



LAKE & RUINS OF KEUSHU

 3550m

 45mins - 2hrs

 Easy

 1.5k - 4k





TREK SUMMARY



The adjacent Lake & Ruins of Keushu is the perfect option for those who have just arrived. Depending on how far you want to walk, either head to the lakes edge (45 mins) or hike up and round the lake on the single-track trail (2hrs). From here you will gain spectacular views of the Huascaran Peaks, Huandoy and views onto the Cordillera Negra. Whatever option you choose, this trek makes for a great introduction to the surrounding area and a perfect way to gradually acclimatise.

Along the way, you will pass by an ancient residential and temple complex, the spectacularly coloured Lake Keushu, a burial building home to 100 warrior skeletons and if you're lucky you may see the largest Hummingbird on the planet, the "Patagonia Gigas".





POINTS OF INTEREST



1

On top of the crag and tail is the **Main Chulpa** (burial building) of the Keushu Ruins. This dominates the lake and its surroundings, as was most probably intended by its Huari stonemasons (500AD). There are reported to be over 100 warrior skeletons (evidence by head wounds) in the lower level, although this has now been sealed off by the archaeologists that were investigating the ruins in 2006-2008.

2

The **Temple Complex** is found to the south of the lake. The dominant feature here, would have been the circular main temple. This would have been more than 7m tall, judging by the volume of detritus that has fallen from the walls. The niches in this temple interestingly line up with a large rock on the ridge line to the north west, where more ruins and burial sites have been discovered. There are also several standing stones called Huancas (pronounced “wankers”), that the ancients believed to be petrified ancestors they worshipped.

3

Located on the ridge line to the west of the lake, there is an extensive **Residential Complex** that was exposed by a huge conflagration in October 2006. It is supposed that this held around 2000 inhabitants. This was a complex maze of terraces and many buildings, where there are several more tombs under large rocks on the same ridge.

4

On the main ruin mound, on the ridge that drops down to the lake there is a small copse of **Tscapa Bushes** (*Oreocallis grandiflora* Proteaceae). This is the favoured habitat of the many **Hummingbirds** species, as well as being used to make baskets by the local indigenous peoples. Dawn or dusk is an excellent time to hide out amongst these bushes. You will also find the Sparkling Violetear (*Colibri Coruscans*), the Green-Tailed Trainbearer (*Lesbia nuna*) and the Shining Sunbeam (*Aglaeactis cupripennis*).

5

Lake Keushu is a glacial lake left by a receding glacier, with the lodge hiding behind a ridge line that is one of the glaciers terminal moraines (the main ruin mound is a Crag & Tail). If you look carefully, the entire field of Keushu may have been a lake, before it broke the terminal moraine. This means that the Crag & Tail could have been an island, before the lake level fell within the breach of the terminal moraine.



TREK DESCRIPTION



1

Take the steps up from the bar and head straight down on the path towards the lake, with the lawn terrace on your left hand side.

2

Upon arriving at the car tracks with pine trees either side, head left and follow the tracks keeping the lake on your right hand side.

3

When you reach the temple complex on your right hand side, the road will turn to the left. Turn immediately right after going through an obvious gap in the wall, and a small clearing in the trees, and continue upwards to faint track.

4

Once on the trail, follow this up towards the noise of a small stream. Here you will cross the stream over a small stone bridge.

5

Continue up the stream using this as a handrail on your right hand side. On the left you will see the terraces and ruins of the residential complex.

6

Before you reach the col, the path has one more short and steep switchback, where the waterfalls have washed out the original path. Look out for the remains of the final old defensive wall across the top of the ridge.

7

At the top of the col, cross the concrete bridge over the water canal and emerge onto the ridgeline. Here you will see the route that heads down the other way around the lake.



MAP

Below is a map for the Lake & Ruins of Keushu. Follow the colour coded and numbered markers, that refer to the indicated steps and points of interest on the previous pages.

