our first camp, close to the river at Llamacorral (3750m)

Approx. 8 ½ kms

5 hours

Note: Today can be a demanding first day for those lacking in acclimatisation.



Jatuncocha Lake

Day 2: Llamacorral to Taullipampa, with optional Arhuaycocha side trip

Today we enjoy an easier day's walk up the open valley to our camp at Taullipampa (4250m). The direct route takes about 4 hours. The going is mostly flat as we pass two lakes (Laguna Ichiccocha and the larger Jatuncocha), with the final hour to Taullipampa camp mostly uphill. During the day's hike, the neighbouring peaks of Quitaraju (6,040m) and the famous Alpamayo South Face (5,947m) come briefly into view; an optional, and recommended, side trip from Quisuar up a zigzagging trail takes you to the hanging Arhuaycocha valley and beyond to Alpamayo Base Camp and Laguna Arhuaycocha. This optional detour allows closer views of Alpamayo (once voted the world's most beautiful mountain), Artesonraju (6,025m) and Quitaraju, before traversing via a little-used track to our Taullipamapa camp.

Our camp is situated almost at the base of the beautiful Taulliraju snow peak, and is surrounded by others, including Paria, Artesonraju and Rinrijirca (5,810m).

Approx 8kms direct Llamacorral to Taullipampa

4 hours hiking or add 1 to 3 hours extra if hike towards Alpamayo Base Camp



Taullipampa Camp

Our camp is situated almost at the base of the beautiful Taulliraju snow peak, and is surrounded by others, including Paria, Artesonraju and Rinrijirca (5,810m).

Approx 8kms direct Llamacorrall to Taullipampa

4 hours hiking or add 1 to 3 hours extra if hike towards Alpamayo Base Camp

Day 3 : Taullipampa to the Huaripampa Valley via Punta Union Pass



Punta Union Pass

From Taullipampa camp, we ascend steadily on a good path for some 2½ to 3 hours, gradually nearing the continental divide at Punta Union pass (4750m). Most will feel some shortness of breath on the approach, as the altitude takes its effect; consequently we aim to take our time. From the pass we enjoy stunning views of several snow peaks, including Rinrijirca, Pucajirca (6050m), Artesonraju and the nearby Nevado Taulliraju (5830m), a towering, jagged presence. Looking back down the Santa Cruz Valley, we see Lake Jutuncocha in the distance. From the pass it is a long descent into the beautiful Quebrada Huaripampa valley past two small lakes and several patches of red-barked *quenual* (*polylepis* sp.) forest. Tonight's camp will be on a plateau, away from the main trail, in the secluded Quebrada Paria valley (3900m).

Approx. 13kms

7 hours

Day 4: Hike Paria to Vaquería. Drive to Huaraz via Portachuelo Pass

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. 7kms hiking. 4 to 5 hours walk. Our private vehicle will be waiting at Vaqueria 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 a steep zig zag road to the lakes and continue to Huaraz 135kms road trip, around 5 hours driving. Arrive in Huaraz at around 4 or 5 in the afternoon.

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



Paria Valley

Day 5: Rest day in Huaraz & prepare for climbing trip

Day 6: *Drive from Huaraz to Pashpa or Collón. Hike to Ishinca Base Camp*



Ishinca Base Camp

We drive 1½ hours from Huaraz to the village of either Pashpa or Collón (3400m). We then walk up the Quebrada Ishinca valley on a gently rising path to our camp at the head of the valley. This is a lovely walk, starting on a plateau with views of Huascarán, then passing through beautiful Quenua (polylepis sp.) forest. As we walk up the valley, it opens out, and we see Tocllaraju ahead. Base Camp is at 4390m. 5 to 6 hours.

Day 7: *Ishinca Base Camp to Urus Summit and Return*

Today we climb the East Face of Urus. Leaving camp at 4am, we make a steep climb directly up a ridge and across large moraine rocks until we reach the ice after 3½ hours. There's a steadier gradient on the ice for one hour, then the last half hour to the summit is an easier rock climb. **Note**, however, that some years and months there can be deep snow all the way to the summit. Arrive at the summit to see the sun rise on Tocllaraju, Akilpo, Palcaraju and Ishinca. A steep & long descent back to camp by the same route. 7 hours.



Urus Route



On Urus Summit

Day 8: *REST DAY or bad weather day*

Day 9: *Climb Ishinca*

Today we climb Ishinca. We leave camp at 3am and undertake a steady climb, initially on a good path to Lake Ishinca (2½ to 3 hours). Then we continue hiking over more demanding, steep moraine rock until we reach the glacier. We put on crampons and rope up for the climb. Which route we climb will be decided by the guide having regard to weather, experience and fitness of the clients.



Some years, depending on the condition of the glacier, there can be some hard ice, especially at the glacial face to climb up onto the start of the glacier. It's about 3 to 3½ hours on the ice to the summit. 9 to 12 hours for the day, depending on fitness.



On Ishinca – Looking across to Tocllaraju

Day 10: Base Camp to Tocllaraju Morena Camp

We leave Base Camp mid-morning, carrying all our equipment, and climb to Tocllaraju High Camp. It is a steep climb on a moraine ridge and across large moraine rocks for 3 to 4 hours to where we set up our camp on the moraine immediately below the glacier at Morena Camp (5100m).

Day 11: Tocllaraju Morena Camp to Tocllaraju Summit and Descend to Base Camp

We leave camp early (around 1 or 2am) to climb to the summit. From the Morena Camp there is steady and pleasant climbing which is not very steep for the first 3½ hours. We come to the first large crevasse *which in 2013 season was able to be crossed*. We then negotiate a steep section of 60m of about 70 to 45 degrees slope.



We then climb steadily and not too steeply along a ridge until we reach a second large crevasse at the start of the north ridge of Tocllaraju. We cross the crevasse by another snow bridge, then continue to a steep bergschrund of up to 70 degrees and about 65m in length; this marks the start of the summit climb, and feels quite exposed. The guide may fix a rope for climbing this section.



Arriving At the Bergschrund



Climbing the Bergschrund

After reaching the top of the bergschrund it is a relaxing snow hike to the summit. From the summit we descend with several rappels, collect our things from Moraine Camp and descend to Base Camp. From 12 to 14 hours for the day.



Tocllaraju Summit

Day 12: Walk from Base Camp to Pashpa, then drive to Huaraz

We walk down the Ishinca Valley to Pashpa (4 hours) and return to Huaraz in our vehicle.

The ultimate decision about whether a route is safe to climb, or whether an alternative route must be found, or at worst that it is not safe to continue, will be made by the Peruvian Andes Adventures guide.

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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