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# Peru's Cordilleras Blanca & Huayhuash – The Hiking & Biking Guide

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**Front cover:** Dwarfed by Ranrapalca (6162m) on the 5080m Paso Huapi (p130).

**This page:** Descending to Cutatambo on the Huayhuash Circuit.

**Previous page (p1):** By the shores of Laguna Churup (p127).

**Overleaf** Passing Contrahierbas's glacial waterfalls, descending from Punta Yanayacu on the Ulta-Yanama trek (p109).

## A request

The authors and publisher have tried to ensure that this guide is as accurate and up to date as possible. Nevertheless, things change. If you notice any changes or omissions, please write to Trailblazer (address above) or email us at [pikes@trailblazer-guides.com](mailto:pikes@trailblazer-guides.com). A free copy of the next edition will be sent to persons making a significant contribution.

## WARNING: mountain walking and cycling can be dangerous

Please read the notes on when to go (pp16-18), safety (p39-40 and p44-5) and health (pp45-6). Every effort has been made by the authors and publisher to ensure that the information contained herein is as accurate and up to date as possible.

However, they are unable to accept responsibility for any inconvenience, loss or injury sustained by anyone as a result of the advice and information given in this guide.

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## ABOUT THIS BOOK

The aim of this guide is to give the information needed to hike and bike a multitude of routes in the Cordilleras Blanca and Huayhuash, from the well-known circuits to valleys which rarely see a tourist. Virtually all the multi-day trips described require camping, often at sites which come with great views but no facilities. We hope the book helps promote this beautiful area and encourages more responsible trekking practices in the region, for the benefit of all: local people, visitors and the remarkable mountain environment.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guide could not have happened without the help of many people in Peru and the UK. Special thanks to Cass Gilbert for his unflagging Andes enthusiasm and willingness to go swimming in the pursuit of virgin biking trails; to Marie Timmermans and David Lazo, Julio Olaza, Charlie Good, Erick Castillo, Vanessa Pagola, Antonio Paredes, Clodoaldo Figueroa, Edson Ramírez, Philip Bennie, Sandra Aquino, Dmitri Antonio, Jo Haines, Antoine Faugère, Benjamin Webb, Parker Kempf, John Biggar and the Pike clan for their help in making the information more accurate than it would otherwise have been.

Thanks to the Trailblazer crew for making it all come about: Bryn Thomas for believing in the project, Nicky Slade for turning the text into a book, Nick Hill for magicking kmz files into colour maps and Jane Thomas for the index. Thanks also for the use of material in the Lima and Minimum Impact sections.

Lastly gracias to biking friends Anna Kortschak, James Butcher, Sarah Bedford, Alex Messner Krauss and Nathan Jesus Haley, without whom the research wouldn't have been nearly so much fun.

### 📌 POST COVID NOTE

The authors and publisher have tried to ensure that this guide is as accurate as possible. Nevertheless, things change, and even more so than usual as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

The majority of the in-country research for this edition was carried out just before the pandemic hit Peru particularly hard in 2020. Prices given in this guide are those that were being charged pre-Covid; during the pandemic food prices rose significantly, as did transport costs (due to the reduction in vehicles' carrying capacity) and tour prices (as health and safety measures caused tours to be more expensive to run) while conversely many hotels lowered their prices owing to lack of demand. Time will tell whether these price alterations are here for the long term, or will begin returning towards pre-pandemic levels.

Restaurants, hotels and tour agencies recommended in this guide have all suffered from an almost-total absence of international tourists in 2020 and 2021. Some staff working in the tourist sector have weathered the pandemic by returning to their home villages in the cordillera and working in agriculture, but plenty of businesses which were viable pre-pandemic could not survive such a long period of reduced income. We have made amendments for this where possible, but please write to Trailblazer (address on p2) or email us at [pikes@trailblazer-guides.com](mailto:pikes@trailblazer-guides.com) with information about any other changes or omissions. A free copy of the next edition will be sent to persons making a significant contribution.

# INTRODUCTION

As mountain adventure destinations, the Cordilleras Blanca and Huayhuash are unrivalled in South America. Well known amongst mountaineers, the unique landscape of sheer valleys, colourful alpine lakes, ice falls and giant glaciated peaks also offer some of the best hiking and biking on Earth. These ranges form the snowy highlights of Peru's 2000km Andean spine, and routes that wind their way through dramatic alpine scenery have attracted trekkers for decades.

What really distinguishes the area from other great ranges is the accessibility of high trails and peaks. There are no Himalayan walk-ins: you'll be near a glacier by the second day of almost every multi-day hike in this book. This brings with it the risk of going too high too fast, so spend time acclimatizing in the lively regional capital Huaraz beforehand – the city makes an excellent base for day hikes and rides.

**What really distinguishes the area from other great ranges is the accessibility of high trails and peaks**

Situated in the department of Ancash, the Cordillera Blanca is sandwiched between the populated Callejón de Huaylas (the Río Santa valley to the west of the range, which houses Huaraz) and Callejón de Conchucos – the series of river valleys to the east of the mountains. The Cordillera Blanca is protected by Parque Nacional Huascarán, and treks within this park and in the Cordillera Huayhuash are in wilderness areas with sparse, but friendly, local populations. Lower down, expect a more colourful scene; it's not



© Vanessa Pagola

(Above): On the shores of Laguna 513, under Nevado Hualcán (see p116).



**Some walking trails were laid down by ancient civilizations millennia ago**

Some walking trails were laid down by ancient civilizations millennia ago, but more recently audacious Peruvian road builders have chiselled ways through the heart of the Blanca – ribbons of dirt and tarmac which crawl up

**Cycle tourers are drawn by the most thrilling high passes in the Andes**

precipitous hillsides and drift within a stone's throw of glaciers. Cycle tourers are drawn by the most thrilling high passes in the Andes – it won't just be the altitude taking your breath away. Cycling allows an authentic insight into Peruvian mountain life, the chance to pedal past *campesinos* out tending crops of quinoa and potato, and visit bucolic villages which are a world away from the fast-paced digital media age.

**In a country known for its verticality, word is getting out about the extraordinary possibilities for cross-country riding**

unusual to happen upon a village fiesta with live music, traditional clothing, dancing, and of course a little drinking.

Mountain biking is blossoming in the region too. In a country known for its verticality, word is getting out about the extraordinary possibilities for



cross-country riding or gnarly singletrack descents that shoot hundreds of metres down hillsides.

The majority of outdoor-loving visitors to Peru make a beeline for the Inca trails near Cusco, but for those after magnificent mountainscapes and less crowded paths, these more northerly Cordilleras are the place to come.

## ITINERARIES

[for overview see overleaf]

Good trekking options in this area are almost unlimited, and there are many exciting roads to cycle, so time rather than a lack of ideas is likely to be the constraining factor on any trip. It is important to factor in time to reach the region, and to allow *at least* a couple of days at the beginning in Huaraz or another mountain town to aid acclimatization. Starting with two to four of the easier day hikes/rides before setting out on a longer, more strenuous, route will not only improve your chances of enjoying your time in the mountains but will also reduce your risk of suffering from Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS). See p45 for more information, including tips on how to acclimatize to avoid AMS. The suggested itineraries on p13 and on p14 are for those arriving unacclimatized. If you're coming from Cusco or another high-altitude area see the table (overleaf) for actual walking or cycling days.

(Below): Exploring Quebrada Cayesh, on the Quilcayhuanca–Cojup trek.



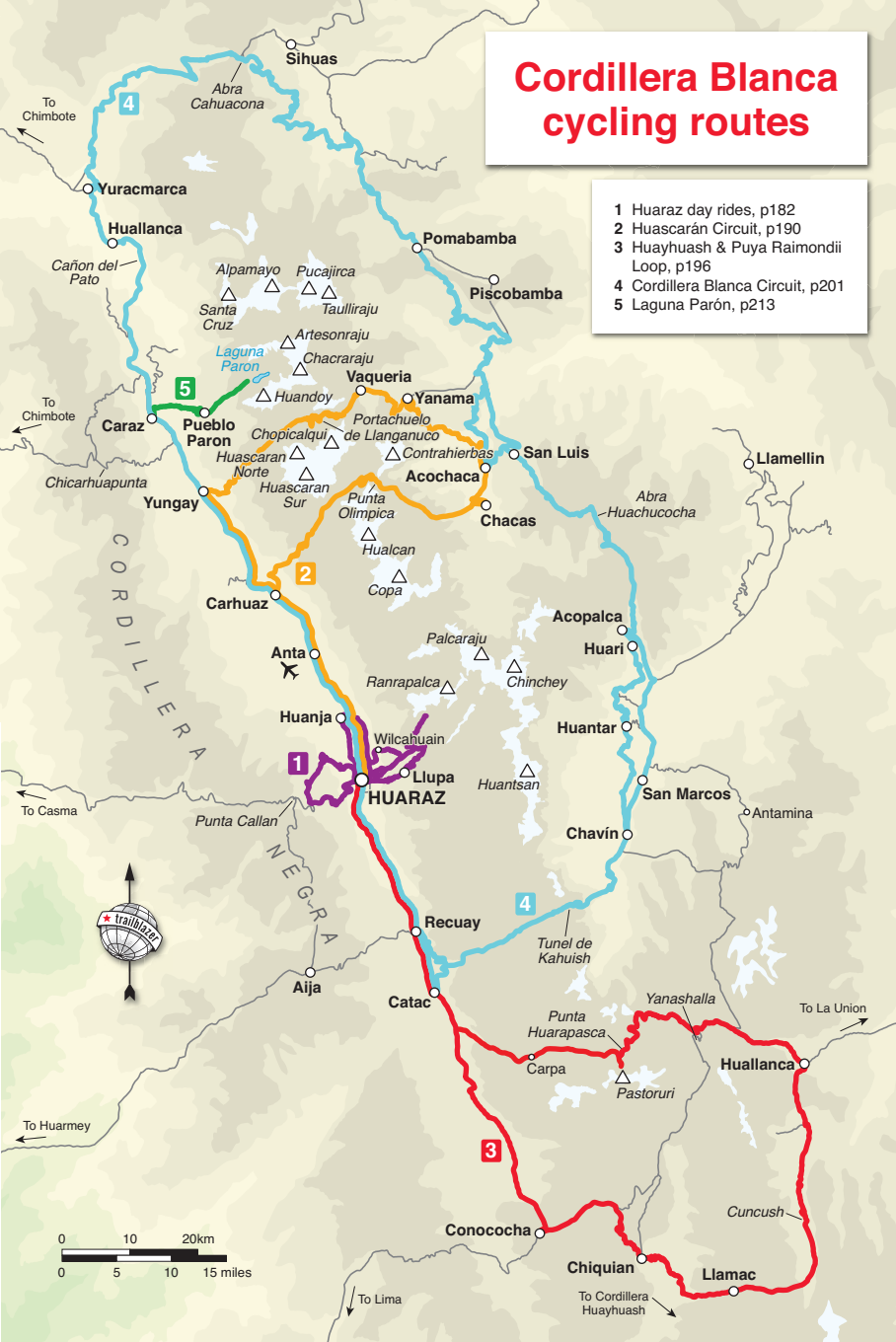


# Cordillera Blanca trekking routes



## Cordillera Blanca cycling routes

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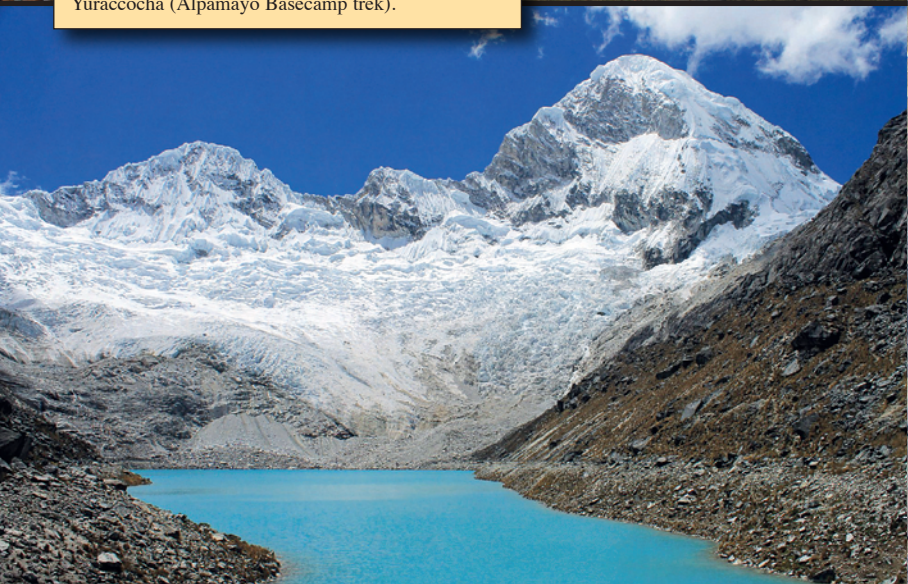








**Above, left:** Artesonraju (5999m) towers above the Santa Cruz trek, the most popular trekking route in the Cordillera Blanca. **Above, right:** Magnificent views of Alpamayo (5947m) on the descent to Jancarurish camp on Day 3 of the Alpamayo Basecamp trek. **Below:** Nevado Santa Cruz, viewed from Laguna Yuracocha (Alpamayo Basecamp trek).







### On the Huayhuash Circuit

**Above:** Packing up camp at the idyllic site above Laguna Carhuacocha. Mighty Yerupajá – at 6617m the second highest mountain in Peru – and Jirishanca for company.

**Left:** Looking north from Paso Jurau to Quebrada Sarapococha, Siula Grande and Yerupajá.

**Below:** Trekking with an *arriero* and mules (see p19 opposite).



# PLANNING YOUR TRIP

# 1

## Guided or independent?

All treks in this book can be undertaken independently if you're sufficiently experienced. On multi-day routes this means lugging supplies along with camping equipment in a backpack on high altitude trails, which is not everyone's cup of tea.

Choosing to go on a guided trip means not only someone to show you the route, a lighter pack and more comfortable trek, but also, if you go with a reputable agency, your experience will be greatly enhanced by your guide's knowledge of local flora, fauna, history and the peaks, and you will be providing employment for local people. Note that while it isn't difficult finding tours in Huaraz for the more popular treks, a few of the treks in this book are not well known, so it won't be easy finding a guide who's familiar with the route. Before employing a guide, always check their ID and guiding qualifications.

## ARRIEROS

Those preferring to trek with just an *arriero* (muleteer) and mules will find it's possible to hire them at some trailheads. The daily amount charged by an arriero is about S/.40 and each animal is around S/.20 (minimum two animals). If your trek is not a circuit, you must also pay for the days it will take the arriero to return to his village/the start point. Trekkers must provide the arriero with substantial cooked meals and a tent, and shouldn't expect him to act like a guide (or to cook for them). His main duty will be to transfer mules and luggage between campsites, not show you the way. Organizing on arrival is likely to take at least a few hours, and in many places there's no guarantee that you'll actually find anyone available. A good option is to make arrangements through a respectable local agency beforehand – they'll be able to put you in contact with a reliable arriero and will charge you a fee for this service.

## AGENCIES

### Local agencies

If you elect to trek with an agency, choosing which one will be the most important decision of your trip. Booking directly with a local agency is the cheapest way of organizing a guided trek and means



meals for about S/.5-12 (see p35). Though hygiene standards at these aren't normally that bad, they're not always of the highest. In a good, clean tourist restaurant in Huaraz you'll be able to find a main course for S/.15-30. To experience *novoandina* cuisine, at one of Lima's world-renowned restaurants, will set you back a good deal more.

## TRANSPORT

Transport in Peru is cheap. Bus and *combi* (minibus) journeys cost the equivalent of about S/.5 an hour, slightly more if you're lucky enough to be on a route with the option of a comfortable vehicle. In a private taxi, as a general rule of thumb a journey of half an hour costs around S/.40; however, the price will be higher to book a more reliable driver with a newer vehicle.

## What to take

### CLOTHING

Daytime temperatures are often quite warm, but as soon as the sun passes behind a cloud or sets it rapidly gets chilly owing to the high altitude; a layering system will allow for these different temperatures. A couple of fast drying **base-layer tops** made from synthetic material are preferable to cotton or wool t-shirts and while you wear one you can wash the other, which will dry quickly in the hot Andean sun. For a **mid-layer**, take either a mid-weight fleece or a synthetic insulation jacket (e.g. Primaloft) as well as a full set of **thermal underwear** to wear in the evening.

On the higher routes described it is worth packing a **lightweight down jacket**, woolly **hat and thermal gloves** for the evenings and early starts. As it can rain at any time of year, it's important to have a good breathable **waterproof jacket** – Gore-Tex or eVent come recommended. Lightweight **waterproof over-trousers** are advisable, particularly if you come in the rainy season. A pair of high quality **sunglasses** is essential.

The terrain in the Cordillera Blanca and Huayhuash can be challenging and it's advisable to wear a pair of **hiking boots** which cover the ankles and have a sturdy sole. Valley floors are often boggy, particularly during the wet season, so make sure your boots are waterproof (either with a Gore-Tex lining or a waxed leather boot). For the treks with a terrain rating of 1 (see p10), a stiff pair of trail running or walking shoes should suffice, especially if you are not carrying your own camping equipment. Bring at least three pairs of good quality **hiking socks**, and on multi-day treks it is also a good idea to take a pair of **sandals** to wear around camp.

Wear light/medium-weight **hiking trousers** that allow for free movement and will dry quickly if there is a sudden downpour. Rural Peru is reasonably conservative so out of respect don't wear very short shorts or sleeveless tops. A



If you're going on an organized tour or hiring mules, take a **duffle bag** (around 70 litres) with padlock, so you can put all equipment that you won't require during the day on the mule. Check with your agency whether you need to bring your own sleeping bag and sleeping mat, or if they are supplied. You'll need a 30-40 litre **daypack** to carry spare clothing, snacks and a drink. If you are hiring an arriero, remember you need to provide him with a tent.

If you are trekking independently, make sure you have a comfortable **rucksack** of around 70 litres. Try out several to find the most comfortable, getting a competent shop assistant to help fit it, as you would with a pair of boots.

### Cycle touring-specific equipment

**Bike** A hardtail mountain bike is the best steed to take on the dirt roads in the Cordilleras; run either with a bikepacking setup, or with a rear rack and panniers. The next best thing is a sturdy touring bike fitted with a rear rack and panniers. Front suspension will make unpaved descents swifter and much more comfortable. The long climbs mean that you want to keep weight to a minimum, so it is inexpedient to bring front panniers, especially as you never need to carry that much food. It's also a good idea to have a handlebar bag or another way of storing your phone and other essentials close to hand.

For mountain biking see p216.

**Tools and spares** Your toolkit should include: a good **pump**, **tyre levers**, **Allen key set**, **small screwdrivers** (one flat, one Phillips), small **pliers** with a good wire cutting tool, small **adjustable spanner** (preferably slim enough to remove pedals), **chain tool**, **puncture patches**, **rubber solution**, small bottle of **lubricant**, small roll of **duct tape**, a spare **PowerLink**, **gear and brake cables**, spare **brake pads**, two **spokes** of each size and two **inner tubes**. It is worth leaving a spare folding **tyre and extra brake pads** in Huaraz just in case. Remember a bike **lock**. Note that Schrader valves are more commonly found in Peru, so it's advisable to have a pump and rims which are compatible with this, or bring more spare tubes from home. Also be aware that it's possible to wear out a new set of rim brake pads on a single dirt-road Peruvian descent in the rain.

### Gear rental

Sleeping bags, sleeping mats, tents, multi-fuel or gas stoves, rucksacks and down jackets can all be rented in Huaraz (see p62). For bike rental, see p180.

### MAPS

We highly recommend you trek with a topographical map, the most useful of which are the Austrian *Alpenvereinskarte*. They come in three sheets: 0/3a Cordillera Blanca Nord (1:100k), 0/3b Cordillera Blanca Sud (1:100k) and 0/3c Cordillera Huayhuash (1:50k). Trails are not always marked correctly, but they cover all treks in this book. There are also more recent 1:75k *Aoneker* maps which cover the Huayhuash and a smaller area of the Blanca. These are all available locally, but are cheaper in Europe or North America.

Carhuaz mapmaker Felipe Díaz produces a helpful overview map of the Cordilleras Blanca & Huayhuash, which is well worth buying locally for S/25.

the going much easier in the Cordillera if they have improved fitness and stamina by practising hill climbs on their loaded bike beforehand.

## HEALTH

The Andean **sun** is strong, so bring sunglasses and a hat, and wear sunscreen even on cloudy days. Moisturizer and lip balm come in handy for combating dry skin. The cold can be equally hazardous when trekking. Weather in the mountains is highly changeable and you should be prepared for cold, wet and windy conditions at any time, and know what to do if a member of your group begins to develop **hypothermia**.

## INOCULATIONS

Before travelling to Peru, make sure you are up to date with the following inoculations: tetanus, polio, diphtheria, tuberculosis, hepatitis A and typhoid. You may also still require proof of Covid vaccination. Malaria tablets and a yellow fever injection are recommended for some areas of Peru, but not for those covered by this guidebook.

It's advisable (especially for cyclists) to have rabies injections before arriving in Peru, as you may be travelling in areas which are several days from the nearest doctor. The inoculation won't stop you getting the disease, but will buy you time to get to a hospital, and mean far less disruption to your trip if you are bitten (see p46).

Prior to departure it is always a good idea to: check the full list of current requirements and recommended injections at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)) or at the Fit For Travel website ([fitfortravel.nhs.uk](https://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk)); ask a doctor; or visit a travel clinic.

## HIGH ALTITUDE TRAVEL

One of the most common complaints on treks and bike rides in this book is Altitude Sickness/Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS). Huaraz lies at 3060m above sea level and the highest trekking pass described is nearly 5100m. At these altitudes, air pressure is substantially lower than at sea level. AMS is caused by the inability of the body to get enough oxygen and it can be fatal; however, it's also very common and entirely preventable. See p45 for AMS symptoms and tips for acclimatization. Before you go, if you suffer from heart or lung problems, high blood pressure or are pregnant, you must visit your doctor to get advice on the wisdom of a trip to the Andes.

## INSURANCE

Before leaving your home country, make sure you have insurance (be it travel insurance or a domestic policy) that covers you for all activities you will be undertaking on your trip. Read the small print carefully, as some providers have altitude limits on cover, or limit the number of cycling days permitted, and pay attention to what is covered in relation to COVID-19.

# PERU & THE CORDILLERAS BLANCA & HUAYHUASH

## Facts about the region

### HISTORY OF THE CORDILLERAS

The colonization of South America began about 15,000 years ago and reached the Andes and the Callejón de Huaylas around 10,000 BCE. Excavations of the **Guittarrero Cave** in the province of Yungay, north of Huaraz, have found proof of advanced hunter-gatherers. The cave's occupants practised one of the earliest cultivations of tubers, beans and chilli in the Americas and consumed wild guinea pigs. Fragments of woven textiles and rope made from agave found at the cave date back 12,100 years and are the oldest discovered in South America. The domestication of camelids and guinea pigs occurred between 6000 and 3000 years ago. From then until the Spanish conquest, the Andean people became gradually more dependent on domestic animals rather than hunting wild game, transforming from foragers into subsistence farmers.

Meanwhile on the coast, the first Peruvian civilizations were evolving. The oldest of these, the **Norte Chico** civilization 200km north of modern-day Lima, developed between 3500 and 1800 BCE. Their success is credited to the fact that there was an abundance of fish and because they managed to develop irrigation channels to supply water from nearby rivers. After the Norte Chico civilization fizzled out, a number of smaller cultures developed along the coast, including the **Sechín** culture, in the Casma valley to the west of the Cordillera Blanca, around 1500 BCE.

The **Chavín** culture was the first highland civilization in Peru and dates from 1000 BCE; at its centre was the pilgrimage site of Chavín de Huántar (see p69) in the Río Mosna valley to the east of the Cordillera Blanca. Chavín was a hierarchical society led by priests and a political elite. The ordinary people were llama herders, hunters and farmers who cultivated potatoes, quinoa and maize. The cult of Chavín spread over an enormous area, for the first time unifying unrelated groups with a common ideology. As the religion spread, people were drawn to the temples, bringing offerings which enriched the city and funded advances in metallurgy, textiles and





**Lycopodium crassum** (in Quechua it's *jacapa pishqun*, meaning 'guinea-pig penis') grows on the high puna between 4000m and 4500m. Found at altitudes of 3400-4300m, **zapatito de diablo** (*Calceolaria* sp., 'Devil's Slippers') has yellow, slipper-like flowers. **Snapdragons** (*Alonsoa linearis*) grow at 3500-4100m and have orange flowers and a black centre with long yellow anthers. From the **wild potato** family, *Solanum hispidum*, with its violet five-point flowers and green marble-like buds, is encountered at 3000-3800m. **Amor Seco** (*Bidens andicola*) is found at 3100-3300m and has dark yellow flowers which are 5cm in diameter. **Gentians**, **orchids** and **buttercups** are also prevalent.

### Other plants

See box on p31 about the incredible bromeliad *Puya raimondii*. **Agave** (*Agave americana*) is common in the lower main valleys – its rosette of sharp-tipped greyish-green leaves can reach up to four metres across and ancient civilizations once made ropes from the leaf fibres. **Ichu grass** (*Stipa ichu*) is spiky, golden brown and grows in tussocks on the puna above 3000m. It's used to make the roofs on *chozas* and as animal feed. *Plantago rigida* grows in round, hard cushions in high swampy areas (4500m-4800m); on a number of treks it acts like handy stepping stones. Red-leaved **bromeliads** are frequently seen clinging to steep rock faces.

### ❑ PARQUE NACIONAL HUASCARÁN

Parque Nacional Huascarán (PNH) was created in 1975 to protect the largest and highest tropical mountain range in the world. With an area of 343,000ha, the park encompasses all but the most-northerly peaks in the Cordillera Blanca, including Huascarán, Peru's highest mountain. PNH was declared a UNESCO Biosphere in 1977 and a World Heritage Site in 1985.

The park is home to over 900 species of flora, 210 species of birds and 25 different mammals. Vegetated areas are characterized by beautiful, gnarled polylepis forests (all of which are strictly protected), ichu grasslands and *bofedales* (marshy wetlands).

### Threats

There are various threats to the ecosystems in the park, from both local and global sources. It is anticipated that Peru will be affected by climate change more than almost any other country on Earth, and this is strikingly evident within PNH with the retreat of the glaciers. Though the latest surveys show glaciers still cover over 500 square km of the Cordillera Blanca, this is a reduction of nearly 30% since 1970. The number of lakes in the park is increasing – forming in the moraine debris the glaciers are leaving behind. There are an astonishing 400 lakes in the Blanca and a further few hundred in the neighbouring Negra and Huayhuash ranges.

Overgrazing by cattle affects almost every quebrada in the park, while litter on popular trekking routes and felling of trees for firewood are also issues. Both legal and illegal mining also threaten the local ecosystems and water courses in some valleys.

### Ticketing

Peru is one of the world's most geographically diverse countries, and PNH is one of its most important national parks and among the biggest money earners. Tourists can buy 1, 3 or 30-day tickets (for S/.30/60/150) at the PNH office in Huaraz, or from



MOUNTAIN CARACARA

**caracara** (*Phalacrocorax maculatus*) are often seen on high altitude routes, as are pairs of **Andean geese** (*Chloephaga melanoptera*), which have tiny pink bills and black and white plumage. Polylepis forests are one of the best places for spotting smaller avifauna.

## Practical information for the visitor

### DOCUMENTS AND VISAS

At the time of writing, citizens of the USA, Canada and countries in Western Europe do not need a visa to enter Peru, and are entitled to stay as tourists for up to 90 days (and in some cases up to 183 days); ask for the length of time you need when your passport is being stamped. Since the start of the Covid pandemic regulations have changed frequently, so always ensure you check detailed passport and entry requirements with your local Peruvian embassy well before travelling. If on entering Peru you are given a paper Tarjeta Andina de Migración (TAM, tourist card), keep it safe so you can hand it back to immigration officials on leaving the country. For those arriving by air at Lima's Jorge Chavez International Airport the TAM is done electronically.

### MONEY

Peru's currency is the nuevo sol (S/.); each sol is composed of 100 centimos. Notes in circulation are: S/.200 (rare), S/.100, S/.50, S/.20, S/.10; coins come in denominations of S/.5, S/.2, S/.1, S/.0.50, S/.0.20 and S/.0.10. At the time of writing, £1 = S/.4.60, US\$1 = S/.3.90. Peru currently has the dubious distinction of being the world's counterfeit capital for dollars, and many fake soles are also produced. Though nothing to be paranoid about (the vast majority of tourists leave without seeing one), it's still a good idea to check notes, as the local people do. See the money guide at [limaeasy.com](http://limaeasy.com) for details of security features.

There are plenty of ATMs in Lima and Huaraz from which to withdraw cash (soles, but often dollars too) using Visa or MasterCard. BCP machines usually allow the largest single withdrawals. Many of the pricier hotels and restaurants accept payment by credit card, as do supermarkets.

### LOCAL TRANSPORT

Buses are the best way of travelling long distances between Peruvian towns. On paved routes such as Huaraz/Caraz to Lima, most buses are modern and comfortable. Journeys on unpaved roads to smaller mountain towns are considerably less luxurious, in dilapidated old vehicles with little leg room.

*Combis* (minibuses) are the most common form of transport for shorter trips.

## Roast chicken and chips joints

- **How to spot** ‘*Pollería/Pollo a la Brasa*’ sign, often full of large families. Rotisserie chicken is immensely popular and chicken restaurants are found even in small towns. Allow a quarter of a chicken (*un cuarto de pollo*) per person which will come with a mountain of chips and salad.
- **Useful words** Breast (*pecho*), wing (*alita*), condiments (*cremas*).
- **Price** S/.6-10 for a quarter chicken.

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <i>menú</i>                        | menu; a basic restaurant selling cheap set-menu food  |
| <i>Milanesa de pollo</i>           | breaded chicken   |
| <i>mondongo</i>                    | tripe stew with tomato, carrot, potato and peas   |
| <i>novoandina</i>                  | a modern style of Peruvian cuisine  |
| <i>oca</i>                         | a plant cultivated in Peru for its edible potato-like tubers  |
| <i>pachamanca</i>                  | traditional Peruvian dish baked in an earthen oven  |
| <i>panadería</i>                   | bakery  |
| <i>papa a la Huancaína</i>         | potatoes with a cheesy white sauce (starter or side dish)   |
| <i>papa rellena</i>                | ball of mashed potato stuffed with meat and onion and then deep fried   |
| <i>papas fritas</i>                | chips (fries)   |
| <i>parrillada</i>                  | barbecue; meat restaurant   |
| <i>pastelería</i>                  | bakery/cake shop  |
| <i>picante de cuy/ carne/pollo</i> | mildly spicy sauce with guinea pig/meat/chicken, served with potato   |
| <i>picarones</i>                   | deep fried pumpkin and sweet potato doughnuts covered in honey syrup; served in the late afternoon            |
| <i>pisco sour</i>                  | drink made from pisco (Peruvian grape brandy), lemon and egg white  |
| <i>pollo a la brasa</i>            | roast chicken   |
| <i>pollo broaster</i>              | deep-fried chicken  |
| <i>pollería</i>                    | chicken restaurant  |
| <i>quinoa</i>                      | a crop grown for its edible grain-like seeds; sometimes served as a thick hot drink also called <i>quinoa</i> |
| <i>refresco</i>                    | drink made with natural fruit juice and water   |
| <i>recreo campestre</i>            | countryside restaurant often serving pachamanca, normally only open weekends                                  |
| <i>segundo</i>                     | main course at a menu restaurant, literally ‘second’  |
| <i>raspadilla</i>                  | ice (often chipped off a nearby glacier) with a flavoured syrup/Slush Puppie                                  |
| <i>seco de pollo/ternera</i>       | chicken/veal stew with carrot, potato & peas in coriander sauce   |
| <i>sudado de trucha</i>            | trout steamed in tomatoes and chillies. Literally ‘sweated trout’   |
| <i>tallarín de pollo</i>           | spaghetti and chicken with a tomato sauce   |
| <i>tamales</i>                     | steamed maize parcels stuffed with chicken, egg, olive and a spicy sauce wrapped in maize husks               |
| <i>tamarindo</i>                   | sweet, fruity Chinese sauce   |
| <i>tipakay</i>                     | Chinese sweet and sour battered chicken   |
| <i>tortilla de verduras</i>        | vegetable omelette on a bed of rice   |
| <i>trucha frita</i>                | fried trout   |

**popped rice, kiwicha** (*achis pop*; a relative of quinoa) or **wheat** cereals are cheap and available at the Huaraz market or supermarkets. Instant coffee, black and herbal tea and hot chocolate are readily available in all towns.

### Lunch

For a short trek, or the first days of a long trek, **bread** is a good option. **Wraps** (*tortillas*), which are sold in supermarkets and at the central market, are pricier but don't take up much pack space. The best **crackers** are 'Field' cream crackers or 'Costa Integral' wholemeal crackers.

The supermarkets have a good selection of **salami, paté, dried meats, peanut butter, jams** and **parmesan cheese** (which keeps much better than the local cheese). Local cheese sold by ladies on the street is not always made or stored hygienically – it's safer to purchase from one of Huaraz's cheese shops such as 'Don Queso' near the market. **Avocados** (*palta*) are available in most towns and make a nutritious cracker topping; **manjar** (a thick caramel-like spread) can be smeared on bread/crackers or squeezed straight down your throat.

### Dinner

**Pasta, rice**, a wide variety of flavours of **instant noodles** (*fideos instantáneos*), **quinoa, couscous, polenta, bulgur wheat** and **instant mash** are all available in Huaraz. Only rice, pasta, quinoa and chicken or beef instant noodles are available in smaller towns, but be warned that rice cooked at altitude often turns out a mushy mess. Sachets of concentrated tomato (*pasta de tomate*) with added garlic, carrot and onion make a good pasta sauce. Sachets of *Huancaína* sauce can be stirred into pasta, polenta or mash. Powdered soups can be found in Huaraz and can either be made into soup or used to make a sauce. Instant potato with lashings of olive oil, garlic and salami is a calorie-filled personal favourite. Kraft Macaroni and Cheese is also available.

### Snacks

Entering the main, east, door of the market in Huaraz, by the huge bread baskets, turn right and the first aisle on the left has the best dried fruit (raisins – *pasas de uvas*), nuts (peanuts – *maní*) and trekking food. *Alfajores* (caramel sandwiched between shortbread) also make excellent trekking snacks; chocolate (*Sublimes* and *Triángulos* are recommended) is available in towns.

### SAFETY

Peru doesn't have the best reputation abroad when it comes to safety, but this is largely unfounded in Huaraz and the Cordilleras. Safety in Lima has improved markedly in the past decade, and the parts frequented by tourists are no more dangerous than many European cities – see p49. Lima and Huaraz have tourist police; elsewhere, to call the police dial ☎ 105.

#### ❑ MACA

*Maca* is an unassuming radish-like plant with high nutritional content which was traditionally used by warriors before heading into battle in order to increase stamina and strength. You can buy maca flour or oats with maca in many shops to help fuel your mountain adventures.



# MINIMUM IMPACT, HEALTH & SAFETY

## Minimum impact hiking and biking

Tourism is a vital source of income for Peru and, directly or indirectly, a great many Peruvians benefit from the increasing numbers of adventure tourists flocking to the country. However, there are undoubtedly problems along the popular trekking routes in the Cordilleras Blanca and Huayhuash that are caused by visiting trekkers and their crews, including those of litter and pollution.

Guardaparques from PNH, some agencies and organizations in Huaraz, and local communities in the Huayhuash arrange periodic clean-ups; however, these are not currently enough to keep some trails spick and span. Whilst it's easy to blame the authorities for the decline of the pristine wilderness, many trekkers are equally at fault. On the trails, people must take responsibility for their own litter and actions; each individual should remember that their thoughtlessness and selfishness has consequences for everyone else.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Damaged vegetation, litter, human excrement at campsites, polluted waterways, deteriorating facilities and an increase in erosion are all indications that trekkers have had a negative impact on the landscape. Fortunately, most people are now much more conscious of the potential impact that they have on the environment and are more likely to adopt a considerate, responsible attitude whilst trekking or cycling. It's important that we all maintain this new-found responsibility.

### Pack it in, pack it out

All waste must be carried out of the hills. Unsightly and unhealthy, accumulated rubbish is one of the most significant threats to the natural environment. If you are with an agency, in theory trekking staff and clients should, between them, ensure all rubbish is removed from the trail. Unfortunately some unscrupulous trekkers, guides and arrieros dump or drop rubbish along the route. Keep an eye on your team and make sure they understand that it is important to you that they adhere to the 'pack it out' rule.

If you are trekking independently, bring rubbish bags to carry all waste, and be conscious, when preparing to trek, of the amount of



**Encourage local pride**

Encourage local pride by giving Peruvians a balanced view of life in your home country. In answer to queries about how much you earn, reply honestly but put the figures into context. Tell them what you think is good about their lifestyle – the extraordinary natural surroundings, the lack of real crime, the clean air. If you particularly enjoyed your stay or tour, be sure to let people know.

**To give or not to give?**

Giving to beggars can perpetrate an attitude of dependency; don't load up with sweets or other gifts to answer begging requests. Although handing things out might make you feel good in the short term, it can lead to a detrimental effect on the recipient, resulting in low self-esteem and an associated idea that the West and tourists, rather than their own culture, hold the answer. Additionally, there are no dentists in the rural communities.

If someone has done something helpful, consider rewarding them, but be careful how you do it. You should also be wary of handing out medicines along the trails: strong or prescription drugs may be taken incorrectly and do more harm than good.

**Ask permission before taking a person's photograph**

Respect people's privacy and if they aren't comfortable or happy with being snapped then leave them alone. Ideally you should not pay anyone for posing. If you offer to send someone a copy of the photo you've taken, make sure you follow through with your promise.

**Don't flaunt your wealth**

Your wealth, however poor you may be by the standards of your home country, is far in excess of that of most Peruvians, so don't make a big issue of it and certainly don't flaunt it. Consider carefully what valuables you actually need to take with you to Peru.

**Don't lose your temper**

Peruvians rarely lose their rag, and you should work hard to control your temper as well. Be polite and the chances are the courtesy will be returned.

## Health and safety in the mountains

**SAFETY WHILE TREKKING**

Although there are hazards in the mountains, a properly prepared expedition with the right equipment and a bit of common sense should not be troubled by them.

**Weather**

The weather in the Andes is very changeable. You should expect rain whatever the season and ought to carry warm clothing at all times, since temperatures can

plummet and conditions can deteriorate extremely quickly. Check the weather forecast online ([mountain-forecast.com](http://mountain-forecast.com) is recommended) before setting out.

### Keeping on course

Although some routes in the region are well trodden, there are others where you'll come across very few people and where there's no trail. Bad weather and diverging cow-paths can also make any route harder to trace. A topographic map (see p25) and compass are helpful, as long as you know how to use them, but beware that even the best topo maps of the area show some trails incorrectly. A GPS used in conjunction with waypoints (see [blancahuayhuash.com](http://blancahuayhuash.com)) should help you to find your way.

### Tell someone where you're going

Before setting off to trek independently, tell someone responsible (at your guesthouse, for example) where you're going and when you expect to return. They should be aware of what to do if you fail to come back and how long to wait before raising the alarm.

## HEALTH IN THE MOUNTAINS

Whilst Peru does have a handful of serious health problems, you are very unlikely to be affected by them in the mountains of Ancash, and if you follow simple guidelines you'll minimize the risk to yourself.

### Altitude sickness/Acute mountain sickness (AMS)

It is highly recommended for all members of your group to have some knowledge of symptoms and treatment of AMS. See [altitude.org](http://altitude.org) or the Mountain Medicine section at the International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation website ([theuiaa.org](http://theuiaa.org)) for detailed and up-to-date information.

AMS is a potentially fatal condition which generally occurs above 3000m and must not be underestimated. At the altitudes covered by this book, it can be prevented with adequate acclimatization. However, there is no hard and fast rule as to how long it takes to acclimatize to increases in altitude, as everyone acclimatizes at a different rate; there is no correlation between a person's fitness and their speed in acclimatizing.

AMS and High Altitude Pulmonary Oedema (HAPE) and High Altitude Cerebral Oedema (HACE), the serious, life-threatening conditions that can occur as a result of it, are entirely preventable, if certain precautions are taken:

- Don't exceed the recommended rate of ascent (once you are above 2500-3000m you should not sleep more than 300-500m higher than the previous night).
- On arrival in the Cordillera Blanca, spend time in Huaraz and on day trips (see suggested itineraries p13) prior to embarking on higher, multi-day routes.
- Keep hydrated by drinking plenty of water (at least 3 litres daily); avoid alcohol and caffeinated drinks
- Avoid overexertion by climbing slowly and steadily
- Look out for early symptoms of AMS and react to them.

Accommodation options for Lima and Huaraz are split into budget, mid-range and expensive categories. Room prices are particularly changeable, but you will be able to make comparisons between the relative price brackets. Prices for accommodation in the Cordillera are quoted for single, double and (where different) twin rooms (**sgl/dbl/twin**), and descriptions include whether they have attached bathrooms (**AB**) or shared bathroom (**SB**). Expensive hotels may add a 10% service charge and 18% IGV tax (the tax does not need to be paid by visiting tourists who can show proof of a passport stamp and TAM card; it has not been included in quoted prices). Be warned that hotels get booked up well in advance for Semana Santa (Holy Week) and other large festivals.

The abbreviations Jr = *Jirón* (street) and Av = *Avenida* (avenue) are used throughout.

## Lima

(Altitude: 160m)

For many lovers of the great outdoors who are itching to get into the Andes, Lima will be a stepping-stone, a place to pass through en route to the snowy peaks. The city lies below a shroud of sea cloud for many months of the year and has also been subject to years of negative press, with reports of it being shabby and unsafe, or simply boring. Peru's capital has another side to it though; the former Spanish capital of South America, originally christened Ciudad de los Reyes (City of Kings), was once one of the continent's most alluring and impressive cities.

These days it is, in fact, hugely underrated and a wonderful introduction to what you'll see and find elsewhere. Archaeological sites stand amidst residential neighbourhoods whose architecture spans styles from the last 500 years. There are good museums, world-class restaurants and a burgeoning food scene, lively night spots and an irresistible energy and edge borne out of the multicultural mix found here. What's more, a resurgent local middle class are taking pride in their city and pioneering a renaissance that should ensure Lima's reputation is restored.





## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### Arrival

All flights arrive at **Aeropuerto Internacional Jorge Chávez** (✈️ lima-airport.com/eng) in Callao, 16km north-west of the city centre. Inside the arrivals hall are exchange bureaux (rates are better in town) and ATMs that accept all major cards. There are also car-hire desks, an iPerú information desk, and official, fixed-rate, **taxi** companies. It's quickest, easiest and safest to use one of the official companies; Taxi Green (✈️ taxigreen.com.pe) are good, with fares from S/.60-80, depending on whether you go to the centre, Miraflores or Barranco. Cheaper, unlicensed cars can be hailed outside, opposite the terminal, but you'll have to haggle hard for a good fare and it's probably safer not to use them if you're alone.

Those wishing to bypass central Lima and head straight for the mountains should catch a ride to Plaza Norte bus terminal. Taxi Green charges S/.60 to Plaza Norte in a car and S/.150 for a van which can accommodate multiple bikes.

You could also use the comfortable Airport Express Lima bus service if you're travelling from the airport to Miraflores or San Isidro. You can buy tickets online before travel (✈️ airport.expresslima.com, US\$6/8 to San Isidro/ Miraflores) or at their desk in the arrivals hall.

### Orientation

Lima is built on a flat plain above a large arc of a bay. A sprawling city, it has many different neighbourhoods and districts (see map on p49), which are often too far apart to walk between.

**Lima Centro** is the original heart of the city and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Amidst the chaotic centre is a

host of colonial sights, museums and excellent restaurants to discover.

To the south-east is the industrial-commercial area of **La Victoria**. West of the centre is **Bellavista**, the coast and the port of **Callao**. Along the coast south of Callao lies affluent **San Isidro**, where several good hotels and upmarket restaurants are located.

Beyond is the well-to-do residential neighbourhood and shopping area of **Miraflores**, and then the more bohemian district of **Barranco**, a one-time coastal retreat that has been absorbed into the city and which boasts hip bars, a lively night scene and a number of workshops that double as art galleries.

### Getting around

● **Taxis** There are countless cabs on Lima's streets. For the safest ride and fairest fare ask your hotel to order you a taxi, or if you're out and about, hail a registered taxi (which will have a sticker with 'SETAME' in the windscreen, and are usually yellow with a licence number painted on the door), as these are more likely to be reputable. From Miraflores to the city centre is about S/.20-25 and to Barranco around S/.10-12. Always agree the fare before you set off.

● **El Metropolitano** This Bus Rapid Transit system is the easiest way of travelling between the centre and Miraflores/Barranco on public transport. First purchase an electronic prepaid card (S/.5, available at all stations), then top it up to travel. There's a flat fee of S/.2.50 per journey (✈️ metropolitano.com.pe).

● **Lima Metro** Though only one line has so far been completed, which doesn't pass through the main areas of tourist interest, the metro is an efficient way to get around, enabling you to escape the often-diabolical traffic. Trains run every 6-10 mins from 06:00-22:00; you need a rechargeable electronic card (S/.5) and there's a flat fare of S/.1.50 per journey (✈️ lineauno.pe).

● **Combis and colectivos** Lima's bus network of combis and colectivos is pretty efficient, far-reaching and surprisingly

The area code for Lima is ✆ 1 and for Ancash it's ✆ 43. To call a land line from a mobile or a landline in a different area, dial (0 + area code + number). Phone numbers are given as 6 digits (Ancash), 7 digits (Lima) or 9 digits (mobile/cell phone).

## Miraflores

- **Budget** *Pariwana* (Av Larco 189, ☎ 242-4350, [pariwana-hostel.com](http://pariwana-hostel.com)).

**Kaclla – The Healing Dog** (Calle Porta 461, ☎ 241-8977, [kacllahostel.com](http://kacllahostel.com)).

**Hostel Alpes Lima** (Calle Jose Gonzáles 170, ☎ 943-124411, [hostalalpeslima.com](http://hostalalpeslima.com)).

- **Mid-range** *The Lighthouse B&B* (Calle Cesario Chacaltana 162, ☎ 997-470569). *Hotel Antigua* (Av Grau 350, ☎ 201-2060, [antiguamiraflores.com](http://antiguamiraflores.com)).

**Hostal El Patio** (Diez Canseco 341, ☎ 444-2107, [hostalelpatio.net](http://hostalelpatio.net)).

The **Casa Andina chain** ([casa-andina.com](http://casa-andina.com)) has a few options, including **Miraflores San Antonio** (Av 28 de Julio 1088, ☎ 241-4050).

- **Expensive** *Casa Andina Premium*

**Miraflores** (Av La Paz 463, ☎ 213-4300, [casa-andina.com](http://casa-andina.com)).

**Miraflores Park Belmond Hotel** (off map; Malecón de la Reserva 1035, ☎ 610-4000, [miraflorespark.com](http://miraflorespark.com)).

## Barranco

[see map p52]

- **Budget** *The Point Hostel* (Malecón Junín 300, ☎ 247-7997, [thepointhostels.com](http://thepointhostels.com)). *Barranco's Backpacker Inn* (Malecón Castilla 260, ☎ 247-3709, [barrancobackpackersperu.com](http://barrancobackpackersperu.com)).

● **Mid-range** *Lima Wari Hotel Boutique* (off map; Av Grau 723, ☎ 586-8122, [limawarihotelboutique.com](http://limawarihotelboutique.com)).

● **Expensive** *Second Home Peru* (Domeyer 366, ☎ 247-5522, [secondhomeperu.com](http://secondhomeperu.com)).



● **San Isidro** *Astrid y Gastón* (Av Paz Soldan 290; Tue-Sat 12:00-19:00, Sun 11:00-16:00, ☎ astridygaston.com) is where the Peruvian food renaissance began. Chef Gastón Acurio and his wife Astrid pioneered *novoandina* cuisine, fusing traditional foodstuffs with Asian, African and Spanish flavours to startling effect. Book well in advance.

**Malabar** (Camino Real 101, Mon-Sat 12:30-16:00, 19:30-23:30, ☎ malabar.com.pe) source many of their vegetables from their own farm. The cuisine includes Amazonian ingredients and a seasonal menu that draws on these.

### International

● **Lima Centro** For a slightly special chifa, seek out **Wa Lok** (Jr Paruro 878, Mon-Sat 09:00-23:00, till 22:00 on Sun, ☎ walok.com.pe) in *Barrio Chino* (Chinatown).

French-influenced food with a Peruvian twist is available at **L'Eau Vive** (Ucayali 370, Mon-Sat 12:00-15:00, 19:30-21:00, ☎ leauvivedeperu.webnode.es), opposite Torre Tagle Palace. Run by an order of nuns, there's a rendition of *Ave Maria* every evening at 21:00. Proceeds are donated to charity.

● **Miraflores** **Maido** (San Martín 399, Mon-Fri 12:30-19:00, Sun 13:00-17:00, ☎ mai.do.pe) is one of Peru's best restaurants – you usually need to reserve well in advance to experience this amazing Japanese-Peruvian fusion cuisine.

### BARS AND NIGHTLIFE

Lima has a more contemporary and happening nightlife than any other city in Peru. Barranco in particular has a lively

atmosphere and a wide range of places in which to hang out.

● **Lima Centro** For old-world elegance head to the **Gran Hotel Bolívar** bar (Plaza San Martín), to sip a Pisco Sour. The best **folklórica show** in Lima is at **Las Brisas del Titicaca** (Jr Heroes de Tarapaca 168, ☎ brisasdeltiticaca.com).

● **Miraflores** Miraflores has a number of expat-style bars, including **Old Pub** (San Ramón 295). Try craft beer on tap at **BarBarian** (Manuel Bonilla 108) or busy lounge bar **Huaringas** (Bolognesi 460).

● **Barranco** Good places to seek out include fashionable bar **Ayahuasca** (San Martín 130); **Juanito's** (Av Grau 270), where a bohemian crowd congregates, **Barra 55** which specialises in gin and cocktails (Jr 28 de Julio 206), or **Barranco Beer Company** which offers craft beers (Av Miguel Grau 308).

### BIKE AND OUTDOOR SHOPS

Miraflores has the widest selection of good bike shops. **Best Bikes** (off map; Av Santa Cruz 535, ☎ bestbikes.com.pe) has a decent stock of components, as does **Specialized Peru** (Av Reducto 1017). **BiciCentro** (Paseo de la República 4986, ☎ bicicentro.com.pe) also comes recommended.

There are numerous small bike shops on Av Emancipación in central Lima, many of which don't open till mid-morning. Parts for sale here are often fakes and you'll need reasonable Spanish to get by.

**Tattoo Adventure Gear** (Av. Prescott 295, ☎ tattoo.ws/pe/tiendas) in San Isidro, north of Miraflores, has a good selection of outdoor hiking equipment, as well as some biking gear.

## Huaraz

(Altitude: 3060m)

Bustling Huaraz is the pulsating heart of the Callejón de Huaylas. Almost totally destroyed in the devastating Ancash earthquake of 1970, the modern city of over 100,000 inhabitants that rose from the ruins is a sprawling mess of

unplanned brick and concrete eyesores, but raise your gaze a few degrees for the real attraction of the place: its sensational location. Eight snow-capped 6000ers adorn the eastern skyline.

It's a comfortable and fun place to hang out (see box on p60) with accommodation options in all categories, good restaurants for both Andean and Western cuisine, chilled-out cafés and convivial drinking establishments serving craft beer. As a result, the majority of visitors to the area base themselves in and around the Ancash capital.

## WHAT TO DO

Though most visitors' time in Huaraz revolves around acclimatizing or planning and resupplying for the next foray into the Cordillera, the city is an engaging place that makes for an interesting introduction to Andean life. The **Centro Cultural** has free exhibitions about the local area and the **Ancash Archaeological Museum** (S/5, 08:30-17:15 Tue-Sat, 09:00-14:00 Sun) displays artefacts from the region, including a vast outdoor lithic art collection. Both are on the Plaza de Armas. The **central market** makes for an eye-opening wander, and numerous street vendors mean that a walk around town is rarely dull. Slightly further afield are the **archaeological ruins** at Wilcahuán (p125) and Huncopampa (p120).

On Sunday lunchtimes, Jr José Olaya hosts a **food fair** where it's possible to feast on many local specialities. Arrive before 14:00 to avoid missing out on some succulent *pachamanca* (see box p60), or thirst-quenching *chicha de jora*.

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

There are ATMs which accept foreign cards, pharmacies, internet cafés and wi-fi at every turn. For **medical** needs try Clínica San Pablo (Jr Inés Huaylas 172, ☎ 428811) – or for treatment of dog bites (see p46), the public Hospital Víctor Ramos Guardia (Av Luzuriaga, ☎ 487120).

The helpful crew at **iPerú** (09:00-18:00 Mon-Sat), just off the Plaza de Armas, can lay their hands on stacks of useful information about fiestas and sights. Trekking info isn't their strong point.

The **Parque Nacional Huascarán office** (08:30-13:00, 14:30-18:00 Mon-Fri) is just off Plaza Belén. There are informative displays, and PNH staff are usually available to answer questions (in Spanish). For ticketing see pp32-3.

## Safety issues

Huaraz is a safe place and the vast majority of tourists to the area will experience nothing worse than being over-charged in a

market or taxi. Having said this, like any city of its size, crime does occur. The most common crimes tourists fall victim to are having a bag stolen whilst travelling on a bus, or being pickpocketed in the street whilst being distracted by the pickpocket's accomplice. By staying alert and being careful with your belongings whilst on transport, in restaurants and wandering round town, you'll reduce your chances of becoming a target. If you are on a night bus ensure you make your valuables inaccessible to an opportunistic thief by, for example, using your bag as a pillow.

In the vicinity of Huaraz there are a couple of trouble spots to avoid as robberies of tourists at gunpoint have occurred over the years. The first is the path up to Rataquena, a mirador above town, and the second is the walking route from Wilcahuán to Monterrey (though both Wilcahuán and Monterrey themselves are fine). If something untoward does happen

# Huaraz



0 100m  
0 100yd

## Places to stay

- |                          |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Jo's Place            | 40. La Casa de Zarela |
| 23. Akilpo Hotel         | 41. Olaza's B & B     |
| 31. La Aurora            | 42. Maria Justina     |
| 36. El Jacal Backpackers | 43. Quechuandes       |
| 37. Selina               | 44. Andino Club Hotel |
| 38. Albergue Churup      | 45. Hotel Santa Cruz  |

## Places to eat & drink

- |                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 2. Mi Comedia Pizzeria   | 33. Wayta            |
| 16. El Rinconcito Minero | 34. Manka Fusion     |
| 17. Cafe Andino          | 35. Jama             |
| 18. Creperie Patrick     | 39. Mordisco's       |
| 30. El Fogon             | Cevicheria           |
| 31. La Brasa Roja        | 46. Trivio Resto Bar |
| 32. California Cafe      | 47. Paulino's        |

## Transport

- |                              |                           |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 3. Cruz del Sur              | 15. Cavassa               |
| 4. Movil Bus                 | 19. Chavin Combi          |
| 5. Caraz/Yungay Combi        | 20. Pira Combis           |
| 6. Wilcahuain Combi          | 21. Casma Combis          |
| 7. Carhuaz Combi             | 22. Sandoval              |
| 8. Renzo & Civa              | 24. Turismo Jesus         |
| 9. Llupa Combi               | 25. Olguita               |
| 10. Linea                    | 26. Oileros Combi         |
| 11. Z-Buss                   | 27. El Rapido             |
| 12. Movil Bus ticket office  | 28. Catac Combi & Nazario |
| 13. Chacas & San Luis Combis | 29. Cheap bus station     |
| 14. Sulza Peruana            |                           |





**La Brasa Roja** (Av Luzuriaga 915, 12:00-00:00, Sun: 17:30-00:00) churns out great value burgers, steaks and chicken. Portions are huge and it's popular with locals as well as tourists looking to gorge after time in the hills.

**Wayta** (Jr. Simon Bolivar 707, lunch and dinner) serves really good value, tasty Peruvian food. The chefs are super friendly and regularly emerge from the kitchen to check up on you.

**Paulino's** (Av. Luzuriaga 629, lunch and dinner) offers a wide range of delicious and authentic Indian dishes including good vegetarian options.

**El Fogón** (Av Luzuriaga 928, 12:00-15:00 & 18:00-00:00, closed lunchtimes on Sun) is one for the carnivores.

**Mordisco's Cevicheria** (Jr. Amadeo Figueroa 1276, lunch) does the best seafood in town.

### Splurge

The exciting **Jama** (Pasaje Guzman Arenas, Parque Cuba, 13:00-16:00, 19:00-22:00) is the finest Peruvian restaurant in Huaraz. Exquisitely presented plates of all the classics with a modern twist.

Run by effervescent Graciela, **Mi Comedia Pizzeria** (Av Centenario 351,

## □ HOW TO SPEND YOUR TIME IN HUARAZ

### Graze the day away...

Tasty street food abounds in Huaraz, and as different snacks are available at different times it's possible to spend the daylight hours contentedly grazing. Early on, try some hot quinoa and *papas rellenas*, near Puente Quilcay. At lunchtime guzzle an *empanada* from one of the ladies at the junction of Sucre and Bolivar. In mid-afternoon try some *picarones* near Iglesia La Soledad. About an hour before sunset, the *churros* sellers near the central market and pop-corn ladies on Sucre appear.

### ...go to a feast...

**Pachamanca** is a pre-Inca dish of meat, potatoes, beans, *tamales* and corn; it's the ultimate local feasting food. A fire prepared in a hole in the ground is used to heat stones. Raw food is then wrapped in banana leaves and placed between layers of hot stones, before earth is mounded on top to create an oven. After two hours the food emerges, deliciously tender. Try some at the Sunday food fair on José Olaya in Huaraz; or else head out to a *Recreo Campestre* (countryside outdoor restaurant) on a weekend – there are tons on the main road between Huaraz and Yungay.



### ...or shop for weird fruit and vegetables

*Abuelitas* selling vegetables like nothing more than finding a gringo who doesn't recognize any of the items on her stall. Pick out some random produce, ask how you prepare it (*¿cómo se prepara?*), have a nice chat, then go home and tuck in. Unless it's *oca* and the instructions begin with 'put it out in the sun for 3 days'...

### Go to a fiesta

Barely a week goes by in Huaraz without a fiesta taking over one of the plazas, or a street being temporarily closed off to traffic to allow a foot procession by one of the professional organisations based in the city. Expect marching bands, colourful costumes

and basic mountain bikes (S/.50/day), and stock camping gas.

### TRANSPORT

Movil Bus (S/.45-85, recommended), Z Buss (S/.30-60), Julio César (S/.30-70) and Turismo Cavassa (S/.30-40) all have multiple daily departures to **Lima** via Huaraz. Movil Bus also service Trujillo via Chimbote. From 04:00 to 20:00, combis for **Huaraz** (1h30, S/.7) and all places in between leave every few minutes from the terminal on the Carretera Central.

### Accessing treks and cycle routes

Shared transport can be found to Cashapampa (for the Santa Cruz trek), Huancarhuaz (for the Alpamayo Basecamp trek) and Pueblo Parón (for the Laguna

Parón & Artesonraju Basecamp trek). See Miramar (p90) and Yungay-Caraz (p91) boxes for descriptions of local day walks. The cycling trips to Laguna Parón (p213) and Winchus (box p213) can also be attempted from town.

For those more interested in flying down big hills on two wheels, than slogging up them, it's possible to put bikes on a taxi to Laguna Parón, or on a Pamparomás combi (and get out near Winchus), and then bomb the 2000m back down to town.

A more sedate and still scenic alternative is to ride from Caraz down through the Cañón del Pato to the village of Huallanca, where you can find a taxi (S/.50) to drive you back to Caraz (see box, p214).

## Carhuaz

(Altitude: 2650m)

Located 30km north of Huaraz by paved road, Carhuaz really comes alive on Wednesday and Sunday mornings for its thriving market. Though it lacks the facilities of Huaraz and the charm of Caraz, it wins hands-down when it comes to ice-cream – get your fill at Helados Porvenir. The long and spectacular road to Punta Olímpica leaves from the north-east corner of town.

### WHERE TO STAY

**Hospedaje Rubri** (corner of Jrs Comercio and Brasil, ☎ 941-748830, sgl/dbl with AB S/.25/50) with its large, modern rooms is the pick of the cheapies.

**Las Torrecitas** (Jr Amazonas 412, ☎ 394213, [lastorrecitas.com](http://lastorrecitas.com), sgl/dbl with AB S/.40/60, dorm bed with SB S/.15) is the best mid-range choice, with a roof terrace, courtyard and light, clean rooms.

**Los Capulies** (Av Soledad 388, ☎ 957-430903) has a pleasant garden and a range of rooms (sgl/dbl with AB S/.50/100, 4-person apartments S/.340); the friendly owners will treat you as part of the family.

**Hotel Karhuash** (Jr Comercio 334, ☎ 965-912343, dbl/tw with AB S/.60/110) offers clean, neat rooms with excellent showers, but no outdoor space or breakfast.

### INTERNET AND TOURIST INFORMATION IN SMALL TOWNS

Many small towns and villages in the Cordillera don't have public internet facilities. If you desperately need to get online and there's no phone signal, try heading to the Municipalidad building – if there's a connection, staff are often happy to allow you to use it and can usually also offer some information about local sights and fiestas.

### ❑ CHAVÍN RUINS & MUSEUM

Chavín de Huántar was a pilgrimage centre from 1000-200 BCE. At its zenith, the Chavín cult exerted influence throughout the Andes and coastal areas of present day Peru.

The massive, awe-inspiring temple complex consisted of a labyrinth of underground galleries and fantastic friezes with anthropomorphic and zoomorphic iconography of jaguars, caimans and serpents. Gargoyle-like tenon heads hanging from the exterior walls amazed pilgrims arriving at the temple, and represented the transformation from human to feline. Only one tenon head remains in place today.

The Lanzon sculpture, which still stands at the heart of the labyrinth, represents the central deity of the Chavín cult; it is thought that only Shamans were allowed into the central galleries to see it. While stumbling around in a haze of hallucinogenic drugs and encountering representations of deities, the priests were believed to transform into jaguars and connect with the divine. Most of the decorative stonework has been removed from the site and can now be found at the Chavín National Museum.

Allow at least half a day to visit both the ruins and museum.



### ❑ CUY CUY CUY

Yes, you did just see that sack in the market wriggling; it's probably full of whistling guinea pigs, onomatopoeically called *cuy* in Peru. They're a local culinary delicacy, usually baked or fried and served up with head and paws still attached. Look out for *picante de cuy* on restaurant menus. (Photo © Cass Gilbert)

# HIKING ROUTES & MAPS

## Using this guide

### ROUTE DESCRIPTIONS

Directions in this chapter are shown as an instruction to go left (L) or right (R) and as a compass point (N/S/E/W). For instance, if the instruction stated 'go L/N', it would indicate that north is to your left. In the case of describing walking along river valleys, the terms true left (TL) and true right (TR) have been used to describe which side of the river when facing downstream.

Popular multi-day routes have been split into days which end at official campsites. On quieter routes we have noted places where camping is possible, but not split the description into set days.


### Direction

Almost all trekking routes in this book could be walked in either direction. They have been described either in the way they are usually walked, or, in the case of routes such as Alpamayo Basecamp which are frequently walked in either direction, the way which the authors feel is preferable.

### Route maps

Trekking maps are drawn at one of two scales. The well-known multi-day hikes (Alpamayo Basecamp, Santa Cruz, Huayhuash Circuit) as well as the day hike to Laguna Wilcacocha are drawn at 1:50k (20mm = 1km). All other treks are drawn at 1:100k (10mm = 1km).

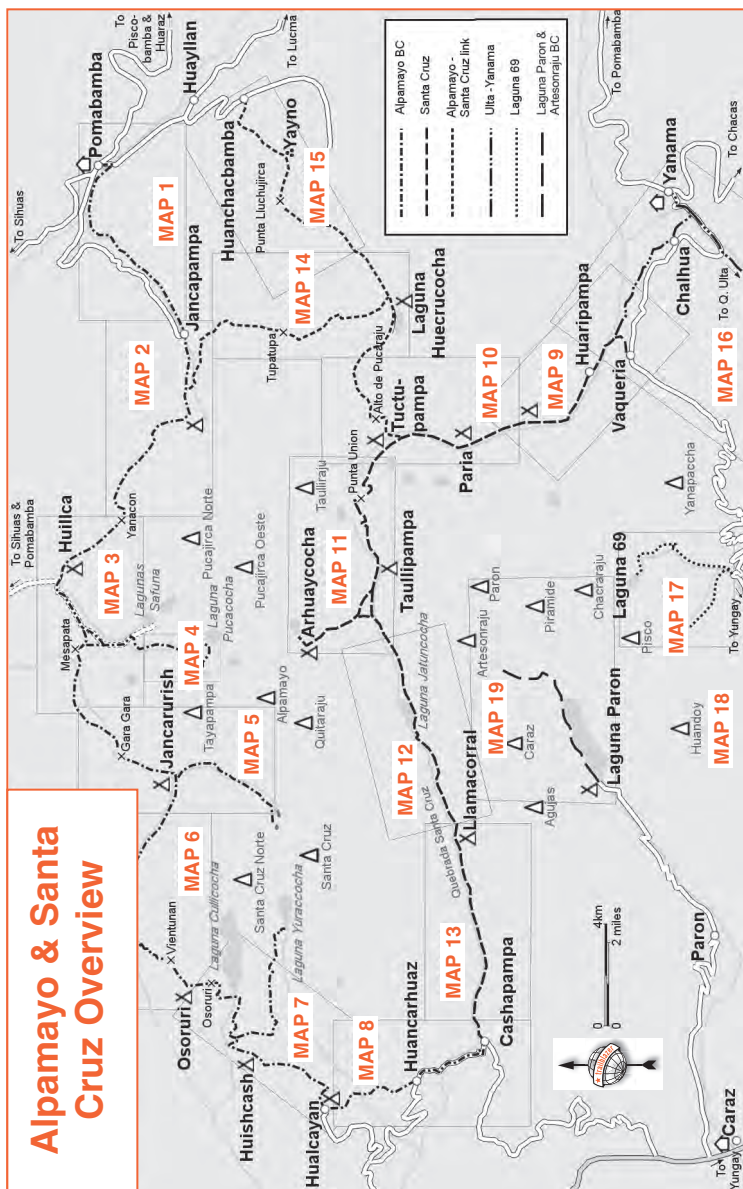
Gradient arrows on maps point uphill. If the path is a steep climb from A to B, it's illustrated as: A --->>--- B. Double arrows represent steeper gradients than single arrows.

GPS waypoints are marked on the maps – all waypoints can be downloaded for free from  [blancahuayhuash.com](http://blancahuayhuash.com).

### Timings

The trekking times included on maps and in descriptions refer to walking (moving) times only, and do not include any breaks. Overall most people will find they need to add on *at least* 30% to the given trekking times to calculate the total time taken from leaving camp in the morning to reaching the next camp that afternoon. The times also







## Trekking Route Map Key

|  |                   |  |              |  |                     |
|--|-------------------|--|--------------|--|---------------------|
|  | Trekking route    |  | Steps        |  | Camp                |
|  | Alternative route |  | Gate         |  | Building            |
|  | 4WD track         |  | Steep slope  |  | Chozo (Hut)         |
|  | Unpaved road      |  | Slope        |  | Archaeological site |
|  | Paved road        |  | Pass         |  | Viewpoint           |
|  | Other paths       |  | Cliff        |  | Mountain            |
|  | Bridge & river    |  | Ridge line   |  | Forest              |
|  | Waterfall         |  | Boggy ground |  | GPS point           |
|  | Water             |  | Grassland    |  | Map continuation    |

assume hikers have a degree of acclimatization; if you're recently arrived from sea level, expect the times you are taking to be slow initially, particularly on ascents, but to speed up as your body becomes more accustomed to the altitude.

### Place names

Many Quechua names can be spelt several ways as the original language had no alphabet. In trekking descriptions and maps, the version used is the one most commonly found locally.

### Altitudes and vertical distances

Heights on trekking (and cycling) routes are given to the nearest 10m. All altitudes have been measured by GPS and should be accurate to about 20m. Peak heights used are from John Biggar's list at [andes.org.uk](http://andes.org.uk), which is thought to be the most accurate list of Andean mountain heights. Vertical ascent is given to the nearest 50m.

## Northern Cordillera Blanca

# 1

### ALPAMAYO BASECAMP

**Trekking time** 5-9 days  
**Ascent** 4000m/13,100ft  
**Navigation** 2

### Pomabamba to Hualcayán

**Distance** 68km/42 miles  
**Max altitude** 4860m/15,950ft  
**Terrain** 2

The Alpamayo Basecamp trek (also known as Cedros – Alpamayo, or simply Alpamayo) showcases much of the Cordillera Blanca's finest mountain scenery.

Most of the hike is a wild, wilderness route through gorgeous landscapes, where the only sounds are the cracking of glacial ice and the murmur of ichu grass in the wind.

An international survey once declared Alpamayo the ‘Most Beautiful Mountain in the World’, but this trek is by no means a one-mountain show. Pucajirca’s sheer bulk and the immensity of Santa Cruz’s glaciers are in many ways more impressive than Alpamayo’s perfect, yet petite, summit pyramid.

Many of the best views are to be found by delving into quebradas south of the main trail – entering sanctuaries surrounded by icy peaks. It’s well worth spending a couple of days exploring these.

Despite its attractions, the trek is far less popular than Santa Cruz – outside of July and August you can go days without seeing another hiker.

### Timing and which direction

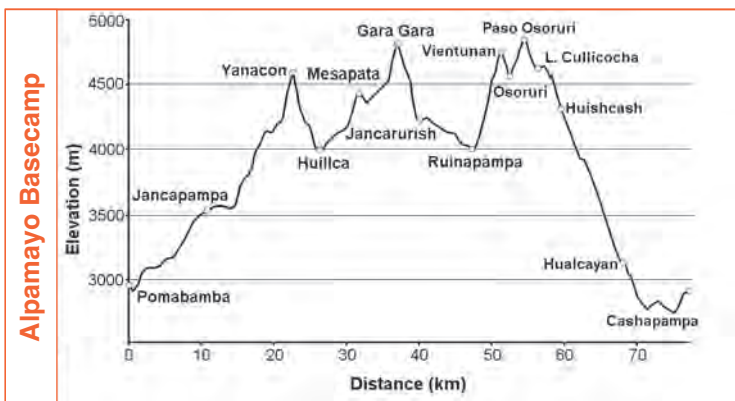
The basic route from Pomabamba to Hualcayán can be completed in five days (not including the day for travelling between Huaraz and Pomabamba), however the many permutations of side trips and start/finish points mean it’s possible to lengthen the walk to as much as a fortnight.

Each of the three recommended there-and-back side trips south of the main route adds a day.

Opinion is divided as to the best direction in which to hike. We describe the route from east to west to avoid beginning with a 2000m climb to the highest pass. Trekking the route in reverse makes it easier to cross many of the passes earlier in the day, when the sky is more likely to be clear.

Taking transport between Pomabamba and Jancapampa shortens the trek by half a day. Finishing/starting in Cashapampa or Huancarhuaz rather than Hualcayán adds half a day, but makes it easier and cheaper to find transport back to Caraz.

See p102 for the popular option of combining the Alpamayo and Santa Cruz treks.



Soon recross and continue upriver on the eucalyptus-shaded main path, through small villages where children may ask you for *caramelos*. One hour and 45 minutes from the bridges, the path emerges onto the meadow of Jancapampa – continue for 15 minutes to reach the road bridge in Jancapampa village. Cross the bridge, and take the shortcut that leaves the road at the first bend. When this rejoins the road soon after, go straight over onto a footpath that heads up valley, contouring high above the river on the N side. After 45 minutes the path descends to the pampa.

Ignore a small bridge to the L/S – this is the way to Tupatupa (see Santa Cruz Alpamayo link p102) – continuing instead up valley. The path fizzles out, but reforms, skirting above the boggy pampa. Follow it along the straight-sided N shore of the pampa for 20 minutes until the pampa edge curves round to the L/S. There's good camping here, level with the last houses on the opposite, southern, side.

## 1.2 JANCAPAMPA CAMP TO HUILLCA

**Trekking time** 5h30-6h

**[Maps 2 & 3, pp81-2]**

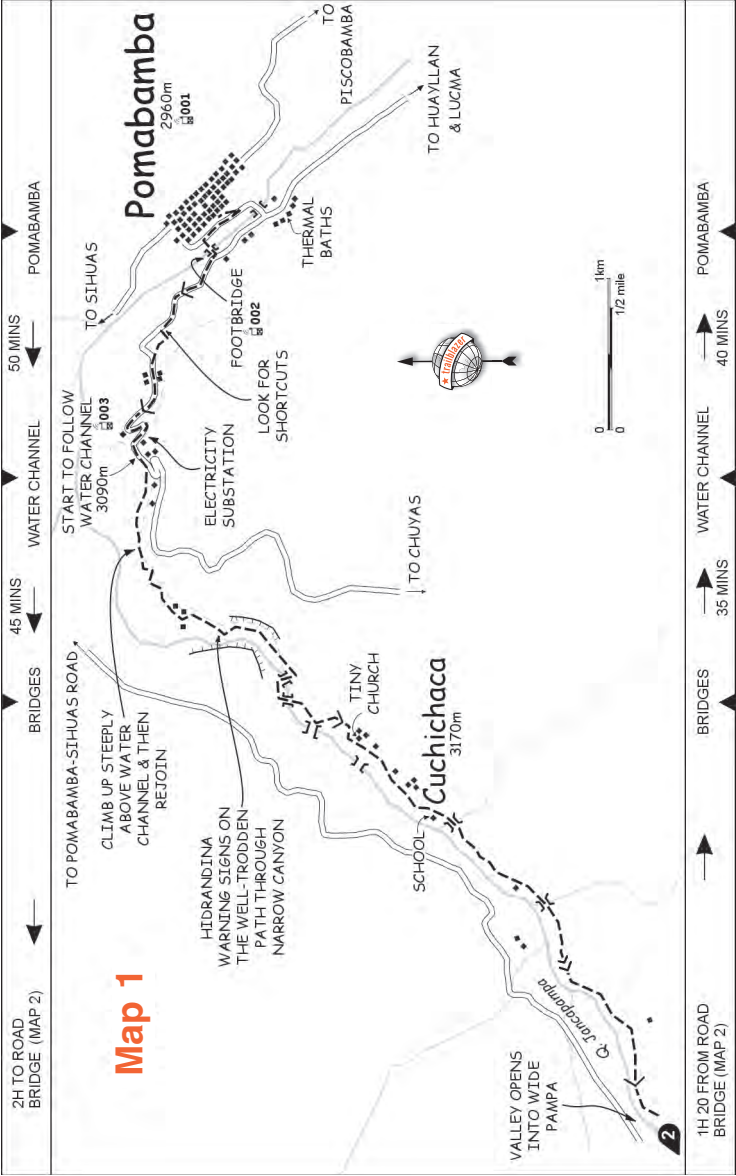
**Distance** 12km/7 miles **Ascent** 1100m/3600ft **Descent** 650m/2100ft

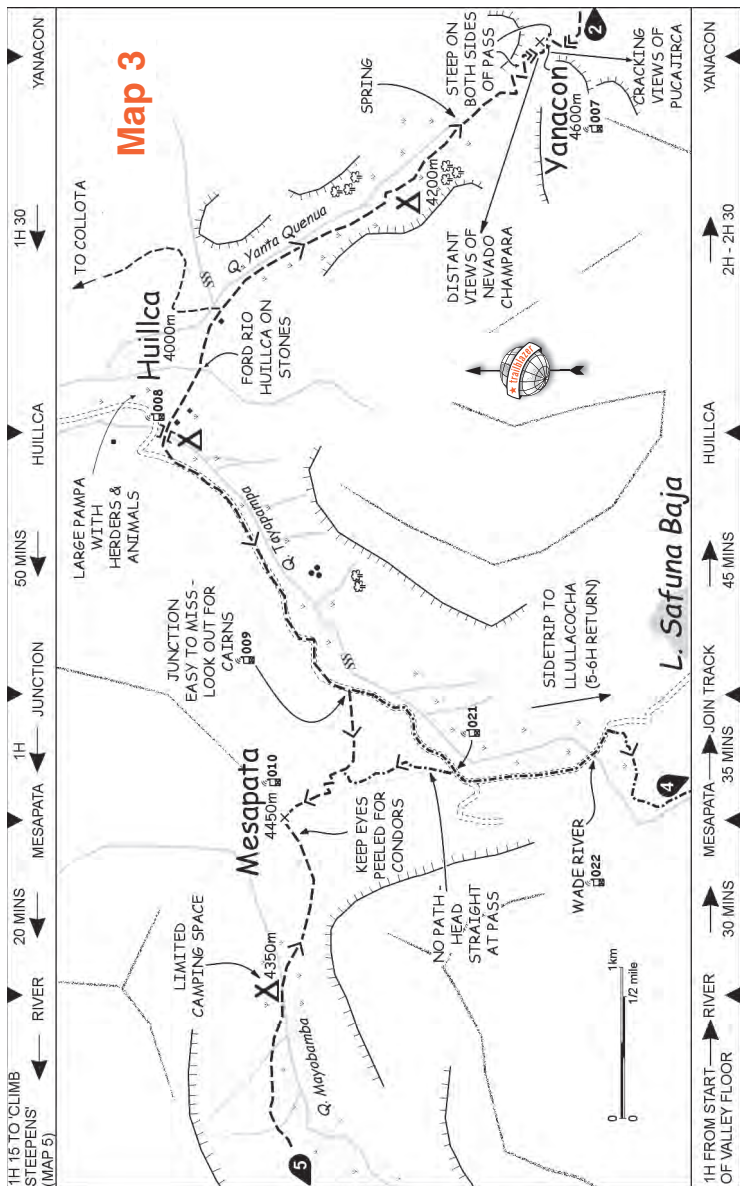
*Tackle imposing Yanacon, the first of the route's high passes, with its close-up views of the ice and folded rock strata of Pucajirca. Descend to camp in the vicinity of the pastures at Huillca.*

From camp, a small path leads up wooded slopes to the N, into Quebrada Yanajanca. After 45 minutes the path crosses the river, then continues up valley, heading towards a serrated, toothy ridge. Twenty minutes of gentle climbing brings you to a large pampa; stay on the left hand side, heading for a path which leaves the pampa by a stone wall.

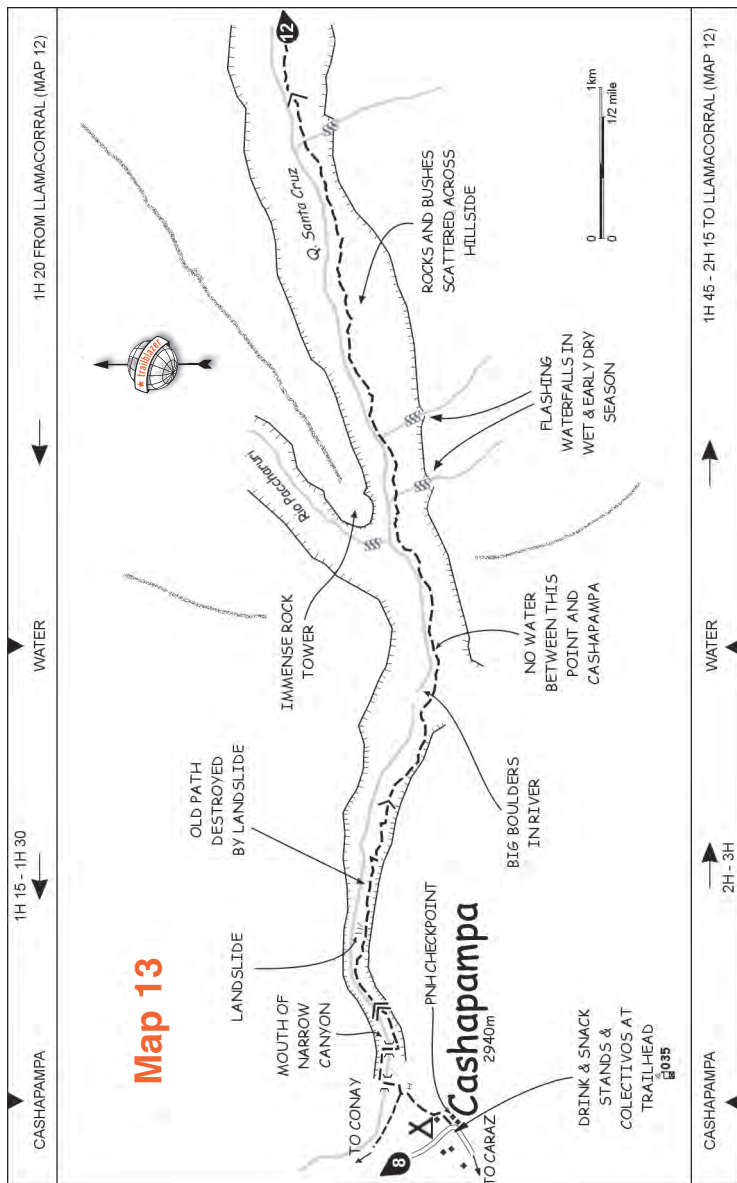
Climb for 40 minutes to another pampa, continuing on the L/S side of the valley. Jade green Laguna Sactaycocha lies in a dip to the N, but is not visible from the trail until nearer the pass. Cross to the far end of a large pampa (50 mins), then follow the path of least resistance up the grassy slopes towards the pass. The views of Pucajirca improve and the climb steepens on nearing Yanacon (1h45); the final section is a real lung-burster.

The descent on zigzags into Quebrada Yanta Quenua is equally steep, the path sticking to the slopes on the R/N of the valley, before emerging onto the pampa after 30 minutes. Descend further, now on the TL/S side, past another pampa with water and possible camping (10 mins) to a couple of buildings and corrals (30 mins). Carry on straight, aiming for the few buildings that comprise Huillca (20 mins). Ask the local residents for permission if you wish to camp in this area. There are many domestic animals around, often including herds of alpaca which are a rarity in this region.









stream (20 mins) – the last water source until near Cashapampa – before leaving the banks of the main river. Descend, over old rock slides, to cross a bridge spanning the roaring river (1h10). The path soon recrosses and climbs briefly to a junction and information board. Go L for the road and guardaparque post in Cashapampa (15 mins).

## 3

**SANTA CRUZ – ALPAMAYO CIRCUIT (LINKING SECTION)****Tuctupampa to Jancapampa****Trekking time 2 days****Ascent 1100m/3600ft****Navigation 2****Distance 23km/14 miles****Max altitude 4620m/15,150ft****Terrain 1**

It's common to combine the Santa Cruz and Alpamayo treks into a sublime seven- to fourteen-day circuit from Cashapampa or Vaquería to Hualcayán or Cashapampa. Walking the loop in an anticlockwise direction leaves the highest altitudes until the end, but it's perfectly possible to do in reverse.

Use the Santa Cruz route description (p92) for details of the trail from Vaquería to Tuctupampa, and reverse it for details of Cashapampa to Tuctupampa. See the Alpamayo description (p76) for Jancapampa to Cashapampa. Here we describe the middle, linking section from Tuctupampa to Jancapampa, as well as the Alternative Route to Huanchacamba via the impressive ruins at Yayno. Both of these take two days.

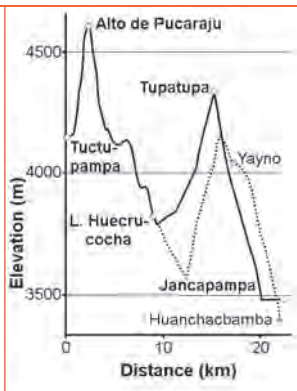
**Timing and getting to and from the trailhead**

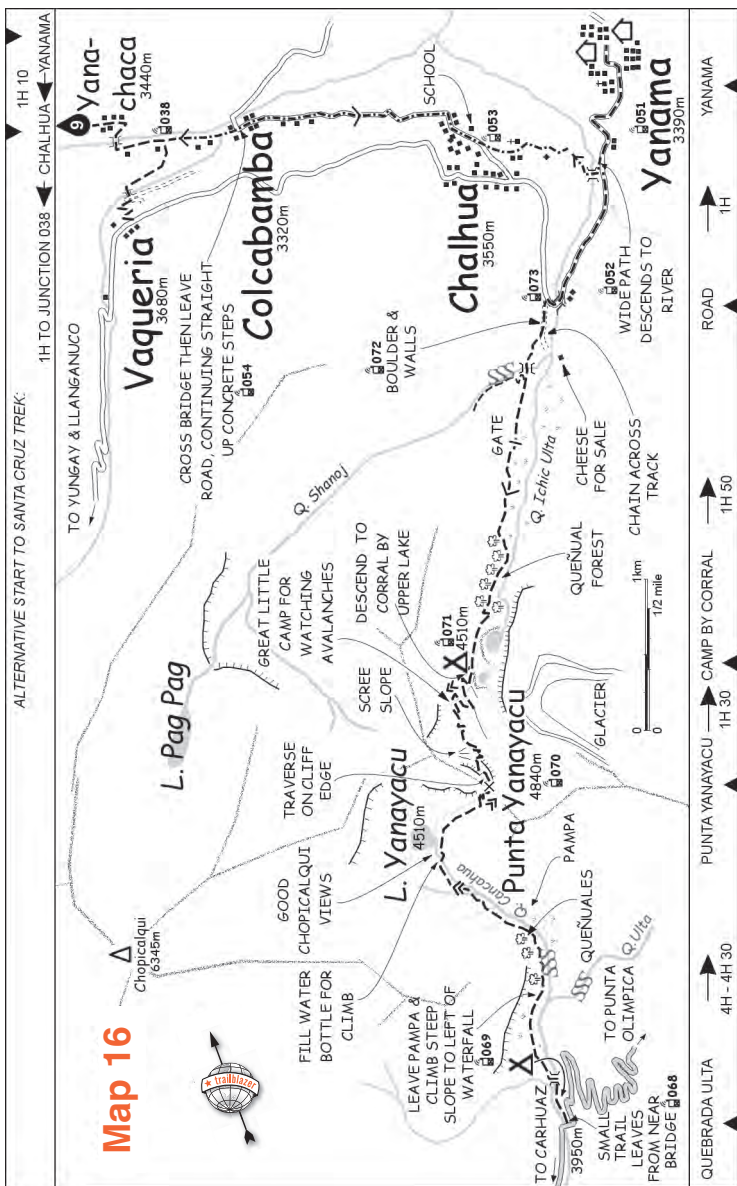
For Cashapampa and Vaquería, see p92. For Hualcayán, Huancarhuaz and Jancapampa, see p78. Vaquería to Jancapampa/Huanchacamba takes three days; from Cashapampa it takes five.

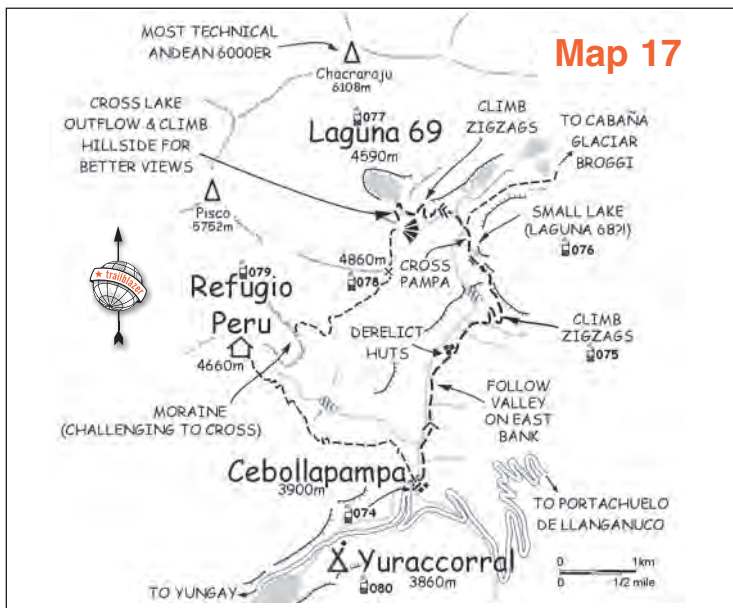
There's a daily combi between Huanchacamba and Pomabamba (30 mins, S/5), usually leaving Pomabamba around 06:00 and returning in the early

afternoon (try and confirm these times with the driver the day before). A taxi between the two is around S/.50. There is more frequent transport between Huayllán (walkable from Huanchacamba) and Pomabamba.

**Preparations** See Santa Cruz (p93) for details about arrieros and PNH tickets. Bring all food with you – there are extremely basic shops at Jancapampa and Quisuar (Alternative route) but nowhere you could properly resupply. If you're unable to carry enough supplies for the full trek, it's possible to break a Santa Cruz –

**Santa Cruz – Alpamayo Link**





combi (last one from Yanama to Yungay usually passes Cebollapampa between 15:00 and 16:00), to return you to Yungay.

Alternatively, to avoid being reliant on return transport, from Cebollapampa you can walk, via the road or footpath shortcuts, over Portachuelo de Llanganuco to Vaquería in a day, to link up with the Santa Cruz trek.

**Preparations** The lake is within PNH – tickets (S/.30 if you're just going for the day) can be bought at the office at the entrance to the Llanganuco valley. Snacks are available here, but nowhere on the walk itself, so bring supplies.

### Cebollapampa – Laguna 69 – Cebollapampa [Map 17]

From the switchback on the road, descend briefly by a stream to the valley floor. Cross a small bridge and in a few minutes reach a signed junction. L, crossing the main river, goes to Refugio Peru (see box p112), but for Laguna 69 continue straight on the main path. After 50 mins of gentle walking with views of the Huascaráns, Chacaraju and Yanapaccha, cross a couple of streams, then begin a steeper 1 hour climb to a small lake at the start of a pampa.

Cross the pampa, ignoring a sign to 'Cabaña Glaciar Broggi' (2km, R) after 10 mins. Continue straight, climbing a further 45 mins to Laguna 69. Note that it's strictly prohibited to swim in, or camp near, the lake.

Returning to the road takes 1h30-2h.



### LAGUNA 69 TWO-DAY LOOP

For even better views, including of Huandoy, acclimatized trekkers can turn this into an excellent two day loop, without the necessity of camping. On the first day, from Cebollapampa climb to and overnight at **Refugio Peru** (2h30-3h30, 4660m, open June-September, [donboscoexpedition.com](http://donboscoexpedition.com)), a hut used by mountaineers attempting Nevado Pisco. In the morning, find a way across (or round) the moraine to the east and join an obvious path which climbs to 4860m en route to Laguna 69 (2h30-3h30); descend via the main trail. Note that though much of the dynamic moraine has a path across, other sections are wracked by rock fall and slides – it's not always possible to cross safely. Take a guide, or ask for information at the Refugio, and if you're not comfortable about crossing the moraine, follow a more circuitous cross-country route skirting round on grassy slopes to the south of the moraine, before meeting the path on the east side.



## 6

### HUANDOY ICEFALL

**Start & End: Laguna Keushu**

**Trekking time 4-4h30**  
**Ascent 550m/1800ft**  
**Navigation 1**

**Distance 8km/5 miles**  
**Max altitude 4020m/13,200ft**  
**Terrain 1**

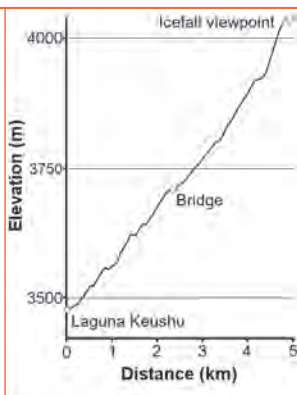
Hiking up to the glacial debris in Quebrada Rajururi, the valley just to the north of Llanganuco, makes for a good acclimatization walk, away from any crowds. The starting point at Laguna Keushu is a pretty spot, and as you delve into the quebrada surrounded by impressive vertical rock walls there are views of mighty Huandoy. The walk ends just above 4000m, at the ice which has fallen

from a glacier high up on the peak's south west flanks. Here you can often find local people carving ice which is taken down to Yungay and used for *raspadillas* (Slush Puppies).

### Timing and getting to and from the trailhead

There is no public transport to Laguna Keushu so unless you are staying at nearby Llanganuco Mountain Lodge (see p63) it's best to find a taxi driver in Yungay for the day (S/.150) to drive you up to the lake, wait while you walk, then drive you down afterwards. Leave early from Yungay as the taxi takes 45 mins each way, and it's worth lingering to

### Huandoy Icefall





though it may be possible to find arrieros in Pueblo Parón. There's a control gate on the road at 3300m where the Parón community charge visitors S/.5 to enter the quebrada. Despite the trek being within PNH, you are not asked to purchase a PNH ticket. Buy all supplies in Caraz.

### **Pueblo Parón – Artesonraju Basecamp – Pueblo Parón [Map 19]**

From Pueblo Parón (3250m) it's a 4-hour walk to Laguna Parón, following the unpaved road and/or footpath shortcuts through queñuales. High granite walls loom overhead on both sides of this, the most impressive of the many steep-sided valleys leading off the Callejón de Huaylas. The giant 800m *Esfinge* (Sphinx) face to the N attracts big-wall rock climbers.

At road-end is a refugio occupied by the Parón Community (see box on p116), where you are usually able to pay S/.20pp for a bed for the night; it's possible to camp for free. Here the turquoise waters of the Blanca's largest lake come into view, along with Nevados Piramide and Chacaraju. To the S, the multiple summits of Huandoy dominate the skyline.

### **Side trip to Mirador overlooking Laguna Parón**

For views along Laguna Parón and of the big peaks it's possible to climb the moraine bank to the S of the lake; the path leaves from the road, a minute down from the refugio. It takes 30 mins to climb up to the mirador (4300m) and 20 mins to return. Note that for a peaceful experience it's best to be at the mirador before 11:30, when the groups on day tours from Huaraz arrive.

The road gives way to a wide path which contours round above the lake's N shore, to a hydro-electric building (10 mins). Beyond, the trail narrows and the views unfurl, with first Pisco East and then its more frequently climbed



**Map 20**

your hands a couple of times, but if you find yourself scrambling or on a rock climb, you've gone a suboptimal way.

At the top the twin lakes of Auquiscocha and Chequiacocha come into view. Descend, steeply at first, through bedrock and ichu grass – choose your own route as there's no real path until you reach the queñual forest (50 mins) high above the SW side of Auquiscocha. Continue down through the forest on a path or along water channels to the main pampa in the valley (1h45); there are orange waymarkers here and there to point you in the right direction. It's 45 mins along a 4x4 track to the paved road in Quebrada Uta.

## 9 AKILPO – ISHINCA San Miguel de Aco to Collón/Pashpa

**Trekking time 3 or 4 days**

**Distance 38km/24 miles**

**Ascent 2200m/7200ft**

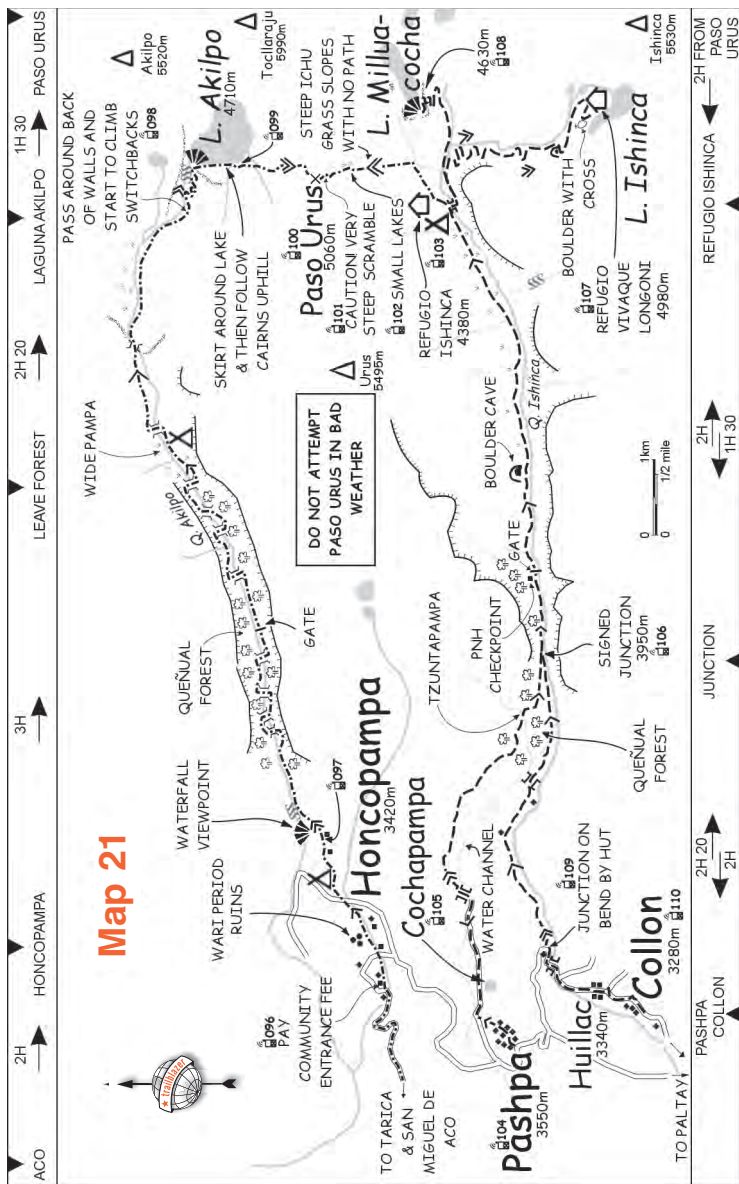
**Max altitude 5060m/16,600ft**

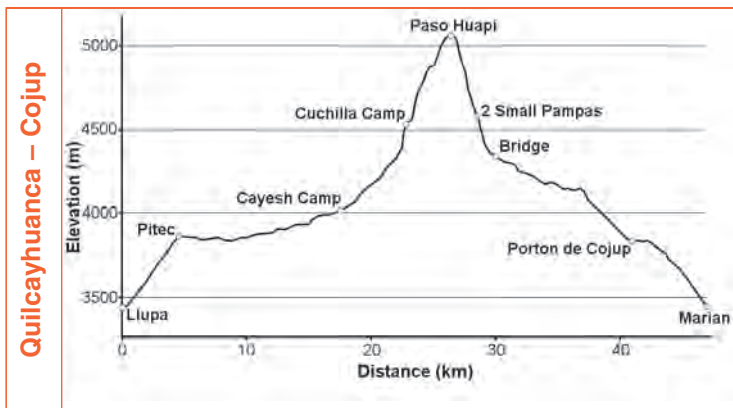
**Navigation 3**

**Terrain 3**

In many ways this is the perfect three- or four-day trekking circuit near Huaraz. There are interesting Wari period ruins to explore at Honcopampa before the trail passes through polylepis forest in both Quebradas Akilpo and Ishinca. Turquoise alpine lakes await at the heads of both valleys, and the mountain scenery on crossing 5060m Paso Urus is magnificent.

Unfortunately there is also a very big drawback. The descent from Paso Urus to Quebrada Ishinca is a nightmare – the most difficult trekking terrain in this book. Just below the pass is a short, steep section on loose rock that requires scrambling skills. It's not a good idea to trek alone – a companion to pass packs





### Side trip to Quebrada Cayesh (2-3h return)

It's well worth crossing the bridge near the campsite and going into Quebrada Cayesh. The views get better the higher you go – stick to the TL/W side.

The main trail swings into Quebrada Tullparaju and steepens en route to a large pampa (40 mins), with views of Nevados Chinchey and Pucaranra. Keep L of the pampa and climb to a smaller grassy pampa (good camping). Here the path becomes indistinct – go to the upper end, leaving from the right-hand (NE) corner. Immediately cross the bridge over the river from Laguna Cuchilla, to climb a clear path on the L/W slopes of the moraine hill in the middle of the valley. Reach a riverside platform (45 mins from start of large pampa) which is another possible camp spot, though the views aren't as good as on the pampas you've already passed through.



### Side trip to Laguna Tullpacocha (30 mins return)

From the platform, a path heads R/E, contouring round to the retaining wall on Laguna Tullpacocha and views of Tullparaju (photo left).

The main path crosses two rivers then climbs broad zigzags for 1 hour to a great **camp** at the base of the moraine enclosing Laguna Cuchilla.

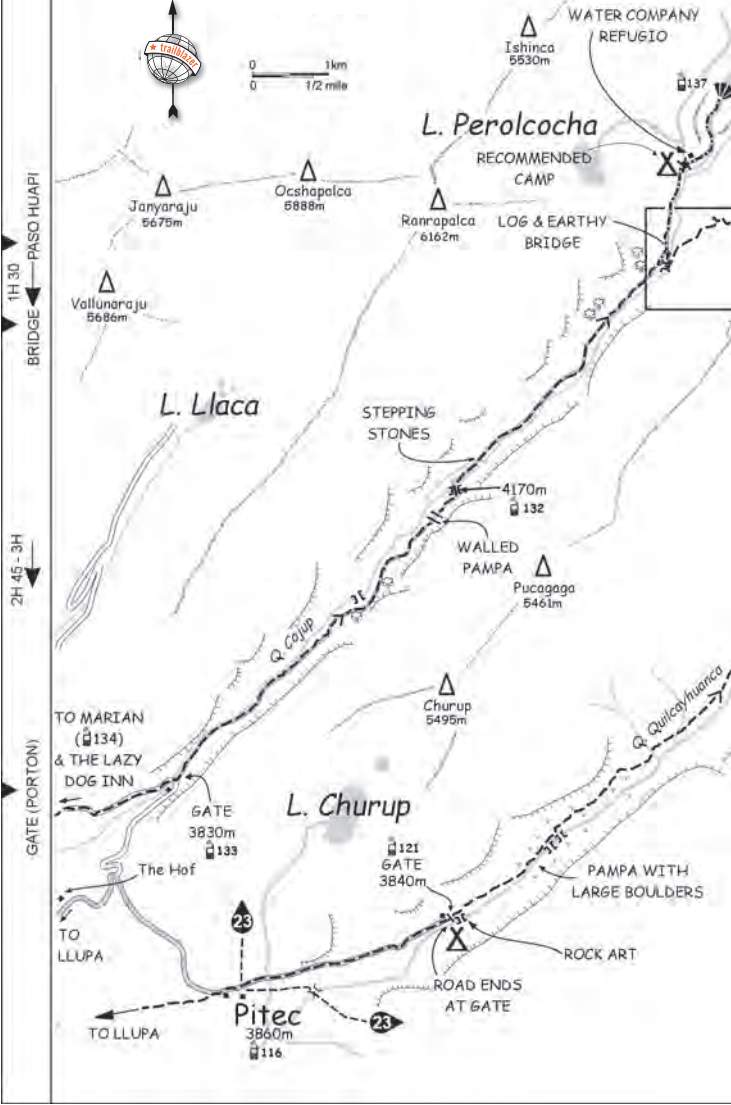
### Side trip to Laguna Cuchilla (45 mins return)

From camp, cross the stream to the R/E and climb zigzags to the lake and a viewpoint of the immense Pucaranra.

The next section of trail is difficult to follow. From the stone walls at the camp, head L/W and climb for a minute onto a small ridge, where you should veer R/NW, following boulder-top cairns, aiming at horned Nevado Huapi. Continue



Map 24



## Conchucos

# 15

### QUEBRADA RURICHINCHAY

**Start & End:** Huari

**Trekking time** 3 days  
**Ascent** 3000m/9800ft  
**Navigation** 2

**Distance** 56km/35 miles  
**Max altitude** 4560m/14,950ft  
**Terrain** 2

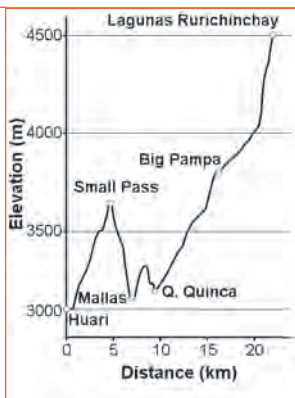
The pastoral wander from Huari to Mallas through thriving traditional villages is a delight. There are views of green, eucalyptus-studded hillsides and serrated rocky ridges, and plenty of jovial campesinos to engage in chat. After entering Quebrada Rurichinchay, the route follows a 4WD track to an abandoned mine, before climbing further to some paradise pampas. It's a mission to reach Lagunas Rurichinchay – but persevere and the intermittent cow paths over tricky terrain bring you out at the lakes, beneath Nevado Copap's layered, zebra-striped south face.

### Timing and getting to and from the trailhead

The trek takes at least three days return from Huari (p73), though can be shortened by taking transport to or from Mallas. There's only one combi a week from Huari to Mallas, on Sundays; best take a taxi (around S/.50). See p63 for details on Huaraz to Huari buses.

**Preparations** The top part of Quebrada Rurichinchay is within PNH, however there's no checkpoint. The 4WD road to the abandoned mine camp half way up the valley is almost all rideable, making this a good trip to do as a biking/hiking combination. Buy all supplies in Huari.

### Quebrada Rurichinchay



### Huari – Lagunas Rurichinchay – Huari [Map 25, pp138-9]

From Huari's Plaza de Armas, head to the Mallas road in the SW corner of town. At a bridge (15 mins) take a foot-path signposted 'Buenos Aires' which climbs above the road. Follow the next BsAs sign, continuing straight/L at a BsAs/Cushin signpost (30 mins), on a rising traverse towards Yakya. In 1 hour, the path meets the road to Yakya by a wooden cross – go R. The road forks (15 mins) at the far end of this large village – go R, to a small pass (30 mins) by a water channel. Don't take the trail that leads R just before the

side. Don't go too high, crossing the ridge after 25 mins and continuing up valley to a natural bridge over the main river (30 mins). Cross and make your way up easy slopes to the main trail (30 mins) on the S side of the valley.

## 20

## QUEBRADA RARIA

## Carpa to Machac

**Trekking time** 3 days  
**Ascent** 900m/3000ft  
**Navigation** 2

**Distance** 39km/24 miles  
**Max altitude** 4800m/15,750ft  
**Terrain** 2

The varied three-day trek in the quiet valleys of Raria and Ranracancha is way off most trekkers' radars. Beginning at Carpa, stray *Puya raimondii* tower over the trail, which eases its way into Quebrada Raria, passing lakes and spiky snowy peaks. There's cross-country walking either side of Punta Raria, but the terrain is not difficult, and the long descent traverses the green slopes of Quebrada Ranracancha past tumbling waterfalls and contorted rock.

The path eventually hits a motorable road near Machac, a short ride from Chavín, making this a more scenically exciting alternative to the Olleros – Chavín route. Linking up with Quebrada Carhuascancha makes for a superb week of off-the-beaten-path hiking.

### Timing and getting to and from the trailhead

The route takes three days; to complete it in two is tough and means crossing Punta Raria on the first afternoon.

The trailhead is in Quebrada Pumapampa, 3.5km after the Carpa PNH office, on a road which sees little traffic except for tourist buses heading to Pastoruri. One option for reaching here is to book on a Pastoruri tour from Huaraz (2 hrs, S/.30), and ask to be let out at the trailhead. If there's a group of you, it makes better economic sense to take a taxi from Huaraz (1h15) or Catac (40 mins).

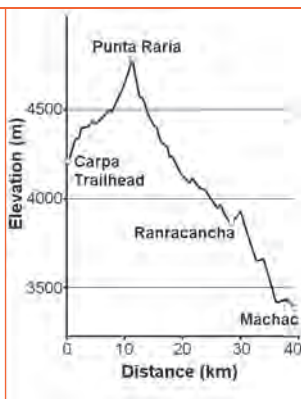
The trek ends in Machac, near Chavín. Flag down transport for the 20 minute journey to Chavín, or a combi/bus (2h15/2h45, S/.15/12) back to Huaraz. It's possible to avoid Machac and the main road and walk all the way to Chavín on ancient trails, in 3 hours from Pichú.

**Preparations** The start of the trek is at 4200m and the first good camp at 4400m, so ensure sufficient acclimatization before beginning. You can buy a PNH ticket at Carpa; bring all supplies.

### Carpa – Punta Raria – Machac [Map 29 & Map 30, p155]

From the road, and brown stump of a broken 'Quebrada Raria' signpost, head NE for 2 mins to a well-hidden

## Quebrada Raria



## Cordillera Huayhuash

21

### HUAYHUASH CIRCUIT      Quartelhuain to Llamac

**Trekking time** 7-14 days    **Distance** 110km/68 miles  
**Ascent** 5700m/18,700ft    **Max altitude** 5060m/16,600ft  
**Navigation** 2 (3 on some route options)    **Terrain** 2

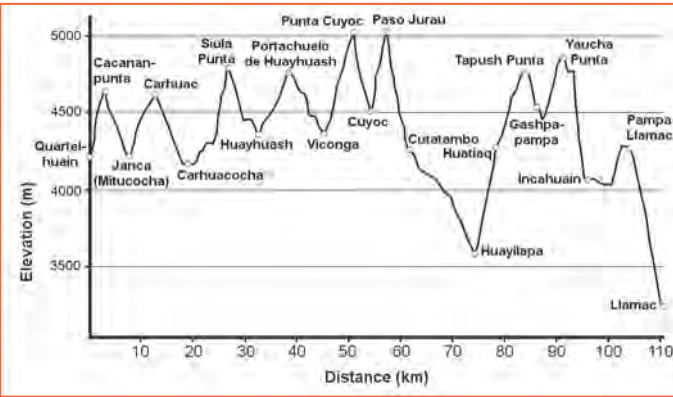
Only 30km long by 15km wide, the compact Cordillera Huayhuash (pronounced ‘why-wash’, with the second syllable rhyming with ‘rash’) really punches above its weight. Packed into this small region are three major summits over 6000m, countless other razor-sharp peaks, bejewelled alpine lakes, chaotic ice falls, gargantuan rock faces and fascinating contorted strata. Magnificent scenery awaits at every turn: it’s not surprising that many people consider this circuit the best trek on the continent.

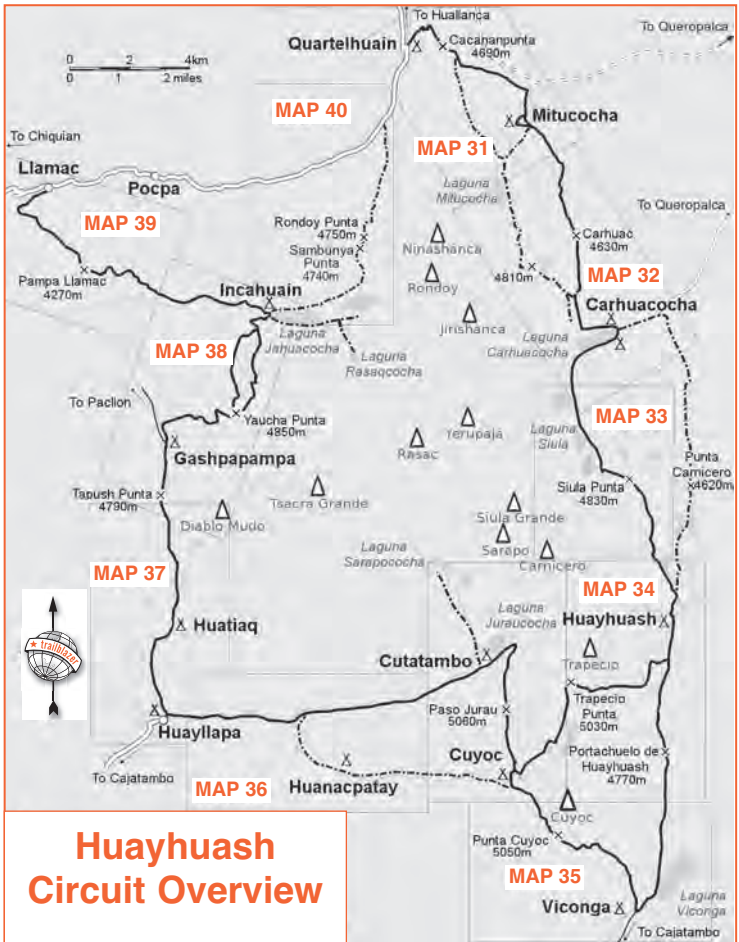
Nine local communities maintain the circuit’s campsite facilities and trails, charging tourists for the privilege. Please stay at these official campsites – which all have a water source and (usually very basic) toilet – both to help the cleanliness of the trails, and also for your own safety. At the time of writing it costs S/.295 to buy all the community tickets needed to trek the whole circuit.

### Safety

The Huayhuash circuit is currently considered safe, and we are not aware of any robberies in recent years. This was not always the case; until the early ‘90s the Sendero Luminoso was active in the region and in the early 2000s, a number of nasty armed incidents against trekking groups occurred. The current ticketing system has helped improve safety; by paying fees and camping at community campsites, in effect you are being given the protection of the local community.

### Huayhuash Circuit






### Timing

Depending on route selection and side trips, the circuit can take anything from seven to fourteen days. Most people take about ten days, and almost all walk the route in a clockwise direction. Those with less time can get a taster by tackling the still-impressive four-day 'Mini Huayhuash' (see box p158).

**Getting to the start of the trek** The vast majority of people begin in Quartelhuain (often called Matacancha), a 4-hour drive from Huaraz. As there is no public transport to this campsite, the best options for independent trekkers are to either:



Trapezio Punta, the Uramaza ticket is not necessary. A Llamac ticket bought at the start of your trek is valid when you pass through again at the finish. Keep all tickets until the end of your trek and check  [blancahuayhuash.com](http://blancahuayhuash.com) for any changes in ticketing arrangements and prices.

## 21.1 QUARTELHUAIN – MITUCOCHA CAMP

**Trekking time** 4h-4h30

[Map 31]

**Distance** 9km/6 miles **Ascent** 550m/1800ft **Descent** 450m/1500ft

*Begin the circuit with a relatively short day which provides a taster of the delights to come. Take it easy on the unrelenting climb to Cacananpunta, then descend gently down the colourful Quebrada Caliente. Camp below Laguna Mitucocha, with great views of Jirishanca to the south-west. If arriving at Quartelhuain via Llamac and Pocpa, a cobrador will board your bus in the former and meet you at the bridge in the latter to sell you community tickets. If you take the less common route in via Huallanca, a cobrador will usually sell you a Llamac ticket at the Quartelhuain campsite. It's not a bad idea to camp at Quartelhuain to aid acclimatization, as once you cross Cacananpunta it is more complicated escaping to lower altitudes.*

From the road bridge at Quartelhuain, head NE through camp, past the toilets and corrals. The clear path crosses a stream, begins zigzagging up a grassy ridge and, but for a short traverse, climbs continuously to Cacananpunta (2h-2h30). Behind, to the N, is the Cordillera Huallanca, while to the W is Mina Mitsui, the reason the Chiquián to Huallanca road was constructed.

This first pass is an oft-windy spot and has views down kaleidoscopic Quebrada Caliente. The path descends steeply on zigzags for 10 mins to a junction where a small path (the alternative route to Laguna Mitucocha – see below) goes off R. Continue descending on the main trail for 10 mins to a metal cross which commemorates a young Polish explorer who died in 1998 trying to locate the source of the Río Marañón. From the cross, traverse down the R/W side of the valley to Jancahuayí (1 hour), a small collection of dwellings near the junction of Ríos Caliente and Janca. Here the path curves R/SW into the Río Janca valley for the 30-minute walk to the **toilet block** at Mitucocha **campsite**. The cobrador for Queropalca is normally in this area. If you have time, it's well worth walking up the valley to Laguna Mitucocha (45 mins each way).

Groups with rushed itineraries often continue directly to Carhuacocha this first day, but this is not a particularly good idea as it leaves many trekkers shattered right at the beginning of the trek.

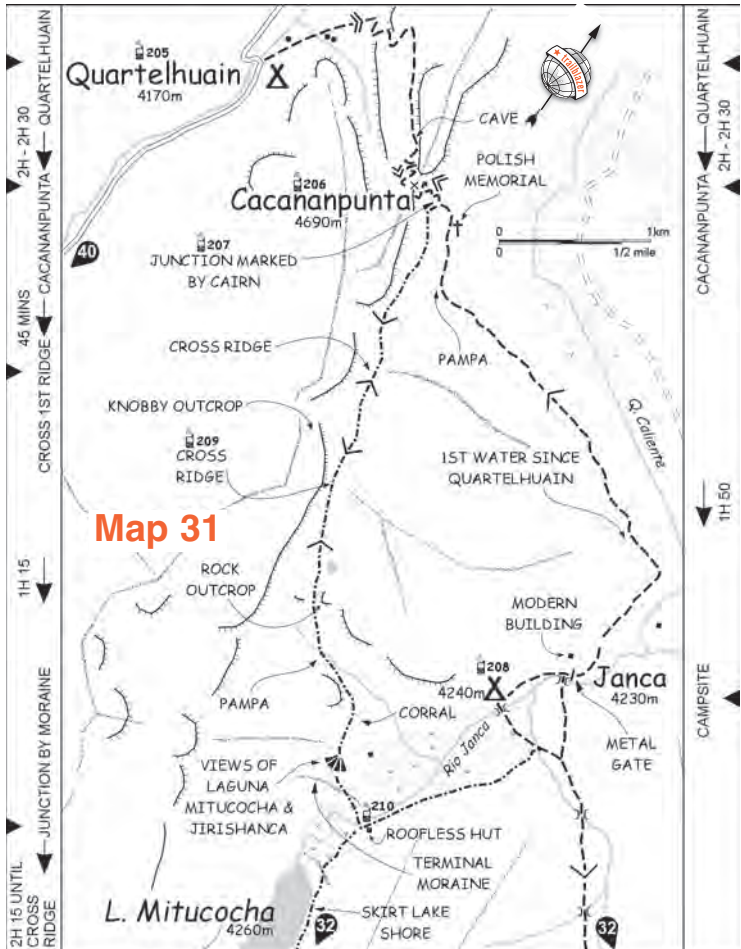
### Day 1 alternative route: Cacananpunta – Mitucocha camp

**Trekking time** 4h30-5h

[Map 31]

**Distance** 9km/6 miles **Ascent** 600m/2000ft **Descent** 500m/1600ft

A more interesting alternative to the mule route is to go R at the small junction just after Cacananpunta and traverse southwards on a faint path. Keep the rocky cliffs to your R and don't lose much ground on the way to crossing a small ridge (35 mins). Continue on the same bearing to a second ridge (25 mins), all the time heading at Jirishanca. From here descend the small river valley, to reach the terminal moraine (50 mins) in the main valley below Mitucocha. It's



Map 31

possible to wander R/S from the moraine to reach the lake; head L/N for the official campsite (30 mins).

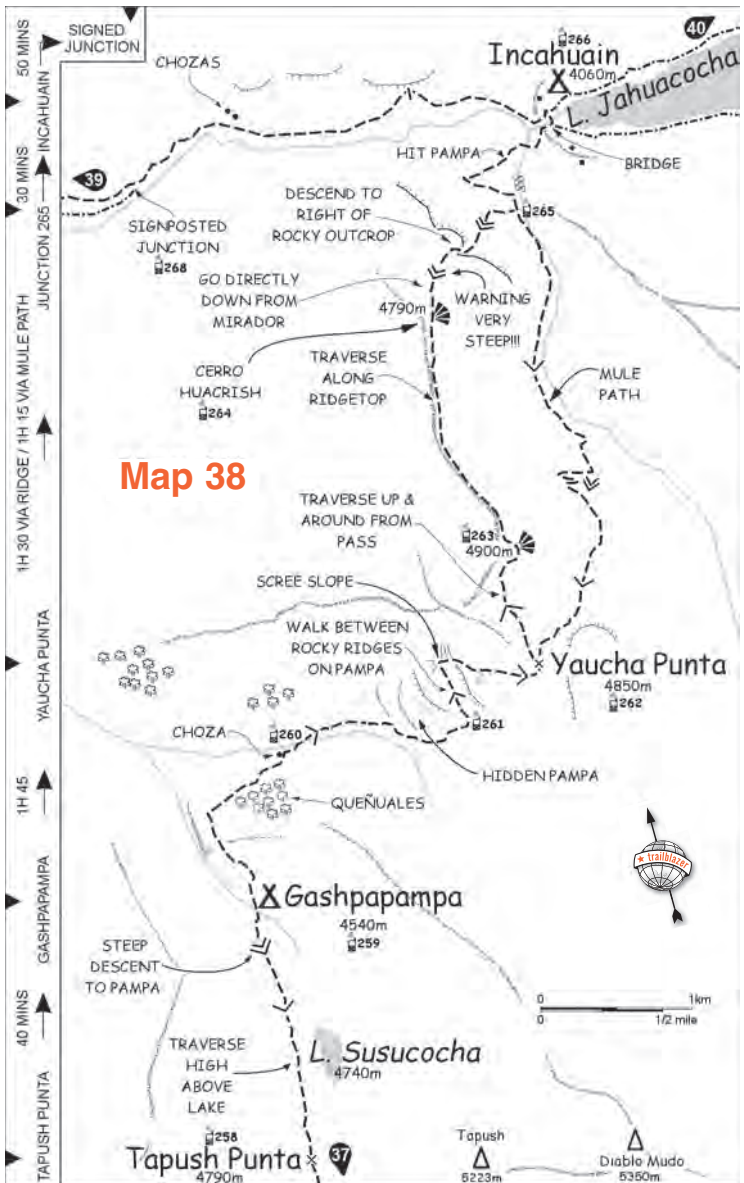
## 21.2 MITUCOCHA CAMP – CARHUAC – CARHUACOCHA

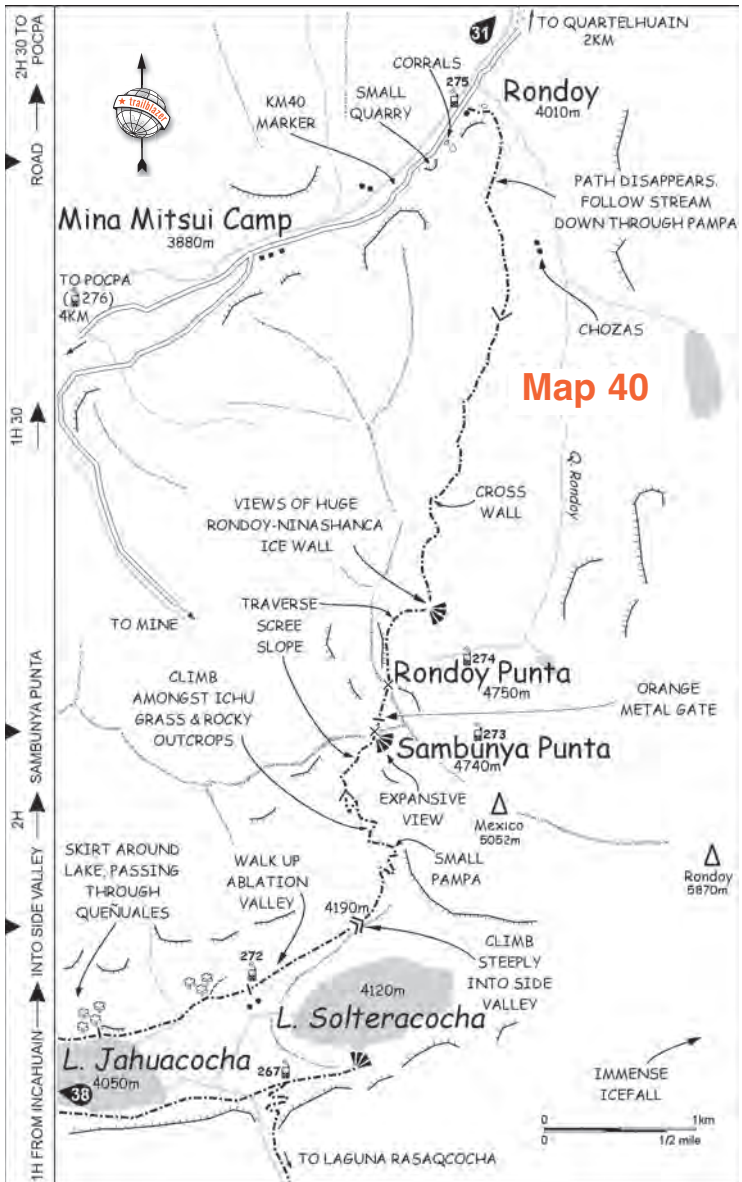
**Trekking time 4h**

[Map 32, p163]

**Distance 10km/6 miles Ascent 400m/1300ft Descent 450m/1500ft**

*The rewards for climbing to Carhuac are revealed on the descent, as the largest peaks in the Huayhuash gradually appear. Arrival above Carhuacocha is greeted by Siula Grande,*





## 21.9 INCAHUAIN – PAMPA LLAMAC – LLAMAC

**Trekking time** 4-4h30

[Map 38, p175 & Map 39, p176]

**Distance** 14km/9 miles **Ascent** 400m/1300ft **Descent** 120m/3900ft

*Most trekkers end their circuit with a walk out to Llamac. If you're relying on public transport you'll need to set off early though, as the last bus from Llamac to Chiquián/Huaraz leaves around 11:00 (confirm with the cobrador). From camp the trail leads down valley, before climbing a low pass and dropping 1000m to Llamac.*

Leave Incahuain via the path on the N side of the river, to reach a signposted junction (50 mins). The main trail heads R/up here (signed 'To Llamac'), though you can go straight on and follow a water channel. The two routes meet up before Llamac, by the yellow box described below. Following the canal is slightly longer (2h30 from signed junction to yellow box), but avoids any climbing.

The main trail climbs in and out of side valleys full of queñuales and bromeliads, reaching a high point after 1h15, then undulates before descending to the Pampa Llamac pass (25 mins, Macrash Punta on the *Alpenvereinskarte*). Forty minutes into the descent, the water channel route joins from the L, just before a ridge and yellow concrete box. With heavy legs, it can feel like an interminable descent as you continue down for a further 1 hr to Llamac.

**Llamac** has some **shops**, simple **restaurants** and a couple of basic places to stay – *Hostal Los Andenes* and *Alojamiento Santa Rosa*. **Camping** is also possible. The Nazario bus stop is one block south of the main street.

### Day 9 alternative exit: to the road at Rondoy

**Trekking time** 4h30

[Map 38, p175 & Map 40, p177]

**Distance** 12km/7 miles

**Ascent** 800m/2600ft

**Descent** 850m/2800ft

*This route boasts far better panoramas than the standard final day, so if transport can meet you at the road in Rondoy, or you don't mind walking down the road to Pocpa/Llamac and spending an extra night there, this is a good option. Climbing to Sambunya Punta there are fantastic views of Jirishanca and Yerupajá, and on the descent from Rondoy Punta the Rondoy-Ninashanca ice wall is in your face.*

Head E from Incahuain, on the N side of the lakes, and after 1 hr begin climbing L/N out of an ablation valley. It takes a further 2 hrs to reach Sambunya Punta, longer if you can't resist pausing every few minutes to look back at the snow and ice treats on show. At the pass a few stray peaks in the Cordilleras Blanca

and Huayllanca come into view to the N, while the path traverses NE for 10 mins to the slightly higher Rondoy Punta. The up-close views of Nevado Rondoy from here are simply superb. The trail traverses down valley, losing height gradually. It takes 1h20 to reach the road, emerging at Rondoy (which is often the first campsite for those trekking the mini-Huayhuash). Pocpa is 2h30 away on foot.

#### □ TOUCHING THE VOID

In 1985, after a first ascent of Siula Grande's west face, Joe Simpson fell and broke a leg while descending with climbing partner Simon Yates. His extraordinary escape back to basecamp from the bottom of a crevasse (popularized by both a book and film) has become the stuff of mountaineering legend.



# CYCLE TOURING ROUTES & MAPS

## Introduction

Cycling in the Cordilleras Blanca and Huayhuash is simply spectacular – many of the classic biking routes in the region are also the most picturesque and exciting mountain rides on the continent. As in days of old, when Wari and Inca civilizations constructed a vast network of mountain trails, modern day Peruvians are still the master road builders of the Andes. Roads cut through the mountains in the most unlikely of locations, providing a rare opportunity to pedal through territory more used to condors than bicycles.

The only prerequisite for enjoying a tour here is a love of climbing: flat routes simply do not exist. Almost all routes have significant vertical ascents, but the rewards for tackling these scenic mountain roads are great.

Though roads in the area aren't as high as some in the Himalaya, they rise far above anything in Europe or North America, and the short distances between valley towns and 4500m+ passes means that acclimatization must play an important part in trip planning.

Routes described are all a mixture of tarmac and dirt roads. There are currently no circuits which can be done all on paving; likewise it's possible to spend most, but not all of your time chewing up dirt. See p24 for kit-planning suggestions. Unpaved surfaces are generally okay – there's no sand or corrugations, though some routes are bumpy or stony and can be muddy in rainy season. Gradients are rarely over 10%, with 4-5% being the norm on most climbs.

Cyclists shouldn't expect to cover more than 40-50km a day, on average. The vertical terrain means you'll climb at least 1000m in this time, which, combined with the high altitude, makes for energy-sapping riding.

Trailblazer's *Adventure Cycle-Touring Handbook* (see p237) is a good resource to help prepare for any kind of multi-day biking tour.

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### Bikes on transport

Airline policies for carrying bicycles vary greatly. Some charge, others don't, but almost all insist the bike is boxed or bagged. Read



conditions of carriage carefully before buying your flight, and take a printout copy in case you need to show check-in staff.

Most buses from Lima to the Cordillera Blanca and between towns in the Cordillera will carry bikes. More upmarket companies have set fees, while drivers at others will size you up before deciding what to try and charge. This is almost always lower than set fees, but don't be afraid to haggle good naturedly (the bike fare should be less than the price for your seat). For a trip from Huaraz to a town in Conchucos, expect to pay a bike fee of around S/.10.

It's equally easy to throw a bike on smaller forms of transport if you need to shorten or access a route. Most taxis are estate cars (station wagons) with room for a few bikes; old combis have roof racks – you're usually charged an extra fare ('pasaje') to put your bike up top – and newer combis are able to fold down the back row of four seats (for which you must pay) to make room for bikes.

### Bike spares and mechanics

Bikers in Huaraz are relatively well catered for in terms of spares, with an eclectic assortment of Shimano components to be found, as well as more common disc pads and rotors. Expect high price tags, and don't rely on finding the latest gear. Although there are plenty of 26" rims and tyres available (especially downhill), if you're riding a 27.5" or 29er you may find yourself needing to have spares sent up from the capital.

Of the Huaraz **bike shops**, Montañas Mágicas Bike Center by Parque Ginebra has the widest selection of spares; if you can't find what you need there, try Julio Olaza's workshop (see p216) and then Reyes, by the Río Quilcay, which stocks a few random parts. For repairs, Arturo Corpus is a skillful and reliable mechanic with over 25 years of bici-tinkering experience who is proudly equipped with a collection of Park Tools (Av Atusparia 851, ☎ 928-270733). For more specialist repairs – he's your best option for suspension or hydraulic brakes – try Jesus Montero at Julio Olaza's workshop. All the above can order parts to be delivered from better-stocked Lima shops (see p54), with deliveries often arriving the following day.

#### ▣ GRINGOOOOO!

Cyclists will find themselves referred to as gringo/gringa at regular intervals. In the vast majority of cases it's a descriptive rather than derogatory moniker, so don't take offence. If not gringo, you'd be *gordito* (fatty), *flaquito* (skinny), *chino* (Chinaman) or one of the many other nicknames Peruvians call one another.

Outside of Huaraz, many towns have mechanics and very basic bike shops. Don't expect more than 26" tyres, tubes, rims and puncture repair kits in the way of spares, and don't be surprised if local mechanic techniques involve brute force and a mallet.

### Renting bikes

If cycling is the main purpose of your trip, it makes sense to bring your own bike – you'll be more familiar with its foibles, and it's likely to be

more comfortable. Added to this, finding suitable bikes to rent for a multi-day tour in Huaraz is tricky – try asking at Montañas Mágicas Bike Center (see p216). Those who are primarily trekking, but who wish to squeeze in a few day rides, should find it possible to rent bikes in Huaraz (see p216) or Caraz (p65), saving the considerable hassle of transporting your steed from home.

### Dangers and nuisances

Ride defensively at all times. In towns, combi and colectivo drivers have an annoying habit of swerving right in front of cyclists to pick up clients, which puts the onus on you to avoid an accident. Stay alert for potholes, missing manhole covers, ice cream sellers, fruit carts, escaped guinea pigs and other obstacles.

Especially in populated centres which rarely see cyclists, **dogs** can be a nuisance. You should remain particularly alert during day rides in the vicinity of Huaraz, as though Peruvian dogs aren't generally that large, they can be aggressive. Simply stopping normally shuts them up; if it doesn't, bending down to pick up a rock usually works. Occasionally you may need to throw the rock, like the locals do. See p46 for advice in the unlikely event that you are bitten.

All routes described are on quiet roads, except for the sections on the paved road by the Río Santa. It's still a good idea to bring a helmet as not only can you pick up huge speeds on the descents, but the standard of driving is questionable and in rainy season there's a slight danger from rock fall.















When wild camping, always ensure you are out of sight of the road.

### Route tables

The route tables in this section show cumulative **distances (km)**, **GPS waypoints**, **altitudes (m)** and include **directions** – left (←), right (→), straight on (↑) – and **local information**.

The GPS waypoints can be downloaded from  [blancahuayhuash.com](http://blancahuayhuash.com).

## Cycling Route Map Key

|   |               |   |            |   |                            |
|---|---------------|---|------------|---|----------------------------|
|  | Paved road    |  | Pass       |  | Internet                   |
|  | Unpaved road  |  | Mountain   |  | Bike shop                  |
|  | Large town    |  | Lodging    |  | Cash machine (ATM)         |
|  | Small town    |  | Shop       |  | Better than basic facility |
|  | Distance (km) |  | Restaurant |  | Camp / Wild camp           |

## Routes

### 1 DAY RIDES NEAR HUARAZ

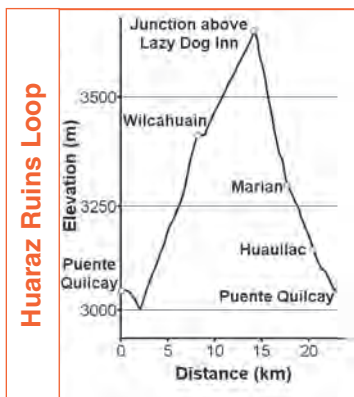
You could easily spend a week, if not two, doing day rides from Huaraz. The first four of the rides described are good ways to acclimatize before heading out to tackle some of the high passes, and the better acclimatized you are, the more enjoyable your multi-day riding will be. Most villages in the hills around Huaraz have a basic shop selling fizzy drinks and biscuits; it's a good idea to bring water and other snacks with you from town.

#### 1.1 Huaraz Ruins Loop

This half-day loop into the hills above Huaraz makes a good first ride in the Blanca. The route climbs steadily out of town to the Recuay and Wari period ruins at **Wilcahuain** (S/.5, open 09:00-17:00 Tue-Sun) and **Ichic Wilcahuain** (same ticket and timetable). Beyond, the scenery opens out and it's a quiet ride with sweeping views of the Negra and the Blanca's southern quebradas and peaks. Pastoral rural life continues sedately – it's a world away from Ancash's busy capital.

At the beginning of the steep and bumpy descent, pass **Café Yurac Yacu** (open daily 11:00-16:00, early/mid-June to September), which serves up local organic produce and makes a great lunch spot. All proceeds from the café benefit the community centre housed there. Before arriving back in Huaraz, the road skirts a third set of Wari ruins at Huallac.

It's possible to avoid most of the climbing on this loop by catching a combi (30 mins, S/.2.50 plus S/.2.50 for a bike) to Wilcahuain (see map p185); bikes are carried on the roof rack.



#### HUARAZ RUINS LOOP

[map pp184-5]

- **Start & end** Huaraz, Puente Quilcay
- **Riding time** 2½-3 hrs
- **Paved/Unpaved %** 20/80
- **Distance** 23km/14 miles
- **Ascent** 650m/2100ft
- **Max altitude** 3660m/12,000ft

| KM | GPS | ALT (M) | INFO  | DESCRIPTION  |
|----|-----|---------|-------|--|
| 0  | 277 | 3060    | Start | <b>Huaraz</b> , Puente Quilcay. Head 2 blocks N on Av Centenario until it becomes one way. |

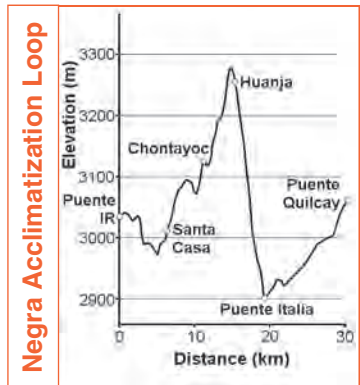
| KM   | GPS | ALT (M) | INFO  | DESCRIPTION   |
|------|-----|---------|-------|---|
| 0.2  |     | 3060    | →, ←  | R on Víctor Velez, then 1st L on Fco de Zela.   |
| 0.9  |     | 3050    | ←, →  | L on Fco Araos, at the end of Fco de Zela, then 1st R onto Av Centenario.   |
| 1.7  | 278 | 3020    | →     | R to Wilcahuain (signposted), off main highway. Paving is soon replaced by bumpy dirt road – stick to the largest route as it climbs up behind Huaraz.  |
| 6.3  |     | 3290    |       | Start of steep km in Paria.   |
| 7.5  | 279 | 3410    | Ruins | Entrance to <b>Wilcahuain ruins</b> . Just after, the route flattens off and the surface becomes good.  |
| 8.4  | 280 | 3410    | Ruins | <b>Ichic Wilcahuain ruins</b> .   |
| 8.9  | 281 | 3440    | ↑     | Go straight. R descends to Uquia and Huanchac.  |
| 13.8 | 282 | 3650    | →     | Junction by Km12 marker. Go R, descending towards Marian. (See Blanca Acclimatization Loop p187 for route that continues straight). Soon reach <b>The Lazy Dog Inn</b> and <b>Café Yurac Yacu</b> . |
| 17.2 | 283 | 3290    | ↑     | Straight at junction in <b>Marian</b> . R descends to El Pinar (see p185).  |
| 20.2 | 284 | 3140    | Ruins | <b>Huauillac ruins</b> , R of road, just before a bridge. Descend paving to the town centre.  |
| 22.5 | 277 | 3060    | End   | <b>Huaraz</b> , Puente Quilcay.   |

## 1.2 Negra Acclimatization Loop

This trip in the Cordillera Negra is another ideal introduction to cycling in the thin air of the Callejón de Huaylas. The route never goes above 3300m, though as it climbs nearly 400m above the valley floor there are great views across to the snowy peaks of the Cordillera Blanca.

After crossing the large Interoceánico Raimondi bridge and leaving the none-too-clean outskirts of town, the route begins a lovely rising traverse, high above the river, through small villages, patchwork fields, *agave cordillerania* and eucalyptus.

Reach a high point before Huanja, then descend swiftly to the main, paved, road and climb back up valley to town. The circuit can be shortened, if desired, by descending to the paving at earlier junctions.





**LAGUNA LLACA****[map pp184-5]**

- **Start & end** Huaraz, Puente Quilcay
- **Riding time** 5-6 hrs
- **Paved/Unpaved %** 15/85
- **Distance** 47km/29 miles (return)
- **Vertical climb** 1400m/4600ft
- **Max altitude** 4450m/14,600ft

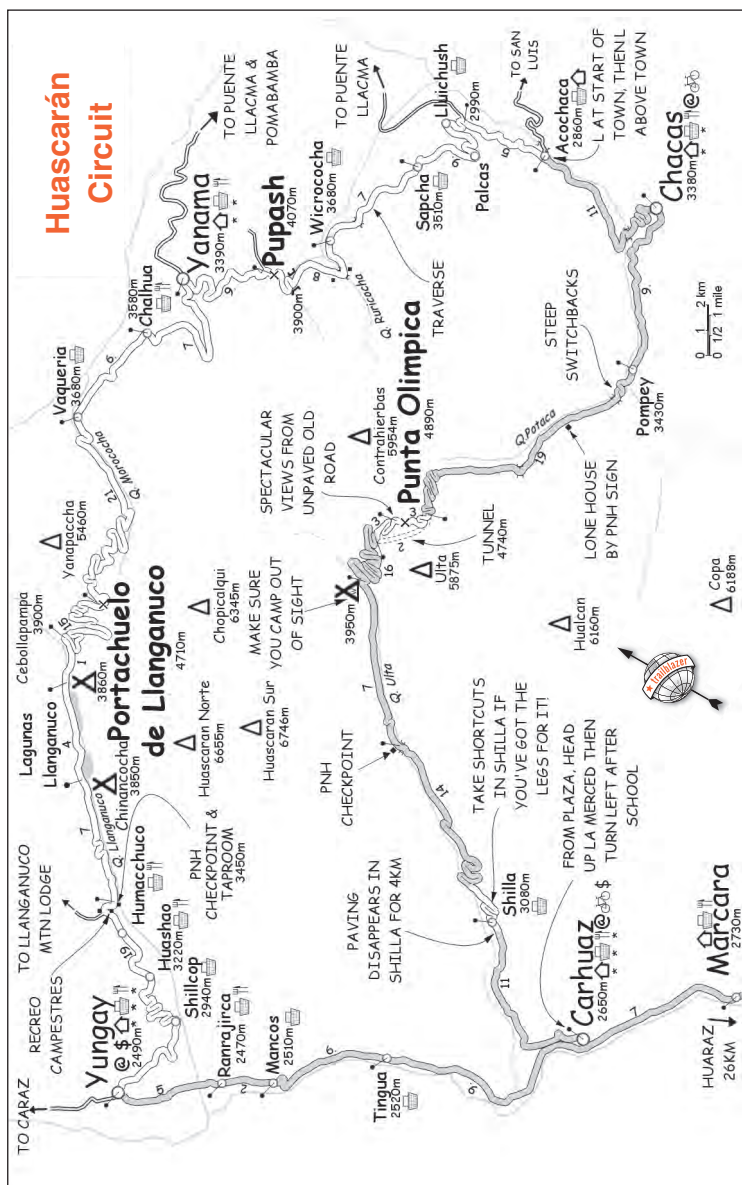
| KM   | GPS | ALT (M) | INFO  | DESCRIPTION  |
|------|-----|---------|-------|--|
| 0    | 277 | 3060    | Start | <b>Huaraz</b> , Puente Quilcay. Go one block N.  |
| 0.1  |     | 3060    | ➔     | Turn R onto Jr Manco Capac and remain on this through town.  |
| 1.7  | 301 | 3150    | ➔     | Turn R, signposted 'El Pinar'.   |
| 4.1  |     | 3270    | ➔     | Turn R onto unpaved road at <b>El Pinar</b> , a gated community for Antamina mine workers.   |
| 5.4  | 283 | 3290    | ⬅     | L at T-junction in <b>Marian</b> . Soon begin a series of very steep climbs. Pass <b>Café Yurac Yacu</b> and <b>The Lazy Dog Inn</b> just before reaching the next junction. |
| 8.8  | 282 | 3650    | ➔     | Go R on meeting road from Wilcahuain. Climb gently on good surface.  |
| 11.8 | 293 | 3800    | ⬅     | Turn off L to Laguna Llaca, before main route enters Quebrada Cojup.   |
| 16.8 |     | 4050    |       | <b>PNH gate</b> as you enter Quebrada Llaca. Ocshapalca and Ranrapalca in view ahead.  |
| 23.3 | 302 | 4450    | Top   | <b>Refugio Llaca</b> and road end. For best views, lock up your bike and walk up the footpath to Laguna Llaca, before beginning the long descent.                            |
| 46.6 | 277 | 3060    | End   | <b>Huaraz</b> , Puente Quilcay.  |

## 2 HUASCARÁN CIRCUIT

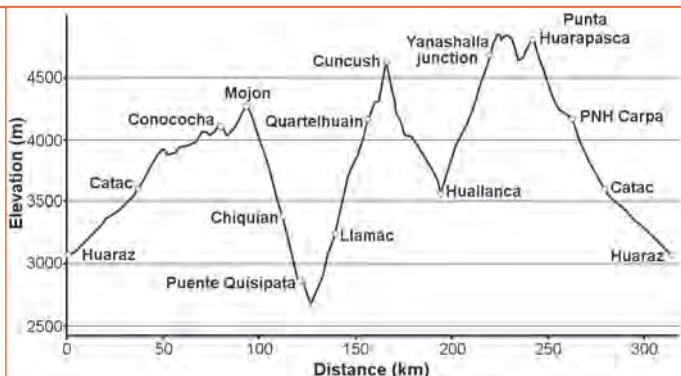
The circuit of Huascarán is a classic Andean cycle route, providing a visual and cultural treat to all intrepid cyclists willing to accept the challenge. The loop crosses the spine of the Cordillera twice, at Punta Olímpica (4890m) and Portachuelo de Llanganuco (4710m), passes cut through rocky ridges in the 1980s, for roads which soar high among glaciers and are towered over by the Blanca's largest peaks. Six or seven riding days is the ideal amount of time to spend on encircling Peru's highest mountain. You'll need to camp a couple of times and will probably also want to add in a day or two for resting in one of the towns, or for exploring Quebradas Llanganuco or Ulta, in order to soak up some of the most dramatic natural beauty in the whole of the Andes.

Here we describe the loop in an anticlockwise direction as we think it's best to start with an easier, paved climb. Others think it preferable to go clockwise in order to be climbing, rather than descending, on the bumpy surface from Yungay to Portachuelo de Llanganuco; take your pick.

Much of the route is in PNH – buy a ticket at the Llanganuco post when you enter (or are leaving) the national park.



## Huayhuash &amp; Puya Raimondii



### 3 HUAYHUASH AND PUYA RAIMONDII LOOP

For panoramas of the Cordillera Huayhuash and up-close encounters with Puya raimondii in the southern Cordillera Blanca, this circuit from Huaraz (or Catac) can't be bettered. Most people need six or seven days to cycle the 315km route as long stretches are at high altitude and there are four 4000m passes to negotiate.

Cycling either of the sections from Llamac to Huallanca or Huallanca to Catac in a day is beyond most mortals, so bring camping equipment. The communities in Llamac and Pocpa charge fees to pass through (see p159). Though this is really meant for the Huayhuash Circuit trek, cyclists have to pay even if they don't leave the road. The puna stretch over Punta Huarapasca is within PNH – you can buy a ticket at the Carpa checkpoint.

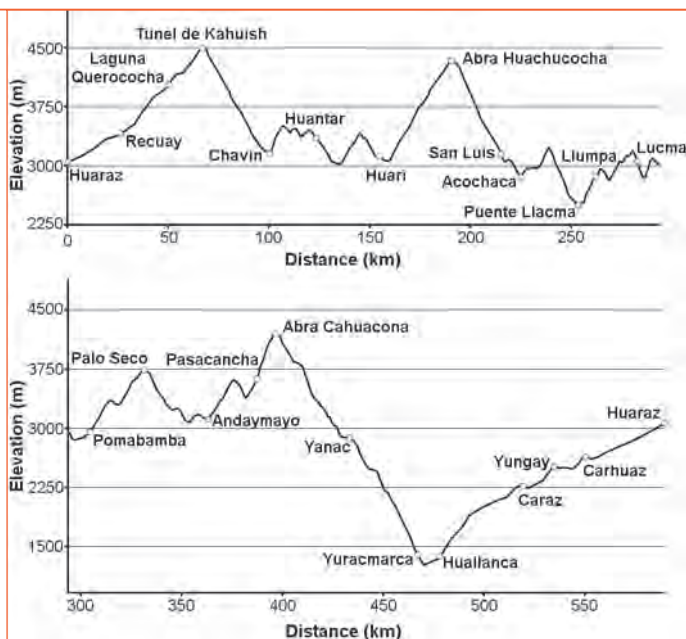


#### □ RUTA DE LOS DINOSAURIOS

During construction of the paving to Antamina, one of Peru's biggest mines, workmen were somewhat surprised to uncover dinosaur footprints in the bedrock being excavated – these incredible discoveries can twice be seen right by the road. To visit, detour from the circuit at the junction above Huanzala.

It's possible to continue past the prints to Antamina mine (46km from the junction) and on for a further 60km to San Marcos. A shorter, rougher way to Conchucos is to turn off the paving 30km after the junction above Huanzala and cut straight down to Chavín (26km away)

## Cordillera Blanca Circuit



## Route description

Climb up the main road from Huaraz to the attractive town of Recuay, where there is a minor route choice. Either take the lovely dirt road shortcut, saving 7km, which crosses the Río Santa and meets the paving above Catac; or, stick to the paving as far as Catac before turning east. Laguna Querococha, backed by hills pitted with deep, wrinkled valleys, makes a good camp spot part way into the ascent, before the route passes through Túnel de Kahuish and descends to the verdant Callejón de Conchucos and Chavín. It's worth spending a day here visiting the most important archaeological site in the region before continuing.

There are two route options from Chavín to Huari. We recommend the more scenic high, unpaved way through Huántar, though this is more strenuous than the main road which descends the Río Mosna valley and passes through San Marcos before climbing to Huari.

From Huari comes a long ascent over Abra Huachucocha to San Luis, where again the road divides. The high route via Cunya offers better views and the chance to linger in untouched villages which rarely see a foreigner. The low route has the advantage of fewer vertical metres to ascend and the opportunity for a quick detour to the pilgrimage site of Pomallucay. The routes rejoin near Puente Llacma and zigzag up to the village of Llumpa. The main, though still very quiet, way to Pomabamba is via Piscobamba; however it's better to take the shortcut via Lucma as the surface and panoramas are superior.

The northern sector from Pomabamba to Yuracmarca is the least impacted by the modern world. Interactions with welcoming poncho-clad villagers, out tending fields or knitting whilst herding animals, are a highlight as the road undulates upwards to Abra Cahuacona. The descent down a large valley from the pass is phenomenal, with huge drops down to the river and pampas below. Chuckle at the gall of Peruvian road engineers as you cut down a near-vertical slope en route to Yuracmarca, then marvel again after hitting the main road and climbing up to Caraz through the Cañón del Pato. The route passes through 36 tunnels cut into the steep-sided canyon walls. Bring good lights – there is some traffic and the unlit tunnels are as much as 250m long.

Caraz makes a good place to rest and recuperate before continuing for a day up the paving by the Río Santa, through Yungay and Carhuaz to Huaraz.



### CORDILLERA BLANCA CIRCUIT

[maps pp202-3 & pp204-5]

- **Start & end** Huaraz
- **Riding time** 10-14 days
- **Paved/Unpaved %** 30/70
- **Distance** 589km/366 miles
- **Vertical climb** 11,200m/36,700ft
- **Max altitude** 4470m/14,650ft

| KM   | GPS | ALT (M) | INFO   | DESCRIPTION  |
|------|-----|---------|--------|--|
| 0    | 303 | 3060    | Start  | <b>Huaraz</b> , Plaza de Armas. Take the main road S.  |
| 24.5 | 327 | 3410    | ←      | L off main road, to Recuay.  |
| 25.5 |     | 3400    | ←, →   | <b>Recuay</b> , Plaza de Armas. Turn L, then R by the river, for the dirt road shortcut. (Continue straight and rejoin the main road for the <b>alternative route</b> via Catac – see p211.) |
|      |     |         |        | <b>Hostal Pasto Ruri</b> , S of Recuay's Plaza, has basic en suite rooms and is a decent choice.   |
| 26.5 | 328 | 3410    | ←, →   | Go L across <b>Puente Velasco</b> then turn R/S.   |
|      |     |         | Bridge | Pass through <b>Llullucachi</b> village.   |
| 30.5 |     | 3470    | ←      | Turn L, climbing up a green side valley. (R is a rough track to Ticapampa.)  |
| 34   |     | 3590    |        | <b>Yacucancha</b> .  |
| 35.5 | 329 | 3640    | ←      | Turn L and rejoin paving at the few houses of Buenos Aires. Gentle climb with views of spiky peaks near Quebrada Rurec.  |
| 46.5 |     | 3960    |        | PNH Querococha Office.   |
| 48   |     | 4020    |        | <b>Laguna Querococha</b> and basic (in season) café. Possible camping.   |
| 65   | 330 | 4470    | Tunnel | Enter 500m-long <b>Túnel de Kahuish</b> . On leaving, you're greeted with a wave from a large Cristo de los Andes figure. There are no good campsites on the descent.                        |
| 90   |     | 3370    |        | <b>Machac</b> .  |
| 94.5 | 331 | 3220    | ↑      | Stay straight at junction in <b>Quercos</b> (thermal   |



**CORDILLERA BLANCA CIRCUIT [cont'd]****Alternative paved route from Recuay via Catac**

| 11.5 |     | 3540    |      | Km0 marker and start of paved road to Chavín.             |
|------|-----|---------|------|---|
| KM   | GPS | ALT (M) | INFO | DESCRIPTION   |
| 17   | 329 | 3640    | ↑    | Unpaved shortcut from Recuay joins (at 35.5km, see p207). |

**Alternative low route from Chavín to Huari via San Marcos**

|      |     |      |   |   |
|------|-----|------|---|---|
| 0    |     | 3150 |   | <b>Chavín</b> , Plaza de Armas. Take main, paved, road N.   |
| 8    | 353 | 2980 | ← | Junction at start of <b>San Marcos</b> . Go L, via the Plaza de Armas.  |
| 10.5 | 354 | 2950 | ↑ | Go straight. R climbs to Antamina via Huari-pampa – see box p196 <b>Ruta de los Dinosaurios</b> .   |
| 17.5 |     | 2870 | ↑ | Go straight in <b>Succha</b> – a dirt road climbs L to Huántar. The low road passes incredible rock slabs – hundreds of metres high and perfectly smooth. |
| 21.5 |     | 2720 | ↑ | Continue on the paving, ignoring a dirt road that climbs L to Mallas. Soon cross Puente Jaucan at the narrowest point of the Río Mosna valley.            |
| 26.5 | 355 | 2620 | ↑ | Stick to the main road in <b>Pomachaca</b> , the pyrotechnics capital of the Cordillera. (R goes to Llamellín.)   |
| 31   |     | 2800 | ↑ | Keep straight, on the paving. (R goes to Chinchas, from where it's about 3 hours walk to the Recuay ruins of Marcajirca.)                                 |
| 33.5 |     | 2880 | ↑ | Straight. (R goes to Cajay.)  |
| 38   | 336 | 3100 |   | <b>Huari</b> , Plaza de Armas.  |

**Alternative low route from San Luis to Puente Llacma via Pomallucay**

|      |     |      |        |  |
|------|-----|------|--------|--|
| 0    | 338 | 2980 | ↑      | Go straight/R (at 215.5km, see p209), descending a dirt road towards Pomallucay. (L is the main paved road to Acochaca.) |
| 8    | 356 | 2780 | ↑      | Straight at junction. (R goes to Pomallucay – 2.5km away and worth a quick detour to see the church) and Yauya.          |
| 12.5 |     | 2540 | Bridge | Cross main river.  |
| 15.5 | 339 | 2600 | ↑      | Join main route described at 248.5km (see p209).   |

## ❏ WINCHUS LOOP



For magnificent panoramic views of the northern peaks in the Blanca and the chance to ride past towering Puya raimondii (see box on p31) in the Bosque de Winchus (Forest of Hummingbirds – which flock to the area when the puya are in bloom) consider this excursion into the Cordillera Negra above Caraz. The once-paved road through Pueblo Libre to the coast has crumbled to dust higher up, making the (90km, 2500m vertical ascent) loop a pre-

dominantly dirt-riding two day affair which brushes 4400m before descending through the village of Huata to the Río Santa valley.

See [blancahuayhuash.com](http://blancahuayhuash.com) for more details.

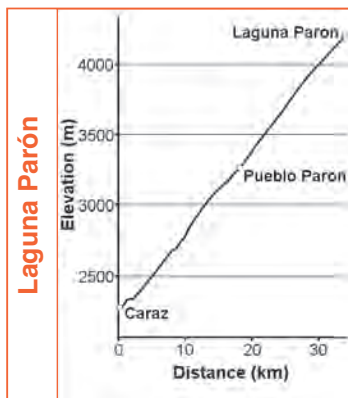
## 5 LAGUNA PARÓN

Enthusiasts of long, challenging ascents should enjoy this one. Once you turn off the tarmac in the outskirts of Caraz, the climb is incessant – almost 2000m at an average 6% gradient.

It's possible to go unloaded on a day trip, but this means arriving at Laguna Parón in the afternoon by which time the peaks are often enshrouded in cloud. Better to cycle to the lake, then camp and go walking in the morning – the views at the mirador above the lake and on the hike to Artesonraju Basecamp (see p113) are superb.

The first half of the climb passes quiet villages; flowers and vegetables seen growing in roadside fields are sold in Caraz market and beyond. At 3300m is a control gate manned by Parón villagers where tourists are charged S/.5 entry to the valley; the money goes directly to the Parón community and you're not required to have an additional PNH ticket. Above the gate nothing but zigzags, queñuales and huge rock walls await. The road ends just above Laguna Parón's turquoise waters, with views of Piramide and Chacaraju.

The rough surface means that a bike with suspension makes for a quicker and more enjoyable descent to Caraz. If big descents, rather than long climbs, are your thing you'll be able to find a driver in Caraz (see p64) who's willing to give you a lift up to the lake in the morning, which gives you time to explore a bit before flying down to town on two wheels.



# MOUNTAIN BIKING ROUTES & MAPS

7

## Introduction

Chaki; foot. Nani; trail. Foot trail – or singletrack. It's Quechua, the language of the Incas, and if there's one word you should learn as a mountain biker in Peru, chakinani is it.

Despite predating mountain bikes by several hundred years, the Incas certainly had their singletrack network nailed. Ancient trading routes zigzag their way from the Pacific coastline to the lofty valleys of the Andes mountains and back down into the steamy cauldron of the Amazon basin. Similarly, Inca-trail building skills remain legendary – a million man hours spent positioning great slabs of time-smoothed rock, linking one settlement to the next. None is more famous than the metropolis of Machu Picchu, magnet for all tourists visiting the country. Yet, for the adventure-seeking mountain biker, the more northerly Cordillera Blanca perhaps holds more appeal.

Set at altitudes that touch 4000m, these are trails that whip both muscles and lungs into shape – 15km dirt road climbs answered by relentless chutes of technical singletrack, covering a whole gamut of conditions under tyre. Hurtle down an Inca stairwell, hop a drainage stream, then skittle down a handlebar-width alleyway. A few corners later, dodge round the edge of a quinoa field, squeeze past donkeys loaded wide with eucalyptus, or try and outrun a manic pack of village dogs.

### SHOCKING SHOWERS



Many showers in Peruvian villages are heated by dodgily-wired electric elements in the shower head. To use, turn the circuit-breaker switch on and open the tap (using a dry or insulated hand if the electrics look really suspect). The higher the flow, the colder the shower – the point where it just starts to buzz is normally the best trade-off between

temperature and power. Flip the switch off again at the end.



### ❑ JULIO OLAZA – MOUNTAIN BIKE ADVENTURES PERU



As a young man in the '80s, **Julio Olaza** explored many of the Cordillera Blanca's quebradas on foot. He ran Tasco Bar, a popular hang out for foreign travellers, where in conversation one day he heard mention of 'mountain biking' as the next big craze. Julio was intrigued; so much so that he later managed to get a mountain bike brought out to him from the States. Cordillera explorations took on a new dimension.

Julio spent the early '90s in the US – they were dark years in Peru with the economy in tatters, high inflation and a still-active Sendero Luminoso. On returning with honed biking skills to his native Huaraz, two possible career paths presented: stay safe and open a *lavandería* (laundrette), or risk starting a mountain biking company.

Fortunately for the Peruvian biking scene he chose the latter, opening Peru's first mountain biking agency, Mountain Bike Adventures, in 1995.


suited to the long and grinding dirt road climbs. Running a tubeless setup will undoubtedly help with the thorns that mine the area, but be aware that it's worth bringing extra sealant as you may not find it available locally.

Likewise, any spares specific to your bike should also be brought out, to avoid wasting time having them sent up from Lima. The same goes with servicing hydraulic brakes – do this beforehand, as options in Huaraz are limited. If you're running a 29er or 27.5", best bring a spare; a derailleur hanger would be a wise addition to your pack list too.

If you do have a mechanical while in the Cordillera, take comfort from that fact that unless you are on an extremely tight schedule, it shouldn't automatically mean the end of your riding. Spares ordered from the capital can often be delivered to Huaraz within 24 hours and, with local help, could be forwarded on to remoter towns deeper in the mountains.

## Routes

### GPS ROUTES

GPS tracks for these routes can be downloaded free from  [blancahuayhuash.com](http://blancahuayhuash.com).

### PI TEC DESCENT

[see p218]

The Pitec Descent is one of the mountain biking staples in the area. It can be worked into a day ride from Huaraz using dirt roads via Wilcahuayán, Llupa or Marian (see map p185), or you can catch transport to Pitec from town (see

(cont'd on p220)

p127). It also makes the perfect finale back to Huaraz after various forays around the quebradas, such as those in Quilcayhuanca and Rajucolta. In fact, it's a trail that's more enjoyable each time you ride it, as you find the flow of the ride and get to know its quirks.

Starting at 3860m and working its way down to 3200m, the trail is made up of a series of flowing bouts of singletrack and steppy chutes. Although there are a few challenging rock gardens and water channels that may require a quick dismount, for the most part it's a fast and flowy trail. Skirting along ancient village walls and squeezing round fields of quinoa, it's a ride that offers great insight into typical mountain life. As close as it is to Huaraz, the pace of life here feels a world away from the hubbub of the city.

Don't forget that locals and their animals use this route, so ride with caution and a smile. The descent from Pitec to Huaraz takes about an hour.

## NEGRA DOWNHILL

[see p219]

Although the Cordillera Blanca gets all the press, the Negra's the place to go for fast and furious descents – this is where the local DH boys tend to gather. Most catch a Pira combi (S/.5, from the stop near the stadium), or a taxi (around S/.50), to Mina Huascar, but you can also ride up on dirt or tarmac (see Santo Toribio Circuit p188), working your way up the 1000m climb to really earn your descent.

Although this is a short route in terms of distance, it's a thrilling, white-knuckle affair, with fantastic views out to the Cordillera Blanca across the valley. Much of the route is singletrack, and where it widens, it's still laced with rocks and boulders. Watch out for the steep concrete staircase towards the end

### BIKEPACKING THE HUAYHUASH

The Cordillera Huayhuash (see p156) makes an epic multi-day bikepack; but it's by no means an easy one. From a mountain biker's perspective, the flowy, rocky and technical trails are hard fought, especially at such high elevations. Many of the climbs are unrideable, so travel light and expect extended hike-a-bikes. Aside from the time taken to manhandle your bike over several high passes, allow for inclement weather to slow progress too.

These challenges aside, the majority of the trail from Quartelhuain to Huayllapa is eminently rideable and laced with some of the finest ribbons of backcountry singletrack you could hope for. Certainly, the experience of riding them is heightened by their sense of context and the magnitude of the mountains around.

The eastern flank of the loop is more bike-friendly than the west, so consider exiting to Cajatambo and catching the 05:30 bus to the coast and then to Huaraz from there. If you do continue round, follow the 4WD track from Huayllapa to Tapush Punta, rather than the more direct trekking route; or consider hiring mules.

It's about 120km from Chiquián to Cajatambo, which can be broken down into four or five days of riding. Cyclists are best off avoiding Siula Punta, tackling the gentler and far more rideable Punta Carnicero instead. Likewise, the dirt road beyond the hot springs at Viconga, following the Río Pumarinri, makes a favourable alternative to the hike-a-bike over Punta Cuyoc.



of the ride. As ever, we'd recommend walking any parts of the route you're not fully comfortable riding, as there's no medevac around here...

Allow an hour from Mina Huascar to town.

### Other downhill rides

Other rides to seek out include **El Cañón** – a whirligig descent that starts beyond the viewpoint at Rataquena (see warning p55). A downhill rider's dream, it's an off-the-saddle affair, a short but intense blast through a landscape resembling giant termite hills. Following a loose and rocky trail that's barely wider than a set of handlebars, it plummets you back down to the south-east corner of Huaraz, by the cemetery.

**La Dentista**, as it's sometimes known, is a barrage of awkwardly shaped rocks – as large and jagged as a giant's bad teeth – that lies en route to Quebrada Llaca. Before the road dives into the gorge, look out for a trail on the left, which winds its way all the way down to The Lazy Dog Inn, from where you can traverse across to Pitec. Be warned: this is a ride for technically proficient mountain bikers only.

## CROSS COUNTRY ROUTES NEAR HUARAZ

The following routes are, at least in part, on hiking trails within Parque Nacional Huascarán. Though they are not in the busiest valleys, please do be careful when riding within the park, giving way to hikers and dismounting if you encounter mule trains.

### Laguna Rajucolta

The 75km-loop to Laguna Rajucolta can either be undertaken as a big day out, or split into a relaxed overnighter by camping below the lake's hydroelectric plant, 32km in. It's a great ride, for three reasons. Firstly, hardly anyone heads out to this part of the Blanca; next up, the singletrack is remote and testing; and lastly it's almost completely rideable – with just one relatively mild 45-minute hike-a-bike to its name.

To get there, ride out of Huaraz via Rataquena, climbing steeply out of the valley, before picking your way over the ridge towards Quebrada Pariac/Rajucolta. Aim to follow trails on the north side, crisscrossing the river on occasions. Persevere up to the lake on a two track to soak up that magnificent Huantsan view. From there, backtrack out of the park, keeping an eye out for the well-defined trail to the north which leaves from a little west of the entrance gate. After a 45-minute hike, reach a stretch of beautiful pampa, which in turn feeds you into a freeform descent to Jancu.

Jancu is linked to Huaraz by road, but can also be connected with Pitec, via the trail that skirts round the base of Quebrada Shallap – almost all of which is rideable and beautiful singletrack at that (see map p129).

The *Alpenvereinskarte* is useful for the route, and there are plenty of campesinos about to check directions with. In the vicinity of Rataquena we'd recommend riding with a local, as walkers have been victims of robberies in the area (see p55).

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## APPENDIX A: SPANISH WORDS & PHRASES

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There are two languages spoken in the areas covered by this guide: **Spanish**, which is the main language of Peru, and **Ancash Quechua** (Quechua Ancashino) which is the native language of the indigenous people and is widely spoken in mountain areas, particularly in villages. Many local people are bilingual, but visiting trekkers and cyclists will find Spanish is the more useful to learn, as it's much more common to come across someone who speaks no Quechua, than someone who speaks no Spanish. There are no readily-available Ancash Quechua phrasebooks – the most useful dictionary we are aware of is the Ancash Quechua to Spanish *Diccionario Quechua Ancashino – Castellano*. Those interested in learning Ancash Quechua should enquire about courses at the Centro Cultural in Huaraz. Many of the terms included in the glossary are Quechua – travellers will most often encounter these in place and feature names.

### SOME QUECHUA WORDS

|                    |                            |                      |                          |
|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Hello/How are you? | <i>Imanollata kekanky?</i> | Where are you going? | <i>Mayta ewanky?</i>     |
| Goodbye            | <i>Aywalla</i>             | Where are you from?  | <i>Maypitatan kanky?</i> |
| Thank you          | <i>Yusulpaaya</i>          |                      |                          |

### SPANISH

South American Spanish is an easy language to pronounce, as once some simple rules are learnt, there are almost no irregularities. 'll' is pronounced like a 'y', 'hu' is pronounced 'w'. Unlike in Spain, there is no lisping in South America – the 'c' in 'ce' and 'ci' as well as 'z's are pronounced 's'. 'v' is pronounced like a 'b', 'j' like the 'ch' in a Scottish loch, 'h' at the start of a word is silent if followed by 'a', 'e', 'i' or 'o'. ñ is pronounced 'ny', as in 'canyon'.

In general, stress goes on the penultimate syllable unless there's an accent to indicate alternative stress.

The 'tu' form, rather than the more formal 'usted', has been used in the following phrases.

### General words and phrases

|                       |                      |                   |                         |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Hello                 | <i>Hola</i>          | How are you?      | <i>¿Cómo estás?</i>     |
| Good day/good morning | <i>Buenos días</i>   | What's your name? | <i>¿Cómo te llamas?</i> |
| Good afternoon        | <i>Buenas tardes</i> | I'm called ...    | <i>Me llamo...</i>      |
| Good evening          | <i>Buenas noches</i> | Please            | <i>Por favor</i>        |
| Goodbye               | <i>Adiós</i>         | impossible        | <i>imposible</i>        |
| See you               | <i>Hasta luego</i>   | good              | <i>bueno</i>            |
| Excuse me             | <i>(Con) permiso</i> | okay              | <i>está bien</i>        |
| Mr/Sir                | <i>Señor</i>         | bad               | <i>malo</i>             |
| Madam                 | <i>Señora</i>        | beautiful         | <i>bonito/lindo</i>     |
| Thank you             | <i>Gracias</i>       | it is hot         | <i>hace calor</i>       |
| Sorry (apologies)     | <i>Disculpame</i>    | rain              | <i>lluvia</i>           |
| Yes                   | <i>Sí</i>            | wind              | <i>viento</i>           |
| No                    | <i>No</i>            | snow              | <i>nieve</i>            |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Where are you going?                        | <i>¿Adónde vas?</i>                         |
| I'm going to (Huaraz) via (Punta Olímpica). | <i>Voy a (Huaraz) por (Punta Olímpica).</i> |
| Where are you from?                         | <i>¿De dónde eres?</i>                      |
| Where have you come from?                   | <i>¿De dónde has venido?</i>                |
| Which country are you from?                 | <i>¿De qué país?</i>                        |
| What's this?                                | <i>¿Qué es esto?</i>                        |
| Is there transport to ... from here?        | <i>¿Hay transporte a ... de aquí?</i>       |

## APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY

|                        |   |                              |   |
|------------------------|---|------------------------------|---|
| <i>ablation valley</i> | a valley formed by a glacier's lateral moraine and the side of the larger valley housing the moraine          | <i>Callejón de Conchucos</i> | the series of river valleys to the east of the Cordillera Blanca  |
| <i>abra</i>            | high mountain pass  | <i>Callejón de Huaylas</i>   | the Río Santa valley to the west of the Cordillera Blanca   |
| <i>abuelita/o</i>      | grandmother/grandfather   | <i>cama</i>                  | bed   |
| <i>acequia</i>         | irrigation ditch  | <i>Camino Real</i>           | the Inca Royal Road   |
| <i>aguas termales</i>  | thermal/hot springs   | <i>campesino/a</i>           | Peruvian peasant or worker of the land  |
| <i>alcalde</i>         | mayor   | <i>cancha</i>                | small plot of land or block of houses in an Inca town; toasted corn   |
| <i>alojamiento</i>     | accommodation   | <i>casa de cambio</i>        | bureau de change  |
| <i>alpaca</i>          | type of domesticated camelid, resembling a long-legged/necked sheep, bred for its wool                        | <i>caserío</i>               | hamlet  |
| <i>alto (de)</i>       | high mountain pass  | <i>casona</i>                | large house/mansion, often set around a courtyard   |
| <i>aluvión</i>         | flash-flood of mud and gravel, usually sparked by an earthquake   | <i>cerro</i>                 | hill/mountain   |
| <i>AMS</i>             | Acute Mountain Sickness   | <i>chacra</i>                | small farm  |
| <i>Ancash</i>          | one of Peru's 24 departments; contains the Cordillera Blanca and part of the Huayhuash; its capital is Huaraz | <i>chakinani</i>             | footpath  |
| <i>Ancashino/a</i>     | a resident of Ancash  | <i>choza</i>                 | stone hut with thatched roof  |
| <i>andinismo</i>       | mountaineering  | <i>chullo</i>                | woollen hat   |
| <i>apacheta</i>        | cairn; wayside shrine   | <i>chullpa</i>               | an ancient funerary tower constructed for a noble person  |
| <i>apu</i>             | gods or spirits of the mountains that protect local people in high areas                                      | <i>cobrador</i>              | conductor (on a bus); collector of money  |
| <i>arriero</i>         | muleteer  | <i>coca</i>                  | plant used by Peruvians to ease altitude sickness and for stamina and health; leaves are chewed or made into tea; raw ingredient of cocaine |
| <i>ayahuasca</i>       | a hallucinogenic drink prepared from the bark of a woody vine   | <i>cocha</i>                 | lake  |
| <i>baños</i>           | toilets; baths  | <i>colectivo</i>             | shared taxi   |
| <i>barranco/a</i>      | ravine  | <i>combi</i>                 | minibus, smaller than micro   |
| <i>basura</i>          | rubbish/trash   | <i>comunidad</i>             | local campesino   |
| <i>bencina blanca</i>  | white gas   | <i>campesina</i>             | community   |
| <i>bicicletería</i>    | bicycle shop  | <i>conquistadores</i>        | Spanish explorer soldiers who conquered South America in the 16th century   |
| <i>blanca/a</i>        | white   | <i>cordillera</i>            | mountain range  |
| <i>bodega</i>          | small shop which also sells alcohol; a luggage compartment on a bus   | <i>Cordillera Negra</i>      | the snowless range west of the Callejón de Huaylas  |
| <i>bofedal</i>         | wetland   | <i>correos</i>               | post office   |
| <i>bus cama</i>        | literally 'bed bus' – the most comfortable type of bus  | <i>Creole</i>                | Peruvian-born person of European descent  |
| <i>calle</i>           | street  |                              |   |

|                              |   |                                    |   |
|------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Quechua</i>               | native South American language spoken mainly in the Andes; Quechua Ancashino is the variety spoken in Ancash      | <i>servicios higiénicos (SSHH)</i> | toilets   |
| <i>(bosque de) queñuales</i> | polylepis forest  | <i>(habitación) simple</i>         | single room   |
| <i>quipu</i>                 | literally 'talking knots', a recording device of knotted strings used by the Wari and Inca Empires                | <i>sismo</i>                       | earthquake  |
| <i>raju</i>                  | snow-capped mountain  | <i>sol(es)</i>                     | literally 'sun'; the unit of Peruvian currency  |
| <i>Recuay</i>                | Callejón de Huaylas culture which flourished in 200-600CE   | <i>soroche</i>                     | altitude sickness   |
| <i>refugio</i>               | mountain hut  | <i>sur</i>                         | south   |
| <i>río</i>                   | river   | <i>tambo</i>                       | an inn or rest-house  |
| <i>ruta</i>                  | route   | <i>tarjeta telefónica</i>          | telephone card  |
| <i>selva</i>                 | jungle  | <i>terminal</i>                    | (bus) terminal/station  |
| <i>semi cama</i>             | literally 'half bed' – a bus that is less luxurious than <i>cama</i> , but more comfortable than <i>económico</i> | <i>terremoto</i>                   | earthquake  |
| <i>Sendero</i>               | 'Shining Path' – a terrorist group active in much of Peru until 1992  | <i>tienda</i>                      | shop/store  |
| <i>Luminoso</i>              |   | <i>tranquilo</i>                   | quiet/peaceful  |
|                              |   | <i>vicuña</i>                      | undomesticated camelid living in high areas of the Andes that is related to the llama and alpaca, with very fine wool |
|                              |   | <i>Wari</i>                        | civilization from Ayacucho which ruled Ancash from 600-800CE  |
|                              |   | <i>winchus</i>                     | hummingbird   |
|                              |   | <i>yurac/yuraq</i>                 | white; 'Yurac Janka' = Cordillera Blanca  |

## APPENDIX C – GPS WAYPOINTS & ALTITUDES

Each GPS waypoint below was taken on the route at the reference number marked on the map as shown below. This list of GPS waypoints is also available to download for free from [blancahuayhuash.com](http://blancahuayhuash.com) and [www.trailblazer-guides.com](http://www.trailblazer-guides.com).

| MAP                        | WPT        | LOCATION                            | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | ALT (M) | ALT (FT) |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|----------|-----------|---------|----------|
| <b>1 Alpamayo Basecamp</b> |            |                                     |          |           |         |          |
| 1                          | <b>001</b> | Pomabamba                           | -8.8205  | -77.4608  | 2960    | 9710     |
| 1                          | <b>002</b> | Footbridge                          | -8.8205  | -77.4634  | 2930    | 9610     |
| 1                          | <b>003</b> | Cross water channel                 | -8.8158  | -77.4746  | 3100    | 10170    |
| 2                          | <b>004</b> | Santa Cruz – Alpamayo Circuit joins | -8.8508  | -77.5420  | 3530    | 11580    |
| 2                          | <b>005</b> | Jancapampa camp                     | -8.8516  | -77.5496  | 3560    | 11680    |
| 2                          | <b>006</b> | Leave pampa by walls                | -8.8382  | -77.5576  | 3840    | 12600    |
| 3                          | <b>007</b> | Yanacon                             | -8.8265  | -77.5897  | 4600    | 15090    |
| 3                          | <b>008</b> | Bridge at Huillica                  | -8.8040  | -77.6127  | 4000    | 13120    |
| 3                          | <b>009</b> | R to Mesapata                       | -8.8126  | -77.6262  | 4140    | 13580    |
| 3                          | <b>010</b> | Mesapata                            | -8.8107  | -77.6358  | 4450    | 14600    |
| 5                          | <b>011</b> | Gara Gara                           | -8.8261  | -77.6735  | 4830    | 15850    |
| 5                          | <b>012</b> | Jancarurish camp                    | -8.8462  | -77.6816  | 4210    | 13810    |
| 6                          | <b>013</b> | Ruinapampa camp                     | -8.8288  | -77.7333  | 4000    | 13120    |

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Abbreviations: **L** = Laguna; **N** = Nevado; **Q** = Quebrada

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**2**  
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## The Hiking and Biking Guide



### Andean adventure paradise

The Cordilleras Blanca and Huayhuash boast some of the most spectacular scenery in the Andes, and some of the **most accessible high altitude trekking and cycling in the world**. Perfect pyramidal peaks, gargantuan ice falls and turquoise alpine lakes are all easily reached from Huaraz, the region's capital and centre of tourist comforts.

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❑ **Detailed guides to Lima, Huaraz and gateway towns** Hotels, restaurants, what to see, street plans

❑ **Health, safety and responsible tourism** – trek safely and minimize your impact on a fragile region

❑ **Spanish words and phrases** – for hikers and cyclists

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