



PERUVIAN ANDES ADVENTURES

SANTA CRUZ TREK with PISCO & YANAPACCHA CLIMBS

10 Days or 11 Days

A great program combining a scenic mountain trek with two exciting climbs based around the Llanganuco Lakes area, nestled amongst the biggest peaks in the Cordillera Blanca.



Punta Union Pass – Santa Cruz Trek

***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.

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 and is also a rewarding climb for experienced climbers. 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 Huascarán (6768m), the highest mountain in Peru.



Pisco

Yanapaccha Climb 5460m (17913 ft)

Grade: AD- / some steep climbing

Yanapaccha is situated in the Llanganuco Valley and, as the Condor flies, is located very close to Pisco. Yet it is much less known and less frequented by climbers than Pisco.

It is a moderately difficult climb with some steep & technical sections and a final slope of up to 65 deg. to the summit.

Yanapaccha is not suitable for first-time climbers, but is an ideal peak for advancing skills of novice climbers who have received instruction, as well as for experienced climbers wanting to practice techniques.



Heading to Yanapaccha Summit

Note 1: Fitness: This is a demanding program. The route from Base Camp to Morena Camp on Pisco is on steep, loose moraine rock and it is necessary to carry your gear. Although the hike into Yanapaccha Morena Camp is not so steep, you do still need to carry all your equipment. The climbing on the glacier is sustained with continuous uphill and sometimes 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. In some years depending on snow conditions there can be short sections of steep ice climbing or crevasses to negotiate around on Pisco. Yanapaccha does have sections of steep ice and also is prone to forming crevasses which need to be negotiated around. 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.

Note 3: The guide in charge of your climb will be one of our local experienced & professional UIAGM International Mountain Guides.



Note 4: The 11 day option is a relaxed itinerary with a day and a half rest & recovery time at Cebollapampa Camp between the Pisco & Yanapaccha climbs. For the 10 day option we have a half day rest between the two climbs.

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



Hiking to 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 Jatuncocha 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 : Hike Paria to Vaquería. 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 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 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 may like to bring some pens, or other small things to give to the many children that we see on the way.



Ancient Quenual Trees Huaripampa Valley



Portachuelo Pass – Looking across to the Route up to Pisco Base Camp

Pisco Climb

Day 5: Hike to Pisco Base Camp

A relaxing hike today - our gear is loaded onto the donkeys and we climb on a good path for 2½ hours to Pisco Base Camp (4650m). There is a refugio there where you can buy beer, wine and hot food.



Pisco Base Camp, Pisco is Behind

Day 6: Carry Gear from Pisco Base Camp to Morena Camp

Today is a short but challenging day. 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 any assistance you can offer would also be appreciated. 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.



To Morena camp

Day 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.

Day 8: Gear is loaded onto donkeys again & we descend for about an hour and a half to Cebollapampa where we set up camp for a rest period before the Yanapaccha Climb.

OPTIONAL Extra Day: at Cebollapampa for a full day rest and to enjoy some great food.

Yanapaccha Climb:

Day 09 (or 10) : To Yanapaccha Morena Camp

We drive for a half hour up an impressive zigzag road towards the Portachuelo de Llanganuco pass. Some 200 metres below the pass we stop at a hairpin bend known as the "Curva 45km" (4580m) and unload backpacks & equipment.

From here, we hike towards Yanapaccha Morena Camp, carrying our backpacks as we traverse and climb gradually on a faint trail, sometimes over grass and then over moraine rock for about 3 to 3 ½ hours until we reach the campsite (5000m).



Yanapaccha Hike

Morena camp

Day 10 (or 11): Camp to Summit. Descend via Morena Camp to Road. Drive to Huaraz

We leave very early in the morning, first crossing large moraine rock for about 30 minutes until we gain the glacier. Here we put on crampons and rope up. The initial ascent onto the glacier is usually a steep ice climb for up to 45m before reaching the glacier with slopes varying from 45 deg. to 60 deg. We negotiate a large crevasse field to arrive at the west face of Yanapaccha. From here we make a traverse to a bergschrund where we have to climb steeply for 15m on a gradient of 65 deg. to 70deg. to arrive at the summit ridge which we follow to the summit. The final pitch to the summit is at 35 to 40 deg. Depending on clients' experience and confidence, we may fix a rope on certain sections. About one 20m rappel is required during the descent.

We return to Morena Camp (about 7 to 8 hours for the climb & return) and then, having eaten some lunch and broken camp, we walk back by the same path back to the road (2 more hours' hiking) where our private vehicle will be waiting to take us back to Huaraz.



Climbing Glacier Face

Snow Bridge



Summit at Sunrise



Rest Break

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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