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Inkaterra: Peru's Eco-Tourism Pioneer Marks Four Decades Of Luxury Travel

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Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba in the scenic Sacred Valley of the Incas is the newest property in the Inkaterra portfolio.

With last year's opening of [Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba](#) in Peru's scenic Sacred Valley of the Incas, [Inkaterra](#) traces the evolution of eco-tourism over 40 years since José Koechlin opened [Inkaterra Reserva Amazónica](#) deep in the Amazon rainforest. Since then, the company has grown to seven hotels ranging from an academic field station where guides are trained in the Amazon rainforest to the sprawling and serene [Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel](#) to the chic [La Casona](#) in the heart of Cusco.

Nestled in a verdant valley between Cusco and Machu Picchu with panoramic vistas of the surrounding sculpted Andean peaks, Hacienda Urubamba blends the stylish design of a boutique hotel with a program of activities that immerses you in the local culture.



Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba's dramatic contemporary interiors feature local materials and colorful handcrafted textiles.

Built as a contemporary hacienda with a central courtyard, the main building houses 12 rooms, while 24 spacious casitas fan out on the hillside capitalizing on spectacular views of the mountains, which transform throughout the day under ever-changing lighting and weather conditions. Interiors draw on local materials, indigenous art, and handcrafts with colorful woven textiles, colonial-style furnishings, and comfy leather armchairs for taking in the dramatic landscape through walls of windows.



Inkaterra La Casona offers 11 spacious suites in a beautifully restored 16th-century mansion in the heart of Cusco.

In addition to coordinating offsite excursions, such as visits to Chinchero market or the ancient salt mines of Maras, guides host a number of onsite activities such as hikes in the surrounding mountains, bird watching, star gazing, and tours of the property's 10-acres of organic gardens that supply the chef and his team. Inkaterra's acclaimed culinary offerings reflect local influences, whether in traditional dishes such as Lomo Saltado (Peruvian beef

tenderloin accented with giant Urubamba corn) or continental classics prepared with a Peruvian twist.



La Casona's Pollo Enrollado, chicken breast wrapped in smoked bacon with fava bean Capchi, white onion, potatoes, and Andean cheese, topped with a yucca "cloud."

Fine dining is also underscored at Inkaterra La Casona, Peru's only Relais & Châteaux property. The innovative menus feature gastronomic preparations of local specialties such as Andean trout in a Brazil nut tempura with spinach, snow peas, pickled carrots, and soy sauce vinaigrette or crispy guinea pig confit with Andean ratatouille.



La Casona's refined colonial style reflects local history and culture.

Tucked away on the quiet Plaza de las Nazarenas just a few blocks from the central Plaza de Armas, La Casona occupies a 16th-century mansion built around an interior courtyard framed by arches and columns. Inkaterra spent five years restoring the landmark building with 11 large suites behind carved wooden doors. The rooms feature fireplaces, heated floors, and expansive bathrooms with soaking tubs, while the décor reflects local history and culture with colonial antiques and pre-Colombian textiles.



The emphasis on design and cuisine at Inkaterra's newer properties reflects an updated notion of eco-tourism that blends luxurious indulgence with authentic cultural experiences and nature exploration. The richness of La Casona and Hacienda Urubamba is contrasted with the more rustic accommodations of the original Inkaterra Reserva Amazónica, which has been preserved for those who crave an immersive wilderness experience.



Reserva Amazónica's open-air casitas are outfitted with simple wooden furniture and beds shrouded in mosquito nets.

From Puerto Maldonado, you board a long wooden skiff for a 45-minute journey on the creamy-coffee-colored waters of the Madre de Dios River. As the boat progresses to its destination, your connection to the outside world fades with the diminishing signal bars on your phone. Reserva Amazónica offers a digital detox as it is so remote, there is no Wi-Fi. Even the electricity shuts down at 11 p.m.



Take a walk in the rainforest canopy along a series of suspended rope bridges suspended high above the ground.

The property's tightknit cluster of 35 thatched-roof casitas and main lodge are sited on a bluff overlooking the river. The camp's knowledgeable local guides lead nature walks and nighttime boat rides for spotting caimans and capybaras, the world's largest rodent, along the shoreline. In the absence of light pollution, the sky is studded with layers upon layers of sparkling stars and the spectral haze of the Milky Way. A canopy walk along a series of rope bridges in the treetops, almost 100 feet above ground, is another highlight. Adventurous types can even book a night in a treehouse where you can sleep in the canopy. And for those who can't live without Wi-Fi, the nearby Inkaterra Hacienda Concepción, offers a more stylish alternative with 19 cabanas and a six-room casa grande on the river.



Inkaterra has logged 747 different bird species, including the striking Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, on its properties throughout Peru.

In addition to sustainable tourism, Inkaterra also supports scientific research and charts biodiversity with inventories of flora and fauna. Researchers have identified 365 different ant species at Reserva Amazónica, and 747 bird species have been identified on Inkaterra properties throughout the country. The Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel is home to the world's largest native orchid collection with 372 different species growing on the property's parklike 12 acres on the edge of town.



After disembarking in Machu Picchu following a scenic journey through the Urubamba River Valley aboard the Inca Rail, you cross a wooden bridge into the sanctuary of the Machu Picchu Pueblo hotel. Meandering stone pathways connect terraces with 81 adobe casitas perched on a hillside over the Vilcanota River. With its waterfalls, gardens, and abundant birds, the hotel is a serene base for exploring the famed 15th-century Incan citadel, one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. Inkaterra's expert guides handle all the logistics for a hassle-free and fascinating tour of the mysterious Sanctuary that was rediscovered by American archaeologist Hiram Bingham in 1911.



As it continues to grow and evolve with an upcoming beach property in Cabo Blanco in 2018, Inkaterra broadens the concept of eco-tourism with a range of hotels and authentic experiences as diverse as Peru's often underrated natural wonders and cultural landmarks. For those who wish to explore the many facets of both, Inkaterra can customize a Peruvian itinerary that simplifies a cross-country trip from the depths of the Amazon rainforest to Machu Picchu's mystical cloud forest.

Getting there: South America's [LATAM](#) offers flights to Lima from Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Orlando, San Francisco, and Washington D.C.

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