



SANTA CRUZ

TREK

DURATION: 9 DAYS

LOCATION: PERU

SKILL LEVEL: INTRODUCTORY

ALPENGLOW



TREKKING THE SANTA CRUZ IN PERU

Expedition Details

DURATION: 9 DAYS

LOCATION: PERU

SKILL LEVEL: INTRODUCTORY

DATES: SUMMER (N. HEMISPHERE)

DIFFICULTY LEVEL DESCRIPTION:

Introductory - This expedition requires no prior experience, though it is highly recommended that participants have prior experience at altitude. Trekkers must be in excellent physical shape in order to join this expedition. Multiple months of prior training is highly recommended if not crucial to success at high altitude.

PREREQUISITES:

There are no prerequisites to join the Santa Cruz Trek.



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Expedition Introduction

Why Trek in Peru?

Peru's Santa Cruz Trek is a captivating trek at sustained high altitude. Enjoy incredible views of pristine mountain lakes and snow-covered peaks while immersed in traditional Andean culture.

The famed circuit of the Santa Cruz Trek is a stunning journey. Trekking with Alpenglow Expeditions in Peru means you are led by our professional guides while taking advantage of our longtime relationship with our local logistics team to create a seamless experience.

Our expedition begins with acclimatization in Huaraz. Sitting at nearly 10,000'/3,048m, Huaraz is the perfect place to begin getting our bodies used to the altitude. We spend two days here, touring the city on the first, and then renting mountain bikes on the second. Light activity in preparation for our larger objectives will have us in prime physical condition for our trek.



ROUTE CHOICE

Our trek through the Santa Cruz Valley encompasses a captivating journey through some of Peru's most stunning landscapes. Beginning in Huaraz, we traverse picturesque valleys and ascend challenging mountain passes, each offering breathtaking panoramic views of snow-capped peaks and pristine alpine lakes.

Along the way, we camp beside tranquil lakeshores and in remote villages, immersing ourselves in the region's natural beauty and rich cultural heritage. During the Santa Cruz trek, you'll travel through the two main valleys of Peru's Cordillera Blanca, known to climbers and trekkers as one of the most stunning mountain ranges on the planet.



HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Santa Cruz Trek runs through the heart of Peru's Cordillera Blanca, following valleys that have long been used by local communities as seasonal travel routes between high pastures and lower agricultural areas. In the mid-20th century, as mountaineering expanded in the range, the Santa Cruz Valley became a primary access corridor to peaks like Alpamayo and Artesonraju. Today, the trek remains one of the most established routes in the Andes, shaped by both its cultural history and its role in the region's climbing heritage.



9 Day Itinerary

Experience a classic traverse of Peru's Cordillera Blanca on our Santa Cruz Trek. Beginning in Huaraz, we take time to acclimatize before entering the Santa Cruz Valley, one of the most iconic trekking corridors in the Andes. Over the course of the trek, we move through broad glacial valleys, high alpine passes, and remote campsites framed by some of the range's most striking peaks.

Led by experienced guides, we travel through a landscape shaped by both mountaineering history and traditional Andean land use, passing through high pastures and along turquoise glacial lakes.

Each day brings a new perspective—whether crossing a high pass, descending into a quiet valley, or settling into camp beneath snow-covered summits—offering a well-rounded and immersive introduction to trekking at altitude in the Cordillera Blanca.



Following completion of the Santa Cruz Trek, trekkers should feel confident making plans to trek to the Cordillera Huayhuash, Everest Base Camp in Nepal, or consider joining our beginner expeditions such as the Ecuador or Peru Climbing Schools.

See more trips at ALPENGLOWEXPEDITIONS.COM



About Alpenglow Expeditions

Alpenglow creates and fosters a community of climbers prepared to achieve their dreams in the world's greatest mountain ranges.



About the Company

Alpenglow Expeditions is an AMGA accredited business, and prides itself on working with guides who uphold and exemplify the highest standard in the profession of mountain guiding.

Led by IFMGA mountain guide Adrian Ballinger, Alpenglow focuses on creating expeditions that reflect our high standards in mountain guiding by providing precision logistics, cutting edge technology, and thoughtful itineraries that combine for successful climbs.

History of Alpenglow Expeditions

Founded in 2004 by IFMGA mountain guide Adrian Ballinger, Alpenglow Expeditions began as a boutique guide service that focused on high altitude climbing. In those 20+ years we've expanded our offerings, both internationally and in the United States. We are now proud to offer courses and expeditions ranging from a climber's first experience on the Tahoe Via Ferrata, to basic backcountry education for those interested in exploring winter landscapes, to climbing the world's highest mountain for those on the Road to Everest.

About Alpenglow Expeditions



Founder — Adrian Ballinger

Adrian Ballinger founded Alpenglow Expeditions in 2004 envisioning a more holistic climbing experience for his clients than the status quo.

Adrian is the only American who has skied three 8,000 meter peaks, and was the first person to ski Makalu and Manaslu, the 5th- and 8th-tallest peaks in the world. In 2011 he became the first person to summit three 8,000 meter peaks in only 3 weeks (Everest twice and Lhotse once).

Adrian holds both an AMGA and IFMGA guide's certifications and has achieved more than 15 summits of 8,000 meter peaks (including 10 summits of Mt. Everest).



Partner / Chief Guide — Logan Talbott

Logan has been guiding professionally for over a decade in the disciplines of Rock, Alpine and Ski Mountaineering. When not out guiding, Logan spends time in the office helping the team with the day-to-day operations of the business. From one day ascents of El Capitan to big Alpine climbs in the Himalaya, or from ski descents on Denali to backyard ski tours in Lake Tahoe, he can't help but smile when out running around the hills.

Logan is an AMGA/IFMGA mountain guide, an Avalanche course leader with AIARE, as well as a wilderness EMT. In addition to guiding, Logan has extensive experience in mountain rescue, having worked for rescue teams in both Yosemite and Denali National Parks, and volunteering locally for Tahoe Nordic SAR.

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE, LOCAL PARTNERS

We partner with local logistics companies in each country and region that we operate in. Often we have partnerships that have been with us since the beginning of Alpenglow. Whenever we bring on a new operator we have vetted them thoroughly to ensure their reliability and quality. Our local and regional logistics partners are the backbone of our in-country logistics and help us achieve the success that we're known for.



Who We Are

MISSION

TO INSPIRE ADVENTURERS THROUGH POWERFUL MOUNTAIN EXPERIENCES

VISION

LEVERAGING THE POWER OF THE MOUNTAINS TO CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE IN THE WORLD

VALUES

Alpenglow Expeditions facilitates epic mountain expeditions. From Via Ferrata to summiting Mount Everest – our innovative climbing techniques, premier logistics, experienced & accredited guides, and smaller, curated teams results in an inspiring, powerful experience for every client.

Our logistical team is focused on quality and detail at every step resulting in a higher level of personal comfort with fewer delays and a better chance at success. As an AMGA accredited business, we surpass industry norms, guaranteeing that our guides are the best of the best, which includes requiring all international guides to have their IFMGA and/or AMGA certifications.

Our guides are extensively trained across every route encountered - knowing the mountain inside and out makes for a smart, safe decision process resulting in efficient, seamless trips. This training also allows our guides to focus on facilitating the best experience for our clients, including educating and teaching while on the mountain.

Our guides and logistics ensure professionally managed and enjoyable expeditions, cohesive group dynamics, and an optimal trip for all. Attention to detail extends to group dynamics and team size as well. We believe that the right people on the right mountain results in a unique and memorable adventure.

We spend time understanding each participant, precisely matching them with the rest of the team. Small team size enables us to focus on each team member's goals for the trip, maximizing success and safety, which results in an outstanding curated experience.

Alpenglow Expeditions is a group of passionate adventurers with a love for the high alpine. Our mission is to inspire adventurers through powerful mountain experiences because we know the transformative power they hold. Our clients feel empowered, surprised, delighted, and changed by the possibilities and promises of the mountains.

The Alpenglow Difference

EXPEDITION DOCTOR ON CALL

Dr. Monica Piris has been on fourteen 8,000-meter peak expeditions and countless others. She is in daily communication with our teams during the entirety of the expedition and is available for client consultation at any time.

OUR GUIDES

Alpenglow's guides are a fundamental part of our operation and your experience. Your trip will be led by one or more of our AMGA Certified guides who have intimate knowledge of their craft and the terrain. AMGA (American Mountain Guides Association) certification is the highest possible training available to guides, and only the most experienced and dedicated attain it.

PRECISE LOGISTICS

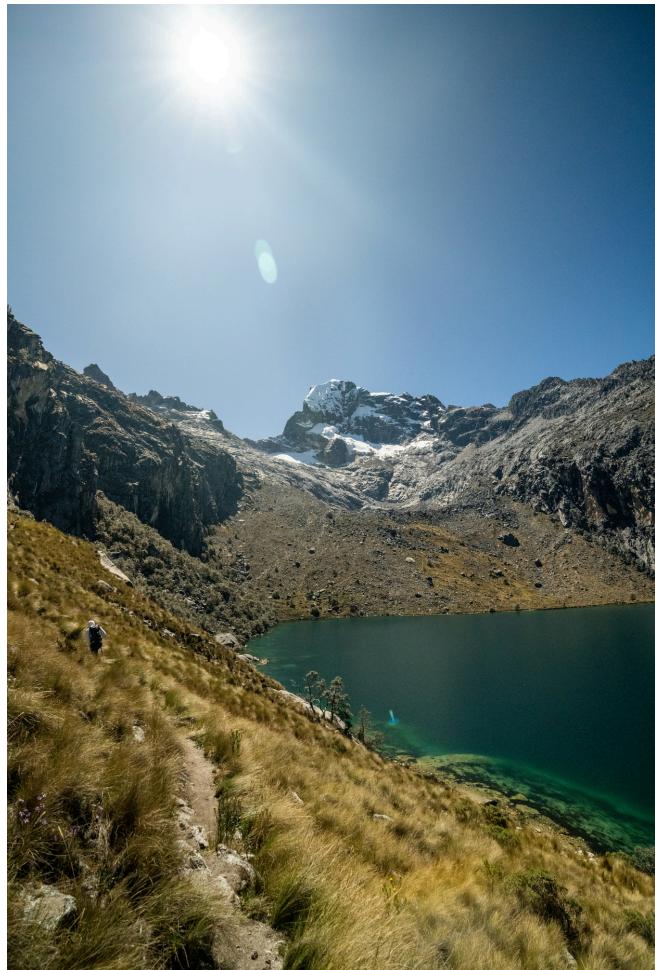
Time is a scarce resource in all of our lives. To maximize the value of our time, we work with a local logistics team and have established relationships with the services we use.

HIGH-QUALITY FOOD

Imported and local foods of the highest quality, combined with a Western-trained cook staff. Alpenglow has the best food on the trail, ensuring your strength and health throughout the expedition.

FULL TIME OFFICE STAFF

We understand that scheduling and booking an international expedition is a large step. Therefore we maintain a full-time office staff to provide peace of mind and support you throughout the process.





Route Description + Itinerary

The expedition begins with arrival in Lima in the afternoon or evening, where we spend the night to allow flexibility for international travel and any potential flight delays. This overnight stay ensures a smooth transition before heading into the mountains the following day. On Day 2, we fly from Lima to Huaraz, the gateway to Peru's Cordillera Blanca. Here, we settle into a small, comfortable hotel at roughly 10,000 feet, using the afternoon and evening to rest, hydrate, and prepare for the trek ahead.

Day 3 is dedicated to acclimatization and organization in Huaraz. We spend the day exploring the city and surrounding area, getting our legs moving while allowing our bodies to begin adapting to altitude. This relaxed day plays an important role in setting the foundation for a successful trek, helping to ease the transition into higher elevations over the coming days.

On Day 4, we drive approximately three hours to the village of Cashapampa, passing through agricultural communities nestled between the Cordillera Negra and the Cordillera Blanca. At the trailhead, we meet our burro team, organize loads, and begin trekking up the Santa Cruz Valley. Hiking with daypacks, we make our way to Llama Corral, where we establish our first campsite. The day's trek takes roughly four to five hours and offers a gentle introduction to the terrain and pacing of the expedition.

The following day, we continue deeper into the Santa Cruz Valley, with expansive views of Artesonraju and Quitaraju dominating the skyline. The trail climbs gradually as we approach Alpamayo Base Camp, set beneath one of the most striking peaks in the Andes. We arrive in the afternoon and settle in for the evening beneath Alpamayo, with total trekking time ranging from five to six hours.

Day 6 begins with sunrise views of Alpamayo before we descend briefly back into the main valley. A short trek of approximately one and a half hours brings us to Taullipampa, a broad grassy meadow beneath the towering walls of Artesonraju. With a shorter hiking day, the afternoon is spent resting, acclimatizing, and enjoying the high alpine surroundings.

Day 7 marks the most challenging and rewarding day of the trek as we ascend toward Punta Union Pass, the high point of the expedition at roughly 15,500 feet. From the pass, sweeping views stretch across the Cordillera Blanca before we descend into the Huaripampa Valley on the far side. We continue down to Paria Camp, completing a full day of trekking lasting six to seven hours.

On Day 8, we follow the valley floor toward the village of Vaqueria, gradually losing elevation as the terrain opens into pastoral landscapes. After approximately four hours of hiking, we reach the road, where our transport awaits for the three-hour drive back to Huaraz. The evening provides time to rest, clean up, and reflect on the journey through the range.

On Day 9, we depart Huaraz in the morning and return to Lima, connecting with international flights later in the day and bringing the expedition to a close.



Daily Itinerary Overview

DAY 1 — Arrive in Lima in the afternoon or evening. We'll stay one night in Lima to allow flexibility for delayed or rescheduled international flights and ensure a smooth transition into the expedition.

Activity: Arrive in Lima, Peru
Sleeping Elevation: sea level
Lodging: Hotel TBD
Meals: None

DAY 2 — Fly from Lima to Huaraz, the gateway to Peru's Cordillera Blanca. After arrival, we transfer to a small, comfortable hotel where we can rest, organize gear, and begin adjusting to altitude.

Activity: Flight from Lima to Huaraz
Elevation Gain/Loss: +10,000' / 3,050m
Sleeping Elevation: 10,000' / 3,050m
Lodging: Hotel in Huaraz
Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3 — Today is dedicated to acclimatization and trip organization in Huaraz. We'll spend the day exploring the town and surrounding area, getting our legs moving while allowing our bodies to begin adapting to altitude.

Activity: Acclimatization hike and gear prep
Elevation Gain/Loss: N/A
Sleeping Elevation: 10,000' / 3,050m
Lodging: Hotel in Huaraz
Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4 — After breakfast, we drive approximately three hours to the village of Cashapampa, passing through agricultural communities between the Cordillera Negra and Cordillera Blanca. At the trailhead, we meet our burro team and begin trekking up the Santa Cruz Valley. Hiking with daypacks, we make our way to Llama Corral, where we camp for the night.

Activity: Drive to Cashapampa and trek to Llama Corral
Elevation Gain/Loss: +2,500' / 760m
Sleeping Elevation: 11,500' / 3,505m
Lodging: Tent camp
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Daily Itinerary Overview

DAY 5 — We continue trekking up the Santa Cruz Valley, with expansive views of Artesonraju and Quitaraju dominating the skyline. The trail climbs steadily as we approach Alpamayo Base Camp. We arrive in the afternoon and settle in beneath one of the most striking peaks in the Andes.

Activity: Trek to Alpamayo Base Camp
Elevation Gain/Loss: +2,650' / 807m
Sleeping Elevation: 14,150' / 4,312m
Lodging: Tent camp
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6 — After watching sunrise illuminate Alpamayo, we descend briefly back into the Santa Cruz Valley. A short trek brings us to Taullipampa, a broad grassy meadow beneath the towering walls of Artesonraju. With a shorter hiking day, the afternoon is spent resting and continuing acclimatization.

Activity: Trek to Taullipampa
Elevation Gain/Loss: -550' / -167m
Sleeping Elevation: 13,600' / 4,145m
Lodging: Tent camp
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7 — Our biggest day of trekking yet – we climb over a second pass called Carhuac Pass (15,255'/4,650m) before dropping into another beautiful valley. Our camp for the night lies on the shores of Laguna Carhuacocha (13,615'/4,150m). Today's total trekking time should be about 6-7 hours.

Activity: Trek over Punta Union Pass to Paria
Elevation Gain/Loss: +1,900' / 580m, -3,000' / -915m
Sleeping Elevation: 12,500' / 3,810m
Lodging: Tent camp
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8 — Our final day of trekking follows the valley floor toward the village of Vaqueria. After several hours of hiking, we reach the road where our transport awaits for the drive back to Huaraz. The evening is spent resting and celebrating the completion of the trek.

Activity: Trek to Vaqueria and drive to Huaraz
Elevation Gain/Loss: -500' / -153m
Sleeping Elevation: 10,000' / 3,050m
Lodging: Hotel in Huaraz
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 9 — Depart Huaraz in the morning and return to Lima. International departures typically take place later in the day.

Activity: Travel from Huaraz to Lima and depart
Sleeping Elevation: Sea level
Lodging: None
Meals: Breakfast

Travel Details

FLIGHTS

Climbers should schedule flights to land in Lima, Peru on Day 1 of the itinerary. Climbers will meet their guides and transport to our first hotel will be arranged. Transportation between Lima, Huaraz, and base camp in the Llanganuco Valley will also be arranged. Once you arrive in Peru, all ground transportation is arranged for you including your airport arrival and departure transfers (within the scheduled itinerary). Additional costs will apply if arriving before Day 1 or after the last day of the scheduled itinerary.

Please confirm your itinerary with Alpenglow Expeditions before purchasing.

VISAS

For US citizens, visas are not required to enter Peru for the duration of the trek. Those from outside the US are advised to contact the Peruvian embassy for assistance and information regarding visas. Anyone wishing to remain in Peru beyond 183 days must apply for a visa.

For visa information, visit [CIBT Visas](#).

PASSPORTS

You will need to email a proper photo of your Passport upon signing up for your trip. Your Passport must have more than 6 months validity after the last date of the trip and have at least 2 blank pages for stamps. Copies must be high quality, color, no glare, no cropping, in focus, straight on/no angles.





Accommodations

All expeditions include double occupancy lodging in town and double occupancy tents on the mountain. No matter where we travel, Alpenglow strives to stay in safe, clean, and comfortable accommodations. Our tents are always in good shape and are replaced regularly.

IN-TOWN

For our time in Lima and Huaraz, we'll be staying in double-occupancy rooms in hotels.

Accommodations are sufficiently comfortable for the necessary rest and recharge time before and after our time in the mountains.

ON-MOUNTAIN ACCOMMODATIONS

Life on the trail includes all meals as well as double-occupancy sleeping tents for every climber. We will use three-person tents to accommodate two climbers.



SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

If you prefer a single room while we are in hotels, please let us know as soon as possible. There will be an additional cost associated for this. Single supplement tents are available for camps as well at an additional cost.



General Trip Information

FOOD

Fresh, healthy and nutritious food is both imported from the U.S. and purchased from local markets in Peru to provide the best options to our team. Our western-trained base camp cooks work around the clock to provide hearty meals that are both pleasing to the palate and filled with calories to replenish our depleted bodies.

MOUNTAIN TRAINING

Climbing in the Cordillera Huayhuash is a large physical undertaking, and climbers who are joining our teams should have at least a general understanding of what it takes to train for an expedition like this. For a personalized training schedule, please reach out to our in-house trainer:

lynette@alpenglowexpeditions.com.

Lynette Talbott is the owner and operator of [Billy Goat Swift](#). As a full-service expedition trainer, Lynette specializes in sports performance, orthopedic injuries, and endurance event training. Her passion for sports rehabilitation and athletics began in high school as a competitive swimmer and water polo player and followed into her time as a mountain guide in the Sierra Nevada. She works as a Physical Therapist Assistant at the Tahoe Forest Hospital as well as a personal trainer. For the past 10 years she has trained for triathlons, cross country skiing events, cycling events like the Death Ride, and backcountry ski trips.

MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

All of our expeditions and treks are physically demanding. Regardless of the skill level or experience needed, it is essential that you arrive in good physical shape, and prepared to handle extreme conditions, including cold, heat, and long tiring days. Alpenglow Expeditions, LLC, and its guides reserve the right to remove any member of our trips at any time if we do not believe they are ready for the rigors of the trip.

You are responsible for your own medications, inoculations, and deciding whether you are physically able to participate in an Alpenglow Expeditions trip. You should discuss your participation in this trip, and the dangers involved, with your physician.

On Mountain Medicine Our guides are certified in wilderness medicine, CPR, and are experienced in client care in remote high altitude locations. However, Alpenglow Expeditions, LLC, is not a medical facility and Alpenglow Expeditions, LLC, assumes no liability regarding medical care.

Our on-call high-altitude expedition doctor, Dr. Monica Piris, has been on more than 15 expeditions to some of the world's highest peaks including Everest, Lhotse, Cho Oyu, and Manaslu. Her work has ranged from monitoring team members' health throughout the expedition, treating locals and visitors for common illnesses, to treating frostbite and potentially fatal altitude-related illnesses and offering diagnostic and therapeutic advice over the radio for unwell climbers being rescued above 8000m.

INCLUSIONS

The cost of your trip includes your land costs (excluding in-town meals). This includes:

- All lodging according to itinerary, including double occupancy lodging while in town and group lodging in mountain huts
- Breakfasts in town, all meals while on the mountain
- Base Camp and Advanced Base Camp infrastructure
- Permits
- Scheduled in-country transportation
- Airport transfers
- Certified guides
- Burros and porters

INSURANCE

We require that all participants have rescue insurance and health insurance. Travel insurance is strongly recommended. Your policy numbers must be provided to us prior to leaving the USA.

EXCLUSIONS

The cost of your trip does not include:

- Flights to/from the city where the expedition begins
- Additional nights in hotel outside of the itinerary
- Airport taxes
- Visas
- In-town dinners
- Immunizations
- Tips for guides or local staff
- Travel, rescue, or any other type of insurance
- Hospitalization or evacuation costs
- Excess baggage charges
- Alcohol
- Other personal expenses
- The costs of delays or changes to the itinerary that are beyond the control of Alpenglow Expeditions or its agents are not included





Expedition of a Lifetime

Summit success is only achievable with your hard work and perseverance, and of course the right team of people around you.

We think of ourselves as your partner in dreaming, planning, climbing and celebrating. Our entire team from Adrian, guides, support personnel and logistics partners are excited to have you along for the expedition of a lifetime.

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BOOKING + INQUIRIES

For booking details, questions, or more information please call or email us:

1 (877) 873-5376
info@alpenglowexpeditions.com



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This expedition is operated by Adrian Ballinger, IFMGA Mountain Guide.
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