



848 S. Swadley St. Lakewood, CO 80228  
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## **Santa Cruz Trekking Adventure - Itinerary**

**This trek is an adventurous exploration of the Northern Cordillera Blanca, Peru 's highest mountain range. Starting in the Quechua village of Cashapampa , we will circumnavigate the high massifs of the Alpamayo and Santa Cruz peaks, finishing the trek in the hilltop village of Hualcayan . Crossing high mountain passes up to 5000M and camping among the alpine lakes makes this trek a challenge even for seasoned high-altitude trekkers. Burros will carry our loads, leaving us free to enjoy trekking with only a light day-pack.**

**DAY 1** Arrive Lima, Peru. Flights arranged w/early AM arrival. Transfer via private mini-bus to Huaraz (3100M), the busy center for local government, education, and tourism. The 8 hour drive will take us from the modern capital city of Lima, along the spectacular desert coastline, up winding river canyons, and finally over the high plains to the foothills of the mighty Andes mountains. A restful night awaits us after dining on local specialties. Hotel lodging.

**DAY 2** We will relax this morning and let our bodies recover from the long hours of travel. We can leisurely tour the sights of Huaraz, as well as check equipment and prepare loads for burros. We will begin our acclimatization program with an afternoon hike or mountain bike ride. Hotel lodging.

**DAY 3** An early morning breakfast and private mini-bus transfer to the Quechua village of Cashapampa. The first stage of our trek takes us up the steep-walled Santa Cruz Canyon, through an arid landscape where we will find cactus and parrots, typical of the high tropical desert. We will make our camp in the ancient herding settlement of Llamacorral. Tent.

**DAY 4** From Llamacorral, our route continues up the Santa Cruz, past a chain of turquoise lakes. Our arrieros may even be lucky enough to catch a few rainbow trout for our dinner. We will camp tonight at Camp Silencio, among a grove of Quenal trees below the hanging valley which leads up and north to Alpamayo Base Camp. Tent.

**DAY 5** If the group wishes, we will have time this morning to visit the Alpamayo Base Camp and the high glacial lakes below the jagged peaks of the Rinrijirca Cirque. We will then return to Camp Silencio, and continue up the valley to the foot of the towering peak of Taulliraju and our camp at the base of the Punta Union Pass. Tent.

**DAY 6** Today is our first of several high pass crossings. A strenuous early-morning climb takes us up and over Punta Union Pass, 4750M, and into the valley of the Huaripampa. Here we are on the eastern slope of the Cordillera Blanca, where the rivers flow to the Amazon, and will notice slight differences in the local flora and fauna, as well as a somewhat moister climate. Tent.

**DAY 7** Another high pass crossing awaits us today. We climb up the switch-back trail to Alto de Pucaraju, 4650M, the pass between the peaks of Taulliraju and Pucaraju. From the top of the pass, the downhill trek takes us to the lush lake-shore camp at Laguna Huecrocha. Tent.

**DAY 8** Yet another pass for us today. From Laguna Huecrocha we climb to 4400M and cross the Tupatupa pass. The descent takes us down into the Jancapampa alley, which if followed would lead to the village of Pomabamba and the Amazon rain-forests. We will follow the valley up-stream, however, and make our camp at Ichicque, 3900M, near Laguna Satayoche. Tent.

**DAY 9** An early morning hike past the Laguna Satayoche brings us to the base of another pass crossing. We cross over the 4600M divide and descend the valley to Huillca. This crossing brings us once again to the Western slope of the Cordillera Blanca, where rivers drain into the Rio Santa, and eventually the Pacific Ocean. We camp tonight at 4100M, just down-valley from the village of Huillca. Tent.



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**DAY 10** Today is possibly the most demanding of the trek, with two high passes to cross. We trek up the gentle rise to the first pass at 4500M, then cross beautiful alpine meadows and heathers to the second pass at 4850M, the highest point of the circuit. From here we enjoy possibly the finest views we will get of Alpamayo and the peaks of the Santa Cruz Massif. Tent.

**DAY 11** Today we have only to walk down the valley to the village of Alpamayo in the Quebrada de los Cedros. Here we will find some very ancient, and very peculiar, stone enclosures reminiscent of Stonehenge. We camp among the ruins and rest for our final day of up-hill trekking. Tent.

**DAY 12** We start the day with a steep climb up out of the canyon through wildflowers and rich grazing pastures. A short descent and another short climb bring us to the final pass crossing of the trek at Paso de los Cedros, 4800M. A very short distance around the corner is our camp along the clear blue waters of the Laguna Cullicocha at 4650M. Recent glacial retreat has left exposed polished granite slabs along the lakeshore. We will be rewarded on our final night camping with views of the towering Santa Cruz peaks across the lake glowing in the sunset. Tent.

**DAY 13** Today we have 1600M of down-hill hiking from the Laguna Cullicacha to the village of Hualcayan, where we meet our private mini-bus. There seem to be countless switchbacks along the well-engineered road down into the Rio Santa valley. We soon arrive back in Huaraz, where hot showers, cold beers, and a celebration dinner are waiting for us. Hotel lodging.

**DAY 14** We will enjoy our final parting views of the now familiar peaks of the Cordillera Blanca this morning from the roof-top terrace of the hotel before our private mini-bus transfer to Lima. Flights will be arranged with late afternoon departures. (We are happy to arrange lodging in Lima/ Miraflores if you wish to extend your visit.)