



PERU

BLANCA PANORAMA TREK

DURATION	:	12 days / 11 nights (7 nights tent camping)
SEASON	:	May through October
DEPARTURES	:	Guaranteed with a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 12 participants
TRIP RATING	:	Strenuous Trek, Grade (IV) - This exciting, off-the-beaten-path adventure features a 6-7 day high-altitude trek which averages 8.4 miles per day and reaches 15,585' on the highest of 3 mountain passes.
2011 DATES	:	On request any week during the season for a minimum of 4 travelers

INTRODUCTION :

The Cordillera Blanca is the highest tropical range in the world, and with more than 60 glacier-clad peaks rising above 18,500'—15 of whose summits soar over 20,000'—it is the highest chain of mountains in the Peruvian Andes. It lies at the heart of Huascarán National Park, created in 1975 to protect the area's natural beauty and abundant flora & fauna. Majestic summits such as Huandoy and Alpamayo, hundreds of multicolored glacial lakes, dozens of crystal clear rivers and a myriad of sparkling cascades make this one of the most magnificent mountain destinations on earth. In addition, the region's relatively easy access, generally excellent climate and friendly people make it the perfect range for hiking or climbing adventures. This special trip, designed for strong, experienced hikers who want to explore one of the Andes' less traveled routes, provides a grand overview of the northern peaks of the Blanca, offering some of the most spectacular vistas and exciting trekking Peru has to offer.

Following a night in Lima, we drive north along Peru's desert coastline and into the Andes to the Callejón de Huaylas valley and the charming mountain town of Huaraz. The next morning we drive along the valley and over the Blanca's foothills to reach the trailhead near the community of Cashapampa. Here we meet the local mule drivers and camp staff who will assist us the following day when we begin our demanding, 7-day, 40-mile trek. Our route takes us through deep gorges, alpine meadows and scattered queñual forests as we make our way uphill to the foot of Mount Taulliraju (19,130') and the first pass, Punta Unión (15,585'). This is the highest point of our trek, and we enjoy one of the best views in the range. Descending from the top, we hike through another alpine valley and cross our second pass where we have superb vistas of the rock and ice walls of the northern peaks of the Blanca. Our route then takes us past turquoise-colored glacial lakes and small Andean communities, such as Quishuar, as we follow an enchanting valley. Enjoying a well-deserved rest day at Quishuar, we take an optional hike to visit the pre-Incan, hilltop ruins of Yaino before crossing Yanagrahirca Pass and ending our trek in the Morococha River gorge. We visit the lovely twin lakes of Llanganuco, beneath the icy summits of Huandoy and Chacaraju, on the route back to Huaraz. The next day we return to Lima before flying home.

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DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY:

DAY 01: USA/LIMA

Evening arrival to Peru's capital city, **Lima**. We are met at the airport and transferred to the Costa del Sol Hotel located near the International Terminal.

DAY 02: LIMA/HUARAZ

Following an early breakfast, we board our private vehicle for the 8-hour drive to **Huaraz** (10,140'), gateway to the spectacular Cordillera Blanca. Our route takes us north along the Pan American Highway through the Peruvian coastal desert to the town of Pativilca. Time permitting, we visit the Inca ruins of Paramonga en route and take a very winding, paved road leading inland along the Río Pativilca gorge. We pass sugarcane fields as we gain elevation and continue up into the dry, eroded hills of the western Andes approaching Conococha Pass (13,385'). At the top, we enjoy our first panoramic vistas of the area's three mountain ranges: the snow-capped Cordillera Blanca to the northeast; the barren black peaks of the Negra range to the northwest; and the jagged summits of the Huayhuash to the southeast. We descend into the warmer *Callejón de Huaylas* valley, between the first two ranges and arrive to its main city, Huaraz, in the late afternoon where we check into the Andino Hotel. This evening we have a trip briefing and dinner with our guide. **Driving distance:** 248 miles or 8 hours (B,L,D)

DAY 03: HUARAZ/CASHAPAMPA

Early this morning we join our guide for a 2-hour warm-up hike to the lookout point at Pukaventana, where on a clear day, we have an impressive view of Huaraz and the valley, backdropped by the Blanca range. Returning to the hotel, we board our bus and travel north, driving along the fertile *Callejón de Huaylas*. We pass the many red-tiled roofs and colonial architecture of the small, agricultural towns along the way, stopping to enjoy spectacular views of the western face of Peru's highest peak, Mount Huascarán (22,205'). We visit the Yungay memorial dedicated to the town and its inhabitants who were buried when a massive avalanche was released from Huascarán's summit in 1970. At Caraz, we taste the regional cuisine at a country-style restaurant. This afternoon we continue up a steep, winding, dirt road that ascends to our trailhead near **Cashapampa**. Passing through the village, we set our first camp in a grove of eucalyptus trees overlooking the colorful patchwork of golden wheat and barley fields in the valley. **Driving distance:** 55 miles or 4 hours; **Camp elevation:** 9,515' (B,L,D)

DAY 04: CASHAPAMPA/ICHICOCHA LAKE

Our *arrieros*, or mule drivers, and their donkeys arrive this morning. While they load our gear, we begin our trek. Leaving **Cashapampa**, our uphill trail takes us gradually through the narrow entrance to the *Quebrada Santa Cruz* gorge. Once in the canyon, we ascend several steep sections, high above the glacier-fed river. Nearing the upper end of the gorge, the trail becomes more gently sloped as we walk among high bushes and trees interspersed with sparkling cascades. We might encounter farmers tending their potato fields in the meadows at wider parts of the canyon, and enjoy beautiful scenery throughout the day as we look toward the ice-capped peaks at the valley's head. We arrive to our camp at **Ichicocha** (*Small Lake*) in the afternoon, where we may observe a variety of highland bird species including ducks, Andean gulls and possibly a pair of *Huallata*, or Andean geese. **Trek length:** 8.7 miles or 6.5 hours; **Camp elevation:** 12,465' (B,L,D)

DAY 05: ICHICOCHA LAKE/TAULLIPAMPA

Following a hearty breakfast, we continue our gradual uphill journey, passing the turquoise waters of Large Lake, or *Jatuncocha* as it is known in Quechua, and walk through scattered queñual forests. We cross a sandy expanse at the upper end of the lake before stopping for lunch. Afterwards, we continue gaining elevation. From the area's high plains we watch the pyramidal summit of Alpamayo (19,510') rising above the Arhuaycocha gorge. Known for its lovely fluted walls, the peak has often been called the most beautiful mountain in the world. Our route brings us to a secluded glade surrounded by towering summits called **Taullipampa**, at the foot of impressive Mount Taulliraju, whose 19,130-foot summit looks like a rock and ice cathedral. We establish our camp at the end of the valley, enjoying magnificent views of the glaciers and peaks around us including Artesonraju (19,768') and Quitaraju (19,800'), and looking at tomorrow's route up Punta Unión Pass. **Trek length:** 6.2 miles or 4.5 hours; **Camp elevation:** 13,780' (B,L,D)

DAY 06: TAULLIPAMPA/TUCTO

Today is the most challenging hike so far. We begin by following an ancient, pre-Inca, stone-paved path that winds along the side of the glacier moraine to the top of **Punta Unión Pass** (15,585'). Upon reaching the highest point of our journey, we contemplate our first full panoramic view of the surrounding Cordillera Blanca peaks. After some time to

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rest, have lunch, and appreciate the vistas, we descend into the Huaripampa gorge, heading toward the greener eastern slopes of the range. Our route takes us past small alpine lakes and cascading rivers to our camp at a peaceful spot called **Tucto**. This evening after dinner we try our hand at identifying unfamiliar southern hemisphere constellations such as the *Cruz del Sur*, or Southern Cross, and the *Corona Australis*, or Southern Crown. As we watch thousands of stars in the inky black sky, we can look for distant galaxies like Andromeda or the Clouds of Magellan. **Trek length:** 6.8 miles or 6.5 hours; **Camp elevation:** 13,616' (B,L,D)

DAY 07: TUCTO/QUISHUAR

Leaving camp early, we begin hiking toward the top of the second high pass. Our route leads through a small patch of *queñual* and *quishuar* trees whose lovely, twisted trunks of light orange bark are the only trees to grow at these high altitudes. The well-established trail then leads through a section of talus, or small loose rocks, as we approach **Alto de Pucaraju Pass** (15,260'). From the summit we have an extensive view of two deep valleys and the surrounding peaks, one of the best vistas in the Blanca Range. This is also an excellent location for observing condors, the world's largest flying bird with a wingspan of up to 10 feet, as there is a nesting area in the nearby rocky promontories. We descend from the pass following a steep trail that winds down to golden meadows, then heads past the dark and mysterious waters of *Huecrococha Lake* (excellent for trout fishing), whose outlet stream eventually flows to the Amazon Basin. We establish our camp in the **Quishuar** valley and may have the opportunity to meet with some of the local villagers. As we visit with them we may notice that their hats are shaped differently from those worn by locals on the western side of the range. This traditional practice, found throughout the Andes, helps inhabitants of a region recognize where a visitor is from. **Trek length:** 6.8 miles or 6.5 hours; **Camp elevation:** 12,630' (B,L,D)

DAY 08: QUISHUAR CAMP (YAINO)

Today is at leisure in our **Quishuar** camp. Those who prefer can enjoy a well-deserved day of rest around camp, taking short day hikes along one of the four gorges that meet in this valley or fishing for trout in nearby *Huecrococha Lake*. More energetic members of the group may opt to rise early and join the guide for a challenging hike to the ancient ruins of **Yaino**. This option starts off following the trail down the Quishuar valley on the same route that villagers from the area use to reach the trading community of Pomabamba. At the far end of the valley, it crosses the river and ascends to a saddle on the ridge where the route continues along the crest to the impressive, pre-Inca ruins of Yaino. Situated on a hilltop at 13,450', there is a spectacular 360° view of the main northern peaks of the Blanca range as well as the deep Pomabamba valley. Lunch is beneath ancient stone walls which, in places, rise at least 30 feet. We return to our campsite at Quishuar in the late afternoon and prepare for the delicious *Pachamanca* dinner the cook has prepared. A typical Andean feast created by roasting meat & vegetables underground, this is truly a delight! **Hiking distance:** 11.8 miles or 7.5 hours; **Camp elevation:** 12,630' (B,L,D)

DAY 09: QUISHUAR/VAQUERIA

We face one of the longest days of our trek this morning. We begin with a moderate ascent to **Yanagrahirca Pass** (14,765') where we can still observe the remains of an ancient lookout post and trail, and far in the distance, make out the ruins of Yaino. From the top, we descend into the warm, agricultural valley of Chinguill. After crossing the stream at the bottom of the gorge, we start hiking uphill again to traverse the range of hills that separates us from the Huaripampa gorge and the hamlet of **Colcabamba**. Here, we rest before tackling the last uphill push of the day—a short but steep hike to the trail's end near Vaqueria. We follow the dirt road leading down from Llanganuco Pass through the Morococha gorge and arrive to our campsite in a small, level clearing by the river in the late afternoon. **Trek length:** 10.6 miles or 7.5 hours; **Camp elevation:** 10,825' (B,L,D)

DAY 10: VAQUERIA/HUARAZ

We say goodbye to our *arriero* friends and camp staff after breakfast and board our vehicle for the journey back to **Huaraz**. Driving a switchback route to the top of Portachuelo de Llanganuco Pass (15,750'), we have excellent views of Huascarán's east face as well as the icy summits of Huandoy (20,980'), Chopicalqui (20,845'), and Chacaraju (20,050'). From this vantage point, a long, winding descent leads us into the **Llanganuco** gorge where we visit the lovely turquoise lakes and try to spot the herd of vicuñas (a delicate, wild relative of the llama which produces the finest wool in the world) that have been reintroduced to this region. Surrounded by groves of *queñual* trees, these lakes are one of the most photogenic sights in the Blanca. From Llanganuco we continue along the dirt road to Yungay and from there drive along the highway to the comfortable Andino hotel in Huaraz. We have a farewell dinner with our guide this evening. **Driving distance:** 63 miles or 4.5 hours (B,L,D)

DAY 11: HUARAZ/LIMA/USA

We transfer to the airport in **Huaraz** for our mid-morning, scenic flight back to **Lima**. We are met upon arrival and join

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our local guide for a private tour of colonial Lima and the fascinating Larco Herrera Museum with an extensive collection of Pre-Columbian artifacts. Lunch and dinner are on your own to try a typical seafood meal such as ceviche at one of the several gourmet restaurants in Miraflores. Participants leaving tonight have a return transfer to the airport this evening. (B)

DAY 12: USA

Arrive in the US this morning and make onward connections home.

NOTES ON THE ITINERARY: Although we do our best to adhere to the schedule listed above, the day-to-day activities on this itinerary are subject to change for numerous reasons beyond our control including group pace & interests, weather, road, river and trail conditions. Hiking distances and altitudes are approximate, and times indicated do not include lunch breaks, rest stops, time to explore the surroundings, etc. This program is suitable for physically fit participants accustomed to outdoor activities, minimum 12 years old. On **Day 09**, depending on the group's pace, we may hike just to Colcabamba and camp nearby, and face the 1.9-mile uphill hike to Vaqueria early the next morning.

2011 LAND COST: \$3,745 p.p.d. (4-6 participants)
 \$3,475 p.p.d. (7-12 participants)
 \$ 465 Single Supplement

p.p.d.=per person based on double occupancy

SERVICES INCLUDED:

- Comprehensive **pre-departure planning packet** and expert travel advice.
- All **in-country transfers** as scheduled (transfers on different days are additional). Ground transportation in spacious and comfortable private vehicles with professional drivers.
- Local and return flight reconfirmation, **in-country airport check-in and luggage assistance**.
- One-way, Huaraz-Lima flight on LC Busre airline.
- All **accommodations in 3-4 Star hotels** as listed (or at similar hotels) on a shared basis with private bath. Advanced bookings are recommended if you plan to arrive early or stay longer than scheduled.
- Single Supplement includes single room and single tent on trek. Due to the small size of the hotels in Huaraz, the number of singles available per group is limited to 2. If you require single accommodations, we recommend making reservations well in advance. Double beds for couples (primarily king or queen-sized) can be requested in advance, but cannot be guaranteed, as most hotels offer few rooms with double beds.
- All **meals** indicated on the itinerary (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner). **Vegetarian diets accommodated** on request (advance notification is required).
- All **guided tours** listed, conducted by knowledgeable English-speaking, local guides and including any applicable entrance fees.
- **First-class trekking service** includes:
 - Experienced, licensed, English-speaking, Andean guide & assistant guide (assistant provided for groups with 8 or more participants).
 - Expert camp chef & kitchen assistant, camp assistant & local *arrieros* or handlers with their pack animals (*arrieros* are treated & compensated well, mules or donkeys carry a maximum of 45 lbs of an individual trekker's personal gear).
 - All group camping equipment: spacious 3-person all season Eureka K-2 or North Face VE-25 tents (shared by just 2 members), Thermarest™ sleeping pads, kitchen & dining tents, folding tables & camp stools and an environmentally friendly toilet tent.
 - All meals: we serve a variety of healthy food with fresh & native ingredients. A cup of hot wake-up tea is brought to your tent door followed by a hot breakfast, box or picnic lunch, and a 3 course served dinner.
 - Tips to the *arrieros*.
 - First-aid kit.

NOT INCLUDED:

- US domestic, international flights, nor other flights within Peru (the latter are required only if extending to Cusco or other cities in Peru).
- Peruvian airport departure taxes (approx. \$30 per traveler).

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- Two (2) meals at approximately \$20-25 each.
- Tips to the local staff.
- Tours or other services not listed on the itinerary.
- Alcoholic beverages nor items of a personal nature; such as clothing, equipment, laundry & phone calls.
- Sleeping bag & other personal gear. Southwind has a **limited** number of REI Halo or similar synthetic sleeping bags rated to 0°F available for rent for \$70 per person. Advance reservations and prepayment are required.
- Expenses incurred in preparing for this program such as, but not limited to, non-refundable airline tickets or traveler's insurance, nor additional expenses resulting from flight delays, schedule changes, cancellations, or missed connections.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: We strongly recommend purchasing a plan to protect your trip investment. Travel insurance helps to cover unexpected events prior to departure causing the need to cancel or change your dates. Weather, geologic events, local strikes, a personal injury/illness to you, family member or your traveling companion could cause interruption or changes to your itinerary, missed connections, delayed arrival, lost/delayed baggage or need for medical attention on the trip or evacuation which is why coverage is important. We recommend the *Worldwide Trip Protector (WTP)* plan offered by Travel Insured International (TII). **Kids 17 and under are free with related adult on the WTP plan.** Information and an application are sent upon receipt of your deposit (sooner if requested). Policies can be purchased securely online at: www.southwindadventures.com/insurance.html. If you, your traveling companion or a family member has a pre-existing medical condition, you should purchase the WTP policy within 21 days of your deposit in order to be reimbursed for non-refundable costs if a recurrence of the condition forces you to cancel your trip (some restrictions apply). Please call our office or visit our website for more information.

OPTIONAL CUSCO/MACHU PICCHU EXTENSION:

Travelers with extra time may consider extending to visit Machu Picchu. Although this extension is available following the *Blanca Panorama Trek*, it can also be added before the main program as an aid for acclimatization. Other extensions you may consider include the Galápagos Islands, Amazon Basin, Lake Titicaca or the Nazca Lines. All extensions require a minimum of 2 participants. Please contact our office for details.

ANDEAN GUIDES: Cesar Sifuentes - Born in Huaraz, Cesar is one of the top trekking guides in the Blanca area, and is our operations manager for this region. He has been leading American and Canadian trekking groups for 19 years and also has experience in the hotel industry. He lived in Europe and teaches English locally. In addition to an intimate knowledge of the *Blanca & Huayhuash* ranges, Cesar is well-organized and has a positive, energetic attitude.

Renzo Moreno & David Gonzales, each with a minimum of 5 years experience leading groups in the northern Andes of Peru, these native bilingual guides are also among the top professionals working with our groups.

WEATHER: Generally the Blanca trekking season, **May-October** is clear, dry, and cool but one must always expect variable weather patterns when hiking in the mountains. **Rain all day is not common during the trekking season, although it is still possible** as are hail, sleet or snow storms at the highest elevations. Andean nights are cold, ranging from 25-40°F depending on the elevation, while the days are pleasantly warm and springlike, with temperatures between 70-80°F. At the highest camps on the trek (Ichicocha Lake, Taullipampa, Tucto and Quishuar) you should expect nighttime lows of 23-28°F and daytime highs ranging from 50-68°F (depending on elevation and cloud cover—it can be cold and windy on the high passes). In spite of warmer temperatures, trekking during the Andean rainy season, November-April, is not recommended in the Blanca range because of the high risk of mud slides, rock fall or lightning. Also, trails and high passes may be closed due to heavy snow fall.

ESTIMATED AIRFARE: The Land Cost ONLY INCLUDES THE HUARAZ-LIMA FLIGHT. Round-trip **international** air from US gateways (New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Houston, Atlanta) is approximately \$800-\$1,000 per person. **Local flights** for the **Machu Picchu Extension** are estimated at \$350 per person for Lima-Cusco-Lima. Upon receipt of your deposit, Southwind will send you more information about booking your flights to match your land itinerary.

HOW TO SIGN UP: Submit Southwind's Trip Reservation Form along with a \$1,000 per person per trip deposit (payable by check or credit card). The form and deposit can be completed securely online at www.southwindadventures.com by clicking on "Book a Trip" at the top of our homepage. If you prefer, you can print the

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Trip Reservation Form and mail/fax it to our office with your deposit. You can also call us at 1-800-377-9463 to make payment arrangements (**your deposit will be charged and your reservation confirmed once we receive your Trip Reservation Form**).

Due to the popularity of the Peruvian Andes, we recommend making reservations 4 months in advance. Once your trip is guaranteed to operate, you will receive a comprehensive pre-departure packet.

Land Balance: Final payment is due at 90 days by Visa, Mastercard, Discover, American Express or check. You will receive a trip invoice indicating your balance due. Provided services and space are available, reservations can be accepted up to 21 days before departure.

Cancellation Fees and other policies are outlined under the 2011 Terms & Conditions on Southwind's website (click [Book a Trip](#)>2011 Terms & Conditions).

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