



Explorations Sacred Valley & Machu Picchu

Our explorations take travelers through the colonial history of Cusco and the architectural magnificence of the Incas in Machu Picchu, isolated villages, archaeological sites such as Ollantaytambo, Moray, Chinchero and Pisac, to Andean pampas and mountains or Apus, considered by locals as guardians of people and nature.

Our explorations in the Sacred Valley have been designed so as to provide travelers with an in depth experience of the Inca civilization's cradle, allowing them to fully immerse and go deeper into the territory's countless natural and cultural features.

For this purpose we have outlined four different exploration zones – each with its own set of unique geographic, cultural and biosphere characteristics.

Zones

QUECHUA

Hikes

- Arin
- Huertos de Yucay
- Ollantaytambo
- Salineras
- Pumamarca
- Pumatambo
- Machu Picchu Inti Punku

Bike

- Río Urubamba
- Cuesta del sapo

Combination

- Moray Avalanche
- Between mountains

Overland

- Machu Picchu
- Valle Sur
- Ayni

Self Guided

- La capilla
- Urquillos
- Huayabamba
- Silvayoc

SUNI

Hikes

- Racchi
- Machu Kolka
- Moray
- Kaytucha
- Senderito de Pisaq
- Colores de Huaypo
- Maras Plateau
- Amor Violento

Bike

- Huayna Kolka
- Huaypo Views

Combination

- The Mita

Overland

- Cusco
- Pirka
- Pisac
- Chinchero
- Moray y salineras

PUNA

Hikes

- La Verónica
- Paru
- 5 lagunas
- Lloclla
- Tastayoc
- Stream to Cusco
- Huchuy Qosqo
- Incañan
- Pachatusan

Bike

- Qenqo

Combination

- Inkatracks

Overland

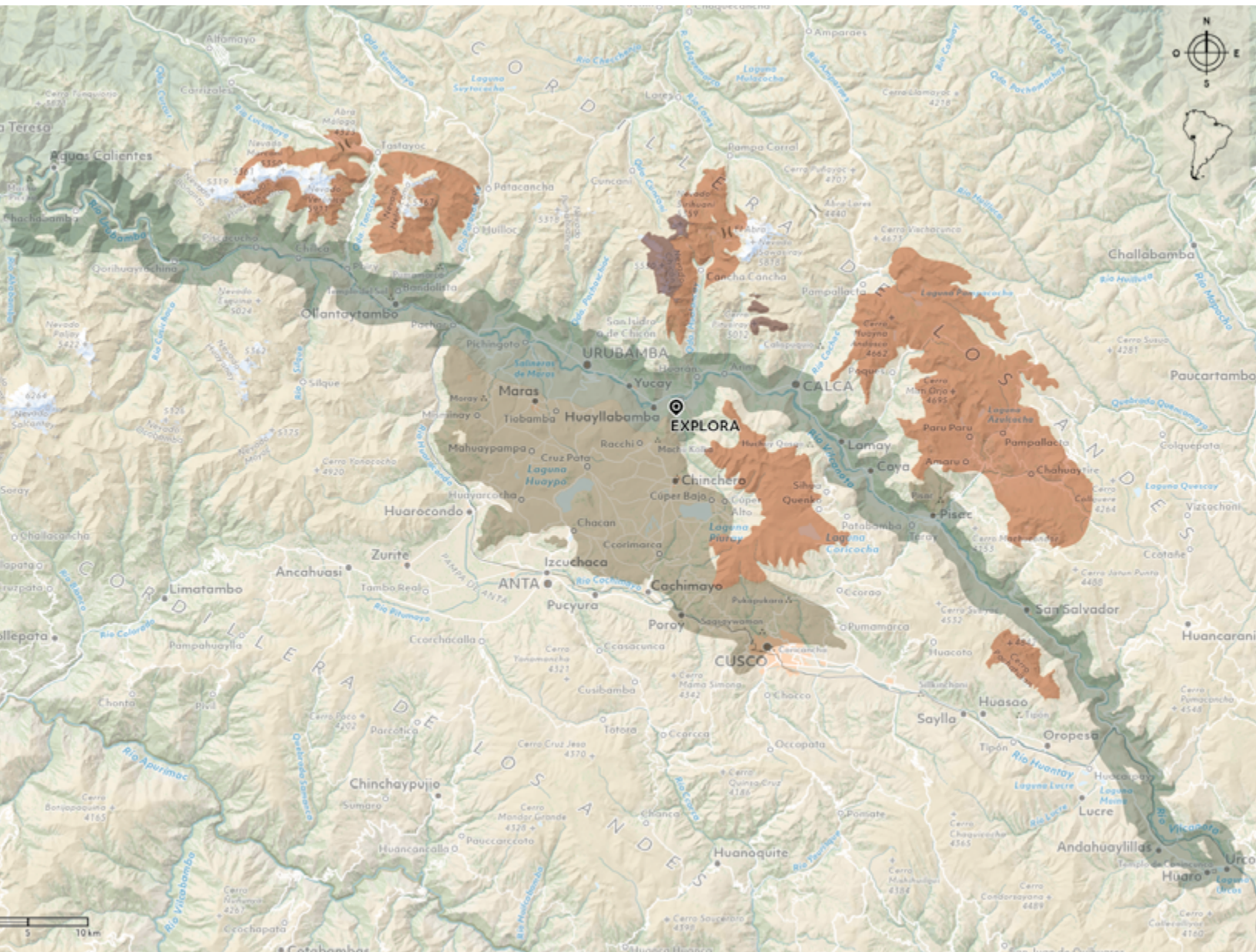
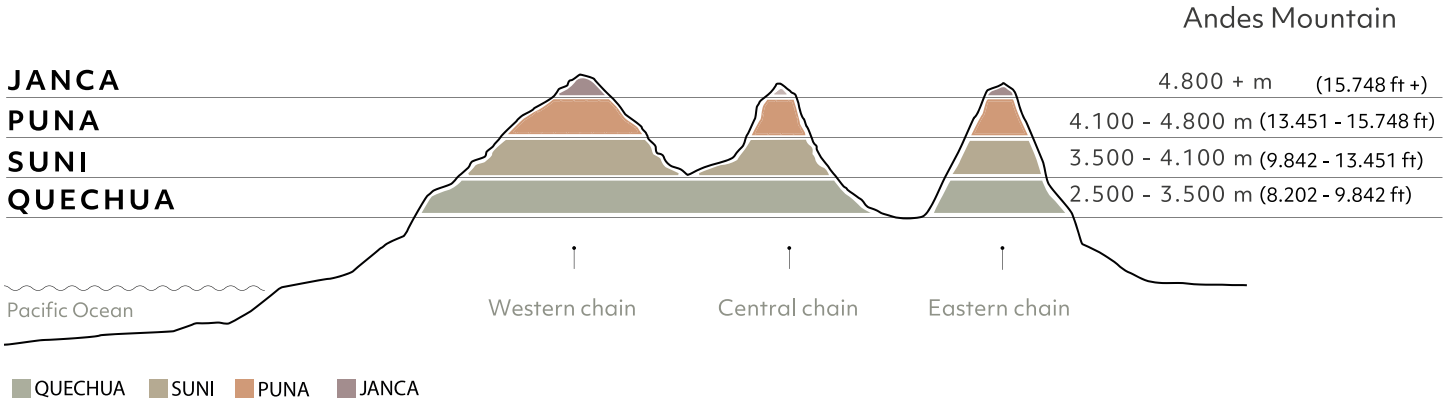
- Valle de la papa

JANCA

High Mountain Ascent

- Chicón
- Pitusiray

SACRED VALLEY ZONES



Quechua zone

Following the winding course of the Urubamba River, this area showcases Inca architecture at its best, enclosing some of Peru's most important archaeological landmarks, from Pisac to Macchu Picchu.

HIKES

Arin

Duration: 2:30 hrs
Distance: 3,7 km / 2,3 mi

Our hike begins in Huarán, on a narrow path that runs along an irrigation channel and different crops, with views of the valley and its ravines; among them, that of Urquillos. We continue skirting the channel through forests of eucalyptus and small-holdings, until we come to a path by which we descend. Finally, we reach the community of Arín. We return to Explora by van.
* Not recommended for travelers with fear of heights.

Half day | Easy ● ○ ○ ○

Huertos de Yucay

Duration: 2:30 hrs
Distance: 4,7 km / 2,9 mi

The exploration begins at Yucay, the former residence of the prominent Inca rulers Tupac Inca Yupanqui, Huaynacpac and Sayritupac, and abundant crop fields. The trail takes you to the area's platforms and crop fields.

Half day | Easy ● ○ ○ ○

Ollantaytambo

Duration: 3 hrs
Distance: 4,7 km / 2,9 mi

The walk takes us through the living Inca town of Ollantaytambo. The trail passes through the old main gate and over cobblestone streets framed by narrow water channels. After visiting the village, we climb to the archaeological site to see its terraces, the ceremonial center and the Royal Building.

Half day | Easy ● ○ ○ ○

Salineras

Duration: 2:45 hrs
Distance: 6,5 km / 4,1 mi

Hiking begins visiting the colonial town of Maras. After crossing the village, the trail descends among potato fields to the community's salt mines.

Not recommended for travelers with fear of heights.

Half day | Moderate ● ● ○ ○

Pumamarca

Duration: 3:30 hrs
Distance: 6,1 km / 3,8 mi

This exploration is an opportunity to discover one of the area's most puzzling and isolated Inca remains. The walk takes us through the Patacancha valley. The walk begins outside of Ollantaytambo, ascending through a verdant trail along local farm houses and orchards. The Pumamarca remains pose a conundrum to archeologists and explorers: their origins and functions are still unknown.

Full day | Moderate ● ● ○ ○

Pumatambo

Duration: 6:30 hrs
Distance: 11 km / 6,8 mi

The first part of the exploration is right through the living Inca city of Ollantaytambo. Then, we ascend to the archaeological site to get to know its terraces, the ceremonial center and the Royal House. The second part is a hike through the Patacancha valley, ascending progressively along a path to the vestiges of Pumamarca, one of the most enigmatic archaeological sites in the region.

Full day | Moderate ● ● ○ ○

Machu Picchu Inti Punku

Duration: 5 hrs
Distance: 5,4 km / 3,4 mi

We begin in Ollantaytambo, where we take the train to Aguas Calientes. There, we take the bus up to Machu Picchu. We walk towards Inti Punku or Puerta del Sol, an old check point, to enter the citadel. Then we descend and explore this magical place for approximately three hours. Once we have thoroughly explored the sanctuary, we leave Machu Picchu and head towards the station to take the train back.

Full day | Moderate ● ● ○ ○

BIKE

Río Urubamba

Duration: 3 hrs
Distance: 32,4 km / 20,1 mi

The road used for this exploration goes down the south side of the Urubamba River, a quiet area of cornfields, old haciendas and manors from the 19th and 20th centuries. This bike ride is recommended for families wishing to take a long walk or for those who want to take on a sport.

Half day | Easy ● ○ ○ ○

Cuesta del sapo

Duration: 2 hrs
Distance: 19,3 km / 12 mi

From the heights of the Sacred Valley's slopes we descend over a track in good conditions. The road offers very interesting views to the mountains and the Urubamba river. Once downhill, we will continue bordering the river through an area of cornfields and orchards and densely packed Inca terraces.

Half day | Moderate ● ● ○ ○

COMBINATION

Moray Avalanche

Duration: 5:30 hrs
Distance: 22,5 km / 14 mi

Our exploration begins with a hike through a community located in the hills, and descends to the Inca ruins of Moray, a special site that was used as an agricultural research center. Afterwards, we continue on bicycle, from the top of the slopes of the valley we descend on a wide path kept in good condition. The journey offers interesting views towards the mountains and the Urubamba river. Once the descent is finished, we continue along land parallel to the river, an area full of orchards and cornfields, as well as a great density of Inca terraces.

Full day | Moderate ● ○ ○ ○

Between mountains

Duration: 6:30 hrs
Distance: 27,4 km / 17 mi

From the heights of the slopes of Sacred Valley we will descend by bicycle on a track in good condition. The journey offers very interesting views towards the mountains and the Urubamba river. Once the descent is finished, we will continue along a land parallel to the river, an area full of orchards and cornfields, as well as a great density of Inca terrace. We continue walking through Ollantaytambo, ascending a path with vegetation next to houses and orchards. The Pumamarca remains pose a conundrum to archeologists and explorers: their origins and functions are still unknown.

Full day | Moderate ● ● ○ ○

OVERLAND

Machu Picchu

Duration: 12 hrs

We explore the famous historical sanctuary of Machu Picchu, one of the most impressive architectural expressions of the Inca civilization. We leave the hotel towards the train station in Ollantaytambo, where we take the train to the town of Aguas Calientes to ascend to Machu Picchu by bus. We explore this magical place for approximately three hours. This version does not include the hike to Puerta del Sol or Inti Punku. Once we've visited the sanctuary, we leave Machu Picchu and head towards the station to take the train back.

*Machu Picchu has an additional cost.

Full day | Easy



Valle Sur

Duration: 10 hrs

This exploration reveals the influence of the Spanish conquest in the region, embedded in art and in the religious syncretism that resulted from the encounter of these cultures. We begin by touring the first of three Canincunca churches that we visit in this exploration. We then walk to the Huaru church and take a van to the Andahuaylillas church, where we tour the choir and the museum. Next, we hop on a van towards an Inca road, where we take a light trek to a wetland, perfect for bird watching and having lunch. Finally, we take the van to the Tipón archaeological center, a token of the Inca's knowledge of fluid power.

Full day | Easy



Ayni

Duration: 7 hrs

We will visit the community of Huayllafara in the valley of Lamay, stopping along the way for a briefing on existing conservation projects and then reaching the hike's starting point. Once in the community, we will take part in farm work –based on the Andean calendar– learning about different local plants and crops. We will also get to know farming tools and techniques passed down through generations. Lunch will be prepared by community members using local produce.

Full day | Easy



SELF GUIDED

La capilla

Duration: 1:30 hrs

Distance: 3,4 km / 2,1 mi

This hike up to the chapel located on the hillside behind the hotel offers views of the valley, cornfields and mountains. The chapel is a sample of the religious syncretism of this area where Catholicism and local traditions converge.

Half day | Easy



Urquillos

Duration: 1 hrs

Distance: 2,1 km / 1,3 mi

A good way to get to know the surroundings of Explora Valle Sagrado and the community of Urquillos, a hike where the active use of irrigation channels for local farming can be observed, where the quiet way of life and work prevailing in this area of the Sacred Valley is maintained.

Half day | Easy



Huayabamba

Duration: 1:30 hrs

Distance: 10 km / 6,1 mi

Riding a bicycle through the Explora's surroundings is a good option for getting to know Urquillos, as well as getting to Huayllamba by following the course of the Urubamba River. This tour shows the farming nature of the area and the contrasts between one locality and the other.

Half day | Easy



Silvayoc

Duration: 1 hrs

Distance: 1,8 km / 1,1 mi

Explora's plot is located in Urubamba, considered Peru's archaeological capital. This 32-hectare area –encompassing four ancient properties– includes archaeological evidence that proves occupation since pre-Incan times. The hike visits archaeological sites with great historical value helping us connect with those who once inhabited the Sacred Valley.

Half day | Easy



Suni zone

This zone showcases the valley's verticality – a pivotal component around which the Incas developed their particular cosmovision.

HIKES

Racchi

Duration: 2:30 hrs
Distance: 6,1 km / 3,8 mi

The walk carries you through orchards and communities to familiarize yourself with the rural landscape and its culture. This exploration takes place at a mean height and offers panoramic views to the Sacred Valley and its snowed capped peaks. It provides a good chance for acclimatization and to understand the area's geography.

Half day | Easy ● ○ ○ ○

Machu Kolka

Duration: 2:30 hrs
Distance: 4,6 km / 2,9 mi

We leave by van to Chinchero, where we begin a steep ascent through crops with views of the pampa, the valley of Urquillos and the snowy peaks that crown the mountains. We walk to the Machu Kolka archaeological center, formerly used as a product storage warehouse. We explore the place and enjoy a privileged view of the valley. We return to Explora by van.

Half day | Easy ● ○ ○ ○

Moray

Duration: 2:30 hrs
Distance: 3,2 km / 2 mi

The trail begins at a farming community located amidst hills and goes down to the Inca remains of Moray, a laboratory of experimental farming where different microclimates are used to grow crops.

Half day | Easy ● ○ ○ ○

Kaytucha

Duration: 3:30 hrs
Distance: 5,1 km / 3,2 mi

We begin with a visit to the community of Cúper Bajo where we learn about textile techniques. Then we start our hike, ascending up an agricultural road with panoramic views of lagoons, fields of crops and the town of Chinchero. Finally, we descend to the archaeological complex of Chinchero, where Inca and colonial elements merge. We return to Explora by van.

Half day | Moderate ● ● ○ ○

Senderito Písaq

Duration: 6 hrs
Distance: 5,8 km / 3,6 mi

We descend from the mountains to the remains of Písaq. We will use one of our alternative routes to access the back of the remains, which provides for a unique view. This exploration is recommended for every traveler wishing to enjoy an altitude landscape that calls for contemplation.

Full day | Moderate ● ● ○ ○

Colores de Huaypo

Duration: 5:30 hrs
Distance: 13 km / 8,1 mi

During this exploration, we can get to know the daily life of local communities: shepherds and farmers. Between November and May, the landscape is lush green and humid, while from June to October the setting features are ochre, red and yellow. Lunch is served beside a lagoon and the last span of the route takes us to an altitude from where a broad 360° panoramic view can be enjoyed.

Full day | Moderate ● ● ○ ○

Maras Plateau

Duration: 6:30 hrs
Distance: 14,3 km / 8,9 mi

The trail begins at a farming community located amidst hills and goes down to the Inca remains of Moray, from where it continues to the colonial town of Maras. We see a piece of history in every corner. Afterwards, the trail descends to the bottom of the Sacred Valley and goes through the salt mines. The track crosses barley and potato fields and other crops.

Full day | Moderate ● ● ○ ○

Amor violento

Duration: 6 hrs
Distance: 13 km / 8,1 mi

We begin with a visit to the community of Cúper Bajo, where a group of weavers teach us their work and culture. Next, we walk up the slope of a large hill through agricultural terraces, the valley and the town of Chinchero. We descend to Chinchero and the archaeological site. From there, we take an Inca road down to the valley. We have lunch at a viewpoint and continue descending until we reach Explora.

Full day | Moderate ● ● ○ ○

BIKE

Huayna Kolka

Duration: 3:15 hrs
Distance: 18,2 km / 11,3 mi

After visiting the archaeological site of Machu Kolka, we get on our bikes and begin a descent among trees and adobe houses towards the town of Racchi. There, we pedal in ascent towards the viewpoint of Huayna Kolka to contemplate the valley. We descend by a winding dirt road to Huayllabamba. At this point, we skirt around different crop fields until we reach Explora.

Half day | Moderate ● ● ○ ○

Huaypo Views

Duration: 7 hrs
Distance: 36,5 km / 22,7 mi

This exploration crosses the farmlands of Chinchero, visiting vegetable gardens, small farms and villages. It takes the traveler to the remains of the Moray experimental crop center, the colonial town of Maras and its Inca salt-mines, to finalize with a descent to the Urubamba River. This exploration is recommended for travelers in good physical conditions and experienced in mountain biking.

Full day | Advanced ● ● ● ○

COMBINACIÓN

The Mita

Duration: 5:45 hrs
Distance: 22,8 km / 14,2 mi

We leave by van to Chinchero, where we start an uphill hike through crop fields overlooking the valley and the snowy peaks that crown the mountains. We walk to the Machu Kolka archaeological site, formerly used as a product storage warehouse. We visit the place and enjoy a privileged view of the valley where we will have lunch. Then, we get on our bikes and start our descent down a winding dirt road to Huayllabamba. At this point, we skirt around different crop fields and bike back to Explora.

Full day | Moderate ● ● ○ ○

OVERLAND

Cusco

Duration: 10 hrs

This exploration shows the best of Cusco in one day. We will descend from the fortress of Saqsaywaman down crossing the alleys of the colonial quarter of San Blas to the main square. After lunch, the traveler can continue walking through Cusco with one of our guides or on his/her own. The temple of Corincan cha, on which the Santo Domingo convent was built, Museum of Pre-Columbian Art, the San Pedro Market, some Art Galleries or the hundreds of souvenirs stores are some of the options we recommend. * Tickets to the evening attractions are not included.

Full day | Easy ● ○ ○ ○

Pirka

Duration: 10:30 hrs

This route first takes us to Ollantaytambo, also known as the "living Inca city". From there we travel to the archaeological site of Moray, a laboratory of experimental farming where different microclimates are used to grow crops. From here we continue to Maras and a large lagoon, an ideal place to take a stroll and have lunch, to then follow to the town of Chinchero. The road crosses several fields where we will see farmers working or looking after their animals.

Full day | Easy ● ○ ○ ○

Chinchero

Duration: 4:30 hrs

Just 1 hour away from Explora, between Urubamba and Cuzco, the village of Chinchero (3762 masl) is believed to be the birthplace of the Sacred Valley's textile craftsmanship, as well as a hub for local trade.

This exploration takes travellers through the colonial streets of Chinchero by foot, visiting the village's adobe church and discovering the unique murals preserved within.

Half day | Easy ● ○ ○ ○

Pisac

Duration: 4:30 hrs

Known for its remarkable ruins, as well as for its colorful crafts market, the village of Pisac bears witness to the accomplishments and mysteries of the Inca civilization.

This exploration allows travellers to discover, by foot, this key enclave of the Sacred Valley, showing an integral vision of the Inca cosmivision.

Half day | Easy ● ○ ○ ○

Moray y Salineras

Duration: 4:15 hrs

Located only 45 min. away from Explora (by van), the Maras salt mines are one of the few sites in the world to extract naturally pink salt. This exploration takes travellers through the open-air salt pools, as well as to the silent village of Maras. Close by, travellers will also find the circular terraces of Moray, once used by the Incas as agricultural laboratories for the empire's crops, and one of the best-preserved archaeological sites in the valley.

Half day | Easy ● ○ ○ ○

Puna zone

This highly dynamic zone is a feast to the eyes that varies significantly depending on the seasons and harvesting times.

HIKES

La verónica

Duration: 3 hrs
Distance: 5,3 km / 3,3 mi

This hiking takes us through a reserve aimed at preserving forests and endangered birds. In the dry season, the snow-capped Verónica hill and the mountains surrounding it are the main attractions. During the rainy season, views may be obstructed by clouds, but then the ground steals the limelight.

Full day | Moderate ● ● ○ ○

5 lagunas

Duration: 4:30 hrs
Distance: 9,6 km / 5,9 mi

This walk begins at an isolated community in the heights of the Andes. From there, the trail goes up to a broad pass from where to observe the snow capped Sawasiray and other snowcapped peaks. The descent takes us through a ravine with llama and alpaca herds, passing beside several lagoons that reflect the large snowcapped peak in the background and the yellow-colored mountains.

Full day | Moderate ● ● ○ ○

Huchuy Qosqo

Duration: 8 hrs
Distance: 17,3 km / 10,7 mi

This exploration offers breathtaking views to lagoons at different altitudes, to the farmlands of Chinchero and to the valleys. To reach the remains of the Huchuy Qosqo Palaces, it goes down an Inca trail. Once in the remains, you cannot miss lying down in the gardens, taking a rest and enjoying the view towards Sacred Valley.

Full day | Advanced ● ● ● ○

Paru

Duration: 5:30 hrs
Distance: 10,5 km / 6,5 mi

This exploration transports travelers to paths where only shepherds pass. There they will walk to more than 13000 ft. Then, following some water courses, explore the slopes of the mountains and lagoons between ranches of Paru-Paru.

Full day | Moderate ● ● ○ ○

Tastayoc

Duration: 6:30 hrs
Distance: 12,4 km / 7,7 mi

We begin in the altitude, through a pastureland highly isolated from the rest of the valley. The trail includes several lagoons, some with turquoise waters due to thawing, and others with transparent waters, allowing travelers to learn about high-mountain water ecosystems.

Full day | Advanced ● ● ● ○

Incañan

Duration: 8 hrs
Distance: 17,8 km / 11,1 mi

This is the most physically demanding exploration and the one with the most spectacular landscapes. It crosses the Urubamba mountain chain from north to south, over a trail that goes along the second highest peak in the region, the Sawasiray, with 19,088 ft.

Full day | Expert ● ● ● ●

Llollla

Duration: 5 hrs
Distance: 10,6 km / 6,6 mi

This mountain walk follows tracks used by local shepherds among lagoons serving as water deposits to sustain the area's rural lifestyle between the valleys of Lamay and Pisac. Old mountain trails, mild slopes, views, and people, among others, invite travelers to relax, walk calmly, breathe deeply and enjoy different perspectives and colors.

Full day | Moderate ● ● ○ ○

Stream to cusco

Duration: 6:30 hrs
Distance: 14,5 km / 9 mi

The trail crosses the mountains that separate the Sacred Valley from Cusco and reaches the Town Square of the Inca's imperial city. This road simulates the journey followed by the Incas and Spanish conquerors more than 500 years ago. Before completing the exploration, there is a guided tour to the huge walls of the Saqsaywaman and its archaeological and ceremonial centers.

Full day | Advanced ● ● ● ○

Pachatusan

Duration: 8 hrs
Distance: 12,2 km / 7,6 mi

We begin our ascent by a path of agricultural and livestock use. During this exploration, we can see Cerro Pachatusan, considered in Inca culture to be the protector of the world. We walk to an open area with wide views of the Cusco Valley and finally, we descend to the archaeological centers of Pukara and Tipón, where agriculture was developed with an important Inca hydraulic system that is still in use today.

Full day | Expert ● ● ● ●

BIKE

Qenqo

Duration: 6:30 hrs
Distance: 54,5 km / 33,9 mi

The exploration begins in the heights of the pampas and then descends – over a vehicle road – among Quechua communities and farmlands with views to the Sacred Valley and Pisac. In the afternoon, the ride goes follows the south side of the Urubamba river among cornfields, old haciendas and manors from the 19th and 20th century.

*Browsing is subject to the availability of Explora's external operator.

Full day | Expert ● ● ● ●

COMBINATION

Inkatracks

Duration: 8:30 hrs
Distance: 59,9 km / 37,2 mi

During the morning, this exploration considers a 3,3 mi walk over a mountain trail with 360° views to Cusco and the Sacred Valley. The descent is through potato plantations and pampas where shepherds tend their animals. In the afternoon, biking starts on the heights of the pampas, then going down through Quechua communities and farmlands, with views to the Sacred Valley.

Full day | Expert ● ● ● ●

OVERLAND

Valle de la papa

Duration: 9 hrs

This exploration takes the traveler to one of the most fertile areas in the Sacred Valley. The journey begins towards the Quinsacocha lagoon, a sublime site that features the typical Cusco puna landscape. Going downhill, we will cross the el Valle de la Papa and next, visit the Quechua community of Chahuaytire, a place with an ancient textile tradition where we will learn about natural dyeing and back strap loom techniques. The trip ends with a visit to the stunning archaeological center of Pisaq, a city built on a mountain with hundreds of remarkable hanging farm terraces on its slopes.

Full day | Easy ● ○ ○ ○

Janca zone

Towering titans that reach into the clouds above, defying altitude and gravity in order to provide a vital experience of heaven on Earth for all who venture their slopes.

HIGH MOUNTAIN

Chicón

Duration: 13 hrs
Distance: 16,1 km / 10 mi

We reach the community of Cuncani after a three-hour drive. Hiking upslope, we pass by a shepherds' estancia. We then follow a trail used by the community for livestock and farming activities. Once we reach the Chicón glacier, the hike continues through ice and snow; after the pass we enjoy an amazing view of the Sacred Valley and the Maras plateau. We descend crossing a Queuñas forest.

Full day | Expert ● ● ● ●

Pitusiray

Duration: 10 hrs
Distance: 16,2 km / 10,1 mi

Van ride to the upper part of Calca city. The hike begins with a sloped ascent following a well-marked winding trail. We go by lagoons and rocky areas that require escalating skills, to then reach the summit. We get a broad view of the Sacred Valley and most of the Vilcanota Mountain Range.

Full day | Expert ● ● ● ●