

PERUVIAN ANDES ADVENTURES

INCA ROYAL ROAD TO HUAYHUASH TREK

Timing: 12 or 13 days

Grading: Moderate

Highest Point: 4750m

A Journey Combining : Inca History & Engineering – Archaeological Sites – Mountains & Lakes

An exhilarating diverse trek route that commences by following an part of an ancient Inca Royal roadway was once the principal highway of the Inca Empire extending from Ecuador in the north to the Inca capital Cuzco in the south of Peru - a distance of some 2500m along the spine of the Andes mountain chain.



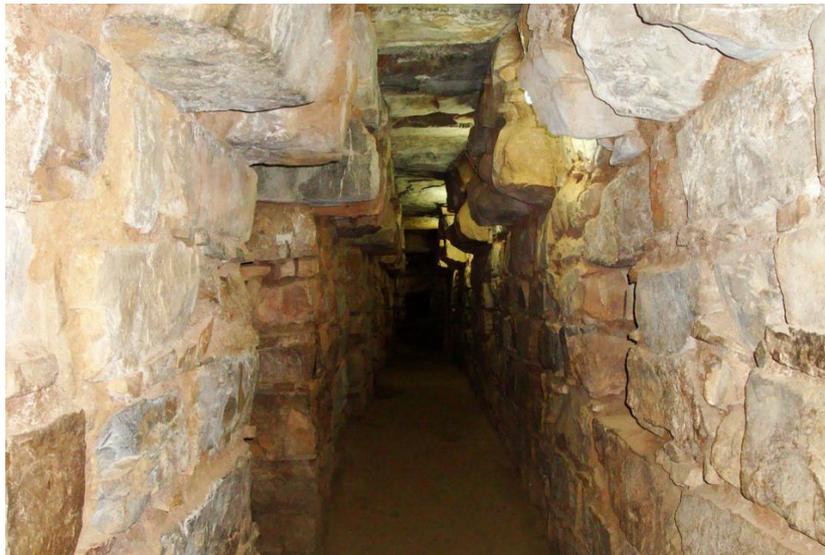
The first section of the trek follows along part of this route and often we are hiking upon the famous Inca paving with the ancient road still being visible and in places being as wide as 10m. The trek commences with a visit to the ancient pre Inca site of Chavin de Huantar characterized by an extensive labyrinth of underground chambers & tunnels and finishes at the ruins of the Inca citadel of Huánuco Viejo, a major archaeological site which was used as a staging post for the Inca and his court to rest and replenish supplies during expeditions from Cuzco.

After a short rest at Huánuco Viejo we move onto the Cordillera Huayhuash mountain range and spend 6 days trekking over high passes with stunning views of the jagged mountain peaks and camping by blue trout filled lakes.

Grading: Although we grade the trek as moderate, you do have to cross several mountain passes above 4500m. This implies demanding hiking and consequently both a reasonable level of fitness and adequate acclimatisation to altitude are necessary.

Day 01: Huaraz – Chavin – Castillo – Soledad de Tambo

We begin the adventure with a road journey in our private transport from Huaraz to the village of Castillo. En route we visit the pre Inca archeological site of Chavin de Huantar which demonstrates the incredible engineering skills of the Incas predecessors with most of the building being underground. We then continue to Castillo (3300m) where we start hiking with a short 1 ½ hour steady uphill climb to camp at 3720m.



Underground Chambers Chavin de Huantar

Day 02: Soledad de Tambo – Taulli

We climb steadily sometimes on a steep stone Inca path to reach our first pass (Waga Punta) 4400m from where we have views of Huari and the mountains to the north. Descend pass a lake to our camp at Taulli 4000m. 5 to 6 hours walk

Day 03: Taulli - Huamanin

We climb again gently to a second pass Paso Ahuac at 4200m, then follow an undulating Inca path to the small remote settlement of Huamanin 4250. 6 to 7 hours hike



Approaching Paso Ahuac

Day 04: Huamanin – Taparaco

We cross the pass Paso Huamanin Punta 4450m and then have a delightful easy valley walk following the river on the Inca Road, in places up to 6m wide until we reach the Inca staging post of Taparaco (4000m) where we camp and spend the afternoon exploring the archaeological site. 6 to 7 hours hike



Inca Stone Bridge

Day 05: Taparaco - Estanque

We follow the Inca road into a small valley filled with native grass, ancient Quenual trees and small agricultural fields littered with evidence of Inca influence to our camp at the small village of Estanque (3800m). 6 hours hike

Day 06: Estanque – Huanuco Viejo

We start with a 3 hour hike down into the dramatic Vizcarra Valley. . We come to the Huallanca – La Union road where our vehicle will be waiting for us to drive 30 minutes to Huanuco Viejo where we camp. Huanuco Viejo was a major Inca staging post where the Inca and his court and soldiers would rest and replenish supplies during their journeys from South to North of the Inca territories. We can still see evidence of many houses, store rooms, Inca baths, meeting rooms and fields on the hillside behind the site. The site features a main plaza which is still the site of the annual Inca Inti Raymi Sun Festival in the Huanuaco area each July.



Inca Sun Gate

Day 07: To the Cordillera Huayhuash Mountains!

Drive for 3 to 4 hours 105kms from Huanuco Viejo via Baños village to Queropalca village at 3800m. In Queropalca we meet our donkey drivers and donkeys and start the trek with a relaxing uphill hike on a gentle gradient to Laguna Carhuacocha (4200m). From the camp we have astonishing views across the lake to the Yerupaja Grande, Yerupaja Chico (6121m), Jirishanca and Siula Grande. Approx. 11kms hiking
4 hours



Hiking to Carhuacocha



Carhuacocha Lake

Day 08: Rest Day at Carhuacocha Camp

We stay another night at Carhuacocha to enjoy the mountain surroundings. We can take a day hike up a side valley past the base of Yerupaja and Siula Grande. Here we find 3 glacial lakes, all unique in that each has a different shade of blue or green. Sometimes we see avalanches coming off the glaciers into the lakes or just rest at the picturesque campsite and enjoy the surroundings.



Siula Lakes



Hiking towards the Pass

Day 09: Via Punta Carhuac to Laguna Mitucocha

A steady ascent on a good path takes us to Punta Carhuac (4650m) pass, with good opportunities en route of spotting the elusive Viscacha rodent, endemic to the high Andes. From here, weather permitting, we will enjoy excellent views of the Yerupaja and Siula Grande peaks. We descend on grass to the Janca plateau then head southeast to reach tonight's camp at another large, trout-filled lake; Laguna Mitucocha (4250m). After lunch, you have the option of walking around the lake. From our camp we have superb views of the sheer face of Jirishanca (6094m) and Jirishanca Chico. [In 2013 season the local community have requested that groups do not camp next to the lake to protect the grass for their animals in the area. The campsite is now 15 minutes hike down river from the lake in a flat area](#)

Approx. 12kms
4 to 5 hours



Mitucocha Lake

Day 10: Via the Cacanán Punta Pass and Quartelhuain to the Rondoy Valley

In the morning we continue anti-clockwise across *puna* grasslands (paramo) and cross the pass – indeed the Continental Divide - at Cacanán Punta (4700m). We descend to the Quebrada Cuncush, a broad valley flanked by vast expanses of quenal forest, and pass a collection of crofts known as Quartelhuain, the site of tonight's camp (4350m).

Approx. 12kms
6 to 7 hours.



Cacanan Pass



Quartelhuain & Rondoy Valley

Day 11: To Laguna Jahuacocha via the Rondoy Pass

We make a long traversing ascent to the Rondoy Pass (4750m). From here we enjoy yet more awesome views of the nearby peaks, the highest Huayhuash peak, Yerupaja (6634m), as well as Rondoy and others, dominating the panorama. The descent from the pass takes us first past a stunning, milky-blue glacial lake, Solteracocha, and then along the shore of the beautiful Laguna Jahuacocha to our picturesque camp at the head of the lake (4150m).

Approx. 14kms

A harder day - 7 hours.



Rondoy Pass

Day 12: *OPTIONAL: Free day at Laguna Jahuacocha for Rest & Relaxation or a side trip*

The awesome setting, together with options for side-trips, means we stay an extra day at Laguna Jahuacocha. We can take a day hike up to the Yaucha pass 4847m to take a look at the western side of the Cordillera Huayhuash range or head up the Quebrada Rasac valley to the Rasacocha glacial lake. Alternatively, you could enjoy a rest day and go fishing for trout! Why not visit the farmhouse just behind our camp and buy a beer to go with your trout?



Laguna Jahuacocha

Day 13 (or 12): Walk from Laguna Jahuacocha to Llamac. Drive from Llamac to Huaraz

After an early start and gentle descent for an hour, we start our gradual climb to the final pass, Pampa Llamac (4300m), from where we have our final views of much of the Huayhuash range. Then it is a long descent back to the Llamac valley and the village of Llamac.

Approx. 14kms hiking

5½ to 6 hours

In Llamac the bus will be waiting to take us back to Huaraz and your hotel for that long-awaited hot shower!! We arrive in Huaraz at about 06:00pm.



Huayhuash Trout



Llamac Pass



Llamac

Hiking Hours & Kms Hiked:

Hiking hours are estimated times including rest breaks and lunch stop. Times are for our average groups based on past experience. Some people may be much faster and others slower.

Kms hiked are estimated.

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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