



PERUVIAN ANDES ADVENTURES

SANTA CRUZ LLANGANUCO MINI TREK

3 days trekking
Grade: Hard
Highest Point: 4750m

This special mini-trek along the famous Santa Cruz Llanganuco Circuit is especially for those travelling with limited available time yet still keen to experience the scenic splendours of the Cordillera Blanca mountain range.

The trek offers amazing mountain scenery with spectacular views of 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; and all this condensed into just 3 days hiking.

Note: *This is a demanding trek with a long and steep ascent to the top of a high pass on only the second day of trekking. The final day is a long day's walk out. As such, the trek is **suitable only for people who are fit, strong hikers with good endurance and already well acclimatised**. It is an ideal trek to combine with treks and tours to other areas of Peru or as extra acclimatisation for climbing.*

Day A: Arrive Huaraz (3090m)

Day B & C: Huaraz / Acclimatisation days (two days minimum is recommended for acclimatisation)

Day 1: Drive via Llanganuco to Vaqueria & hike up Huaripampa Valley to Paria

We drive in our private transport for 135kms 5 hours, initially past the famous Llanganuco lakes and then up a succession of switchbacks to the spectacular Portachuelo de Llanganuco Pass (4767m). From here we enjoy a spectacular panorama encompassing several 'giants' of the Cordillera, including Peru's highest mountain, Huascarán (6768m) and Huandoy (6395m). We drive on to the settlement of Vaqueria (3600m) where we meet our donkey drivers and 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 Huascaran National Park to camp in a secluded valley at Paria (3900m).

Approx. 7kms
4 hours hike



Llanganuco Lakes from Portachuelo Pass



Portachuelo Pass



Huaripampa Valley



Paria Valley Campsite

Day 2: Hike from Paria to Taullipampa via the Punta Union Pass

Today is a tough 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.



Approaching the Pass



Donkeys On Punta Union Pass



Punta Union Pass – Taulliraju Behind

Day 3: Hike via Alpamayo Viewpoint to Cashapampa. Drive to Huaraz

We take a brief but rewarding detour 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 but easy downhill hike on a good trail along the Quebrada Santa Cruz valley to Cashapampa village (2900m). En route, we pass two lakes and descend beside a tumbling river.

Approx. 17kms

6 to 7 hours hiking

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

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



Taullipampa



Alpamayo



Jatuncocha Lake

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 unfair 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.



Cirillo



Victor

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

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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