Misti & Chachani: Acclimatization Plan

Two Arequipa volcanoes, non-technical but hard · climb the ladder step by step

The rule: Arequipa is only about 2,335 m. Don't fly in and head straight for a volcano: climb step by step, **Misti first**, and Chachani a few days later only if your body responded well.

The Arequipa acclimatization ladder



1 Arequipa city
1–2 days: city tour, rest, hydrate

2 Salinas y Aguada Blanca
Day trip to ≈4,300 m, sleep low again

3 Colca Canyon, 2 days
One night higher in Chivay; Patapampa pass 4,910 m

4 El Misti, 2 days
Your first real test

5 Chachani, 2 days
After 1–2 rest days in Arequipa

Coming from Cusco or Puno after a week or more at altitude? You can skip steps 2 and 3. From sea level, allow at least four or five days before Misti.

Misti vs Chachani at a glance

	El Misti	Chachani
Summit	5,822 m	≈6,057 m (many local pages say 6,075 m)
Walking starts	≈3,300–3,700 m, after a 4x4 drive	≈4,900–5,000 m, end of a 4x4 track
High camp	≈4,600–4,800 m	≈5,200 m
Total climbing	≈2,500 m over two days	≈1,000–1,200 m
Summit day	Start 1–2 a.m.; 5–6 h up, 2–3 h down	5–7 h up, ≈3 h down
Terrain	Loose ash and scree, no water	Sand, ash, some snow after snowfall
Harder on…	Legs: more climbing, loose ground	Lungs: higher summit and camp

Route and camp names vary between operators; altitudes are approximate and depend on the route.

What to pack

- [ ] Down jacket, warm layers, hat and gloves (−5 to −15 °C at night)
- [ ] Gaiters and sturdy boots; trekking poles for the descent
- [ ] At least 3–4 litres of water per day: none on either route
- [ ] Sunglasses, sunscreen and lip balm
- [ ] Headlamp for the night start

Tents, mats, crampons, ice axes and meals are included in our climbs, with an official mountain guide. Crampons and ice axe are used only when there is snow.

Season and safety

Season: May–October, with July and August usually the clearest and coldest. December–March brings rain, snow, low visibility and lahar risk; we don't recommend it.

El Misti is an active volcano. Peru's Geophysical Institute (IGP) monitors it and publishes its alert level (green in early 2026). We check the latest bulletin and the weather before every departure.

→ Misti vs Chachani guide
terraquechuaperu.com/blog/misti-vs-chachani/

→ Misti Volcano 2 days
terraquechuaperu.com/climb-to-misti-volcano-2-days-1-night/

→ Chachani 2 days
terraquechuaperu.com/climb-to-chachani-2-days/

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