



PERUVIAN ANDES ADVENTURES

SANTA CRUZ LLANGANUCO CLASSIC TREK

4 or 5 days trekking
Grade: Medium
Highest Point: 4750m

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 or 5 days.

Note Grading: *Although we grade the trek as medium, 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. There is a 2½ to 3 hour hike to a high pass, as well as a long descent from that pass. 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*

Most trekking options in the Cordillera 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. The trail on this trek in a few places is steep – both ascending or descending and can be slippery & uneven in places. If you do not think you can enjoy this type of trekking, let us know and we can suggest some easier options



Punta Union Pass – Santa Cruz Trek



Taullipampa



Rima Rima Flowers in Santa Cruz Trek

Day A: Arrive Huaraz (3090m).

Day B & C: Huaraz / Acclimatisation days & hikes 2 days

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). 97kms & 3 hours driving. 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 fitness or acclimatisation.



Llamacorral



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 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 Llamacorral to Taullipampa
4 hours hiking or 1 to 3 hours if hike towards Alpamayo Base Camp



Taullipampa



Near Taullipampa

Hiking to Alpamayo Base Camp

OPTIONAL EXTRA DAY

We can add an extra day here and stay on at the beautiful Taullipampa Camp. Options would include either a hike up Centillo Peak (5000m – approx 4 hours); a mixed climb on an uneven path and rock, but not technical (rope not needed), a beautiful hike up to the Alpamayo Base Camp & Laguna Arhuaycocha glacial lake (4350m – approx 4 hours there & back), with its awesome backdrop of the Rinrijirca peak (5,810m), or a hike to a high glacial lake at the base of Artesonraju (approx 4 hours). Alternatively, you could enjoy a rest day surrounded by awesome scenery.



Artesonraju Lake



Rinrijirca from Alpamayo Base Camp

Day 3 (or 4): Taullipampa to the Huaripampa Valley via 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



Punta Union Pass

Day 4 (or 5): 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 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 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.



Paria Valley

Huaripampa Valley

Note: You may consider bringing some pens or other small gifts for the many children we meet on the trek.



Local Kids



Llanganuco Lake



Portachuelo Pass

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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