

PERUVIAN ANDES ADVENTURES

ALPAMAYO BASE CAMP TREK: CORDILLERA BLANCA

Vaqueria (Llanganuco Lakes) to Hualcayan

8 days trekking

Grade: Very Hard – good fitness required

Highest Point: 4860m



Laguna Cullicocha

Without doubt, the Cordillera Blanca range provides some of the most spectacular and varied trekking and climbing landscapes in the world. The range boasts more than 50

peaks of 5700m or higher of which some 20 surpass the 6000 metre mark. Huascarán is, at 6768m, the highest mountain in Peru while the pyramid of Alpamayo is arguably its most beautiful peak. We find, within this 170km-long range, the greatest concentration of tropical-zone glaciers on earth. Turquoise glacial lakes abound and vertical granite walls rise thousands of metres into the sky.

Our Alpamayo Base Camp trek: Vaqueria to Hualcayan weaves a route through the heart of the Cordillera Blanca, crossing a number of high passes which lead us into valleys with hugely varied mountain landscapes. The trek starts with a scenic drive past the famous twin lakes of Llanganuco to the road end at Vaqueria. The focal point of the trek is the famous Alpamayo pyramid, once voted the most beautiful mountain in the world. We have the opportunity to see a close view of it from the lake Laguna Jancarurish.

We have designed this trek to be an exciting shorter version of our classic 11 to 13 day Complete Circuit of Alpamayo for those people who want to enjoy the majesty of the Cordillera Blanca mountains and Alpamayo, but do not have time for the longer trek.

Note 1: Grading *We grade the trek as **VERY HARD** because you cross several high passes and there are some long hard days mixed with short easier days. The effects of altitude make the trek demanding and harder than a similar trek at lower altitudes. There are some long days on this trek and no shorter easier days or rest days. This trek option condenses into 8 days what most of our clients take 9 or 10 days to do. You need to be well acclimatised to the altitude before starting this trek and need to have very good fitness levels, be able to hike for a long day up to 8 to 10 hours, and manage the steep climbs up to the top of the passes and descents back down to enjoy this trek. Trails are not formed paths and are not maintained, they are dirt trails also used by animals and are uneven underfoot.*

Most trekking options in the Cordillera Blanca should be considered to be physically demanding owing to the altitude (you are above 4000m for the duration of the treks) and the mountainous nature of the terrain. Trails on this trek are often steep – both ascending and descending and can be slippery & rocky in places. If you do not think you can enjoy this type of trekking, let us know and we can suggest some easier options

Note 2: 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 with Victor said: Donkey driver. - We'll take Victor anytime!. He's great!

Day A: Arrive Huaraz

Day B & C: Huaraz, Acclimatisation day hikes

Day 1: Drive Huaraz to Vaquería via Llanganuco pass. Hike to Paria Camp

Drive from Huaraz(3070m) down the broad Callejón de Huaylas valley to Yungay (2500m), then up towards the Cordillera Blanca peaks, into the Huascarán National Park and past the famous turquoise Llanganuco Lakes. We continue onwards and upwards to the Portachuelo de Llanganuco road pass (4767m). Here we stop to enjoy views of a number of spectacular high Andean peaks, including Huascarán, Huandoy (6395m) and Chopicalqui (6,345m), as well as the Llanganuco lakes a kilometre below us.



Llanganuco Lakes



Portachuelo Pass

We descend to Vaqueria (3600m), arriving after 4 to 5 hours 135kms drive. At Vaqueria our equipment is loaded onto donkeys and we have a relaxing hike on a gradually rising path to a secluded campsite in the Quebrada Paria Valley (3900m)



Huaripampa Valley



Paria

During the walk up the Quebrada Huaripampa valley to Paria, we pass by many farm houses and see a lot of local people, children, sheep, goats and donkeys along the trail.
Approx. 7kms
4 to 5 hours hiking

Day 2: Paria camp via Alto Pucaraju Pass to Huecrococha.

A long day:

We start with a three hour just gently rising hike up the Huaripampa Valley to Tuctubamba at 4200m. We then climb steeply on a rocky trail to the top of the Alto de Pacaraju Pass (4650m). At the pass there are magnificent views of many peaks and lakes, and the peaks of Taulliraju and Chacaraju tower over us. We then have a long descent - initially on switchbacks, then on a sweeping path - down through lupin covered hillside and quenal (polylepis sp.) forest to camp at a small lake, Laguna Huecrococha, at 3950m.

Approx. 11.5 kms
9 to 10 hours.



Huecrococha Lake



Lupin Fields

Day 3: Huecrococha to Jancapampa, via Tupatupa Pass

After a short initial descent, we climb gradually, then more steeply to the Tupatupa pass (4400m), with views back to several big snow capped peaks of the Cordillera Blanca, including Pucajirca Norte (6050m), and then descend to camp at the top of a wide valley at

Jancapampa (3600m). Directly behind camp we have views of a huge hanging glacier releasing waterfalls down a broad, horseshoe-shaped wall of granite hundreds of metres high. A lot of farming families live in the valley, and we will be visited at camp by some of the friendly local people and curious, happy children.

Approx. 12kms

7 to 8 hours



Tupatupa Pass



Jancapampa



Jancapampa



Welcoming Committe Jancapampa

Day 4: Jancapampa to Safuna via Pucajirca pass

We start with a long climb - gradual in parts, steeper in others - up a forested valley with occasional clearings, to the beautiful Laguna Sactaycocha lake. From here, now amid grassy shrubland, we climb steeply to the top of the rocky Paso Pucajirca pass(Yanacon) (4600m). On a clear day, the awesome Pucajirca Norte can be seen rising steeply to the southwest.

We descend to Willcapampa (4000m) where we will find local traditional farm houses and passing by a large Alpaca flock - then we continue to walk up a gentle climb in the Quebrada Tayapampa to Safuna camp(4200m).

Approx. 14kms

8 to 9 hours.



Day 5: Safuna to Cruce Alpamayo via Mesapata and Cara Cara Passes



We cross two passes today. The first is via a gradual, grassy ascent to the Mesapata Pass (4500m). We then enjoy a long traverse, skirting around swamplands, and continue with a steep climb to the high and sometimes windy Cara Cara Pass (4830m). From here we get our first amazing views of triple summits of Santa Cruz (6259m) then after 20 minutes descending down the pass we see the beautiful pyramid of Alpamayo (5947m), its neighbouring peaks Jancarurish and Quitaraju (6036m), and also Laguna Jancarurish lake directly below us. We continue descending to camp below the majestic Alpamayo at the camp named Cruce Alpamayo (4150m). From the camp there is a view of the Northwest face of Alpamayo

Approx. 10kms
7 to 8 hours



Cara Cara Pass – Alpamayo is in the left corner of the photo



Alpamayo

Laguna Jancarurish & Alpamayo

Day 6: Cruce Alpamayo to Osoruri Camp

An easier start in the morning with a relaxing hike, initially flat or slightly descending down the valley Quebrada Dos Cedros for 2 ½ hours to Ruinapampa (4050m). During the hike down the valley we see more local farm houses and also some pre-Inca terraces. We then have a long endless zig zag climb towards the south on a well-used trail to the Paso Vientunan pass (4770m). Descend from the pass for 40 minutes to our campsite nestled between two passes at Osoruri (4511m). From our camp we have a view of the mountain Milluacocha.

Approx 12 kms
7 to 8 hours



On the trail – Dos Cedros valley



Paso Vientunan

Day 7: Osoruri to Laguna Cullicocha and Huiscash

We start the day with a climb again for 1.5 to 2 hours to the top of Paso Osoruri (also called Cullicocha) at 4860m. The last half hour to the pass the trail is undulating up and down. From the pass as we begin our descent, there are fabulous views of the surrounding mountains, especially the magnificent triple summit of Santa Cruz and below us is crystal blue Laguna Cullicocha Lake (4650m). After spending some time at the lake to appreciate the views we continue hiking up and down for one hour, then mostly descending now to our final campsite at Huiscash (4300m), perched high up the mountainside. We have terrific views across the Callejón de Huaylas west to the Cordillera Negra. At night we can see the sparkling lights of the villages high up in the Cordillera Negra.

Approx. 10 kms

6 to 7 hours.



Cullicocha Lake

Day 8: Descent to Hualcayan village. Vehicle to Huaraz

It's a long descent following a zig-zag track down to the village of Hualcayan (2900m).
Approx. 8 kms
4 hours.

Our private van will be waiting for us at Hualcayan to drive us about 4 hours 116kms back to Huaraz.



On the route to Hualcayan



Victor – Alpamayo Trekking

Hiking Hours & Kms Hiked:

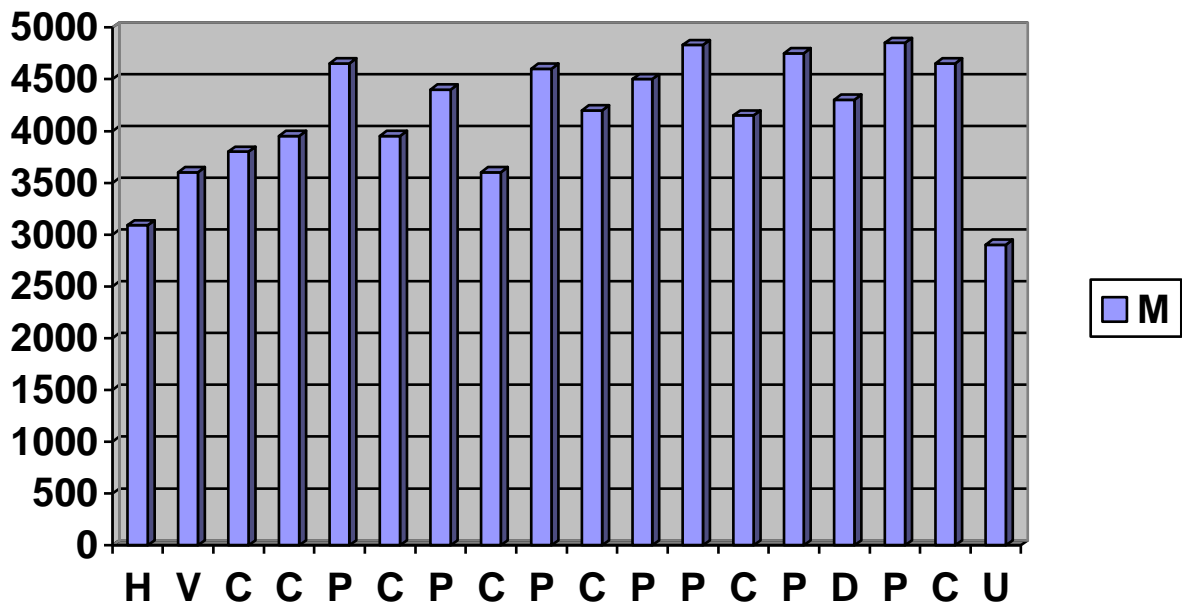
Hiking hours are estimated times including rest breaks and lunch stop. Times are for our average groups based on past experience. Some people may be much faster and others slower.

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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Altitude Change (Metres)

H = Huaraz
 V = Vaqueria
 C = Campsite
 P = Pass

D = Descent on the two pass day
 U = Hualcayan (finish of trek)