



Santa Cruz Trek

The Lake District is all well and good, but the stunning 4-day Santa Cruz trek shows you what a real Lake District looks like! As you hike through verdant green countryside, gazing up at snow-capped peaks and down at turquoise-coloured glacial lagoons, it makes the UK feel just a little small...

There's no need for acclimatisation in the UK, however, whereas the Santa Cruz trek takes you up to 4700m at the Punta Union pass. But the route itself isn't overly strenuous and we guarantee it will only be the views making you gasp: this is high-altitude trekking at its very best.



Day One - Trek to Llamacorral

After breakfast this morning we will pick you up and take you by minibus along the Santa River as we climb up the trailhead. We will pass several villages before reaching the town of Yungay, from where the road winds slowly up the valley, giving us superb views of Huascarán and the three-pointed peak of Huandoy – two of the Andes' most iconic mountains. The trailhead lies at Cashapampa where we will leave the minibus and start our trek, hiking for about six hours until we reach Llamacorral where we will camp for the night at 4000m.



Day Two - Alpamayo: the most beautiful mountain in the world

After breakfast this morning we will trek for about another six hours. We will see Mt. Taulliraju looming above us and on the other side one of the area's characteristic glacial lake. The glacier adds drama to the already amazing view down the Santa Cruz valley. The peaks of Santa Cruz, Quitaraju, Artesonaju and Alpamayo (regularly voted the most beautiful mountain in the world), will come into view as well as the two lakes of Ichicocha and Hatuncocha. The trail ascends into Taullipampa, where we will camp at 4400m.



Day Three - Punta Union

An earlier start today as we have some of the hardest walking of the trek ahead of us. The trail climbs quite steeply towards Punta Union, a pass at 4700m and as we approach the pass, you will enjoy amazing panoramic views down the Santa Cruz valley to the west, and views of the Huaripampa valley to the east. The snow-capped peaks of Paria and Taulliraju, Artesonaju and Huaripampa will all come into view as head over the pass and down towards our camp for the night which, depending on the pace we've set during the day, will either be in the vicinity of Paria or Tuctu - both significantly lower than we have been sleeping at, at around 3800m.



Day Four - Paria to Llanganuco

Today offers arguably the most beautiful scenery of the whole trek as we walk through the Huaripampa valley on our way up to the Portachuelo of Llanganuco at 4750m. From this pass, we have absolutely spectacular views of Mt. Huascarán, Huandoy, Pisco and Chacaraju, as well as the stunning Llanganuco lake. Once through the pass, we make our way down the valley to meet our transport back to Huaraz.