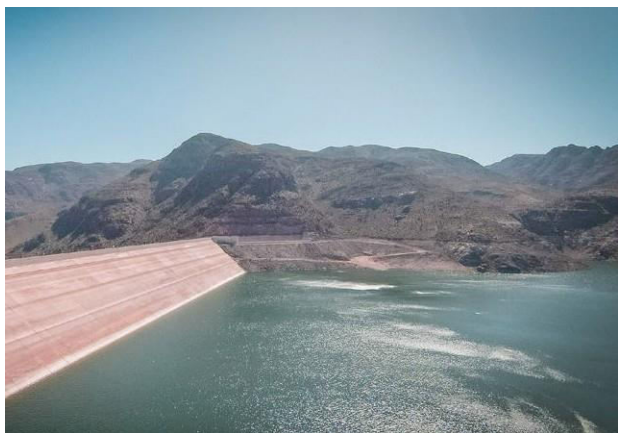


INTRODUCTION

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.

It is the most territorially extensive district in the region of Coquimbo. Apart from the natural and historical attractions that surround it, it is one of the places in the world where astronomical observation has developed the most, both at a scientific level as well as in divulgation.

The city is located in the bed of the valley, excavated by the river for thousands of years. The *raison d'être* of this district is the Elqui River, which is born in the town of Rivadavia where the two tributaries that give rise to it meet: the Claro River and the Turbio River, which are formed in the distant foothills of the Andes. The Elqui meanders through the valley for 240 kilometers to flow into the sea at La Serena, shaping life in a fragile semi-arid environment.



Above Puclaro Reservoir. **Center** Panoramic view of Tololo Hill Observatory. **Below** Mamalluca Hill Observatory.

VICUÑA

Be amazed by the land of the famous poet Gabriela Mistral, a famous valley preferred for its extraordinary climate, clear skies, low humidity, and pleasant temperatures. The imposing hills form a narrow landscape, in a symphony of colors that sprouts from the vineyards, the crops and native vegetation, the rugged land, and the always blue sky.

Vicuña, a picturesque town that is the communal head, concentrates the main services in the Elqui Valley such as accommodation, food, supermarket and handicrafts, ATM, and refueling. From here you can tour the valley or marvel at the mysteries of the universe that show us the astronomical observatories in this area.

TO VICUÑA

El Molle. A place where the first vestiges of the pre-Hispanic culture of the same name were discovered. It has restaurants and assorted, quality lodging services. It is interesting to visit its chapel and taste its famous Chilean sweets, along with delicious and varied cuisine.

 It is located 34 km from La Serena, Ruta CH-41.

Gualliguaica. The name represents the history of this town, which had to fight to stay in the area due to the construction of the Puclaro dam. Finally, the town was relocated to its current position. Its waterfront is the ideal place to observe the entire reservoir. It has a chapel dating from 1757 and the building from the old train station built in 1897. Both buildings are replicas of those that were in the old Gualliguaica, and a museum with the history of the town. One of its main attractions is the water sports done in the reservoir, such as kitesurfing and windsurfing, thanks to the natural wind conditions in the area.

Puclaro Reservoir. Built to regulate the course of the Elqui River downstream of the dam. It has a capacity of 200,000,000 cubic meters and can be visited by requesting passage at the control barrier. Various nautical sports are dondeand its viewpoints give a panoramic view of the Elqui Valley. Another perspective is achieved by entering the town of Gulliguaica, where there are piers for water sports.

📍 **Located at Km 40 of Route CH-41, near the town of El Molle.**

Cerro Tololo Reservoir. Located at Km 50 of route Ch-41, 38 km towards an inland ravine, at an altitude of 2,200 meters above sea level. This scientific observatory has state-of-the-art telescopes and instruments.

Cerro Mamalluca Reservoir. Belonging to the local council of Vicuña, it is located at an altitude of 1,100 meters above sea level and a distance of 9 km from the city center. It offers a wonderful trip to enjoy the clearest skies in the world through 12 and 16-inch telescopes.

Mamalluca Planetarium. As part of Vicuña's 201st anniversary in February 2022, the Mamalluca planetarium was inaugurated, becoming the second of its kind in Chile. It has a 360° viewing system and surround sound, an immersive experience that is managed from a Tablet.

VICUÑA AND ITS APPEAL

Bauer Tower. Built on the old building of the town hall in 1905 by Mayor Adolfo Bauer and inspired by similar towers in Germany. Inside, an authentic hall of the Municipal Council is conserved.

📍 **Located on San Martín Street on the corner of Gabriela Mistral.**

Old Municipal Council. It was the first meeting room for the town hall. It was built in 1826, where the mayor and the aldermen used to meet. Today it is a small museum that exhibits a gallery of portraits of illustrious figures of the area, old photographs, and furniture from the era.

📍 **Located inside the Bauer Tower.**

Inmaculada Concepción Temple. Inaugurated in 1909, it was built in the same place where the old temple of La Merced was located. It has an image of the Virgin of Carmen that accompanied the Chilean troops during the Pacific War, donated by Bishop Florencio Fontecilla. It preserves the baptismal font where Gabriela Mistral was baptized in 1889 and has a small religious museum and impressive frescoes on the ceiling of its main nave.

📍 **It is located on Gabriela Mistral 615 Street.**

Peace Obelisk. Located in front of the Bauer Tower, it is a monument donated by the Japanese foundation e Word Peace Project Society.

Los Artesanos Village. Local artisans offer typical works and beautiful souvenirs of the area.

📍 **It is located on Gabriela Mistral Street w/n, next to Inmaculada Concepción church.**

Casa de la Cultura and Public Library. This modern cultural center is located in the building that dates back to 1853 and was the former High School for Girls where Gabriela Mistral studied at the age of 11. Exhibitions, lectures, and various artistic and cultural activities are permanently held here.

📍 **Located at 334 Chacabuco Street, in front of Gabriela Mistral Square in Vicuña.**

Entomological and Natural History Museum.

The largest private collection of insects in Chile. Fossils, butterflies, beetles, snails, and birds from the valley, and tropical and Latin American areas.

📍 **Located at 334 Chacabuco Street, next to the Casa de la Cultura.**

Gabriela Mistral Museum. Built in 1971 based on the design of architect Oscar McClure and muralist Elías Castro, it is the place where the poetess Gabriela Mistral was born on April 7th, 1889. The building uses stone, glass, and water, elements from the valley that are present in the work of the poet and educator, who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1945. It houses personal objects, awards, photographs, and books, among others, and exhibits a replica of her native house. It has rooms for entertainment, a library, exhibitions, and meetings, in addition to a beautiful patio or orchard that was part of the original house.

📍 **Located at 759 Gabriela Mistral Street. Free admission.**

La Virgen Hill and natural viewpoint. Dedicated to the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception, protector of the city. The place of pilgrimage and prayer is a natural viewpoint that dominates a great part of Vicuña. It has a vehicular and pedestrian road.

📍 **Located only 2 km from Vicuña, it is accessed through the town of Hierro Viejo.**

Aldea Elquina. It operates all year with local artisans and producers offering handicrafts and souvenirs from the valley.

📍 **Located 1 km from Vicuña on Route CH-41.**

Abastos Market Fair. It offers on weekdays the sale of fruits, vegetables, seafood, and other products, in addition to kitchens with the offer of typical dishes from the area.

📍 **Located less than one kilometer from the center of Vicuña, on Ruta CH-41 (Las Delicias Avenue towards the interior of the valley).**

Los Pimientos Park. A place for recreation and relaxation, offering 90 barbecue areas, 3 swimming pools, food service, a children's playground, an outdoor gym, and beautiful green areas. It operates all year round.

📍 **Located 1.5 km. from the center of Vicuña, Route CH-41.**

Capel Tourist Center and Pisco Museum. Here the famous Capel Pisco is produced, which in its many varieties has given fame to the valley. It offers a tour of the plant, knowing the whole process of production, tastings, product sales room, and souvenirs, plus a Pisco Museum that exhibits the history of this ancient activity. It also has a room for cultural activities.

📍 **Located on the road to Peralillo, 2 km from Vicuña.**

Artisanal Pisco Winery. In the town of El Arenal, there is an artisanal plant and distiller of pisco Aba for export. The facilities can be visited all year round.

📍 **Located 8 km from Vicuña, Fundo San Carlos, El Arenal.**

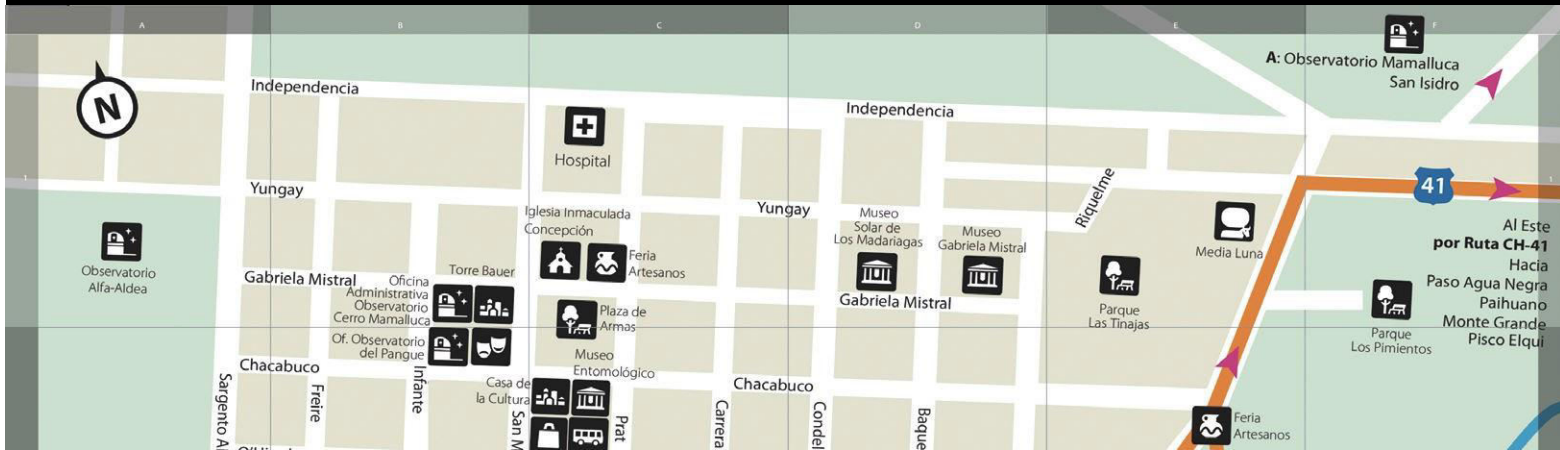
Industria Papayas. In the town of San Carlos, there is a factory called Olivier that offers for sale numerous products derived from this fruit.

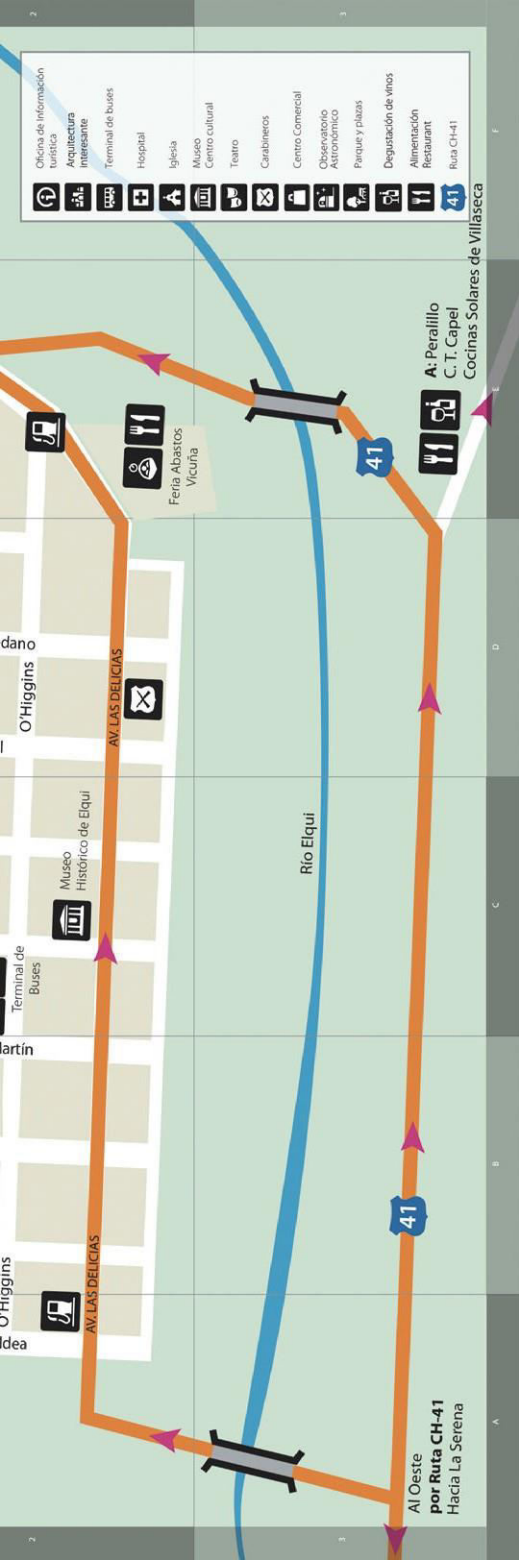
📍 **Route CH-41, Km 50. Open all year round.**



Gabriela Mistral Museum Front part.

Vicuña Map







Life-size sculpture of Gabriela Mistral.

RURAL VILLAGES

San Isidro. Its church is one of the oldest in the valley, whose floor is made of carob tree stakes, an old Spanish practice. Here the most important local party in the district: The Pampilla de San Isidro, an iconic place in the Elqui Valley during the celebration of Fiestas Patrias, also takes place here.

📍 **Located only 3 km from Vicuña and accessed by a detour in the Hierro Viejo sector.**

Peralillo. It is an old agricultural town, famous in its time for the production of Elquino vegetable products such as chili peppers, tomatoes, table grapes, papayas, peaches, and apricots, among others. In the town, the creation of the first agricultural cooperative of the Norte Chico in 1964 stands out. Its beautiful chapel and its traditional small square with large trees and palm trees are a must. On the second Sunday of September, the patron saint's day of the Virgen del Carmen is celebrated.

📍 **Located 6 km from the city of Vicuña.**

Villaseca. It owes its name to a great drought that hit the town in 1850. The first settlers had to struggle with the drought and the intensity of the sun. At present, the settlers use solar energy to make the most of it in activities such as agriculture and cuisine. Its main attraction is the solar kitchens where typical dishes are prepared and are visited by thousands of tourists every year.

📍 **Located 8 km from the city of Vicuña.**

Diaguitas. Occupied by the Diaguita culture between the 12th and 15th centuries AC. They developed agriculture and pottery. It was declared a typical zone by the Council of National Monuments of Chile in 2013, due to the picturesque of the town, with its elongated and sinuous shape, with houses aligned almost uniformly on the sides of its main cobblestone street. It also has beautiful postcards such as its beautiful square, its centennial chapel, and a pleasant riverbank.

📍 **Located 8 km east of the city of Vicuña.**

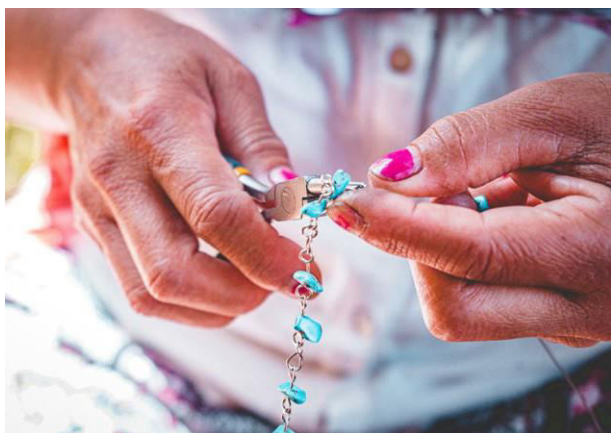
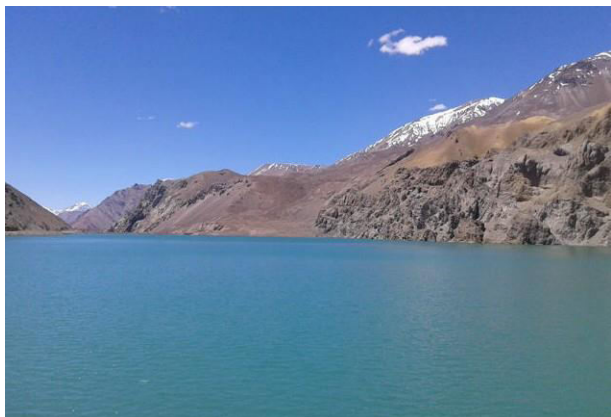
Andacollito. Located in front of Diaguitas, it has an extensive street that crosses the town, in the middle of beautiful landscapes.

Rivadavia. In 1606, the first 600 blocks were ceded to the first Spaniards who arrived in this sector known as Rivadavia. Since 1950, thanks to the railroad and the Agua Negra pass, the town became a reference point for trade in the Elqui Valley, with large movements of fruit, burning water, and a large influx of people. In this area, the Elqui River is born thanks to the union of the Turbio River and the Claro River. One of its main attractions is the nocturnal observation of the skies.

📍 **Located 13 km east of Vicuña.**


Huanta. It is considered an oasis in the aridity of the high mountain landscape. It has old houses, orchards, and vineyards next to the Turbio River and is the gateway to the mountain range.

📍 **Located 50 km east of Vicuña on the same road that leads to Chapilca.**




Above La Laguna Reservoir. **Center** Immaculate Conception Sculpture on La Virgen Hill. **Below** Handicrafts in Vicuña.

Chapilca. Its name comes from "chapi" which is a plant whose roots were used to dye red and is now extinct. It means "place where there is an abundance of chapi" and according to the locals, Chapilca also means "place where weavings are confronted". Since pre-Columbian times, the inhabitants of the area have practiced rustic loom handicrafts with wool dyed with natural pigments, a tradition that is still preserved.

 **Located 29 km east of Vicuña, on Ruta 41-CH, which leads to the Agua Negra border crossing.**

Agua Negra Border Complex. At an altitude of 2,200 meters above sea level (paved road). It is operational from the end of November to mid-May depending on weather conditions. Opening hours are from 7:00 to 17:00 hrs. On the way to the border (on a paved road only up to the curtain) you can see La Laguna reservoir. The crossing is at 4,765 meters above sea level.

 **Located about 90 km east of Vicuña.**

La Laguna Reservoir. Leaving the border complex towards the border with Argentina, at an altitude of 3,150 meters, you will find this marvelous place.

 **Located 125 km southeast of Vicuña.**

FESTIVALS AND ACTIVITIES

Summer Program. Every year the town hall of Vicuña carries out a program of cultural, artistic, recreational, sports, and social activities during the high-peak tourist season and the anniversary of the city. **Date: December - January - February**

Elquino Carnaval. For more than 100 years it has included the election of the queen, artistic shows, cultural activities, popular dances, and a great parade of floats with costumes.

Date: January - February



Above Main Street of the town of Diaguitas. **Below** Bridge access to the town of Vicuña.



Above Church of Vicuña and Bauer Tower, Vicuña.
Below Pisco Distillery.

Vicuña Anniversary. It is celebrated with a mass of thanksgiving, a military civic act, recognition of personalities, and a ceremony of honor.

Date: February 22nd

Gabriela Mistral's Birthday. Celebration of the birth of the poet and teacher. This date is preceded by Poetry Month, with literary contests, painting, drawing, and literary gatherings, in addition to official events. On this day, the Vicuña Floral Games literary contest is usually held.

Date: April 7th

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.

Visit: serviciosturisticos.sernatur.cl