



## PERUVIAN ANDES ADVENTURES

### EXPEDITION Climbing Vallunaraju and Alpamayo

**Timing** – 15 days Huaraz to Huaraz

**Grade** : Technical climbing

#### Peaks:

#### **VALLUNARAJU 5686m (18655 ft)**

**Grade:** AD- / Moderate snow slopes – some steep climbing

Great location for climbing instruction & ice wall climbing

Vallunaraju is easily accessed from Huaraz and with a wide variety of rock, ice forms, slopes, ice walls and crevasses is an ideal site for climbing instruction. It is where the Peruvian mountain guides go for training courses and to practice.

A day of ice wall climbing & rescue practice and revision of techniques followed by a climb to the summit of Vallunaraju is ideal preparation for the technical climbing on Alpamayo & also provides valuable extra acclimatisation and strength. The time on Vallunaraju with the guides also gives you opportunity to develop trust with your guiding team.



## **ALPAMAYO 5947m (19511 ft)**

Grade: D – steep & technical climbing

With its almost perfect pyramid shape and ice flutings, Alpamayo was nominated the “most beautiful mountain in the world” in a 1966 German photographic exposition. **The climbing is steep and technical with several hours of continual front pointing and using two technical ice axes on steep slopes averaging 55 to 65 deg and up to 80 deg. on short sections** Climbers need to be experienced on steep ice, and comfortable with using ice screws, snow stakes, anchor systems and descent by rappel. The Alpamayo climb is **NOT** suitable for beginner climbers.

The route climbed (French or Ferrari route) will depend on the conditions on the mountain at the time and whether there is any danger from overhanging cornices or high avalanche risk on one of the routes.



*Alpamayo from High Camp*

**Note 1: Acclimatisation & fitness:** *You do need to be very well acclimatised to the altitude to climb in the Cordillera Blanca. You are sleeping & climbing above 5000m and this is very demanding and tiring for the body. Without sufficient acclimatisation, the chances of becoming ill on the mountain are high, or you may experience a complete loss of energy and be unable to continue with the climb.*

*This expedition program includes three days in Huaraz doing day hikes to progressively higher altitudes to help with acclimatisation before departing for Vallunaraju. We have used this program with several small groups and have had good success with clients making the summit of Alpamayo.*

*It is necessary to carry all equipment from the vehicle up to the camp on Vallunaraju and from Base Camp up to High Camp on Alpamayo. Our crew carry the tents, food & equipment, but YOU need to carry your own personal gear (and must have a backpack large enough for this).*

*For the fit, strong and well-acclimatized this is a great, challenging adventure; you should not consider this program unless you have very good fitness and are generally strong.*

**Note 2:** The routes used and the conditions on all the peaks are rapidly changing each year and even from month to month or week to week due to global warming and subsequent rapid recession of glacial ice. The description below reflects how the climb is in a "normal" year.. Consequently, the descriptions we have given are general only, and the routes used, conditions on the mountain or description of the routes may change considerably on the day we are climbing. It is possible that if there is significant movement on the glaciers that the conditions for climbing could be more difficult and technical than described here. Conditions on all the mountains are changing rapidly 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.



**Day 1:** Arrive Huaraz (3090m)

**Day 2: Acclimatisation Hike to Macashca Hills** (highest point 4200m)



Macashca Hills

You will probably not find information about this in the books. It is a lovely but physically demanding climb up into the hills directly behind Huaraz. The trip starts with a short car journey (around ½ hour into the Macashca Valley close to Huaraz). You initially walk up quite steeply for around 1 hour on a grassy hillside, then reach a wide open grassy ridge which you follow easily to a saddle at 4200m. . From the ridge and the saddle are fantastic views over Huaraz, across to the snowcapped peaks of the Cordillera Blanca and Huascarán (the highest mountain in Peru) and also the Cordillera Negra.. The walk descends a long way with open views all the way to finish in Huaraz. Around 6 hours.

**Day 3: Acclimatisation Hike to Laguna Churup** (highest point 4450m)



*Laguna Churup*

This is a well known hike described in many guide books. Take our private transport from Huaraz to Pitec, driving through the attractive farming settlements of Unchus and Llupa (one hour drive). From Pitec (3850m) there is a steady continuous climb on a dirt path to the hidden Laguna Churup (4450m), a beautiful turquoise mountain lake below Nevada Churup (5493m). The final 100m to the lake is climbing up a steep rock gully which less fit people may find difficult. Allow 4 to 5 hours walk from Pitec to the lake and return to the car.

**Day 4: Acclimatisation Hike to Laguna Ahuacocha** (highest point 4560m)

Hidden high in the hills behind Huaraz at the base of Vallunaraju mountain is the small and isolated lake Laguna Ahuac at 4560m. This is a little publicised hike and we are almost certain to have the trail to ourselves.



First we take our private car for half an hour to the ruins of Wilkawain. We start off hiking on a wide grassy path, climbing steadily upwards through farmland with views of the surrounding mountains and across to the adjacent Cordillera Negra. We often come across local people tending their cows and sheep and they will be friendly and greet us as we pass. We then leave the path and climb more steeply through tussock grass covered hillside and later over some rock until we pop over the lip of a rock wall to be surprised by the bright blue lake. From here we have excellent close views of Vallunaraju. There is an option to keep climbing up across the rock for those with a lot of energy. On the return if we still have time we can visit the ruins of Wilkawain. Our private car will be waiting to take us back to Huaraz.

6 hours , up to 8 hours if you hike up further through the rock towards Vallunaraju mountain

## **VALLUNARAJU CLIMBING INSTRUCTION & CLIMB**

### **Day 5: Drive Huaraz to Quebrada Llaca valley. Climb to Morena Camp**

We drive eastwards and upwards from Huaraz on a dirt road for 1½ hours to the Llaca Valley (4470m). Here we put on our packs and climb steeply up a ridge for about 3 to 4 hours to Morena Camp (5000m). Donkeys are unable to negotiate this route, so we need to carry all equipment. The first 2 hours is on tough, steep ground, but then the route gets easier and traverses gradually to the campsite. All the way up to Morena Camp we have amazing views of the nearby ridgeback Nevado Ocshapalca snowpeak (5888m), the town of Huaraz and, away to the west, the Cordillera Negra. At night time from Morena Camp, the lights of Huaraz way below are magical.



*Climb up to Morena Camp*



*Vallunaraju Morena Camp*

### **Day 6: Day for Ice Climbing & Rescue Practise**

First we climb up over moraine rock slabs for ½ an hour before we come to the glacier where we will have a full day ice climbing revision instruction, crevasse rescue techniques etc.

### **Day 7: Climb to Vallunaraju Summit & Return to Huaraz**

We leave early to climb to the summit. It is a steady and not steep on good snow slopes towards the summit 5686m. The last 60m to the summit is steeper and more exposed. You will practise & reinforce the techniques you have been learning on the previous days. All the way we can see across to Huascarán, the highest mountain in Peru. We then return to Morena Camp to pack up the tents, and descend to the Llaca Valley where the car will be waiting for us. Around 10 hours to climb and return to Llaca Valley depending on fitness levels.



*To the Summit*

## Day 8: Huaraz. Rest Day & prepare for Alpamayo Climb

### ALPAMAYO CLIMB

#### **Day 9: Drive Huaraz to Cashapampa. Hike the Santa Cruz Valley to Llamacorral Camp**

We drive 2½ hours from Huaraz to the village of Cashapampa (2900m) where we meet our donkey drivers. Approaching Cashapampa we have our first view of Santa Cruz, the huge pyramid shaped mountain that gives the trekking circuit its name. We climb up through the Santa Cruz Valley, following the river. The first 2 hours we are in a steep sided river gorge and can be quite hard as we are climbing continuously up, and when the sun is out it is hot here. But later the valley opens out to *puna* grassland and is flatter and cooler as we approach our first camp. We camp near the river at Llamacorral (3750m). 4 to 5 hours.



*Llamacorral*



*Jatuncocha Lake*

#### **Day 10: To Alpamayo Base Camp**

We begin with an easier walk up the open, U-shaped Quebrada Santa Cruz valley, following the Santa Cruz trail towards the impressive snow covered peak of Taulliraju. During the hike up the valley we glimpse the towering pyramid of Santa Cruz mountain and then the twin peaks of Quitaraju and the famous Alpamayo come into view. We walk past two lakes; first the small Ichiccocha then the larger Jatuncocha. We then leave the main Santa Cruz trail and climb for 40 minutes on a steep zig-zag path to enter the hanging Quebrada Arhuaycocha valley and continue with a relaxed hike up the valley to Alpamayo Base Camp (4300m). 4 to 5 hours.



*Taulliraju*



*Alpamayo*

### **Day 11: Rest Day or Bad Weather Day**

Today is a **rest day**. While porters carry equipment up to the high camp on Alpamayo. You can take a short walk up to the beautiful glacial Laguna Arhuaycocha lake, nestled at the base of Rinrijra. Often there is ice floating on the lake.

Or use this day as a **bad weather day**.

**Or** there is an option to continue up to an Intermediate camp **Morena Camp** today instead of going direct from Base Camp to High Camp in a single day

### **Day 12: Climb to Alpamayo High Camp**

To High Camp. The first 3 hours is a testing climb on steep and slippery moraine rock until we reach the ice. We then climb up average 45 deg up an ice gully to reach the bottom of an ice cliff. Some years there is about 150m to 200m of 70deg. ice to climb to arrive at the top of an ice cliff, and we may fix ropes on this section. Some years there are crevasses that have opened up on the glacier which we must either negotiate our way around or jump across. The High Camp (5450m) is situated at the top of the ice cliff between Alpamayo & Quitaraju. 6 to 7 hours.



*High Camp, Quitaraju is behind*

### **Day 13: High Camp to Alpamayo Summit & Back**

We leave camp early and climb on sometimes steep soft snow slopes for about an hour to a bergschrund at the bottom of the southwest face; sometimes there are crevasses to negotiate here.

The climb on the southwest face to the summit is steep and technical, with mixed good snow and hard ice. 7 or 8 pitches are needed to reach the summit. The first two pitches are on good snow (55° - 65°) and then it gets steeper with good ice of 65° - 85°.

Depending on the level of experience of clients, and the number of clients, a fixed rope may or may not be used. The climb to the summit takes about 5 hours. The descent is by the same route, and takes up to 7 to 8 rappels. Return to sleep at High Camp. The whole day is 8 to 9 hours.



**Day 14: *High Camp to Base Camp***

Return to Base Camp. It is necessary to make a rappel of 150m to 200m close to the camp to descend the ice cliff. The last 1½ hours to the camp is on steep and slippery rock. 5 to 6 hours for the day. A celebration dinner will be waiting for us at Base Camp.

**Day 15: *Base Camp direct to Cashapampa & drive to Huaraz***

A long but easy walk down the Quebrada Santa Cruz to return to Cashapampa. 6 to 7 hours. Our private van will be waiting in Cashapampa to return us to Huaraz.

**Add one of two extra days:**

Extra acclimatisation day in Huaraz

Extra reserve day on Alpamayo

**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.

**Copy:**

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