

THE CLASSIC ALPAMAYO – 9D8N

Overview:

The northern White Mountain Range offers one of the most spectacular treks in the world: the Alpamayo Trek. This route brings you face-to-face with the iconic north face of Nevado Alpamayo (5,947m./19,511ft.), famously named “The Most Beautiful Mountain in the World” by Alpinismus magazine in 1966.

Along the trek, you’ll be surrounded by awe-inspiring snow-capped peaks, including Taulliraju, Quitaraju, the impressive Pucahirca group, and the sharp summits of the Santa Cruz range. Explore deep glacial valleys, turquoise alpine lakes, and high mountain passes close to glaciers, while observing the unique flora and fauna of the tropical Andes.

Adding to the adventure, you’ll encounter pre-Hispanic archaeological sites, combining natural beauty, cultural history, and unforgettable high-altitude scenery in one incredible circuit.

Highlights

- Majestic views of Alpamayo, often called the “most beautiful mountain in the world”
- Trekking through Huascaran National Park, a UNESCO-protected area
- Crystal-clear glacial lakes and high-altitude passes
- Authentic encounters with local Andean communities
- Campsites in stunning, remote locations surrounded by iconic peaks

Detailed itinerary:

Day 01: Depart Huaraz for the start of our trek at Vaquería via Llanganuco Pass

Leaving early in the morning we drive along the Santa Valley passing several villages until we reach present-day Yungay. The road winds slowly up into the gully between the Huascaran massif and the Huandoy three-pronged peak. As we reach the overhanging valley we arrive at the boundary of Huascaran National Park. Llanganuco, as the area is known, has two lakes, Chinancocha and Orconcocha with beautiful turquoise waters. We continue driving to Portachuelo de Llanganuco Pass located at 4707m. (15,442 ft.). Here we have one of the best views to appreciate beautiful mountains such as Huascaran (6,768m. / 22,204ft.), Huandoy (6,395m. / 20,980ft.), Pisco (5,752m. / 18,871ft.), Chacaraju (6,112m. / 20,052ft.), etc. Then we drive down to Vaquería where we start our trek at 3,640m. (11,942ft.).

Breaking our parking place, we trek up the Huaripampa Valley, passing through several small Andean agricultural settlements. Pacing out our day sensibly, we ascend to our camp located in Paria valley at 3,822m. (12,539ft.) and settle to enjoy mountain views of Paria (5,510m. / 18,077ft.) and Piramide (5,885m. / 19,307ft.) looming at the head of the valley. (L / D)

Trekking distance: 10.6 km (6.6 mi) – Time: 5 hours

Bus ride: 119 km (74 mi) – Time: 5 hours

Day 02: Cross the Alto de Pucaraju Pass. Trek to Laguna Huecrococha Camp.

Breaking camp this morning, we gradually trek toward Tuctupampa, following the Huaripampa Valley. Continuing along this ancient trail, we embark on a rewarding ascent toward our objective for the day, the Alto de Pucaraju pass (4,650m. / 15,255ft.). As we

gain elevation, we are treated to breathtaking panoramic views of some of the most iconic peaks in the Cordillera Blanca, including Pirámide de Garcilazo (5,585m./18,323ft.), Paria (5,510m./18,077ft.), Chacaraju (6,112m./20,052ft.), Quitaraju (6,036m./19,803ft.), Artesonraju (6,025m./19,767ft.) this striking, perfectly sculpted peak is widely believed to have inspired the iconic Paramount Pictures logo, its symmetrical silhouette rising like a natural masterpiece above the Andean skyline— and the majestic Huascaran (6,768m. 22,204ft.), the fourth highest mountain in the Western Hemisphere, first climbed in 1932 by a German-Austrian expedition.

We then continue our trek descending to Laguna Huecrococha (3,837m./12,588ft.), where we camp nearby and enjoy the serenity of one of South America's most stunning national parks.

(B / L / D)

Trekking distance: 9.6 km (6.6 mi) – Time: 8 hours

Day 03: Trek up through Tupa Tupa pass and descend to Jancapampa village.

This day, our trail ascends through lush Quenual forests and other native shrubs, leading us to a grassy mountain pass where we hope to see flocks of sheep grazing peacefully along the slopes. Crossing the Tupa Tupa Pass at 4,383m. / 14,379ft., we descend to the small settlement of Pingospampa, where locals make their living through livestock and agriculture, cultivating lupines, sweet potatoes, wheat, and other crops. The flowering of these fields creates a spectacular contrast against the mountainous landscape, offering especially striking scenes for photographers.

We then continue down across a wide grassy slope and then through a small valley down to Jancapampa 3,535m./ 11,597ft. Thanks to the higher rainfall on the eastern side of the range, agriculture thrives here even at high altitude. Local farmers still cultivate their fields using traditional methods, working by hand with the help of donkeys.

At this campsite, villagers offer handmade items such as hats, gloves, and socks made from sheep's wool, as well as beverages like Coca-Cola and beer, providing a memorable and authentic cultural experience.

(B / L / D)

Trekking distance: 12.1 km (7.5 mi) – Time: 8 hours

Day 04: Trek over the Yanajanca Pass to the small settlement at Huilca.

After enjoying a touch of greenery, we are well prepared for our long ascent to the Yanajanca Pass (4,616m./ 15144ft.), where we may encounter herds of horses and cattle along the way. Gradually, we leave behind the fertile fields and clear lakes of the valley.

After approximately six hours of trekking and a final steep climb, we reach the pass, rewarded with views of the Pucajirca peaks behind us and the Huilca Valley stretching out ahead. This pass marks the watershed divide, where we leave the Amazon basin and return to the Pacific side.

The descent leads us into the valley and down to a wide alpine meadow, where we set up camp at around 4,000m./13,123ft. The Huilca area is home to Andean foxes, as well as sheep and alpacas, and with a bit of luck, we may also encounter local shepherds along the way.

(B / L / D)

Trekking distance: 11.6 km (7.2 mi) – Time: 8-9 hours

Day 05: Scenic Trek to Moyobamba Camp, close to Alpamayo Mountain.

We break camp and set off from Tayapampa valley, enjoying magnificent views of the northeast face of Mt. Alpamayo north east face, Pucajirca Central, and Pucajirca Oeste. Never failing to impress with its panorama of glistening peaks, the Cordillera Blanca truly is a mountaineer's paradise. As we draw closer to the striking beauty of Alpamayo, we cross the Mesapata Pass (4,436m. / 14,553ft.) and we walk to Moyobamba (4,506m. / 14,783ft.), with the view of tomorrow's pass in sight.

(B / L / D)

Trekking distance: 8 km (4.9 mi) – Time: 5 hours

Day 06: Crossing Carcara Pass to reach the viewpoint for Alpamayo. Camp in the Jancarurish Valley.

We begin the day at a relaxed pace, passing grazing cows and horses as we hike through the green puna landscape toward the Cara Cara Pass 4836m./15,866ft. The final stretch climbs through a rocky scree slope, and soon we reach a viewpoint just below the pass. From here, in clear weather, we are rewarded with breathtaking views of the iconic pyramid of Alpamayo, as well as the massif of Santa Cruz with its four peaks.

The descent is steep and demanding, with faint trails and loose terrain requiring careful footing. As we continue downward through tall grass, we eventually reach the Cruze Alpamayo junction, where we have lunch.

After lunch, we trek to the moraine of Laguna Jancarurish, situated at the base of the snow-capped Alpamayo, offering spectacular opportunities for photography. We then retrace the same trail, returning to our campsite in the Jancarurish Valley at 4,206m./13,799ft., with plenty of time to enjoy one of the most breathtaking mountain sunsets in the mountains.

(B / L / D)

Trekking distance: 7.7 km (4.7 mi) – Time: 7 hours

Day 07: Trek over the Jatun Viento Pass, westwards to Osoruri Camp.

We continue trekking down the Alpamayo Valley to a remarkable site called Ruinapampa, where we encounter the remains of an Inca settlement, including numerous agricultural terraces, a testament to the valley's past abundance of tuber crops. After a junction, the trail winds upward in a series of switchbacks to the windy Jatun Vientunan Pass (4,762m./15,623ft.). From the top, we enjoy sweeping views of the northern reaches of the Black Mountain Range, the Huaylas Province, and Milluacocha Mountain.

We then descend westward and set up camp on an alpine meadow at approximately 4,556m./14,947ft., surrounded by expansive mountain scenery. This afternoon, we will have the chance to enjoy a stunning sunset over the peaks of the Black Mountain Range.

(B / L / D)

Trekking distance: 12.3 km (7.6 mi) – Time: 8 hours

Day 08: Trek to the Highpoint at Toro Pishtanan and Descent to Huishcash Camp

Just a final gentle climb separates us from the highest point of our trek, the Toro Pishtanan Pass at 4870m. 15,977ft. Directly below, several deep-blue lagoons lie stacked like terraces, while across the valley, the majestic trio of Nevado Santa Cruz rises dramatically.

We pass Laguna Cullicocha (4,648m./ 15,249ft.), azure-blue and framed by the three peaks of Santa Cruz, Cullicocha Lake is more than just a picture postcard view! A pre-Incan aqueduct provides valuable water for the valley farms below to this day and every year Andean farmers make their way into the mountains for an annual 'aqueduct repair' festival. We set up our final campsite near Huishcash at around 399m./13113ft. From here, we enjoy stunning views over the Santa Valley and the Cordillera Negra, with the town of Huaylas in the distance.

(B / L / D)

Trekking distance: 9.7 km (6 mi) – Time: 7 hours

Day 09: Descend through the Huaylas Valley. Transfer back to Huaraz.

Leaving camp this morning, we enjoy a downhill walk to the pre-Incan ruins of Hualcayan (3,134m./ 10,282ft.), descending through farmland and village life of the Huaylas Valley. Upon reaching the edge of the national park, we will have a chance to sit and absorb the splendor and challenge of our trek before meeting our private vehicles. Taking a scenic drive back to Huaraz, we return to the group hotel for a well-earned shower and in time for celebrations.

(B / L / D)

Trekking distance: 6.2 km (3.8 mi) – Time: 3 hours

Bus ride: 107 km (66.4 mi) – Time: 4 hours

End of services

B- Breakfast / BL- Box Lunch / L- Lunch / D- Dinner

Included:

- Transportation
- Professional bilingual guide
- Double occupancy tents with Thermarest sleeping pads
- All meals during trek
- Non-alcoholic drinks
- Kitchen and dining tents
- Cook and field staff
- Horses and drivers
- Entrance tickets
- Solar energy lamps
- Eco toilets
- Adequate garbage disposal
- First aid kit and oxygen tank

Not included:

- Personal travel insurance
- Laundry service
- Airline tickets
- Sleeping bags (rent available)
- Personal gear

- Alcoholic beverages
- Additional services
- Tips
- Extras

What to take:

- Regular and long wicking first layer for cold weather, like polyester, nylon, or merino wool
- Short-sleeved shirts or t-shirts, breathable fabrics, like nylon and polyester
- Light-colored long-sleeved shirts or t-shirts
- QuickDry Pants, trekking pants, and shorts
- Insulated long-sleeve jacket (fleece, synthetic, down, merino wool)
- Liner gloves
- Light cap and beany
- Rain jacket (in the rainy season, bring rain pants)
- Breathable sports socks or hiking socks
- Warm socks for nights
- Multifunctional headwear (e.g. Buff)
- Waterproof and breathable hiking boots
- Comfortable and lightweight shoes for campsite
- Sleeping Bag (0°/32° to -15°/ 5°) (rent available)
- Day Pack (preferably with rain cover)
- Trekking Poles (available to rent)
- Waterproof duffle bag
- Sunglasses
- Headlamp
- Microfiber towel
- Sunblock, lip balm, and insect repellent
- Reusable water bottle or vacuum bottle
- Portable Power Bank (to charge lamps, etc.)
- Personal First Aid Kit (recommended)

On each trip we carry a medical kit, but we suggest you bring a small personal First-Aid Kit for bruises and blisters. Knee and ankle braces are sometimes useful especially if you suffer from weak knees or ankles. Include any special medication your doctor might suggest for you.