

KRAIG ADAMS

Huayhuash Circuit Hiking Guide

11 days around the Cordillera Huayhuash in Peru

2027 season edition · updated September 2026

Contents

	Welcome
	At a glance
	Straight answers
	How this trek works
	When to go
	Altitude
	Getting there
Day 1	**Huaraz to Cuartelhuain**
Day 2	**Cuartelhuain to Mitucocha**
Day 3	**Mitucocha to Carhuacocha**
Day 4	**Carhuacocha to Huayhuash**
Day 5	**Huayhuash to Viconga**
Day 6	**Viconga to Huanacpatay**
Day 7	**Huanacpatay to Cutatambo**
Day 8	**Cutatambo to Huayllapa**
Day 9	**Huayllapa to Cashpapampa**
Day 10	**Cashpapampa to Jahuacocha**
Day 11	**Jahuacocha to Rondoy**
	Getting home
	Other ways to do it
	Gear for this route
	Weather and safety
	Using the GPX files
	Before you go, check these
	One-page trip sheet
	About this guide

Welcome

In August 2022 I spent eleven days walking around the Cordillera Huayhuash in Peru, one of the most beautiful ranges I've ever seen. Five subscribers joined me, along with two guides, a cook, muleteers and a string of pack donkeys carrying our camp. We started at Cuartelhuain, at the end of the road above Chiquián, and walked clockwise around the whole range: glacial lakes under Yerupajá and Siula Grande, passes over 16,000 feet, hot springs, and the village of Huayllapa, then out over one last pass to the road at Rondoy.



Me with Free Solo, the dog that hiked with us every step, at Carhuacocha on Day 3.

It was eleven days of hiking, a new record for me at the time. It was also a different kind of trip. This was a group hike: I sold tickets and invited five subscribers, and a Huaraz agency ran the whole thing. Having donkeys, a cook and two guides made it a very different vibe from hiking by myself.

That's what this guide is built around. The Huayhuash has no huts and no shops for most of the way, and each campsite belongs to a local community that charges a fee. Most people walk it the way I did, with an operator, a muleteer and pack animals. So this guide shows you my trip day by day, with my GPS files, maps, notes and film links, and it tells you plainly what an operator arranged and what you'll need to sort out yourself.

What's inside

- Straight answers to the questions people ask about this trek
- How this trek works: what my operator arranged, the community fees at each camp (2026 amounts, cash in soles), and what you need to arrange
- When to go, getting to Huaraz and the trailhead, and a clear section on altitude and acclimatizing, with every camp height from my GPS
- All eleven days: my notes, the trail, where to get off, a map with an elevation profile, and links to that day in my film
- Getting home, other ways to do it, what I paid and gear for this route
- Weather and safety, one page of things to check before you go, and a printable trip sheet

How to use it offline

Save this PDF to your phone's Files or Books app before you leave home. Load the GPX files and download offline maps while you still have Wi-Fi in Huaraz: don't count on a phone signal once you leave the road. Each day starts on a new page. The film links need a connection; everything else works in airplane mode.

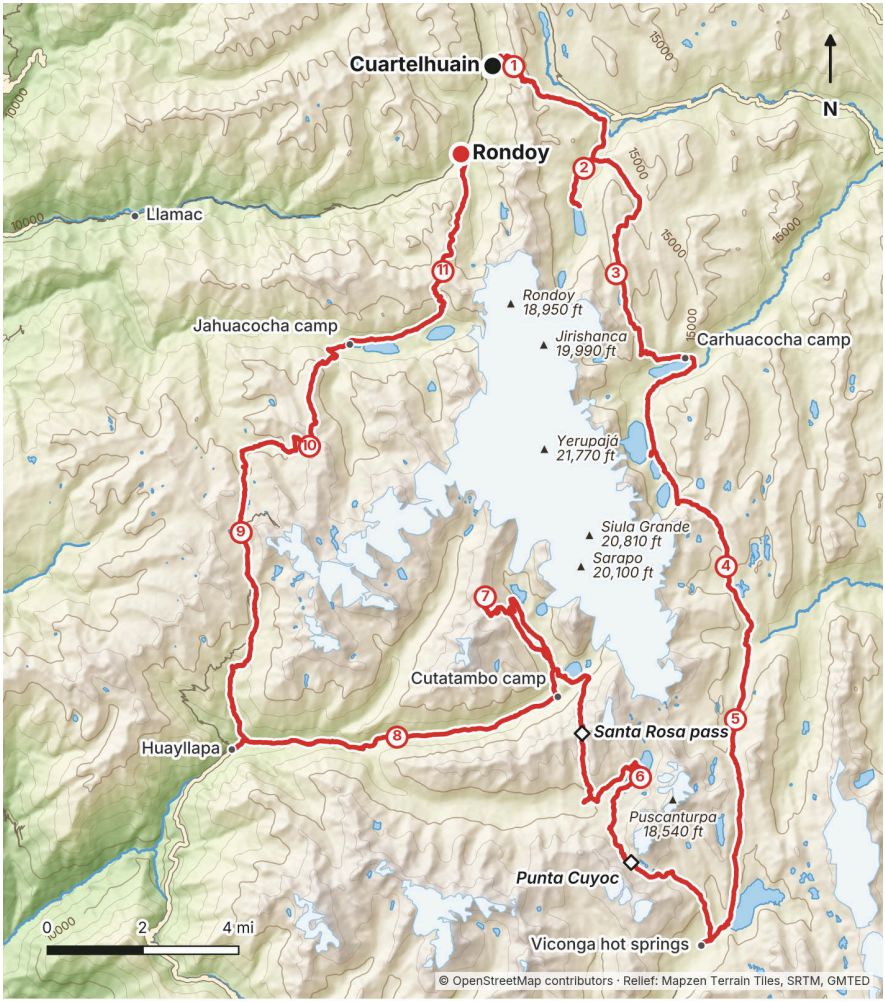
When I say "I," it's my own trip. Fees and rules change, so they're dated, and the checks are collected on one page: Before you go, check these.

At a glance

QUICK FACTS	
Distance	83.2 miles (133.8 km) over 11 days on foot
Climbing	about 24,360 ft (7,430 m) up and 24,900 ft (7,590 m) down
Start	Cuartelhuain, a campsite above the Matacancha road end, about 6 hours by road from Huaraz
Finish	Rondoy, at the end of a road, about 5 hours by road from Huaraz
High point	Cerro Gran Vista on Day 7: 16,802 ft (5,121 m) on my GPS. The highest pass: Santa Rosa, 16,636 ft (5,071 m)
Over 5,000 m	Punta Cuyoc (Day 6), the Santa Rosa pass and Cerro Gran Vista (both Day 7)
Highest camp	Cashpapampa, 14,840 ft (4,523 m) on my GPS
Nights	9 in tents, 1 in a hostel in Huayllapa
How	With a Huaraz operator: two guides, a cook, muleteers and pack donkeys
When	The dry season, about May to September. I walked August 17 to 27, 2022
Difficulty	Long, high and remote. Short walking days, but every camp is above 13,000 ft except Huayllapa
Base	Huaraz, about 8 hours by bus from Lima
Trip	A group trip I hosted, organized by Quechuandes in Huaraz

DAY	ROUTE	MILES (KM)	UP / DOWN (FT)	CAMP (FT)
1	Huaraz to Cuartelhuain (drive, then a short walk)	2.4 (3.9)	1,089 / 1,183	13,730
2	Cuartelhuain to Mitucocha	7.9 (12.7)	1,940 / 1,710	13,930
3	Mitucocha to Carhuacocha	7.1 (11.4)	1,860 / 2,064	13,720
4	Carhuacocha to Huayhuash	9.3 (15.0)	2,370 / 1,794	14,260
5	Huayhuash to Viconga	7.4 (11.9)	1,728 / 1,681	14,290
6	Viconga to Huanacpatay	8.7 (14.0)	2,714 / 2,218	14,750
7	Huanacpatay to Cutatambo	11.8 (19.1)	4,597 / 5,381	13,960
8	Cutatambo to Huayllapa	8.2 (13.1)	21 / 2,542	11,440
9	Huayllapa to Cashpapampa	7.5 (12.0)	4,144 / 822	14,840
10	Cashpapampa to Jahuacocha	6.0 (9.6)	1,633 / 3,139	13,320
11	Jahuacocha to Rondoy, drive to Huaraz	7.0 (11.2)	2,271 / 2,371	

The numbers come from my own GPS recordings, smoothed the same way for every day. Day 2 includes a 2.7-mile walk to the lake after lunch. My Strava entry for the trip says 83 miles.





My eleven days, clockwise around the Cordillera Huayhuash from Cuartelhuain to Rondoy. The numbers are the days. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors.

Straight answers

Did you do the whole circuit? Yes, the full loop around the range, clockwise, from Cuartelhuain to Rondoy in eleven days, with Cerro Gran Vista and the Siula Grande viewpoint on Day 7. The classic start is the village of Llamac, lower down; we drove past it to the road end at Matacancha, which saves a day or two. See Other ways to do it.

Can I do it on my own? People do, but it's a big trek to carry alone: ten nights of food and camp at 13,000 to 15,000 ft, with only one real village on the way. When I asked in 2021, my operator told me solo hikers were technically no longer allowed into the range, and that most people who go without a full agency at least hire a muleteer and donkeys. I haven't found an official rule on solo hiking; ask in Huaraz when you arrive. See How this trek works.

How many days do I need? Eleven on the trek, plus at least two or three days in Huaraz first to acclimatize, and a day each way between Lima and Huaraz. I arrived in Huaraz three days before we left, did an acclimatization hike and a day of prep, and took the bus back to Lima the day after we finished.

How hard is it? The walking days are short, 6 to 12 miles, and the donkeys carry the camp, so you only carry a daypack. What makes it hard is the altitude: we crossed a pass nearly every day, went over 5,000 m three times, and slept above 13,000 ft every night but one. It's also cold at night and long. By Day 10 I said it plainly: 11 days is a lot, and I think we were all feeling it.

Will I get altitude sickness? I had a slight headache on Days 2 and 3, and on Day 2 I didn't feel good at all. By Day 7, at almost 17,000 ft, I felt nothing: the most acclimatized I'd ever been. Read Altitude before you book anything.

When should I go? The dry season, roughly May to September. I went in the middle of August. See When to go.

What does it cost? In 2022 our private group of six paid the operator US$1,200 a person for everything on the trek: guides, cook, muleteers, donkeys, food, tents and transport from and back to Huaraz. On top of that you pay the community fees in cash, about S/290 a person in 2026. See What I paid.

What are the community fees? Each community whose land the trail crosses collects its own fee at its campsite or checkpoint, in soles. In 2026 the nine fees add up to S/290 if you visit Cutatambo, as we did. Every day in this guide lists that day's fee.

What's a day like? A cup of coca tea brought to the tent, breakfast in the dining tent, pack your duffel for the muleteers, then 3.5 to 9 hours of walking with a daypack. Most days we were in camp by early afternoon, with time to nap, walk to a lake, and eat dinner early.

Is there phone signal or Wi-Fi? Don't count on it. The hot springs camp at Viconga allegedly had Wi-Fi, and in Huayllapa I could charge batteries at the hostel. Download everything before you leave Huaraz, and consider a satellite messenger.

Can I charge my phone and camera? Not in camp on my trip. In Huayllapa, on Day 8, I charged three drone batteries at the hostel. Bring a power bank big enough for the whole trek.

How this trek works

What my operator did

My trip was organized by Quechuandes, a trekking agency in Huaraz (quechuandes.com). I'd met them briefly on my 2021 trip to Peru. In October 2021 I wrote asking for help with the full circuit, and we settled on a private group: me plus five subscribers, starting August 15, 2022. I collected applications from my audience, and the agency took it from there.

On the morning of Day 1 we met at the agency, loaded twelve donkeys' worth of gear, and said goodbye to David, the mastermind of the trip. From there the team ran everything.

The agency's 2021 quote listed what was included, and it matches what I saw on the trail:

- **A guide** certified in mountain first aid and speaking Spanish and English. We had two guides.
- **A cook**, who prepared three meals a day and served them in a dining tent.
- **Muleteers (arrieros)** and **donkeys**, carrying up to 8 kg (18 lb) of personal gear per person. You carry only a daypack.
- **An emergency horse**, for evacuation or to ride for a while if someone is unwell.
- **All food on the trek**, a mix of Peruvian and Western dishes.
- **Private transport** from your hotel in Huaraz to the trailhead and back from the finish.
- **Equipment**: two-person tents, a foam sleeping mat, dining and kitchen tents, tables and chairs, stove, dishes and a group medical kit.
- **Small things**: a cup of coca tea at your tent each morning, a bowl of hot water for washing, toilet paper in camp, a printed itinerary and map.

Not included in 2022, and still worth planning for: the **community fees**, a **sleeping bag**, an **inflatable mat**, **tips**, **water and breakfast on Day 1**, **dinner on the last day**, drinks, travel insurance, and any cost of leaving early or being rescued. The agency boiled water for our bottles each morning and evening at no charge.



The view from my tent at Mitucocha on Day 2.

Life in camp

The food. The cook fed us well, and it's a big part of what I remember. Pumpkin soup on the first night. Cheese and potatoes. Steak and eggs, and a random banana, at Carhuacocha. Blueberry pancakes with peanut butter and honey before one of the harder days, so we were powered by pancakes. A stuffed pepper for lunch on Day 7, one of the best lunches of my life. On Day 10 the team cooked a feast at Jahuacocha, a real feast.

Mornings. Every morning we packed our stuff, rolled up the mat and left our duffel for the muleteers to load. Then daypack, tea, and into the dining tent to wait for breakfast.

The cold. Nights were cold. On Day 2 I was wearing everything I had. Day 5 started with frost on the ground and on the tents, the coldest morning of the trip, and on Day 6 I walked circles around camp to warm up before breakfast. The days swing the other way: by midday at Mitucocha it was really hot.

The dog. A dog we called Free Solo hiked with us every step, a beast of a dog.



Free Solo above Laguna Carhuacocha on Day 3.

The community fees (2026)

The Cordillera Huayhuash is a reserved zone (Zona Reservada Cordillera Huayhuash, created in 2002), and most of the land around the circuit belongs to peasant communities. Each community charges for its own sector, at a checkpoint near its village or at its campsites. The 2026 list, published at huayhuash.com (checked September 26, 2026):

COMMUNITY	WHERE IT'S COLLECTED	2026 FEE
Llámac	Cuartelhuain and part of Jahuacocha	S/50
Pocpa	On the way in	S/20
Queropalca	Mitucocha and part of Carhuacocha	S/40
Quisuarcancha	Part of Carhuacocha	S/30
Tupac Amaru	The Huayhuash camp	S/30
Uramaza	Laguna Viconga and the hot springs	S/30
Huayllapa	Viconga, Huanacpatay and Huatiac	S/50
Pacllón	Cashpapampa and part of Jahuacocha	S/30
Cutatambo	The Siula Grande base camp valley (extra)	S/10
Total		**S/280, or S/290 with Cutatambo**

Carry it in cash, in soles, in small notes, and keep the receipts. On my trip the fees weren't in the operator's price; in 2021 the agency estimated them at about S/260 a person.

What I paid

I hosted this trip, and the five subscribers' tickets covered my place, so my records don't hold a normal personal price. This is what the records show.

ITEM	COST
The operator's private trek for a group of six, all the inclusions above	US$1,150 a person quoted in December 2021 (US$6,900 for six); raised to US$1,200 a person in January 2022 because the dollar had dropped
Community fees	Cash on the trail; the agency's 2021 estimate was about S/260 a person. Not in my records
Trekking pole rental in Huaraz	A shop receipt, amount not legible
Hostel night in Huayllapa (Day 8), flights, Lima to Huaraz bus	Not in my records

For scale, the agency's 2021 price was US$80 a person per day for its own groups of 5 to 8. A private trek for one person was quoted at US$4,000 for 2022, because the whole team costs the same for one person as for six.

For your budget (2026)

- **The operator's trek.** Most of the cost. Ask exactly what's included, how many guides, whether a horse comes along, and what happens if someone has to leave early.
- **Community fees:** S/290 a person in cash (2026 list).
- **Tips** for the guides, cook and muleteers. They usually aren't included.
- **A sleeping bag and an inflatable mat,** yours or rented in Huaraz.
- **Huaraz:** two or three nights before the trek and one after, meals, and an acclimatization day hike or two.
- **Lima to Huaraz and back:** about 8 hours by bus each way.
- **Travel insurance** that covers trekking to 5,100 m (16,800 ft) and evacuation.

What you need to arrange

1. **An operator, or at least a muleteer.** Most groups go with a Huaraz agency. The trek needs ten days of food and camp carried at altitude, and only Huayllapa has shops. If you don't want a full agency, you can hire a muleteer and donkeys and cook for yourselves (and for the muleteer).
2. **Acclimatization days in Huaraz.** My operator wouldn't take anyone who wasn't acclimatized. Its rule of thumb: at least one day hike above 4,000 m if you've been at altitude the week before, and three if you come straight from sea level. See Altitude.
3. **Cash in soles** for the community fees, tips and Huayllapa. Get it in Huaraz.
4. **A sleeping bag** for nights well below freezing, and an **inflatable mat**.
5. **Insurance** that covers this altitude and evacuation, and a plan for getting help (see Weather and safety).
6. **Spare time.** A day in Lima or Huaraz at each end in case of buses, strikes or someone needing more time to acclimatize.

When to go

The Huayhuash is trekked in the dry season. Peru's tourism inventory recommends May to September. Outside those months the wet season, roughly November to March, brings snow on the passes and cloud on the peaks, and storms can start in late September and October.

I walked in the middle of August. We had clear, sunny days for the big passes (Days 4, 6 and 7), an overcast day with the peaks in cloud on Day 3, and a foggy morning on the ridge that same day. Nights were cold, with frost on the tents by Day 5, and middays were hot in the sun. Pack for both.



The peaks above Laguna Carhuacocha, the afternoon of Day 3.

Altitude

This is the part of the trek to take seriously. Huaraz is at about 10,000 ft (3,050 m). Our first camp was 13,730 ft (4,185 m), we crossed a pass nearly every day, and every camp except Huayllapa was above 13,300 ft.

How I acclimatized. I arrived in Huaraz on a long flight and a long bus ride and could feel the altitude hitting me the first night. I was so tired I couldn't tell if it was jet lag or altitude. The next day, August 15, I did a day hike with a few others to Laguna Rajucolta: about an hour's drive, then up the valley to the lake and back, 9.1 miles (14.7 km) to a high point of 14,030 ft (4,275 m). It felt pretty easy. The day after that was a prep day in town, with another short hike on the hills above the city. We left for the trek on August 17.

How it went. Day 2 over the Cacanan pass gave me a slight headache, and that afternoon I didn't feel good at all. I had a slight headache again at Carhuacocha on Day 3. From then on it got better, and on Day 7, crossing 16,600 ft and climbing Cerro Gran Vista, I felt great: the most acclimatized I've ever been.

My camp heights (from my GPS):

NIGHT AFTER	CAMP	HEIGHT
Before the trek	Huaraz	about 10,000 ft (3,050 m)
Day 1	Cuartelhuain	13,730 ft (4,185 m)
Day 2	Mitucocha	13,930 ft (4,245 m)
Day 3	Carhuacocha	13,720 ft (4,182 m)
Day 4	Huayhuash	14,260 ft (4,346 m)
Day 5	Viconga hot springs	14,290 ft (4,355 m)
Day 6	Huanacpatay	14,750 ft (4,497 m)
Day 7	Cutatambo	13,960 ft (4,256 m)
Day 8	Huayllapa (hostel)	11,440 ft (3,487 m)
Day 9	Cashpapampa	14,840 ft (4,523 m)
Day 10	Jahuacocha	13,320 ft (4,058 m)

The rules of thumb. The US CDC's current guidance (Yellow Book, April 2025): once above 3,000 m (9,850 ft), don't raise your sleeping height by more than 500 m (1,650 ft) a night, and allow an extra night for every 1,000 m (3,300 ft) you gain. The jump from Huaraz to the first camp is more than that, about 1,100 m, which is why the days in Huaraz and the acclimatization hikes matter. After Day 1 most camps stay within a few hundred meters of each other; Day 9, Huayllapa to Cashpapampa, sleeps 1,040 m (3,400 ft) higher, twice the CDC's limit.

The signs. Headache is the main symptom of acute mountain sickness, usually with loss of appetite, dizziness, tiredness or nausea. Confusion, stumbling or drowsiness like being drunk can mean HACE (swelling of the brain); breathlessness at rest, a cough and chest congestion can mean HAPE (fluid in the lungs). Both are emergencies. The CDC's advice is to descend if symptoms get worse despite rest, and to ask your doctor about acetazolamide before you go. On this trek, going down means walking or riding the emergency horse to a lower valley; see each day's "If you need to get off" and Weather and safety.

Getting there

To Huaraz. Fly to Lima, then take the bus north to Huaraz. It was my third time in Huaraz, and I love this place: you wake up and look at mountains. Cruz del Sur, for one, runs 8 buses a day from Lima to Huaraz in 7.5 to 8.5 hours (2026 timetable, fares from S/87). I stayed at the agency the first night and in a hotel in town after that.



Huaraz from above, with the Cordillera Blanca behind it.

In Huaraz. Give yourself two or three days. Do an acclimatization hike (Laguna 69, Laguna Churup and Laguna Rajucolta are the ones people do), buy snacks, get cash in soles, and rent anything you need: I rented trekking poles, and they helped so much on the climbs. I had breakfast and did my editing at California Cafe.



Laguna Rajucolta, where I hiked to acclimatize two days before the trek.

To the trailhead. Our agency drove us in a private van: about six hours from Huaraz in all, with a lunch stop in Chiquián, the last town before the trailhead, and the last three hours or so on dirt roads to the camp at Cuartelhuain, near the Matacancha road end, at 13,730 ft (4,185 m). Without an agency, the public route is a minibus from Huaraz to Chiquián (El Rápido, for one), then a local car to Llamac, Pocpa or Matacancha. These aren't timetabled like the Lima buses; ask in Huaraz the day before.

The trailheads. Llamac (about 10,800 ft, 3,300 m) is the classic start, with a first day's climb to Cuartelhuain or Jahuacocha. Matacancha and Cuartelhuain, where we started, sit at the road end high above Llamac. The road also reaches Rondoy, where we finished, and the villages of Queropalca, Huayllapa and Cajatambo.



Chiquián, the last town before the trailhead, where we stopped for lunch on Day 1.

DAY 1

Contents

Huaraz to Cuartelhuain

DISTANCE	CLIMBING	DESCENT	TIME I TOOK
2.4 mi (3.9 km)	**1,089 ft** (332 m)	**1,183 ft** (361 m)	**1.2 hours** (3:18 to 4:30 p.m.), after about 6 hours on the road

HIGH POINT

14,963 ft (4,561 m), on the slope toward the Cacanan pass

CAMP

Cuartelhuain, 13,730 ft (4,185 m)

COMMUNITY FEES (2026)

Llámac S/50 at Cuartelhuain; Pocpa S/20 on the way in

TERRAIN

A short out-and-back on grassy slopes above camp

My day

We packed up in the morning. We had a lot of stuff, but we also had twelve donkeys helping us carry things. Breakfast, a toast, and a goodbye to David, the mastermind of the trip, and then a six-hour ride to the trailhead. We stopped for a quick lunch in the last town before the trailhead, with some interesting coffee, then another three hours to where we set up camp, at about 14,000 ft: our first taste of altitude.

At camp we did a quick little hike up and down, just to get some exercise. Then I changed, got warm because it was going to be cold, and we went for tea and dinner. The boys were hungry. Dinner was a romantic little pumpkin soup.

The trail

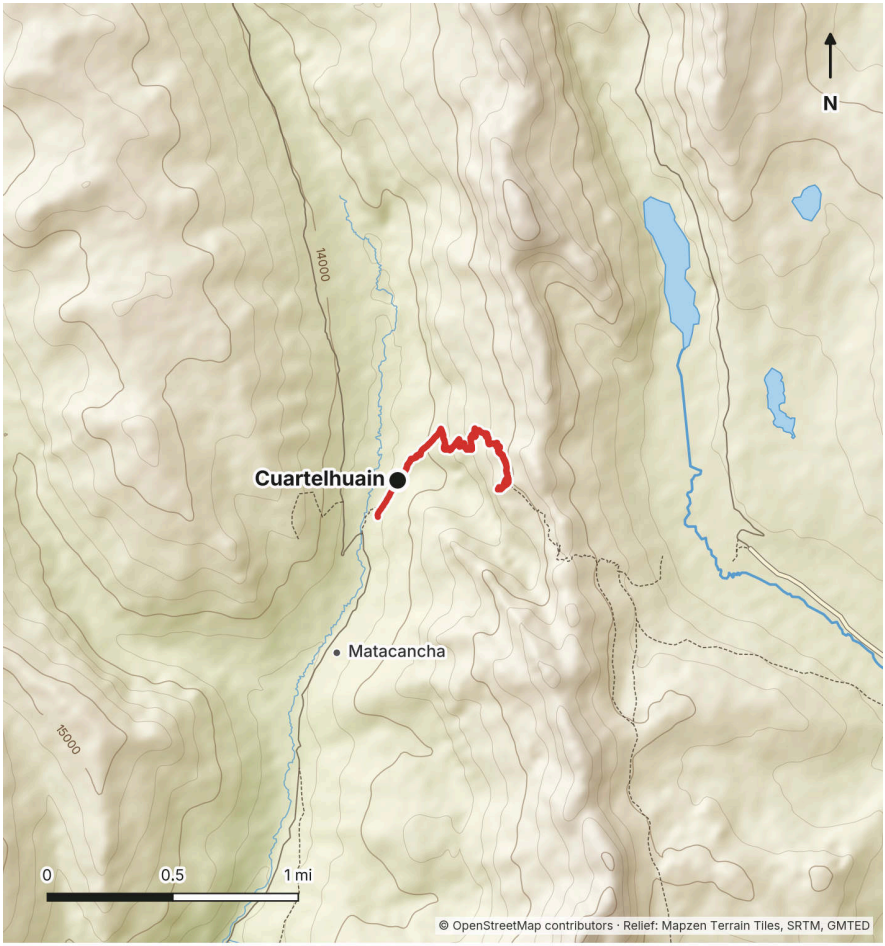
There isn't one today: this is the drive in and a warm-up walk. From Cuartelhuain I walked up the slope east of camp, toward the next day's pass, to about 14,960 ft (4,560 m) and back down. It's worth doing. It gives your body a first night's reminder of where it's going.

If you need to get off

You're at the road. The vans that bring groups in go back to Chiquián and Huaraz.

Watch this day

Film, Day 1 · The acclimatization hike · Huaraz





Day 1 map and elevation profile: my warm-up walk above Cuartelhuain. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors.



Laguna Mitucocha below Jirishanca, on the afternoon walk on Day 2.

DAY 2

Cuartelhuain to Mitucocha

DISTANCE	CLIMBING	DESCENT	TIME I TOOK
7.9 mi (12.7 km), including 2.7 mi to the lake and back after lunch	**1,940 ft** (591 m)	**1,710 ft** (521 m)	**3.6 hours to camp** (7:23 to 11:00 a.m.), then 1.4 hours to the lake and back

HIGH POINT

The Cacanan pass (Cacanapunta), 15,341 ft (4,676 m) on my GPS; published 15,387 ft (4,690 m)

CAMP

Mitucocha, 13,930 ft (4,245 m)

COMMUNITY FEE (2026)

Queropalca S/40

TERRAIN

A steady climb on a good path to the pass, then a long, gentle valley down to camp

My day

Last night was cold. I was wearing everything I could, and I couldn't wait to eat dinner and get in my sleeping bag. The morning was cold too. We approached our first pass in the shade, and after it we had nice views in the sunlight all the way to the lake.

We were in camp before lunch. The plan was to rest, then walk up to the lake before sunset. I had a slight headache, and it was suddenly really hot: the extremes out here, hot and cold. We took a nap. I didn't feel good at all. Before dinner we did a quick little hike to the lake, through golden grass. Dinner was cheese and potatoes.



Our camp at Mitucocha from above, just after we arrived on Day 2.

The trail

From Cuartelhuain the path climbs east up grassy slopes to the Cacanan pass, 2 miles in. It's the first test of the altitude, but not a hard one: about 1,600 ft of climbing on a clear path. From the pass the trail drops into a wide valley and follows it south, gently, to the Mitucocha camp in the meadows below Jirishanca and Rondoy. The lake itself is a mile and a half up the valley from camp: a good afternoon walk.

If you need to get off

Back over the Cacanan pass to Cuartelhuain and the road. Or down the valley east to Janca and on to the road at Queropalca, a longer walk.

Watch this day

Film, Day 2





Day 2 map and elevation profile. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors.



Laguna Carhuacocha under cloud, the afternoon of Day 3.

DAY 3

Mitucocha to Carhuacocha

DISTANCE	CLIMBING	DESCENT	TIME I TOOK
7.1 mi (11.4 km)	**1,860 ft** (567 m)	**2,064 ft** (629 m)	**5.9 hours** (7:33 a.m. to 1:26 p.m.)

HIGH POINT

15,627 ft (4,763 m) on my GPS, on a grassy ridge just west of the Carhuac pass (published 15,223 ft, 4,640 m)

CAMP

Carhuacocha, 13,720 ft (4,182 m), on the lake shore

COMMUNITY FEE (2026)

Quisuarcancha S/30 (part of Carhuacocha is Queropalca's)

TERRAIN

Grassy slopes and a tussock ridge, then a steep drop to the lake

My day

It was a bit overcast, which meant it had been much warmer overnight: the clouds trap the heat, and it was a nice night's sleep. Even with the cloud it was a good spot to fly the drone, and I got a couple of good shots. From up there you can see the lakes that we'd go up to the next day, the famous view of three lakes and the mountains.

We had lunch, then came down to camp. It's a pretty cool camp, right on the edge of the lake, with nice views of the mountains if the sunset comes through. I had a slight headache again and planned to hit the tent as soon as I was ready. On the menu that night: steak and eggs and a random banana.



The lakes below the ridge, in cloud, on Day 3.

The trail

From Mitucocha the path climbs south up a side valley toward the Carhuac pass. My track doesn't go through the pass itself: our guides took a grassy ridge just west of it, about 400 ft higher, with a view down to Alcaycocha and across to the ice. In fog, stay with the path. From the ridge the trail runs south along the slope and drops steeply to Laguna Carhuacocha, under Yerupajá and Jirishanca. The camp is on the lake's northeast shore.

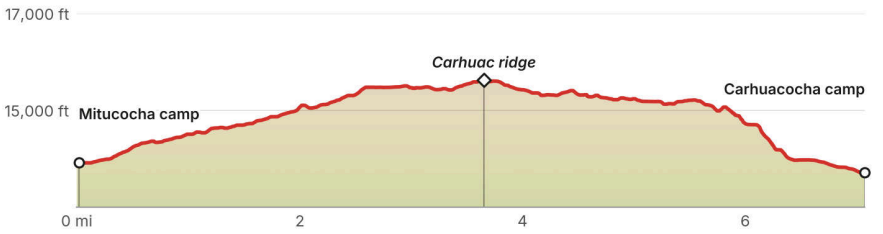
If you need to get off

Down the valley east from Carhuacocha to Queropalca and the road. That's the main way out from here.

Watch this day

Film, Day 3





Day 3 map and elevation profile. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors.



The three lakes below Siula Grande on Day 4.

DAY 4

Carhuacocha to Huayhuash

DISTANCE	CLIMBING	DESCENT	TIME I TOOK
9.3 mi (15.0 km)	**2,370 ft** (722 m)	**1,794 ft** (547 m)	**7 hours** (7:18 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.)

HIGH POINT

The Siula pass, 15,746 ft (4,799 m) on my GPS; published 15,846 ft (4,830 m)

CAMP

Huayhuash, 14,260 ft (4,346 m)

COMMUNITY FEE (2026)

Tupac Amaru S/30

TERRAIN

Lakeshore, a climb past three lakes on an exposed slope, a rocky pass, then a long, easy valley

My day

Clear skies. We got lucky: I was hoping for clear skies on this day. We heard a big avalanche. Breakfast was blueberry pancakes with peanut butter and honey. This was supposed to be one of the harder days, but we were powered by pancakes.

We made it to the first lake, turquoise blue, with beautiful weather, and kept climbing toward the view of the three lakes. This was really one of the most beautiful things I've ever seen, with the glacier right there above us. About a week earlier I'd been running around Mont Blanc, and now I was at a pass at the same height as the top of Europe, which felt like coming full circle. The lunch spot on the far side was pretty cool too.

The trail

From camp the path follows the south shore of Carhuacocha, then climbs south up the moraine past the three lakes: Gangrajanca, Siulacocha and Quesillacocha, under the ice of Siula Grande and Yerupajá. The famous view is from the slope above them. The path then turns east and climbs to the Siula pass at 5.8 miles, a rocky notch with a sign. From the pass it's an easy descent past small ponds (where we had lunch) and down a long valley to the Huayhuash camp.



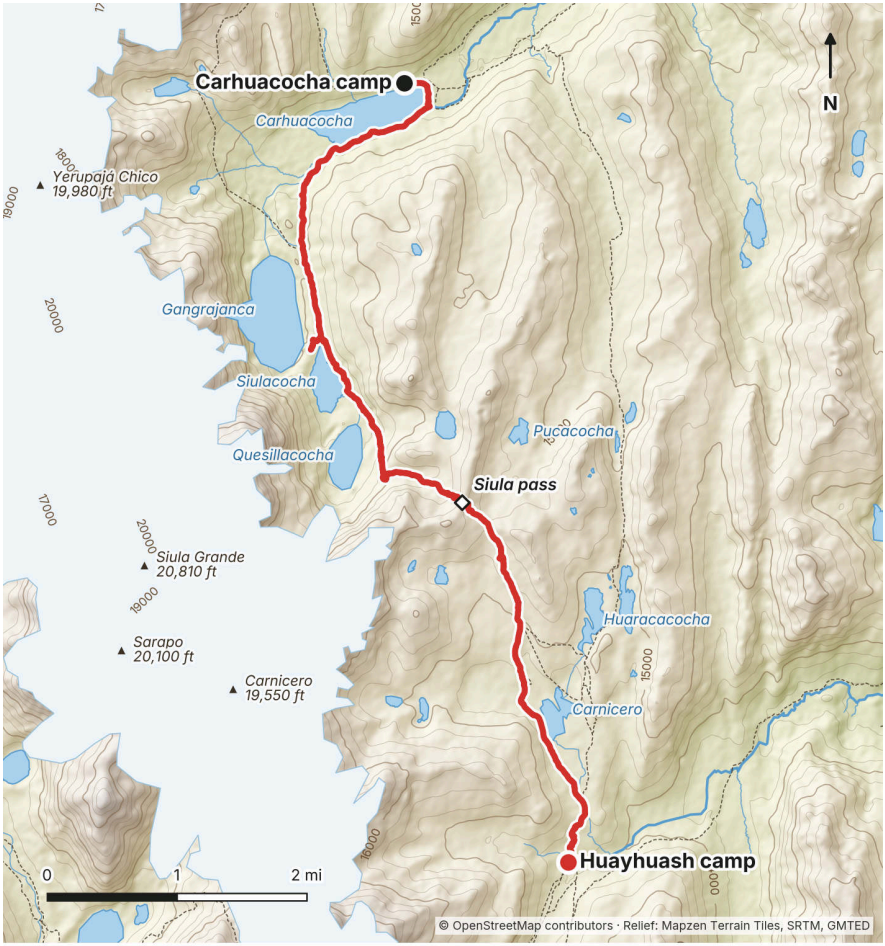
At the Siula pass sign, the high point of Day 4.

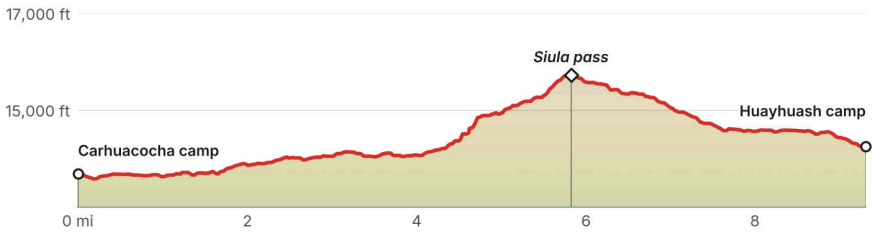
If you need to get off

Back to Carhuacocha and out to Queropalca. From the Huayhuash camp, the valley to the east leads out toward the road at Queropalca too, a long walk.

Watch this day

Film, Day 4





Day 4 map and elevation profile. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors.



Laguna Viconga on the way down on Day 5.

DAY 5

Huayhuash to Viconga

DISTANCE	CLIMBING	DESCENT	TIME I TOOK
7.4 mi (11.9 km)	**1,728 ft** (527 m)	**1,681 ft** (512 m)	**4.7 hours** (7:28 a.m. to 12:10 p.m.)

HIGH POINT

The Portachuelo de Huayhuash, 15,658 ft (4,773 m) on my GPS; published 15,649 ft (4,770 m)

CAMP

Viconga hot springs, 14,290 ft (4,355 m)

COMMUNITY FEE (2026)

Uramaza S/30

TERRAIN

An easy, steady climb to a broad pass, then down past Laguna Viconga

My day

The coldest morning yet. It was freezing, with frost on the ground and frost on the tents. By early afternoon we reached the hot springs, our camp for the night. It allegedly had Wi-Fi and cerveza. Dinner was tuna, beans, carrots and fresh corn.

The trail

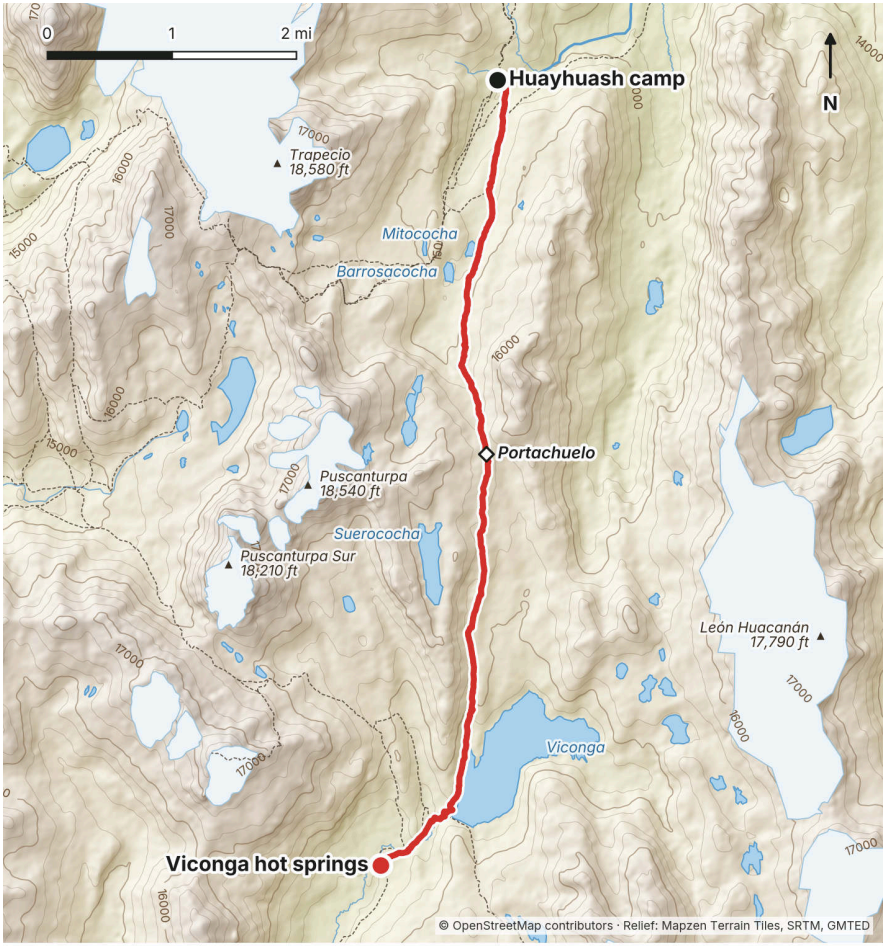
The easiest pass of the circuit. From the Huayhuash camp the path climbs gently south to the Portachuelo de Huayhuash, a wide saddle 3.3 miles in, with Trapecio and the Puscanturpa peaks to the west. It then drops past Laguna Viconga and follows the valley down to the hot springs. The Uramaza community collects the fee for the lake and the hot springs.

If you need to get off

Down the valley west from Viconga toward Uramaza and Cajatambo, where there's a road. This is the usual way out on the south side of the range.

Watch this day

Film, Day 5





Day 5 map and elevation profile. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors.



The peaks beside Punta Cuyoc on Day 6.

DAY 6

Viconga to Huanacpatay

DISTANCE	CLIMBING	DESCENT	TIME I TOOK
8.7 mi (14.0 km), including a side trip to a lake	**2,714 ft** (827 m)	**2,218 ft** (676 m)	**6.2 hours** (7:26 a.m. to 1:39 p.m.)

HIGH POINT

Punta Cuyoc, 16,500 ft (5,029 m) on my GPS; published 16,404 ft (5,000 m)

CAMP

Huanacpatay, 14,750 ft (4,497 m), below Punta Cuyoc (Campamento Elefante on OpenStreetMap)

COMMUNITY FEE (2026)

Huayllapa S/50, covering Viconga, Huanacpatay and Huatiac

TERRAIN

A long climb on a clear path to a stony pass, a steep, loose descent, then grassy valley

My day

Day 6, very cold. I walked circles around camp just to warm up before breakfast. We were going over one of the highest passes, around 16,500 ft, a new record for most of the group.

I felt great, crushing the uphill. The poles helped so much. It was a big effort. Because we'd have been in camp by about noon, two of the group and I went on to an extra lake for some extra miles. Not a bad spot for lunch.



Our camp at Huanacpatay after Day 6.

The trail

From Viconga the path climbs northwest, steadily, for about 3.3 miles and 2,200 ft to Punta Cuyoc, the first pass over 5,000 m, with the Puscanturpa peaks right beside it. The top is a stony saddle with big views. The descent

on the far side is steep and loose at first, then eases into the grassy Huanacpatay valley. My side trip left the path where we had lunch and went north to a lake below Puscanturpa, then back down to camp: it added about 3 miles. The camp is lower down the valley, to the west.



The lake on my side trip on Day 6.

If you need to get off

Down the Huanacpatay valley west to Huayllapa, the one real village on the circuit, where there's a road out. That's the way to go from here.

Watch this day

Film, Day 6





Day 6 map and elevation profile. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors.



Siula Grande and the lakes below it from Cerro Gran Vista on Day 7.

DAY 7

Contents

Huanacpatay to Cutatambo

DISTANCE	CLIMBING	DESCENT	TIME I TOOK
11.8 mi (19.1 km)	**4,597 ft** (1,401 m)	**5,381 ft** (1,640 m)	**9.3 hours** (7:08 a.m. to 4:25 p.m.)

HIGH POINT

Cerro Gran Vista, 16,802 ft (5,121 m) on my GPS; published about 16,900 ft (5,150 m). The Santa Rosa pass: 16,636 ft (5,071 m) on my GPS, published 16,601 ft (5,060 m)

CAMP

Cutatambo, 13,960 ft (4,256 m)

COMMUNITY FEE (2026)

Cutatambo S/10

TERRAIN

A steep, rocky pass, a descent past Laguna Juraucocha, then a second climb up loose slopes to the viewpoint and back down

My day

Day 7, and the sun felt nice. This was 16,600 ft, a big pass. In general I just felt great. I think this was the most acclimatized I've ever been, getting up to almost 17,000 ft and feeling nothing.

Lunch was a stuffed pepper. I was so hungry, and the view was amazing: this was one of the best lunches of my life. Then we headed up again to Cerro Gran Vista, over the lakes below Siula Grande, and then down, down, down to camp.

The trail

The biggest day of the circuit, and the highest. From Huanacpatay the path climbs north, steep and rocky near the top, to the Santa Rosa pass at 2 miles (named Paso Jurau on OpenStreetMap; the San Antonio pass is just east of it). The descent drops to Laguna Juraucocha under Jurau and Sarapo, where the trail meets the Cutatambo valley. We then climbed northwest to Cerro Gran Vista, a rocky viewpoint summit above Sarapococha, looking straight at the west face of Siula Grande, and came back down to the Cutatambo camp.

My operator's plan had Gran Vista as a separate day, a "rest day" from Cutatambo. We did it all in one. If you have the time, splitting it makes a long day into two easy ones.



Lunch on the climb to Cerro Gran Vista, with Siula Grande behind.

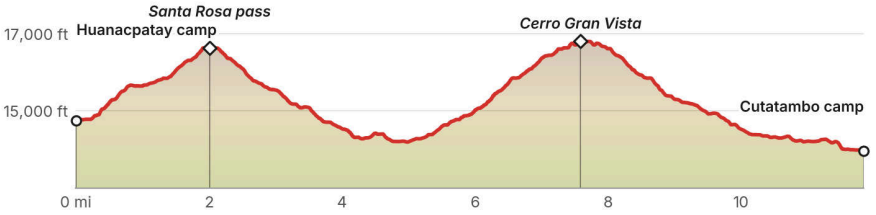
If you need to get off

Down the Calinca valley to Huayllapa, which is the next day's walk (Day 8), about 8 miles and all downhill.

Watch this day

Film, Day 7





Day 7 map and elevation profile. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors.



Huayllapa from above, early the morning after Day 8.

DAY 8

Contents

Cutatambo to Huayllapa

DISTANCE	CLIMBING	DESCENT	TIME I TOOK
8.2 mi (13.1 km)	**21 ft** (6 m)	**2,542 ft** (775 m)	**3.8 hours** (7:30 to 11:19 a.m.)

HIGH POINT

Cutatambo, 13,991 ft (4,264 m), at the start

COMMUNITY FEE (2026)

Huayllapa, already paid (S/50)

NIGHT

A hostel in Huayllapa, 11,440 ft (3,487 m), the lowest point of the circuit

TERRAIN

Downhill all day on a good path, past a waterfall into a steep, green valley

My day

We headed down, down, down, all the way to the biggest village on the trek. Everyone was excited for a hostel, charging and a resupply of food, all those good things, though it's a very small town, so we'd see. I checked out hostels, and we ended up in a three-bedroom dorm for the night. Not bad. I hadn't seen myself in a week, and I looked gross.



The waterfall in the Calinca valley on the way down to Huayllapa.

The trail

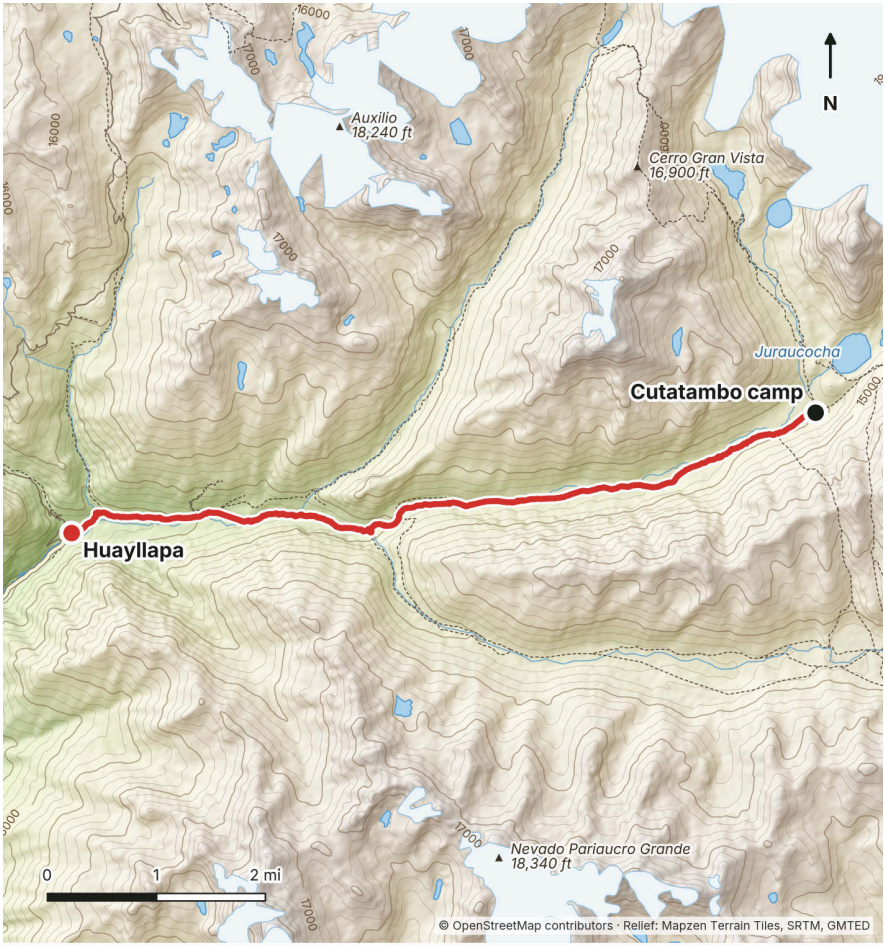
The easy day. From Cutatambo the path follows the Calinca valley west, gently at first, then down a steeper section past a waterfall into a green, wooded gorge, and on to Huayllapa. Huayllapa has small shops and simple places to stay, and a road out toward Cajatambo. The Huatiac camp, where my operator's plan put this night, is in the valley above the village.

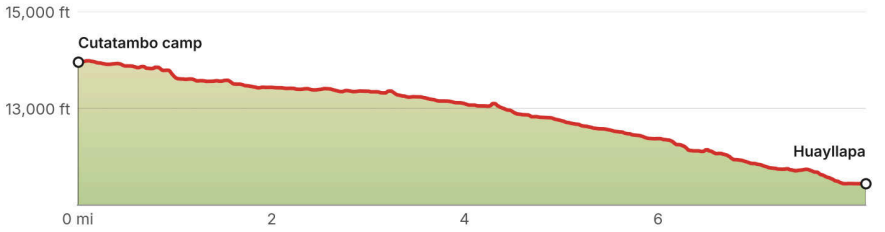
If you need to get off

This is the place to do it: a road runs out of Huayllapa toward Cajatambo.

Watch this day

Film, Day 8





Day 8 map and elevation profile. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors.



At the Tapush pass on Day 9.

DAY 9

Contents

Huayllapa to Cashpapampa

DISTANCE	CLIMBING	DESCENT	TIME I TOOK
7.5 mi (12.0 km)	**4,144 ft** (1,263 m)	**822 ft** (250 m)	**5.9 hours** (7:21 a.m. to 1:12 p.m.)

HIGH POINT

The Tapush pass, 15,680 ft (4,779 m) on my GPS; published 15,748 ft (4,800 m)

CAMP

Cashpapampa, 14,840 ft (4,523 m) (also spelled Gashpapampa or Qashpapampa); the highest camp of the trip

COMMUNITY FEE (2026)

Pacllón S/30

TERRAIN

A long, steady climb out of Huayllapa, over 4,100 ft, then a short drop to camp

My day

Day 9, well rested, and I felt better. From the village we started to go up. We'd been up high for so long, and now we were going back into the mountains. One pass, not too bad of a day. At the hostel I'd been able to charge three drone batteries, about a full battery of footage for each day left.

The trail

The biggest climb of the trip, but on a good path. From Huayllapa the trail climbs north up the valley past the Huatiac camp and keeps climbing, about 4,100 ft in 6 miles, to the Tapush pass. Take it slowly after a night low down. From the pass it's a short descent to the high meadow at Cashpapampa, with Diablo Mudo to the east.

If you need to get off

Back down to Huayllapa and its road. From Cashpapampa, a path leads west down to Pacllón, a village on a road.

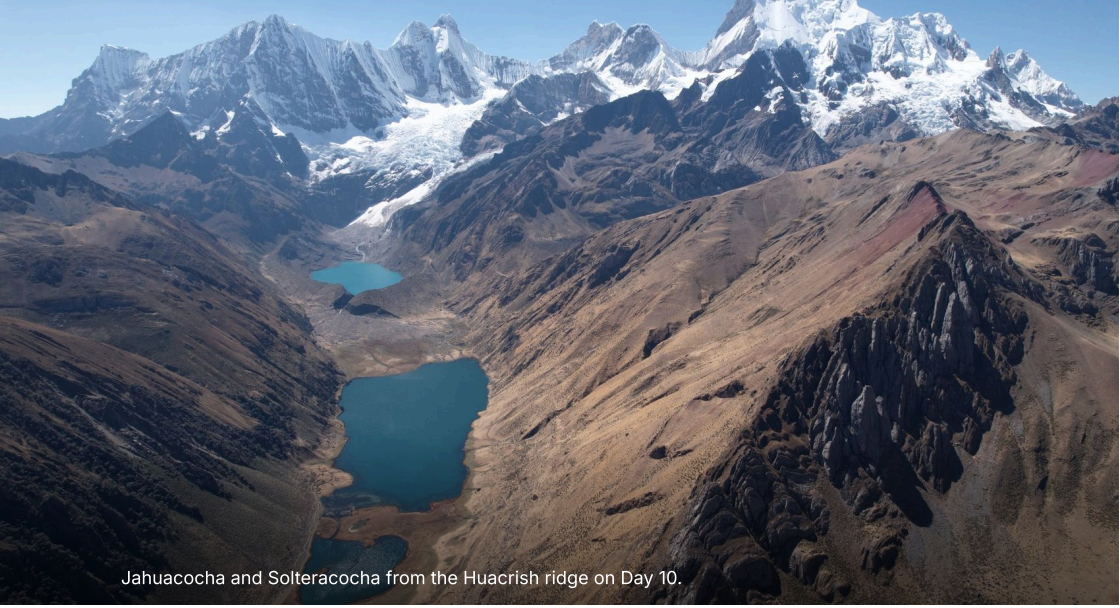
Watch this day

Film, Day 9





Day 9 map and elevation profile. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors.



Jahuacocha and Solteracocha from the Huacrish ridge on Day 10.

DAY 10

Contents

Cashpapampa to Jahuacocha

DISTANCE	CLIMBING	DESCENT	TIME I TOOK
6.0 mi (9.6 km)	**1,633 ft** (498 m)	**3,139 ft** (957 m)	**4.3 hours** (7:14 to 11:30 a.m.)

HIGH POINT

The ridge of Cerro Huacrish, 16,042 ft (4,890 m) on my GPS, past the Yaucha pass (published 15,912 ft, 4,850 m); Cerro Huacrish published 16,076 ft (4,900 m)

CAMP

Jahuacocha, 13,320 ft (4,058 m), below Rondoy and Jirishanca

COMMUNITY FEE (2026)

Jahuacocha is split between Llámac and Pacllón

TERRAIN

A climb to the Yaucha pass and along a high ridge, then a long descent to the lake

My day

This should be the last big pass we had to do, and then a feast at camp that night, which I was very much looking forward to. This had been a very long trip. Eleven days is a lot, and I think we were all feeling it.

It was a really nice ridge hike, with views all the way around. On the way down we collected firewood for the fire. Jahuacocha is a really beautiful campsite. That night was a real feast.

The trail

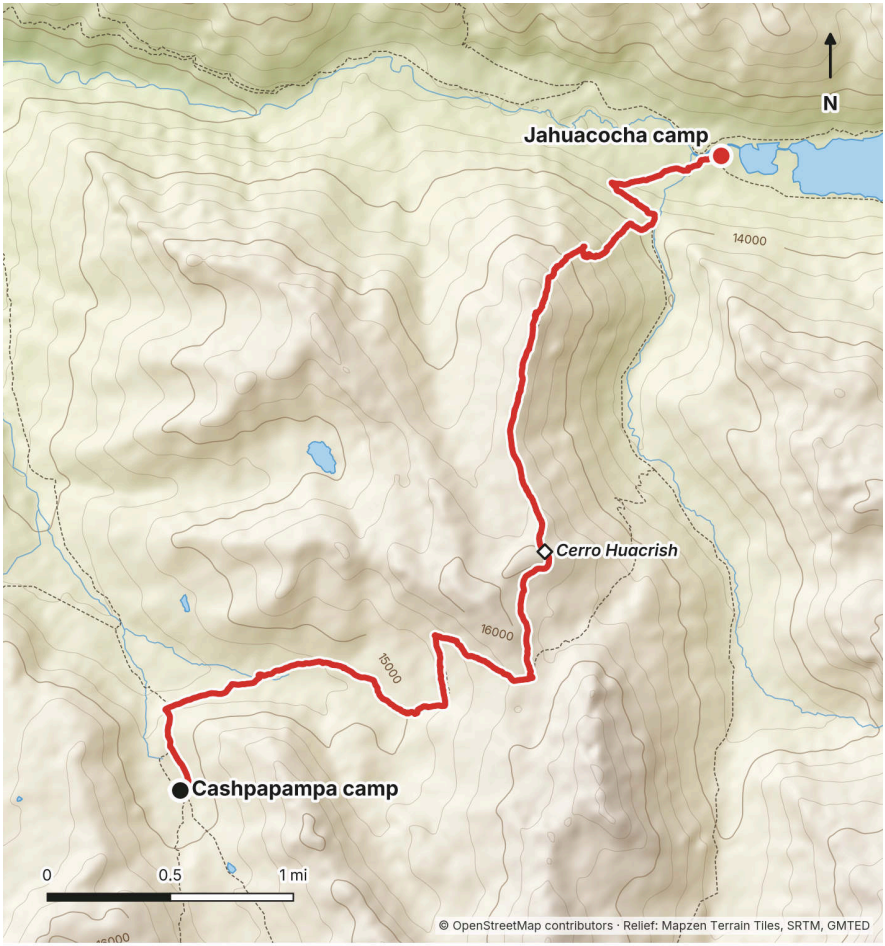
From Cashpapampa the path climbs north to the Yaucha pass, then our guides took the ridge on toward Cerro Huacrish, the highest point of the day, with the whole western side of the range in view: Jahuacocha and Solteracocha below, Rondoy, Jirishanca and Yerupajá above. From the ridge a long, steep descent leads down to Laguna Jahuacocha. The camp is at the lake's east end.

If you need to get off

From Jahuacocha, a path leads west down the valley to Llamac, the classic trailhead, on the road to Chiquián.

Watch this day

Film, Day 10





Day 10 map and elevation profile. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors.



Laguna Jahuacocha, where Day 11 starts, the evening before.

DAY 11

Jahuacocha to Rondoy

DISTANCE	CLIMBING	DESCENT	TIME I TOOK
7.0 mi (11.2 km)	**2,271 ft** (692 m)	**2,371 ft** (723 m)	**3.5 hours** (6:43 to 10:15 a.m.), then about 5 hours by van to Huaraz

HIGH POINT

The Sambuya pass, 15,556 ft (4,742 m) on my GPS; published 15,583 ft (4,750 m) (Paso Rondoy on OpenStreetMap)

FINISH

Rondoy road end, 13,220 ft (4,028 m)

COMMUNITY FEE (2026)

none new

TERRAIN

A climb past Laguna Solteracocha to the pass, then down a valley to the road

My day

Day 11. We packed up for the final push: one quick pass, then the shuttle and the drive home to Huaraz. I soaked in the final views. This place is beautiful, and this trek was great, but I was excited to get home. And then we made it. We did it.

The trail

From Jahuacocha the path climbs north past Laguna Solteracocha, then up to the Sambuya pass, about 3.9 miles in, with a last look at Rondoy and Ninashanca. From the pass it drops north down a valley to the road at Rondoy, where our van was waiting. From there it's about 5 hours by road through Chiquián back to Huaraz.

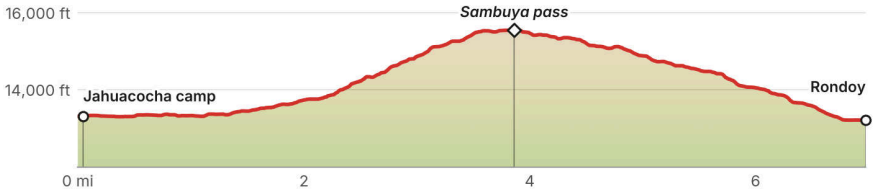
If you need to get off

Back down to Jahuacocha and west to Llamac. Or keep going: the road at Rondoy is closer than anything behind you.

Watch this day

Film, Day 11 · Behind the scenes





Day 11 map and elevation profile. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors.

Getting home

The van picked us up at Rondoy and drove us back to Huaraz through Chiquián, most of the afternoon. That night we had a trek victory dinner in town. The next morning, August 28, I took the Cruz del Sur bus back to Lima and flew home that night.

From Huaraz, the buses to Lima leave from late morning into the night (Cruz del Sur's 2026 timetable: 6 to 8 departures a day from 11 a.m., 7.5 to nearly 10 hours). Keep a spare day before your flight.



Our last camp, at Laguna Jahuacocha, from above on the afternoon of Day 10.

Other ways to do it

My operator's plan. Quechuandes' 11-day plan, sent in December 2021, was: Day 1 drive to Matacancha; Day 2 Mitucocha; Day 3 Carhuacocha; Day 4 Huayhuash; Day 5 Viconga; Day 6 Pampa Cuyoc; Day 7 Cutatambo over the Santa Rosa pass; Day 8 a "rest day" at Cutatambo with Laguna Sarapococha and Cerro Gran Vista; Day 9 Huatiac via Huayllapa; Day 10 Jahuacocha over the Tapush and Yaucha passes and Cerro Huacrish; Day 11 Rondoy over the Sambuya pass and the drive home. On the trail we folded Day 8 into Day 7, slept in Huayllapa instead of Huatiac, and camped at Cashpapampa between Tapush and Yaucha. Same passes, same finish.

Starting at Llamac. The classic circuit starts and ends in the village of Llamac, lower down on the west side, with a climb to Cuartelhuain or Jahuacocha on the first day. It adds a day or two to what we walked.

Longer or shorter. My operator organized the trek in 9 to 12 days. A day to spare lets you split Day 7 or sit out bad weather. The south side (Viconga, Cuyoc, Cutatambo, Huayllapa) and the west side (Jahuacocha) are where most shorter trips cut in or out, using the roads to Cajatambo, Huayllapa and Llamac.

I walked the version in this guide. I haven't walked these other versions.

Gear for this route

From my operator's list, bring

- A warm sleeping bag and an inflatable mat (not included)
- A daypack, water bottles, and purification tablets if you don't want boiled water
- Warm layers for below freezing, a waterproof jacket, hat and gloves
- Sun protection: hat, sunglasses, sunscreen
- Water and food for Day 1 (not included)
- Cash in soles for the fees and tips
- A power bank big enough for eleven days

Paid links: I earn a commission if you buy through these links, at no extra cost to you. As an Amazon Associate I earn from qualifying purchases.

Donkeys carried the camp, so I only carried a daypack. Here's what I had in August 2022, what I'd take now, and what I filmed with.

What I carried in 2022

My records don't name the brands, so no links here.

- **Daypack:** a daypack. Water, snacks, layers, my phone and the drone.
- **Duffel:** a duffel. The donkeys carried it, limited to 8 kg (18 lb).
- **Sleep:** my sleeping bag and inflatable mat. Not included by the operator. Nights were cold enough that I wore everything I had.
- **Poles:** rented trekking poles. I rented a pair in Huaraz for $30, and they helped so much on the climbs.

What I'd take now

What I'd bring for this trek from my current kit.

- **Sleeping bag:** Hyperlite Mountain Gear 20° Mummy Bag (Hyperlite). Nights are below freezing, with frost on the tents.

- **Sleeping pad:** Therm-a-Rest NeoAir XLite NXT (Amazon). The operator doesn't supply a mat.
- **Pad inflator:** AlpenBlow Micro Inflator (Garage Grown Gear). Easier than blowing up a pad at altitude.
- **Daypack:** Hyperlite Mountain Gear Waypoint 35 (Hyperlite). The donkeys carry the rest.
- **Poles:** Black Diamond Alpine Carbon Z Poles (Amazon). Rented poles helped so much on the passes over 16,000 feet.
- **Puffy:** Arc'teryx Cerium Hoody (Arc'teryx). For camp after sunset, below freezing.
- **Rain shell:** Arc'teryx Beta AR Jacket (Arc'teryx). On the operator's list.
- **Sun hoodie:** PATH Projects Pyrenees T19 Hoodie (PATH Projects). Strong sun on clear mornings.
- **Hat:** PATH Projects Hoyt Merino Beanie (PATH Projects). On the operator's list for the cold.
- **Gloves:** Unigear Touchscreen Liner Gloves (Amazon). For the cold.
- **Sunglasses:** Goodr OG Sunglasses (Amazon). Strong sun at altitude.
- **Water:** Katadyn BeFree AC · 1L (Amazon). The cook boiled water morning and evening. Treat stream water: there are animals everywhere.
- **Power bank:** Nitecore NB20000 (Amazon). There's no charging in camp. Huayllapa, on Day 8, was the only place I charged batteries.
- **Navigation:** AllTrails+ (AllTrails, 30% off). Load my GPX files and download offline maps while you still have Wi-Fi in Huaraz. Offline maps need the paid plan.
- **Phone data:** Airalo eSIM (Airalo, $3 off). Data in Lima and Huaraz. Don't count on a signal once you leave the road.

Filming kit

What I filmed this trip with in 2022. My setup is different now (below). Check the current rules for flying a drone in Peru before you bring one.

- **Drone:** my DJI drone. I shot this trip mainly with a drone and an iPhone. I charged three drone batteries at the hostel in Huayllapa.

- **Phone:** an iPhone. I'd sold a lot of my Sony gear and was testing how little I could get away with.
- **Tripod:** a tripod. For setting up the iPhone and walking past.

What I film with now

Since September 2026 I film with a smaller setup: the Pocket 4 and the Mic 3 on the trail, and the Mini 5 Pro in the air.

- **Camera:** DJI Osmo Pocket 4 (Amazon)
- **Mic:** DJI Mic 3 · 1 TX + 1 RX (Amazon). It pairs with the Pocket 4.
- **Drone:** DJI Mini 5 Pro (Amazon)
- **Tripod:** SmallRig Carbon Fiber Tripod (Amazon)

Weather and safety

Weather. On my trip in August: clear mornings, strong sun, a few cloudy days, and nights below freezing, with frost on the tents. Fog can hide the path on the high ridges (Day 3 for us).

Altitude is the main risk. Read Altitude. Tell your guide early if you feel unwell, and don't go higher with worsening symptoms.

Getting help. The Huayhuash is remote. Don't count on a phone signal, and help comes on foot or horseback first. My operator brought an emergency horse for exactly this. The ways out are the valleys to the roads at Queropalca, Cajatambo, Huayllapa, Pacllón and Llamac, a day's walk or more from most camps (each day's "If you need to get off" gives the route). Helicopter rescue in the Peruvian Andes is limited and can't be counted on. Carry a satellite messenger or make sure your operator has one, and have insurance that covers evacuation.

Emergency numbers in Peru (checked September 2026): 105 police, 106 ambulance (SAMU), 116 fire. The police high-mountain rescue unit (USAM) is based in the Huaraz area. In September 2026 rescues in the range were run from Huaraz by Socorro Andino Peruano with the police unit, and one hiker was carried out overland after cloud and wind stopped the helicopter. Get current rescue numbers from your operator or the Casa de Guías in Huaraz.

Dogs. Farm dogs guard their houses. On my prep day in Huaraz, a farm dog bit me while I was running. Walk past calmly, and carry your poles.

Water. Our cook boiled water morning and evening. Treat stream water: there are animals everywhere.

Using the GPX files

My own GPS recordings from August 2022, with all timestamps removed.

FILE	WHAT IT IS
huayhuash-day-01.gpx to huayhuash-day-11.gpx	One file per day, Day 1 (the warm-up walk at Cuartelhuain) to Day 11 (Jahuacocha to Rondoy)
huayhuash-full-route.gpx	All eleven days, with waypoints for every camp, the passes and Huayllapa
huayhuash-acclimatization-laguna-rajucolta.gpx	My acclimatization hike from Huaraz

The files show the way I walked in 2022, including two variants: the ridge above the Carhuac pass on Day 3 and the ridge of Cerro Huacrish on Day 10. Use them with a current map, and follow your guide or the main path where they differ.

AllTrails. On a computer, sign in at alltrails.com, create a new map and use Import. It then shows up in the app on your phone. Offline maps need a paid plan.

Gaia GPS. Open the file from Files, email or AirDrop and choose Gaia GPS, or use Import on gaiagps.com. Download the map area offline.

Garmin. In Garmin Connect on the web, go to Training, Courses, Import. Save it as a course and send it to your watch.

Organic Maps (free). Download the offline map that covers Peru's Áncash region, then open the GPX file and choose Organic Maps. It works fully offline.

Before you leave Huaraz, download offline maps for the whole range, turn on airplane mode, and check that each day and your location show up.

Before you go, check these

These change from year to year; everything else in this guide stays the same. Checked September 26, 2026. Check them again when you book and the week you fly.

On the trail

- The community fees: S/280, or S/290 with Cutatambo, per person in 2026, cash in soles (published at huayhuash.com, which was down in late September 2026; ask your operator in Huaraz for the current amounts)
- What your operator includes: guides, cook, muleteers, donkeys, a horse, food, tents, transport, and whether fees are in the price
- Whether solo or unguided trekking is allowed this season: ask in Huaraz

Getting there

- Lima to Huaraz buses: cruzdelsur.com.pe and other companies
- Huaraz to Chiquián and on to the trailhead, if you're not with an agency: ask in Huaraz the day before
- Your own entry rules for Peru, and the US State Department's advice (Level 2, exercise increased caution, in September 2026) travel.state.gov

Health and safety

- A doctor's visit about altitude and acetazolamide; the CDC's guidance is in Altitude
- Insurance covering trekking to 5,100 m (16,800 ft) and evacuation
- A satellite messenger, and your operator's plan for an emergency

Money and gear

- Soles in small notes for fees, tips and Huayllapa
- A sleeping bag for below freezing, an inflatable mat, poles
- Offline maps and the GPX files on your phone

One-page trip sheet

DAY	DATE 2022	FROM, TO	MI (KM)	CAMP, FT (M)
	Aug 14 to 16	Lima to Huaraz, acclimatizing		Huaraz, 10,000 (3,050)
1	Aug 17	Drive to Cuartelhuain	2.4 (3.9)	13,730 (4,185)
2	Aug 18	Cuartelhuain to Mitucocha	7.9 (12.7)	13,930 (4,245)
3	Aug 19	Mitucocha to Carhuacocha	7.1 (11.4)	13,720 (4,182)
4	Aug 20	Carhuacocha to Huayhuash	9.3 (15.0)	14,260 (4,346)
5	Aug 21	Huayhuash to Viconga	7.4 (11.9)	14,290 (4,355)
6	Aug 22	Viconga to Huanacpatay	8.7 (14.0)	14,750 (4,497)
7	Aug 23	Huanacpatay to Cutatambo	11.8 (19.1)	13,960 (4,256)
8	Aug 24	Cutatambo to Huayllapa	8.2 (13.1)	11,440 (3,487)
9	Aug 25	Huayllapa to Cashpapampa	7.5 (12.0)	14,840 (4,523)
10	Aug 26	Cashpapampa to Jahuacocha	6.0 (9.6)	13,320 (4,058)
11	Aug 27	Jahuacocha to Rondoy	7.0 (11.2)	
Total			**83.2 (133.8)**	**About 24,360 ft up**

Community fees (2026): S/290 per person in cash (soles), paid camp by camp.

Altitude: no more than 500 m more sleeping height a night above 3,000 m; go down for worsening symptoms, and at once for confusion, stumbling or breathlessness at rest.

Ways out: Queropalca (Days 2 to 4), Cajatambo (5), Huayllapa (6 to 9), Pacllón (9), Llamac (10, 11).

Emergency: 105 police, 106 ambulance, 116 fire.

About this guide

Huayhuash Circuit Hiking Guide: 11 days around the Cordillera Huayhuash in Peru, by Kraig Adams. 2027 season edition, updated September 2026.

I walked the Huayhuash Circuit from August 17 to 27, 2022, on a group trip I hosted with five subscribers, organized by Quechuandes in Huaraz. I made a film of it: Hiking the Huayhuash Circuit in Peru. Everything in first person comes from that trip, my film, my GPS recordings and my emails with the operator. Fees, transport and safety facts were checked in September 2026, and anything that changes is dated.

Updates and contact. If something has changed, or you spot a mistake, email me at kraig@kraigadams.com.

Paid links, no sponsors. The gear links in this guide are paid links: I earn a commission if you buy through them, at no extra cost to you. Nobody paid for a mention in this guide, and it isn't sponsored.

Safety. This is a long, high-altitude trek in a remote range, with passes over 5,000 m and help far away. This guide describes my trip and what I found, not current conditions. Rules, fees, roads and advice change. Go with an experienced operator or guide, acclimatize properly, follow local rules and your guide's decisions, and turn back when conditions aren't right. You're responsible for your own safety.

Copyright. © 2026 Kraig Adams. This guide, its photos and the GPX files are for your personal use. Please don't share or resell them.

Credits. Photos are mine, from my trip. The cover is from my film. GPX files are my own recordings. Maps © OpenStreetMap contributors, openstreetmap.org/copyright (ODbL). Relief: Mapzen Terrain Tiles, from SRTM and GMTED data.