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PERU'S SACRED VALLEY



Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba offers guided hikes around the Sacred Valley.

Beyond Machu Picchu

Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba is a gateway to Peru's bountiful Sacred Valley

By Sarah Erdman

The Urubamba River curves through Peru's Sacred Valley, eddying and splashing toward Machu Picchu. Tourists seem to follow its momentum. They touch down in Cusco and hurtle through the Sacred Valley to get to that Inca citadel in the sky. Beyond a token stop at an alpaca farm or a weaving workshop, the valley rarely gets more than a passing night's stay. Anywhere else, this fertile land of quinoa, sweet potato, and purple corn would be the main attraction. Here, ignored by most tourists, Quechua farmers tend their crops amid Inca ruins, 16th-century Spanish churches, and mountains said to embody the spirits of ancestors.

Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba, a National Geographic Unique Lodge, celebrates this often overlooked region. Lodge owners José Koechlin and Denise Guislain-Koechlin combined Inca-inspired masonry with Spanish colonial architecture, commissioned locals to weave textiles, and worked with area farmers to plant a 10-acre organic garden filled with native species such as golden berries and tree tomatoes. Guests go biking in the valley; learn to make *chicha*, or corn beer, on site; or follow a naturalist on a lantern-lit hike. And on their return to the lodge, Alfredo Quispetupa concocts a glorious pisco sour at the hacienda bar as the sun sets on the Andes.

LODGE ESSENTIALS

Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba offers 36 rooms and suites with panoramic views. Naturalists provide information on lodge conservation projects, including Inkaterra Asociación, which helps protect the biodiversity and local communities of the Peruvian Andes.

BOOK IT

To reserve your stay, call 888-701-5486 or visit natgeolodges.com/explore.