



PERUVIAN ANDES ADVENTURES

SANTA CRUZ TREK with PISCO & CHOPICALQUI CLIMBS

12 Days or 13 Days



Punta Union Pass – Santa Cruz Trek

Combine a 4 day trek of the scenic Santa Cruz Llanganuco circuit with climbing Pisco – providing great preparation and acclimatisation for the epic challenge of the Chopicalqui expedition climbing. The trek finishes in the Demanda / Llanganuco Valley which becomes the base for both climbs, minimising the need for road travel between locations

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 climbing Pisco.

Pisco Climb 5753m (18875 ft)

Grade: PD / Moderate snow climbs – Physically hard

Pisco is an achievable climb for anyone who is well acclimatised and fit. It is a suitable climb for beginner climbers but and is also a rewarding climb for experienced climbers and provides good acclimatisation & strength for the Chopicalqui climb.

Most years, there is no technical climbing on Pisco. Some years or months there are short, steep sections, some hard ice to negotiate or a crevasse to navigate around. You do need to be strong to undertake this climb. From the summit you are rewarded with magnificent views of the many surrounding peaks, including the beautiful Chacaraju and massive Chopicalqui & Huascarán (6768m), the highest mountain in Peru.



Pisco

CHOPICALQUI CLIMB 6354m (20847 ft)

Grade : TD / Difficult, long serious climbs – experience on steep ice required

Chopicalqui, at 6354m, is sometimes referred to as the "third peak of Huascarán". It is a demanding peak to climb, with sections of steep climbing. **Previous experience of climbing on steep hard ice is highly recommended**, and a high standard of fitness and strength is also necessary. Chopicalqui is **NOT** a suitable peak for beginner climbers. From the summit climbers are rewarded with tremendous views of the surrounding peaks of Huascarán, Yanapaqcha, Chacraraju, Pisco and Huandoy, as well as Contrahierbas, Ulta, Hualcan and many others.

The route begins following a major glacier uphill, then steepens onto a broad ridge with route-finding skills needed to avoid crevasses and seracs. Higher up the ridge narrows and steepens, and while it is not highly technical it is exposed in some places.

Most of the climb is on snow slopes of 40 to 50 deg. but there is a section of about 200m with slopes of up to 65deg. with belayed climbing on snow and ice necessary some years.



Chopicalqui from Base Camp

Chopicalqui climb is suitable for climbers with good fundamental alpine climbing and glacier travel skills; rope work and cramponing on steep / frozen snow & hard ice, and with good belay techniques. Some years there may be sections of steep ice climbing

requiring use of two technical ice picks and previous experience with this is recommended.

It is necessary to carry all equipment to Morena Camp on Pisco and to Base Camp & all high mountain camps on Chopicalqui. Porters carry tents, climbing ropes, food & cooking equipment but YOU need to carry your own personal gear, sleeping bag, mattress, climbing equipment and have a backpack large enough for this.

Note 1: Fitness: *This is a physically demanding multi day climbing expedition program. The routes from Base Camps to Morena Camps on the mountains are on steep, loose moraine rock and it is necessary to carry your gear. 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.*

Chopicalqui has sections of steep & technical ice climbing & is NOT a suitable peak for climbers with no previous experience with steep ice climbing using two technical ice picks or who have not received mountaineering instruction

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 and we may encounter more difficult climbing than is indicated here. 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.*

If at the time of your climbing expedition, information received from previous groups indicates unstable or difficult conditions, we may recommend an alternative climb.

Note 3: *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 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).



Taullipampa Camp

Approx 8kms direct Llamacorral 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

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 *quenua* (*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 Vaqueria. Drive to Cebollapampa Camp

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 via a steep zig zag road to the beautiful famous lake Llanganuco where we can camp at the base of Pisco at Cebollapampa (3850m).

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



Huaripampa Valley

Pisco Climb

Day 5: Carry Gear from Cebollapampa to Pisco Base Camp & up to Morena Camp

Our gear is loaded onto the donkeys and we climb on a good path for 2½ hours to Pisco Base Camp (4650m). Unload the gear from the donkeys and have a lunch break. After lunch we climb to Morena Camp (4900m), crossing loose ground and negotiating large moraine rocks at times. The donkeys cannot come this way, so you need to carry your personal gear: climbing gear, clothes and sleeping bag. Porters carry tents, food, cooking equipment & ropes but you do need to carry your own equipment. The ground today is uneven and rocky, and the hike commences with a steep but short hike up to the top of the moraine wall and then a short but tricky & steep descent down the other side. The rest of the way is a mixture of good path with some demanding scrambling over moraine rocks and loose ground. 3 hours.

OPTION 13 Day Trip: *(recommended if you have time)*

We make the climb to Pisco Morena Camp easier & less physically demanding by doing it over two days instead of one day. We go only as far as Base Camp in the morning of Day 5. Then you have the afternoon to rest in Base Camp.

The next day we leave around midday for the 3 hour climb to Morena Camp



Morena Camp

Day 6 (or 7): Morena Camp to Pisco Summit and back to Base Camp

Summit Day. We leave early and climb for about 40 minutes to an hour on moraine until we reach the glacier, where we put on crampons and rope up. For most of the route, it is not overly steep or technically difficult, although the altitude does make it a challenge. There are occasional short steep sections and hard ice, or possibly a crevasse, may need to be negotiated. Also note that since 2009 there has been a steep (60 deg.) slope of some 30m to the summit. We try to arrive at the summit to see the sun rise. About 5 hours to the broad summit where there is plenty of room to walk around, appreciate the amazing surrounding mountains and take photos.



From the summit you can enjoy fantastic views of the close-by peaks; many among the tallest in the Cordillera Blanca, including Huascarán (6768m), Chopicalqui (6354m), Huandoy (6160m), Chacaraju (6012m), Pirámide (5885m) and Artesonraju (6025m).

We descend to Morena Camp, where we will prepare hot soup and have an hour's rest, collect our gear and return to Base Camp where a celebration dinner will be prepared. 9 to 12 hours for the day.

Chopicalqui Climb

Day 7 (or 8): *Relocate from Pisco Base Camp to Chopicalqui Base Camp*

We load all equipment onto donkeys again & walk down to Cebollapampa 1½ hours and then relocate with 1 ½ to 2 hour more hiking to Chopicalqui Base Camp (4430m).

Day 8 (or 9): *REST DAY at CHOPICALQUI Base Camp or use as Bad Weather Day*

A well deserved rest day at Chopicalqui Base Camp to enjoy some delicious fresh food & recover energy for the tough days climbing to come

Day 9 (or 10) : *Carry Gear from Chopicalqui Base Camp to Moraine Camp*



Chopicalqui Moraine

This is a demanding day as we now have to carry all equipment - tents, food and kit - and climb through moraine boulders. We climb up the rocky ridge for an hour and then traverse the other side of the ridge and climb more steeply over large moraine rocks to Morena (Moraine) Camp (4820m). 5 to 6 hours.

Day 10 (or 11): *Moraine Camp to High Camp*

Today we set off on a steady climb up loose moraine rock for 1½ hours before reaching the glacier. We need to cross the first ½ hour on the ice early and quickly to avoid falling rocks. There follows some 3 to 4 hours of steady climbing on up to 30 deg. of crevassed snow slopes which we'll negotiate carefully to avoid the crevasses (sometimes we will cross the crevasses). Eventually we reach High Camp, on snow, at 5380m.



Climbing to High Camp



Chopicalqui High Camp

Day 11 (or 12): High Camp to Chopicalqui Summit. Down to High or Moraine Camp

Climb to the summit. The first 2 to 3 hours are steady climbing. There are crevasses and seracs to avoid as we climb 30 to 50 deg. slopes to the summit shoulder. From the summit shoulder the difficulty of climbing is mixed. There are some easy 45 deg. slopes, there may be a large crevasse to cross - then up to 55 deg. climbing on the ridge with some short, steep ice walls to climb. In the half way point to the summit there is a demanding 120m with some steep & technical climbing and a series of pitches from 55m to 60m in length and grades from 65 deg up to about 85 deg at the steepest. And very close to the summit there is a 7m technical climb from 75 to 85 deg. There is a large crevasse near the summit to negotiate and then we are high on the summit at 6354m. From the summit we descend back by climbing and abseiling to High Camp; if you are feeling strong, we can continue back down to Moraine Camp. From 10 to 13 hours for the day.



Climbing Chopicalqui



Day 12 (or 13): To the Road, then Vehicle back to Huaraz

Descend to Base Camp - 5 to 6 hours - then return to the road head and on to Huaraz in our private vehicle.

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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