

Cordillera Blanca trek in Peru



Highlights

An awe-inspiring guided circuit of the world's highest tropical mountain range in Peru. Starting and finishing in Huaraz, this Cordillera Blanca trek takes you through a lush landscape of glacial valleys and lakes circled by towering Andes peaks, camping in stunning locations along the trail.

The Cordillera Blanca or 'White Range' in Peru is the world's highest tropical mountain range and includes thirty-three peaks over 5,500m high. The highest peak in Peru, Huascarán, is found here as well as Peru's first National Park and Biosphere reserve. Glaciers have carved immense canyons that widen at places to reveal beautiful turquoise mountain lakes. Lush valleys fed by snow-melt streams feed small-holding farmland in wider valleys with their meadows and cultivated fields.

Your five-day, four-night guided Cordillera Blanca trek will take in the natural and cultural interests of the area. Pack animals will take the burden of most of your kit as you pass through traditional farming villages along trails winding through scenic gullies flanked by the Andes' hugest peaks. You will come to picture-perfect lakes nestled at the bottom of great glacial valleys fed by cascading rivers and explore the fields and alpine meadows of the local Quechua people and their ancient irrigation systems.

You will camp out under the stars along the trail and learn more about the culture of the area from your local bilingual guide while staff will prepare you meals included in the tour's price.

Is it for me?

This itinerary takes in some of the most stunning mountain scenery in the world and will offer anyone who enjoys the outdoors one of the world's best hiking experience. The daily distances are conservative and do not demand a superior level of fitness and you will have plenty of time to adjust to the altitude that remains pretty constant throughout without any dramatic taxing ascents. A guide fully trained in First Aid will be at hand at all times for any health problems.

On top of the fantastic landscape and wildlife you will have a chance to explore the culture and communities of the native Quechua people and sample the culture of the region. The hike is suited to small groups and couples with an average fitness with some experience of hiking and camping.

Accommodation

You will camp along the route in comfortable two man tents that include sleeping pads. Camp sites are situated in areas of unimpeded views of the Huascaran National Park and its mountains. Basic toilets for hikers are also provided on site.

All meals are included in the price. Afternoon tea is served by your accompanying camp-crew around a warming fire at the end of a day's hike. They will also prepare high-energy meals including local Peruvian delicacies like chicken, pork or lamb with rice or potatoes flavoured with 'aji', Peruvian hot pepper.

Itinerary

Day One: HUARAZ/VAQUERIA

Prices from

510 GBP (5 days) per person

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Leaving early in the morning drive down along the Santa Valley passing several villages until you reach present-day Yungay. The road winds slowly up into the gully between the Huascaran massif and the Huandoy three-pronged peak. As you reach the overhanging valley you will arrive at the boundary of Huascaran National Park. Llanganuco, as the area is known, has two lakes, Chinancocha and Orconcocha which have turquoise waters. 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, you will get a spectacular view of Mt. Huascaran, Huandoy, Pisco and Chacaraju, continue down until about 40 minutes before your first campsite at Vaqueria 3700 m.a.s.l. (12,136 ft) where you will undertake a short hike.

Day Two: VAQUERIA/PARIA

The day starts with a leisurely walk down towards a trail which makes its way to the left over a small ridge into the Huaripampa Valley. As you slowly head up this valley you pass a small settlement of farmers, going by their agricultural activity and Andean vegetation. The snow-capped peak of Chacaraju, Taulliraju will come into view passing meadows and fields along the way. Camp in the vicinity of Paria or Tuctu. (Time 5-6 hours. Distance 11 Kms.)

Day Three: PARIA/TAULLIPAMPA

The trail starts ascending towards Punta Union, a pass at 4,750 m.a.s.l. (15,580 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 you approach the pass, Mt. Taulliraju will loom above 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 Quitaraju, Artesonaju and Rinrijirca will come into view as well as the two lakes of Ichicocha and Jatunconcha. The trail descends into Taullipampa where you will camp at 4,100 m.a.s.l. (13,448 ft.). (Time:7 hours. Distance: 13 Kms.)

Day Four: TAULLIPAMPA/LLAMACORRAL

Today continue our hike down the Santa Cruz Valley, past the side-valley of Arhuaycocha with great views of snow capped mountains including Mt. Alpamayo. 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 you. Finally towards the end of the day walk out of the ever-narrowing canyon into Llamacorrall, where you will camp at 3,500 m.a.s.l. (11,480 ft.) (Time: 6 hours. Distance: 16.5 Kms.)

Day Five: LLAMACORRAL/CASHAPAMPA/HUARAZ

A steep descent brings us to Cashapampa in the early morning. Meet a vehicle that will take us back to Huaraz saying good-bye to your camp crew as the road winds slowly down to the main valley, arriving in the afternoon. Transfer to your hotel and dinner on your own. (Time: 2:30 hours. Distance: 7 Kms.)

Details

Getting there

Huarez is about 420km north east of Lima. You can fly there from Lima, or catch a bus.

Price includes

Transportation by vehicle to start and from the end of trek to your city of departure
Two-man tents including sleeping pads,
Pack animals
Camp crew
Commissary gear
All meals included
Bilingual guide on the trek who will handle the first aid kit.

Comfort level

Down to earth (hostels, camping, huts)

Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed