



Likely the most well-known multi-day hike in the area, the Santa Cruz trek deserves every bit of its popularity. It is considered among the best treks in the world, treating visitors to amazing views of ice capped peaks as the travel through open valleys, over a mountain pass and past amazing rivers and glacier lakes. An amazing way to take in the beauty of the Cordillera Blanca.

Day 1: Huaraz – Cashapampa - Llamacorral

Leaving Huaraz by van, we head north, following the Santa River along the Callejón de Huaylas. The great snow-capped Nevados of the Cordillera Blanca tower to the east, while a lower range, the Cordillera Negra, rises to the west. After an hour of gradual descending in elevation, we reach the town of Caraz (7,544'/2,300m). We turn east, and begin to ascend into the Cordillera Blanca, switch-backing up a secondary road for two hours to the village of Cashapampa (9,512'/2,900m). Here we meet our mountain crew: guides, cooks, and muleteers, who commence loading the gear on mules. We begin the trek heading up the Santa Cruz valley through high pasture. After three hours walking we reach our first camp in Llamacorral (11,972'/3,650m). All meals provided on the trek.



Day 2: Llamacorral – Arhuaycocha

We continue up the Santa Cruz valley, passing Ichiccocha and Jatuncocha lakes. At Quisuar we turn north, and ascend via the Arhuaycocha valley towards Alpamayo base camp (4,000 m). We spend the night with splendid views of the peaks of Quitaraju (6,040m), Alpamayo (5,947m), Artesonraju (6,025m) and others. Enjoy optional scrambles in the afternoon.

Day 3: Arhuaycocha - Taullipampa

We return down the side valley to join the main Santa Cruz valley, and continue the trek up towards Punta Union. Tonight we camp in Taullipampa (4,000m) at the foot of the impressive Taulliraju peak (5,830m) and surrounded by snow peaks.

Day 4: Taullipampa - Huaripampa

We begin today challenging the steep zig zag path to arrive after three hours at Punta Union (4,750m). We pause to enjoy the peaks of Chacraraju (6,112m), Artesonraju (6,025m), Pyramide (5,885m), Huandoy (6,395m), Alpamayo (5,940m), Santa Cruz (6,259m), Rinrihirca (5,810m), Taulliraju (5,830m) and others. During our descent on the east side of the Cordillera Blanca we pass Morococha Lake and then enter the long, broad Huaripampa valley, passing through red-barked queñual forests and the Andean paramo vegetation of ichu bunch-grass. Four hours from the pass we make our camp in Huaripampa (3,600m)

Day 5: Huaripampa – Vaqueria - Huaraz

After an easy one-hour descent to the village of Colcabamba (3,350m), we climb two hours up to the road head village of Vaqueria (3,700 m). Our vehicle awaits here. We drive switch backing up to the Portachuelo de Llanganuco (4,765m)



with splendid views of Huascarán Norte (6,768 m), Huascarán Sur (6,650 m), Chopicalqui (6,354 m), Huandoy (6,395 m), and Pisco (5,752 m). Then we descend the Llanganuco valley, past a succession of turquoise glacial lakes: Llanganuco, Orconcocha and Chinancocha. We descend steadily until we rejoin the main highway in the Santa valley, and turn south and return to our hotel in Huaraz.

