

INTRODUCTION

Territories with vineyards and villages that for years have combined agriculture with tourism. The Elqui Valley is one of the most visited destinations that you cannot miss if you are a nature lover and are looking for a different rest experience. All this is located between Vicuña and Paihuano.

Paihuano is located in the eastern part of the Elqui Valley, and is considered a true paradise for nature lovers, spiritual search, and meditation. It is also the entrance to Cochiguaz and Alcohuaz valleys, where a rich tourist offer is offered to the visitor. Nearby is the ravine that gives its name to the town and that unfolds in the foothills to the east, bringing together special conditions for ecotourism and observation of the skies.


PAIHUANO

The pure air, fresh and crystalline water, blue skies, flowing energy, and warm people are some of the natural virtues of this district. The area is striking for its contrasts, with colorful hills, vegetation that contrasts with the aridity, and a sky that is considered one of the most transparent on the planet. This natural attraction offers an incomparable tranquility which makes it recognized worldwide as an ideal place for relaxation and meditation activities, mainly concentrated in the valley of Cochiguaz, whose mystical fame transcends our borders.


ATTRACTIONS OF THE AREA

Paihuano. This quiet town next to the Claro River has a good network of tourist services such as cabins, restaurants, and stores, among others, which provides the necessary comfort to enjoy a peaceful life in every corner and at any time of the year.

Pueblo Hundido. It is a hamlet that on the top of a rocky outcrop shows a statue of Gabriela Mistral carved in the rock. It is a short distance from the Pinto and Montegrande ravines, with restaurants, rural lodging, cabins, and agro-camping.

 **Located 5 km south of Paihuano.**

Quebrada de Paihuano. A pre-cordilleran place with special conditions for ecotourism activities and observation of the skies. It is accessed from one side of Paihuano main square, which is a road lined with trees and pircas, recommended for those who like quiet places.

 **Located 6 km east of Paihuano**

Pisco Elqui. A meeting place for visitors and artisans, it is located at an altitude of 1,247 meters above sea level. It is a pleasant and picturesque town, which invites you to rest and contemplate beautiful landscapes. It has a wide range of hotel services,



Above Panoramic view of Cochiguaz sector. **Center** view of Pisco Elqui. **Below** Plaza de Paihuano.

cabins, hostels, inns, alternative therapies, restaurants, swimming pools, and camping sites. On one side of the square is the Solar de Pisco Mistral, with a museum that houses old machinery for making this liquor.

📍 **Located 13 km south of Paihuano.**

Pisco Elqui Church. In the town of Pisco Elqui is the famous Nuestra Señora del Rosario church, built between 1910 and 1922. The temple has a European design of the time and is built with materials brought from the old continent. It has a tower 30 meters high, a central nave, and two lateral ones with images brought from France.

📍 **It is located on O'Higgins and Centenario Streets.**

Pisco Valley. The district is famous for its liquors, which can be seen in the number of distilleries that exist. In the Montegrande sector, there is a plant from the Cooperativa Agrícola Pisquera de Elqui Ltda. (CAPEL); in Pisco Elqui there is the Pisco Mistral plant, belonging to Compañía Pisquera de Chile. In the Los Nichos sector, on the road to the town of Horcón, is one of the last artisanal distilleries in the region, the Fundo Los Nichos distillery.

Tres Cruces. A small town, gateway to the interior valleys, it is the ideal place to observe the course of the Claro River and appreciate its fresh and crystalline waters. It is enchanted by the prevailing nature and the rurality of the sector.

📍 **Located 5 km north of Paihuano.**

Cochiguaz Valley. Known as a center of meditation and meditation, it is reached through steep slopes and offers a beautiful pre-mountain range landscape ideal for ecotourism and observation of the skies. It has basic tourist services such as cabins, camping sites, and restaurants.

📍 **Located 18 km east of Montegrande, at an altitude of 1,500 m above sea level.**

CerroCancana Observatory. A private center that offers various alternatives for observing the skies, with guided sessions. Its facilities include two 14-inch telescopes.

📍 **Located 11 km east of Montegrande and 1,560 meters above sea level, on the road to Cochiguaz.**

Booking is required.

Los Nichos. Famous for its pisco production and subway cellar, renowned for its distillates, and now continues to innovate with its nectar wines. You can visit its cellars, known as "the niches", where bottles of liquor of great antiquity are preserved. There is an exhibition and sale of handmade products such as nectar wines, liqueurs, and pisco. Near this winery, there is lodging in a sector of dome-shaped cabins, which are equipped with telescopes and removable roofs, allowing for astronomical observation. There is also a gourmet restaurant in the middle of vineyards and grapevines, located in an old Pisca winery.

📍 **Located 16 km south of Paihuano.**

Horcón. A picturesque place located at an altitude of 1,400 meters above sea level, where there is an attractive handicraft village with workshops and a sales room, traditional agriculture in small farms, and simple houses made of adobe, stone, reeds, cane, coirón, wheat straw, willow wood, and carob tree. In its surroundings, it is possible to find more than one place for astronomical observation.

📍 **Located 23 km south of Paihuano.**

Alcohuaz Valley. Located in the middle of the pre-mountain range, it invites the contemplation of its flora and fauna in a natural environment at an altitude of more than 1,740 m above sea level. It has hotel facilities, among which stands out a remodeled old house and a restaurant.

📍 **Located 29 km south of Paihuano.**



Above Church and Plaza de Pisco Elqui, Vicuña. **Below** Gabriela Mistral, Montegrande.

MONTEGRANDE AND GABRIELA MISTRAL

9 km south of Paihuano and at a latitude of 1,100 m above sea level, is Montegrande, an area that was declared a Typical Zone in 1990. It houses the Casa Escuela and the tomb of the poet Gabriela Mistral, both recognized as national monuments (a magnificent sculpture commemorates her). Also of interest is the old church from 1879 restored in 1999, crowned by a tall wooden bell tower from the nineteenth century. Other attractions include an auditorium named after the neuroscientist with Elquinas roots Francisco Varela, the Zen art gallery, the Artesanos del Cochiguaz pisque plant, and a natural perfume factory. In addition, in the area, it is possible to find cabins, some stores, restaurants, and alternative therapies.

MONTEGRANDE AND GABRIELA MISTRAL

Montegrande Typical Zone. Since 1990, the entire area between the Casa Escuela and Gabriela Mistral's tomb, including the church, the small square, and a neighboring farmhouse, has been officially declared a Typical Zone.

Montegrande Church. This temple of neoclassical inspiration was built in the 19th century and given to the community on November 29th, 1870. It is the oldest in the community. In 1896 Gabriela Mistral took her first communion in it. The images are made of polychrome wood. The Christ of Quiteña wood from the Main Altar dates from 1889.

Gabriela Mistral Mausoleum. In Montegrande there are two national monuments dedicated to honoring the author of "Sol de Trópico". One of them is the Mausoleum of Gabriela Mistral, where the remains of the poetess have rested since 1961 in compliance with her express will. The Nobel Prize in Literature rests today on the hill of the El Pozo estate, a historical monument since 1969. In October 2005, the remains of her beloved nephew Juan Godoy (Yin-Yin) were transferred here.

Gabriela Mistral School-House Site Museum.

Adapted to the style of the time and open since 1980, the building has been a Historic Monument since 1979. It was the place where Gabriela Mistral lived from the age of 3 to 9. The deep marks of those experiences as a child permeate all of Mistral's work to such an extent that in her later years, she says bitterly: "I was happy until I left Montegrande, from then on I was never happy again". It is a very simple one-story Adobe building, like many that still exist in the area.

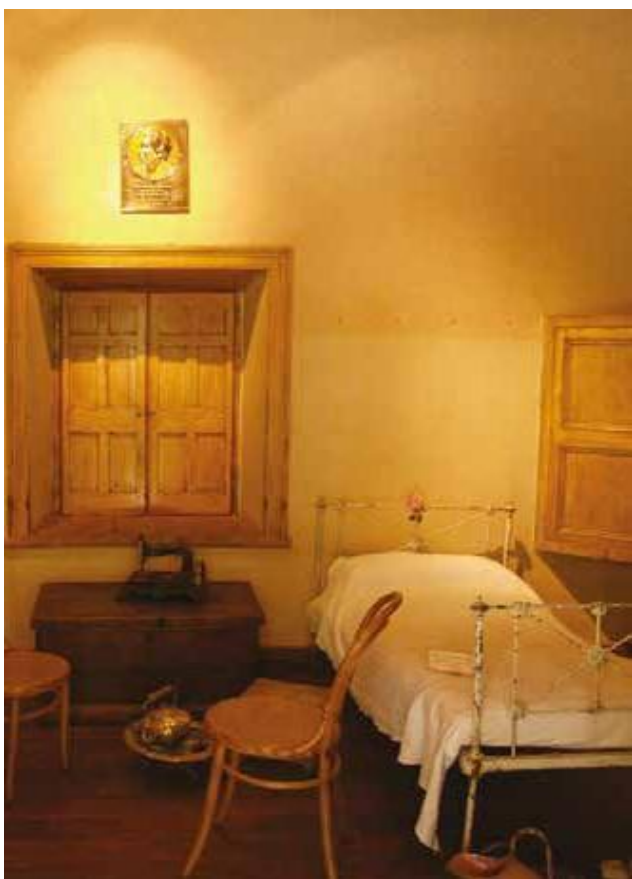
📍 **Located on Calle Principal s/n in Montegrande.**



Frontis Pisco Los Nichos.



Valleys in the area.



Above Inside the Gabriela Mistral House-School Museum. **Center**
Inside the Gabriela Mistral House-School Museum.



Above Pisco Elqui Church. **Below** Alternative therapies.

NATIONAL PATRIMONY

In the communal environment, diverse natural spaces are identified in mountainous environments and inland valleys, each with its characteristics. The commune is intertwined by the towns of Tres Cruces, Paihuano, Quebrada de Paihuano, Quebrada de Pinto, Montegrande, Cochiguaz, Pisco Elqui, Horcón, and Alcohuaz.

Mountain. The most accessible mountains for those who want to practice medium to high mountain sports are Gabriela Mistral (3,940 m), La Coipa (4,040 m), La Embarradita (4,105 m), and Cancana (4,109 m). Different mountain trails can be used as circuits. Of the mountain range sectors, the only one equipped with a shelter to provide lodging for visitors is Alcohuaz. The El Chañar and El Samo shelters belong to the Estero Derecho Community, from whom authorization must be requested.

Valleys. There are two important valleys, Cochiguaz and Alcohuaz, which give rise to two streams of pure and crystalline waters that are home to a variety of fauna. One of the riverbeds is called the Cochiguaz River and the other is the Estero Derecho River. On the way to the Alcohuaz valley, irrigated by the Estero Derecho River, the towns of Pisco Elqui, Horcón, and Alcohuaz unfold. In the valley of the Cochiguaz, you can find a varied offer of tourist lodgings, as well as places for camping and day trips. There is also the possibility of accessing alternatives for meditation, relaxation, and healing. The access to Montegrande is by a dirt road and has public transportation. In both valleys, you can do activities such as hiking trails, climbing hills and high peaks, and cycling.

Rivers. The Claro River is formed by the Cochiguaz River and the Estero Derecho River. Its waters are crystal clear and during the intense summer heat are very refreshing for both residents and visitors. In winter they become really cold due to the limited flows; very reduced if we compare them with the sources of the south zone. The main activities are sport fishing and bathing, as well as the observation of the varied flora and fauna that inhabit these river basins. In the Cepo ravine, in Cochiguaz, are the Verde and Amarilla lagoons, places difficult to get to, but ideal for observing nature and sport fishing.

Flora and fauna. It has a vegetation characteristic of semi-arid environments, with water resources capacity to feed typical chañares, carob trees, hawthorns, and various minor species. There are also fruit trees such as apricots, fig-trees, avocado trees, orange trees, peaches, and vegetable crops. The landscape is intensely cultivated with grapevines that thrive in the intense sun and dry air, giving rise to the best grapes. In fauna, the most common species are guanacos, condors, viscachas, foxes, Chilean pumas, tococos, among others. The access roads to the different localities make up the ideal scenery for the observation of the landscape and flora and fauna.



Above Quebrada de Paihuano **Center** Paihuano Panoramic view of Paihuano **Below** Cerro Cancana de Cochiguaz Observatory

Advice. Prefer the registered tourism service providers which are certified by Sernatur. Registration for lodging and adventure tourism services is mandatory, according to Tourism Law No. 20,423.

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