



PERU: CIRCUIT OF THE CORDILLERA HUAYHUASH



This information should answer some of your questions about the trip and give you a better idea of what we do day-to-day. It doesn't hope to answer everything. If you have any questions please get in touch.



Above Laguna Carhuacocha

- **The whole classic circuit, no shortcuts or time saving**
- **Good acclimatisation and practical pre-trek days**
- **Higher Pass options on some days depending on fitness**
- **Two days in Joe Simpson's valley and a visit to his Siula Grande base camp**
- **R & R time in Huaraz, the 'Chamonix' of Peru**

Peru

Peru is South America's third largest country, and with 25 million people, its fourth most populous. It is a country of extremes – desert and rainforest, snow peaks and sand dunes, excessive wealth and tortuous poverty. The coastal plain is hemmed in between the sea and the giant Andean chain, the spine of the country, while to the east is the Amazon jungle.

The country has risen strongly from the ravages and economic turmoil at the end of the last century and today Peru has never seemed more attractive! It can boast mountain scenery and trekking to rival even the mighty Himalayas, rainforest reserves full of animals and birds, the incredible architecture of the Incas and arguably the best museums in South America. The country does not have traditional resorts or famous beaches, it is a place for activity and is attracting travellers, historians, linguists, climbers and trekkers in growing numbers each year. Add the

special vibrancy, colour and cacophony of its Andean and colonial culture and a visit to Peru is an experience seldom matched anywhere in the world.

For our Huayhuash trek, Huaraz (often called 'the Chamonix of South America') is our relaxed staging post. It is a good base for treks and climbs in the Cordillera Blanca range. Further south, the Cordillera Huayhuash dominated by Yerupaja (6634m) is our attraction. Access to this area is improving but it remains an enigmatic place. It is a compact range – only 30 km from North to South but its valleys are 4-4500m above sea level. Sparkling lakes are home to trout, ducks and geese. Native queñual forests harbour many threatened species of bird. Small glaciers cling to mountains which are of Himalayan proportions - 6 peaks are higher than 6000m.

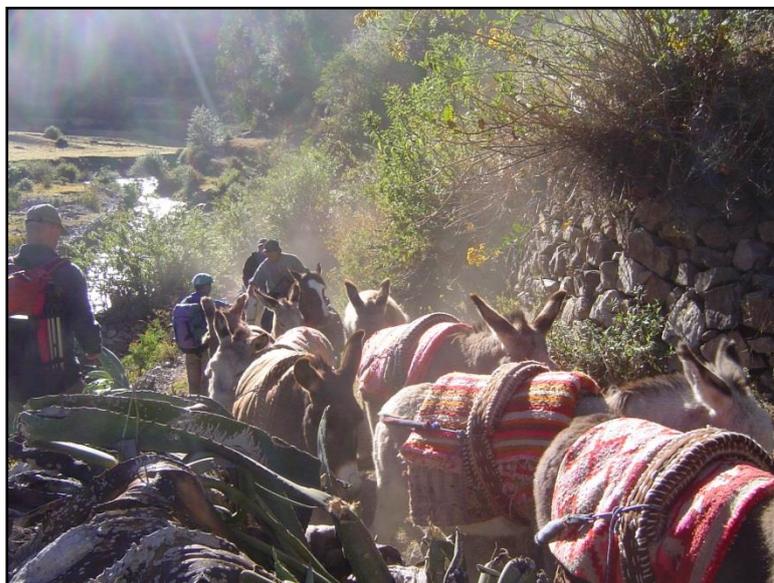
High Places in Peru

High Places have operated in Peru since 1994. It has been one of our most popular destinations and we have a long established and successful relationship with our trekking agency colleagues in Huaraz and Cusco.

The Huayhuash

Above 4000m for nearly the whole time and crossing a succession of passes around the spectacular Cordillera Huayhuash range in the Peruvian Andes, this trek is simply one of the great walks of the world. There is a real feeling of remoteness during the circuit and everyone will benefit from an extra supply of stamina, resilience and 'outdoor living' experience to make the most of the challenges. However it is within the reach of anyone with a love for the mountains and a desire to see one of the world's great ranges. Since the trekking is remote, fairly sustained and at altitude, this trip sits at the upper end of its grade.

Our time in and around Huaraz will help us to acclimatise naturally. We then drive to Llamac, a village near the start and will be on trek for 14 days. The number of hours walking varies from day to day, the longest is about 8 hours. We have rest days but these can give us the opportunity to take side trips and visit some remote hamlets, lakes, glaciers and forests. We cross 9 passes, the highest, Punta Cuyoc at 5000m.



Dust and donkeys near Llamac

The trekking day

On trek we are supported by a cook team, arrieros (donkey drivers), a rescue horse and a local guide. We camp in roomy two person tents. A typical day would be to wake at 6am with a cup of tea in the tent, breakfast in the mess tent and away before 8am. Trekking is best in the cool and

clear air of the morning with a lunch stop at around 12 noon. Arrival in camp is usually around 3-3.30pm in time for afternoon tea. After sorting camp out, we are relaxed and ready for the main meal of the day at about 6.30-7pm.

Climate

Our trek takes place in Peru's dry season and although this does not mean that it won't rain, the weather is generally dry and stable. The most common daily pattern is a clear, bright morning with a bit of cumulus cloud in the afternoon. It is usually clear again by evening. Daily temperatures vary greatly. During the hottest part of the day and in the sun, the temperature can be up to 25-30°C but 15-20°C is more usual. At night it can drop to well below freezing especially at the higher camps close to 4000m where -10°C is not uncommon.

Accommodation

In Lima we stay in a good hotel close to the centre and in Huaraz we always try to stay in the best accommodation – the famous Hostal Andino. All accommodation is on a twin share basis. On trek we camp in roomy 2-person tents. There is a communal dining tent for eating and socialising in the evenings.

Transport

The 8 hour journey from Lima to Huaraz is usually on a luxury inter-city type bus. Once in the mountains we travel in our own private bus or minibus.

Food

While on trek we provide all meals and will take as much fresh meat and vegetables as we can. We are happy to cater for vegetarians if notified beforehand but do warn that choices remain fairly limited in this 'meat eating' part of the world. In main towns we provide breakfast only. Huaraz is a fun place to eat out and there are a variety of local restaurants to try. A meal in a good restaurant should cost about 35 soles (US\$12 approx)

Health and hygiene

On trek we boil all drinking water and provide facilities for hand washing before all meals. With increased numbers on popular treks, camp hygiene and good judgement is vital. In camp we use a toilet tent. Being ill in Peru can be avoided and our health record is very good indeed. Initial contact with salads and street vended food should be resisted. Water should always be regarded with caution and treated (we suggest chlorine dioxide which comes in tablets or tincture) if considered necessary.

Altitude

Above 3000m, the air is thinner, the pressure is lower and there is less oxygen available in the atmosphere. Acclimatisation is the process by which the body adapts to these conditions. The key to acclimatisation is a good itinerary with a gradual initial height gain, walking at a slow and steady pace, and increasing fluid intake – drinking at least 4 litres a day is advisable above 3000m.

Many people have some minor side effects from altitude, such as headache, nausea or general lassitude. The optional use of 'Diamox' has proved useful for some people as it can reduce these symptoms. You will be given more information on 'Diamox' with your Final Information, between 8 and 10 weeks before departure.

Baggage

While trekking, you will only need to carry what you might use that day: i.e. rain gear, some spare clothes, camera, water etc. The rest of your kit will be carried by the burros (donkeys), so you will need a durable trek bag. You can leave some items in the hotel prior to the trek and a lockable bag is recommended if you are leaving valuable items.

Equipment and clothing

Full details of the equipment and clothing required will be sent when you book. You will need good mountain wear, a warm sleeping bag and light clothing for warm day temperatures. All communal and camp gear is provided.

Language and people

A few words of Spanish, enough to say hello, count and tell the time, will make your visit more rewarding. People are usually pleased that you are making an effort to speak the language - even if it doesn't always come out right! There are few English speakers in Peru.

Safety

Care must be taken in the streets and shops of Lima. Joe Simpson who has led several trips to Peru for us in the past recounts in one of his books how someone removed his watch within minutes of leaving a hotel. Away from Lima things are more relaxed, but be careful. It is always a good idea to be discrete carrying valuable items and in how you use your camera. Think how you can look less like a tourist!

Cusco and Machu Picchu

After your trek in Peru take the opportunity of visiting one of the world's great wonders. Ask us for more details.



Machu Picchu and Huayna Picchu. Photo Peter Wise

What our clients say

"Third trip with High Places and as ever the service from start to finish has been excellent. The fact that there are so many repeat customers suggests that most people think the same."

Roger Barwell, Circuit of the Cordillera Huayhuash

DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

This itinerary is flexible and should be seen as a guide only. Local conditions, weather or fitness could lead to changes in our daily plans. All times and distances are approximate. 'B,L,D' refers to meals included in the trip cost, i.e. Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.

This trip is 20 days ex LIMA. The first and last days refer to the days of arrival in and departure from Lima, and may not be the days you depart from or arrive back home.

DAY 1 LIMA
Arrive Lima. Hotel.

DAY 2 HUARAZ (3050m)
We leave Lima early for the eight hour bus journey to Huaraz. The first part of the journey follows an arid desert coastline with disturbing evidence of Peru's burgeoning urban population in several overflowing shanty settlements. As we head up into the mountains the landscape quickly becomes less sombre and rural life looks to be far preferable. Once over the pass of Conococha we have a first glimpse of snow covered mountains and after a long day we finally arrive in Huaraz, the heart of the Peruvian Andes. (B)



Oranges for sale!

DAY 3 HUARAZ (3050m)
At 3050m above sea level, this is the capital of Ancash province and the trekking centre of the Cordillera Blanca. There is time to relax, recover from the travelling and start getting used to the altitude. With a local guide a half day acclimatisation walk beyond the town and up to a Pre-Inca temple is an enjoyable first foray. A descent through fields finishes at the thermal pools at Monterey. (B)

DAY 4 HUARAZ (3050m)
An acclimatisation day. We drive through villages up a nearby mountain valley to the road head (3850m). Laguna Churru (4600m) is a sapphire blue lake set in a beautiful amphitheatre, high above the main valley and is one of the jewels of the Cordillera Blanca. It is a tough but attainable target for the first outing but to climb high and then sleep lower is good for acclimatisation. We return to Huaraz. (B,L,)

DAY 5 LLAMAC (3300m)
The Huayhuash beckons! We drive to the village of Llamac, the gateway to the Cordillera Huayhuash. After a brief stop in the small market town of Chiquian we continue on gravel roads to Llamac where our crew will have already set up camp. 6 hours journey, including stops. (B,L,D)

DAY 6 LLAMAC (3300m)
An important acclimatisation day. We climb out of the valley on a good path to a wide saddle where we have our first high views across to the mighty peaks of the Huayhuash. 6-7 hours return to Llamac. (B,L,D)

DAY 7 LAGUNA MITACOCHA (4300m)
Well acclimatised by now we should be ready to begin the trek. A short bus ride follows the Llamac valley until it opens out into rolling tussockland and our starting point (4180m) where we rendezvous with our horses and arrieros (horsemen). Uphill straightaway toward a rocky ridge line and the narrow Punta Cacan (4700m) pass which marks the crossing of the continental divide and the Andean

watershed. From here the water drains to the Amazon basin and on into the Atlantic. Descending now along the eastern side of the range we reach our first campsite just down the valley from the beautiful Laguna Mitacocha where there are powerful views of the Huayhuash giants, Jirishanca, Rondoy and Ninashanca. 6 hours. (B,L,D)

DAY 8

LAKE CARHUACOCHA (4138m)

Leaving Mitacocha we follow a high and sometimes steep route over an unnamed pass at 4800m to visit the surprisingly deep blue Lake Aguashcacha. We then descend to join the trail around Lake Carhuacocha where we camp in a walled enclosure at its eastern end. There are great views of Siula, Yerupaja, and Carhuacocha from camp. 4138m. 7 hours (B,L,D)



Lake Carhuacocha

DAY 9

LAKE CARHUACOCHA (4138m)

Rest day! Two nights at Carhuacocha lake enables us to take a side trip to Laguna Siula (4300m). This small blue lake sits beneath the tumbling glaciers of Siula Grande. There is plenty of wildlife here including andean geese, torrent ducks, black ibis, kara kara and waders. The round trip takes about 4 hours from the camp. (B,L,D)

DAY 10

JURAUCOCHA (4450m)

We skirt Laguna Siula and climb sometimes steeply to a pass at 4800m with awe-inspiring views of close by glaciers and lakes, followed by an easier descent to our remote camp at Lake Carnicerococha, sometimes called Juraucocha. A fantastic high mountain day. 7-8 hours. (B,L,D)

DAY 11

PUMARINI VALLEY (4480m)

Shortly after leaving camp we reach the now deserted and isolated settlement of Huayhuash. It was until recently a traditional highland Indian community almost totally cut off from the world. From Huayhuash it is a long gradual climb to the pass of Portachuelo (4750m). Descending south, we enjoy our first views of the smaller and even more remote range of the Cordillera Raura. We skirt Lake Viconga and camp at about 4480m in the Pumarini Valley. 6-7 hours. (B,L,D)

- DAY 12 QUEBRADA HUANACPATAY (4330m)
 We leave early and a steady ascent reaches Punta Cuyoc (5000m) and the highest pass of the trek! It is thrilling to be this high and seemingly able to reach out and touch the hanging glacier of Puscanturpa! But we have to descend, steeply at first past a tower sculpted by the wind and weather, then to the flat-bottomed Quebrada Huanacpatay, which is followed to our camp. 4330m. 5 hours. (B,L,D)
- DAY 13 QUEBRADA JURAU (4250m)
 We leave the Quebrada Huanacpatay and make a high traverse of the hillside through highly scented lupins into the Quebrada Jurau. We camp at the top of the valley, close to the base camp of Siula Grande, immortalised by Joe Simpson in 'Touching the Void'. 4250m. 4 hours (B,L,D)
- DAY 14 QUEBRADA JURAU (4250m)
 A rest day today – well almost! In the morning we climb further up the valley towards the Siula Grande base-camp. From here we can view the route over the moraine that Joe Simpson crawled down during his epic survival struggle. In 2002, Joe and Simon Yates and a complete film and climbing crew came back to film a re-enactment of the epic, a major project which 'High Places' and our local Peruvian team arranged and supported. 3-4 hours Return to camp and relax. (B,L,D)
- DAY 15 HUATIAC (4300m)
 Early on we pass an impressive waterfall before continuing down the valley and passing through stone walled fields on our way to the village of Huayllapa (3700m). Here we ascend a narrow valley to camp at Huatiac (4300m) 6 hours. (B,L,D)
- DAY 16 LAGUNA JAHUACOCHA (4000m)
 A tough day where we cross two passes: Punta Tapush (4750m) and Punta Yaucha (4800m) before descending to the spectacular Laguna Jahuacocha (4000m). On the way there is dramatic rock scenery and we should have magnificent views of the surrounding peaks of Rondoy, Jirishanca and Yerupaja, highest peak in the Huayhuash. 8 hours. (B,L,D)



Siula Grande Valley (spot the trekkers!)

- DAY 17 HUARAZ (3050m)
 Our final pass is a gradual climb to Punta Pampa (4300m). Here we enjoy a last close up view of the Huayhuash peaks before making the steep and long descent to

Llamac. 5 hours. From Llamac, we drive back via Chiquian to the fleshpots of Huaraz and civilisation. (B,L)

DAY 18 HUARAZ (3050m)
A free day in Huaraz – sheer enjoyment after the deprivations of a long trek. In the evening no doubt a celebratory evening meal. (B)

DAY 19 LIMA
The long return bus ride to Lima, usually a lively ride with re-oxygenating blood, a sense of achievement, relaxation and a welcome rest from activity. For those going onto Cusco and Machu Picchu, an early departure next day. Hotel. (B)

DAY 20 DEPART LIMA
... or continue with your own plans. (B)

Note – If you are short of time it is possible to return to Lima early and miss the final free day in Huaraz.

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