



Hiking across the source of three ancient cultures: from Huánuco to Huaraz in Northeastern Peru Day by day description

Day 1 - LIMA / HUANUCO

Leaving the capital city we head up into the Andes on the Central Highway. A very steep ascent along the Rimac valley first and then the river as it becomes a gorge bringing us past numerous villages and mines operating in the area. We reach Ticlio, at 4,820m (15,809ft) the pass of the highest railway in the world and begin our slow descent past various mining complexes until reaching Oroya. From here we turn off to Cerro de Pasco and Huanuco. We will have a chance to see vicuña along the road as we travel through the National Reserve of Junin and the Natural Sanctuary of Huayllay. The first harbors a huge lake Chinchaycocha as the central ecosystem surrounded by highland savannah (puna) and the second has thousands of curious vertical slabs of rock probably from a past intrusion. We continue across the plateau and start our descent this time definite to Huanuco a town of 50,000 located at 1,800m (5,904ft) after having spent a good part of the day at 4,500m (14,760ft). Arrive at our hotel and relax.

Day 2 - HUANUCO/ CAURI

Leaving early we travel west towards the valley of the Marañón River. A short distance from Huanuco, we will briefly visit the pre-Inca site of Kotosh before we continue on the road towards Choras, our first stop off. Located 75km from the Huanuco, the road winds its way up the valley passing small villages of Pampas, Huancapulla and Jacas Chico. A fork in the road will take us to Choras, located overlooking the Marañón Valley. From here we will start a three-hour walking tour of Garu, the main site of the Yaru or Yaravilca, ethnic group that dominated the Marañón Valley before the Incas assimilated them. The site is spectacularly located at the junction of the Ticrash Valley and the Marañón with rustic flat rock stone buildings, windows and some two and three storey construction still standing. A magnificent introduction into pre-Inca culture. Lunch at the site.

In the afternoon continue up the Marañón valley past the small villages of Huancabamba, Rayapata and Huarin, origin of the Marañón River. Here the Lauricocha river joins the Nupe to form the Marañón. We cross a bridge and begin our ascent to Jesus about an hour away, nestled in a valley below the Lauricocha Lake. On the road we will stop at a viewpoint to see the profile of the whole of the Cordillera Huayhuash. Continue pass the village along a road that brings us to Cauri where we will camp beyond the village at 3,700m (12,136ft).

Day 3 - CAURI/ANTACALLANCA

From camp we will head towards lake Lauricocha visiting the Inca Bridge or causeway at the bottom of the outflow, and take a trail along the Lake for half the day arriving at the headwaters below Taullicocho for lunch. Here our vehicle will meet us to take us to Antacallanca, the roadhead from where our three day hike will start. We camp near a lake, with views of Mt. Leon Huacanan and the Cordillera Raura

Day 4 – ANTACALLANCA/ HUAYHUASH/ CARNICERO

Following a valley upstream we arrive at the main valley and head towards the community of Huayhuash. As we approach the head of the valley we will see the snow-capped peaks of the Cordillera Huayhuash from close-up - Mt. Carnicero, Trapecio Puscanturpa and Jurau. Camp and overnight near a lake below Mt. Carnicero.



Day 5 – CARNICERO/CARHUACOCHA

Leaving our lakeside campsite we depart from the main trail skirting a marshy area to begin a steep ascent to the Carnicero pass. We come close to Mt. Siula and then reach the pass at 4,850m (15,908ft), our first high pass to find two small lakes and the spectacular view of Mt. Siula and the Jirishanka massif. We will have lunch viewing into Quesillococha and Siulacocha. If we are lucky we will witness an ice-fall. Continue down the valley until we come into view Carhuacocha, beautiful views of Mt. Jirishanka and Yerupaja. Camp at the outlet of the lake. On a clear day, if the lake is without wind, the reflection of the peaks on the surface is unique.

Day 6 – CARHUACOCHA/HUANUCO PAMPA

Leaving the lake behind, we hike out to Queropalca, with great views of the Cordillera Huayhuash as we leave it behind. A vehicle will pick us up and drive as down to Baños, a village located on the Nupe River, the headwaters of the Marañón. From here we continue via Rondos and Iscopampa to Huanuco Viejo – an Inca city located on a high pampa at 3,600m (11,808ft). We camp near the entrance of the complex.

Day 7 – HUANUCO PAMPA/CHAVIN

In the morning we will take a tour on the pampa which harbored a city of perhaps 10,000 Andean people under the domain of Topa Inka, who had the complex built. It contains many of the traditional Inca constructions and buildings, which were used for storage and to house soldiers and artisans. This city was on the main Inca Trail coming from Cuzco and heading north to Cajamarca, the Qhapaq Nan

From here we continue on to La Unión, the capital of the province of Dos de Mayo situated on the Vizcarra River. From here we continue towards Huallanca, a mining town and onto the main paved road heading to Antamina, the world's largest Copper and Zinc mine. We traverse this impressive operation and head down into the Conchucos Valley to San Marcos and Chavin where we stay overnight at the Chavin Hotel. On the way we will be able to get spectacular views of the Cordillera Blanca as we descend into the valley. (Note: Another option is to camp on the high road near Laguna Canrash and hike down into Chavin. The next day spending the night there and doing day 8 on day 9).

Day 8 CHAVIN / HUARAZ

Visit this citadel the largest pre-Inca site that has been restored with its impressive carved stonework and anthropomorphic figures and its labyrinth of underground passages. Lunch in town and afternoon drive to Huaraz with spectacular views of the Cordillera Blanca as we drive into Huaraz. Overnight at hotel, dinner on your own.

SERVICES INCLUDED: Transportation by vehicle to start and from the end of trek to your city of departure, two-man tents including sleeping pads, pack animals, kitchen crew and commissary gear with all meals included as well as a bilingual guide on the trek, who will handle the first aid kit.

NOT INCLUDED: Meals in the cities alcoholic beverages, extras, tips, taxes, laundry service, additional tours, insurance and airline tickets (where applicable), sleeping bags, hiking boots and other personal gear.