Rainbow Mountain, Palccoyo or Pallay Punchu?

The three rainbow mountains you can visit in a day from Cusco, compared on one page

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	Vinicunca the classic Rainbow Mountain	**Palccoyo** the gentle alternative	**Pallay Punchu** the newest
Where	Pitumarca and Cusipata districts	Checacupe district	Layo district (Canas)
From Cusco by road	About 3 hours to the trailhead	About 2 h 30 min	About 3 hours
Viewpoint altitude	**5,036 m** (upper lookout over 5,200 m)	**About 4,900 m**	**Over 4,700 m**
Official hike	3 km up in about 1 h 45 min (Cusipata side); 2 km in 25 min, or 10 min by ATV (Kayrawiri side)	No official figure	45 min – 1 h to the main viewpoint
Our route (round trip)	About 7.4 km on foot	About 4.5 km, up to 4,935 m at the Stone Forest	About 2.5 km, up to about 4,750 m
Effort	**The hardest:** above 5,000 m	**The gentlest slope** of the three	**Short but steep;** altitude is the main challenge
Entrance (foreign adult)	**S/ 30** (Peruvians S/ 15)	Small community fee; no official 2026 figure	No official 2026 figure
Crowds	About 110,000 registered visitors on the Cusipata side in 2025	Up to about 70 visitors a day between Palccoyo and Pallay Punchu (Gercetur, April 2026)	
Extras	Red Valley, views of Ausangate (6,384 m), ATV option	Three colored mountains and a stone forest	Poncho-like stripes; Langui-Layo Lake on the way
Our tour	**On foot USD 70 · ATV USD 121 · ATV + Red Valley USD 130**	**USD 85**	**USD 85**

Which one to choose

The iconic photo and the Red Valley: Vinicunca, on foot if you are fit and acclimatized, or by ATV.

An easier walk and fewer people: Palccoyo.

You have seen Vinicunca or want the newest landscape: Pallay Punchu.

You have only just arrived in Cusco: Wait: all three are above 4,700 m. Go after two or three days in the area.

- **Best season:** the dry months, roughly April to October. In the rainy season snow and clouds can hide the colors.
- **Vinicunca access in 2026:** disputes between neighboring communities have affected access at times. In June 2026 an agreement mediated by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers created a temporary commission to manage the Cusipata entrance. We confirm the route before each departure.
- **Two in one day?** Not practical: each is 2 h 30 min to 3 hours from Cusco, in different directions.
- **Open hours (Vinicunca):** 6:00 to 17:00 all year (MINCETUR).

Official hike times and fees for Vinicunca come from MINCETUR (records updated in June 2026). For Palccoyo and Pallay Punchu there is no recent official record of fees or hike times, so we give our own route data. Fees can change.
Sources: MINCETUR tourism inventory, PromPerú, Gercetur via Andina, and the route profiles of our own tours.

Full comparison · Rainbow Mountain tour · Palccoyo tour · Pallay Punchu tour · WhatsApp +51 961 231 767