



The Northern Ice Peaks: Cordillera Blanca and Huayhuash Day by day description

Day 1 - LIMA (Friday)

Arrival and transfer to your hotel. If you arrive early in the day optional tours are available. Overnight. All meals on your own, overnight at hotel.

Day 2 - LIMA/HUARAZ (Saturday)

Early morning departure by first-class coach to the city of Huaraz, located about 400 Kms. north of Lima. Following the Panamerican Highway north across Lima we will pass several lush green valleys that cut through the coastal desert until we reach the town of Pativilca. Turning inland the main road winds its way up along the Fortaleza River for a good two hours. Finally we reach the Pass of Conococha (4,000 m.a.s.l. / 13,120 ft.) where we will get our first glimpse of the Cordillera Blanca, the highest tropical mountain range in the world. From here the road descends slowly along the Santa River as we pass a vast area of highland pastures. As we approach Huaraz, the vegetation changes into that of an interandean valley, surrounded by clusters of red-tiled houses. Arrival at a hotel and overnight (3,000 m.a.s.l. / 10,000 ft.) Dinner on your own.

Day 3 - HUARAZ/VAQUERIA (Sunday)

Leaving in the morning we drive down along the Santa Valley passing several villages until we reach present-day Yungay. The road winds slowly up into the gully between the Huascarán massif and the Huandoy three-pronged peak. As we reach the overhanging valley we arrive at the boundary of the National Park of Huascarán. Llanganuco, as the area is known, has two lakes that have turquoise waters, and passing them we will arrive at Quebrada Demanda, where we stop for lunch and a short rest. In the early afternoon we continue on this narrow road as it twists and turns to the Pass at Portachuelo of Llanganuco at 4,750 m.a.s.l. (15,580 ft.) From this point, if the evening is clear, we will get a spectacular panorama of Mt. Huascarán, Huandoy, Pisco and Chacaraju, the latter being one of the most difficult mountains to climb in Peru. As the evening falls, we drive down to our first campsite at Vaqueria.

Day 4 - VAQUERIA/TUCTU (Monday)

The day starts with a leisurely walk down towards Colcabamba. Before we reach the village, a trail will make its way to the left over a small ridge into the Huaripampa valley. As we slowly head up this valley past small settlements of farmers, surrounded by agricultural activity and andean vegetation, the snow-capped peaks of Paria and Taulliraju will come into view, passing meadows and fields along the way. Camp in the vicinity of Paria or in the heart of Huascarán National Park. (Time:5-6 hours. Distance: 7 Kms.)

Day 5 - TUCTU/TAULLIPAMPA (Tuesday)

The trail starts ascending towards Punta Union, a pass at 4,700 m.a.s.l. (15,711 ft.) This old trail was heavily used in pre-columbian and Colonial times as a route for transporting goods from the eastern side of the Andes to the main valley. As we approach the pass, Mt. Taulliraju will loom above us and on the other side its glacial lake and glacier will add color and contrast to the amazing view down the Santa Cruz Valley. The peaks of Santa Cruz, Quitaraju, Artesonaju, will come into view as well as the two lakes of Ichicocha and Jahuacochoa. The trail descends into Taullipampa, where we will camp at 4,000 m.a.s.l. (13,200 ft.). (Time:7 hours. Distance: 8.5 Kms.)



Day 6 - TAULLIPAMPA/LLAMACORRAL (Wednesday)

Past the side-valley of Arhuaycocha with a possibility to view Mt. Alpamayo, we continue down the Santa Cruz Valley. The landscape changes, and scree slopes appear on each side of the now marshy meadow as well as rock boulders fallen from the eroded walls above us. Finally towards the end of the day we walk out of the ever-narrowing gully into Llamacorrall, where we will camp. (Time: 6 hours. Distance: 6 Kms.)

Day 7 LLAMACORRAL/CASHAPAMPA/HUARAZ (Thursday)

A steep descent brings us to Cashapampa in the early morning. We meet a vehicle that will take us back to Huaraz saying good-bye to our the herders as the road winds slowly down to the main valley, arriving in the afternoon. Dinner on your own, overnight at hotel. (Time: 2 hours. Distance: 3 Kms.)

Day 8/9 - HUARAZ (Friday – Saturday)

Days at leisure for optional tours in the area. Overnight at hotels. Meals on your own. Visit Quebrada Ishinca, Pitec and Lake Churup or do a river – run on the Santa River.

Day 10 – HUARAZ/ CUATELWAIN (Sunday)

Back-tracking from Huaraz we take the side road at Quebrada Carpa, passing Pachacoto where we will observe the famous Puya Raymondi, the largest flowering cactus. On the way beautiful views of the peaks of the Cordillera Blanca, part of the Huascarán National Park. We drive over the Huarapasca pass (4,780 m.a.s.l.), before reaching a second pass at Yanashallash (4,680 m.a.s.l.) we will get views of the Cordillera Blanca, Huayhuash and Huallanca. The road descends to the Huallanca community, then follow the San Juan river until we cross the pass of Cuncush (4,750 m.a.s.l.) finally descending to camp at Cuartelwain. Lunch on route, overnight at camp at 4,000 m.

Day 11 - CUARTELWAIN/MITUCOCHA (Monday)

The trail winds slowly over the pass of Cacanapunta (4,700 m.a.s.l.) with incredible views of the surrounding countryside giving us a view of the peaks that will surround our campsite. The pass is the watershed of the waters flowing into the Amazon to the east, and the Pacific to the west. We arrive at camp below the peaks of Jirishanca Chico y Grande, Rondoy and Ninashanca at the edge of the Mitucocha lake. (Time: 6 hrs. Distance: 5 kms).

Day 12 - MITUCOCHA/CARHUACOCHA (Tuesday)

Over the Carhuacocho pass at 4,600 m.a.s.l. with views of Jirishanca Chico and the peaks of Siula, Yerupaja, Sarapo and Toro. Highland savannah known as puna surrounds the campsite and the countryside. Located at another lake we have fantastic views of those snow-capped peaks, that surround the western side of Carhuacocho. (Time: 7-8 hrs. Distance: 8 kms).

Day 13 - CARHUACOCHA/CARNICERO (Wednesday)

As we ascend to the narrow pass at Carnicero (4,750 m.a.s.l.) the peaks of the Huayhuash to our right, we will pass a series of lakes. Descending we reach our campsite below Jurau with views of the valley of Huayhuash, a small community of herders. Views of the peaks of Trapecio, Carnicero and Jurau. (Time: 8 hrs. Distance: 9 kms.)



Day 14 - CARNICERO/VICONGA (Thursday)

Passing by the seasonal community of Huayhuash we start our ascent to the pass of Huayhuash (4,750 m) with views of the Cordillera Raura to the south as we leave the jagged peaks of the Huayhuash slowly behind. We will view of Mt. Leon Huacanan and Quesillojanca, as well as Puscanturpa. Descend and camp at Lake Viconga. (Time: 7-8 hrs. Distance: 8 kms.)

Day 15 - VICONGA/SURASACA (Friday)

Over the last pass of Surasaca (4,800 m.a.s.l.). following the lake's shores for about an hour until we reach the roadhead. Here a vehicle will pick us up and drive us down the Churin Valley to the town of the same name where we will stay at a hotel and optional we of the thermal baths. Time: 4 hrs. Distance: 3-5 kms.

Day 16 – SURASACA / CHURIN/LIMA (Saturday)

Departure by vehicle to Lima. We join the Panamerican Highway at Huaura and drive back to Lima. (Hotel and meals not included).