

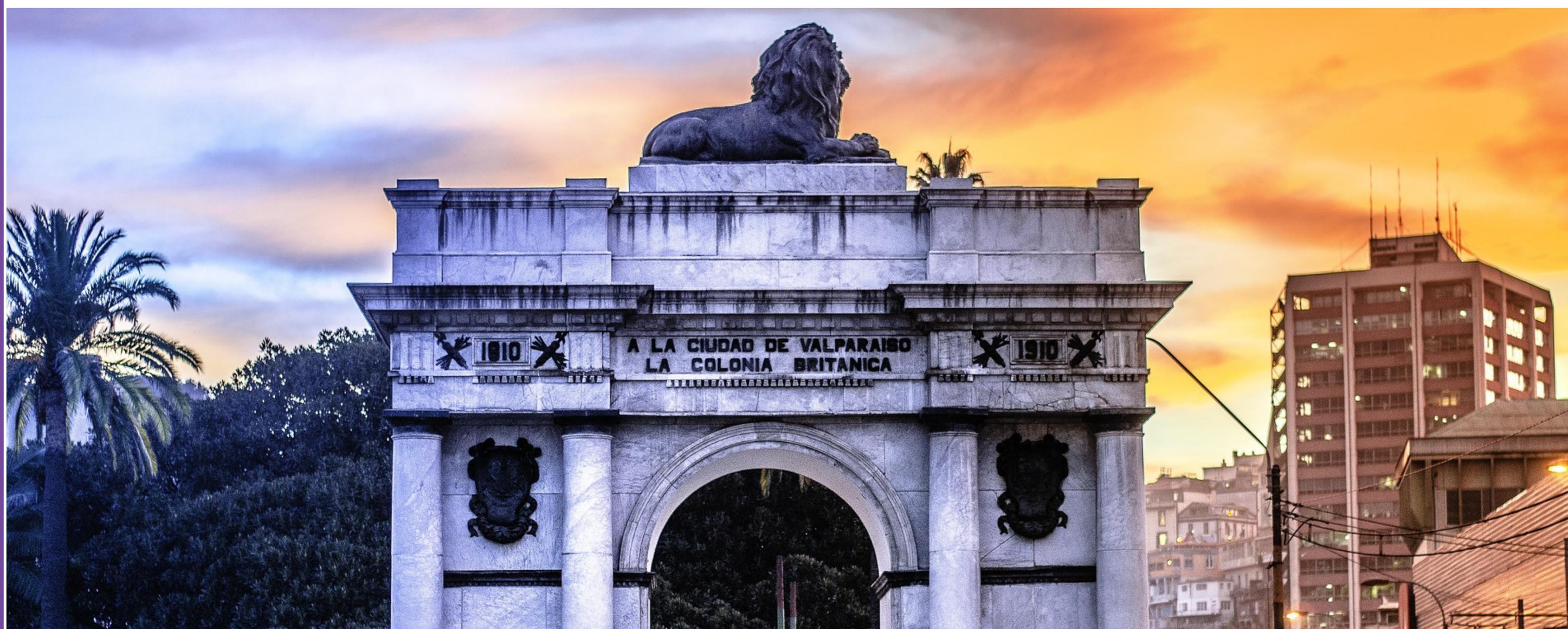


Chile

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HISTORY



In 1520 Ferdinand Magellan was the first European to see Chile. In 1540 Pedro de Valdivia a Spanish conquistador came to Chile where he founded several cities, despite resistance from the Araucanians. One of these cities he founded was Santiago, which is now Chile's capital and largest city. In 1553 the Native Americans led several successful revolts against the Spanish conquerors, killing Valdivia and devastating most of the cities he founded. This led to nearly 100 years of warfare. Eventually, the Spanish dominated, but even then strife and conflicts continued for many more years.

In the Beginning

The history of Chile dates back 10,000 years when migrating Native Americans first settled along the coast and in the fertile valleys of what is now Chile. As a result, the country has a rich and vibrant history. The Incas extended their empire to northern Chile, albeit briefly, but they were met with fierce resistance and the Mapuche retained control of southern and central Chile

Pedro Gutiérrez de Valdivia

Pedro Gutiérrez de Valdivia or Valdivia was a Spanish missionary and the first Cardinal of Chile. After serving with the Spanish Jesuits in Italy and Flanders, he was sent to South America in 1534, where he served as lieutenant under Francisco Pizarro in Peru, acting as his second in command. In 1540 he led an expedition of 150 Spaniards into Chile, where he defeated a large force of indigenous natives and founded Santiago in 1541.

The Independence Movement

In 1808 was when Spain was seized by Napoleon the Chileans saw an opportunity to gain independence. September 18th, 1810 Chile declared independence beginning a long war. Eventually, Chile was able to defeat Spain and Bernardo O'Higgins became Chile's first leader. Despite finally winning its independence, Chile suffered several changes of government. Many of these changes were caused by coups by the military and civil wars, though none as severe as other Latin American countries. Despite these problems, the government enacted many changes that have lead Chile to become the most economically developed country in South America. In 1879 the Chilean military seized the Bolivian port of Antofagasta claiming that the land was theirs, this lead to a war with Bolivia and its ally Peru. Chile came out victorious giving it control over considerable territory, and several of the worlds biggest nitrate and copper mines. Salvador Allende Gossens, a Marxist, was elected president in 1970 making Chile the first country to vote in communism. This move leads to political and economic disaster. The unrest caused by his rule (which was further aggravated by the US government) eventually lead to a military takeover of the government. September 11th, 1973 Augusto Pinochet Ugarte became the dictator of Chile. Pinochet immediately suspended the constitution, enforced strict censorship, banned all political parties, and dissolved Congress. During his time as leader, the country was kept in a state of emergency and the military tightly controlled the people. Thousands were arrested, executed, exiled, or kept in prisons, while many people simply disappeared. But, the Pinochet government helped the struggling Chilean economy and improved education giving Chile one of the highest literacy rates in Latin America. Due to this, the people of Chile are very divided in their opinions about his rule. In 1989 Pinochet allowed the people to vote in a new president and returned the government back to the people.



MONEY



The currency of Chile is the Chilean Peso (CLP or CL\$). It's a floating currency, which means that its exchange rate fluctuates daily. There are currently six coins in circulation - CL\$1, CL\$5, CL\$10, CL\$50, CL\$100 and CL\$500 - but CL\$1, CL\$5 and CL\$10 coins are becoming increasingly rare. The notes come in denominations of CL\$1,000, CL\$2,000, CL\$5,000, CL\$10,000 and CL\$20,000.

Credit Cards

Visa, MasterCard, and American Express are widely accepted throughout Chile, and Diner's Club isn't far behind. Many Chilean businesses are charged a 2% to 4% service fee and will pass that cost on to you, so expect cheaper deals with cash. Smaller hostels and hotels often do not accept credit cards at all.

Debit Cards

Chile has ATM machines that you can use your debit card with and almost every store accepts Visa. In most cases you cannot use your debit card as a debit card at the cash register, in other words, you can not get cash back, but it is accepted as a credit card. You may need to have your passport with you for identification, some places may accept your driver's license instead of your passport.



Visitors from the USA

Unlike in some other South American countries, U.S. dollars are rarely accepted in Chile. (The exception is larger hotels, where prices are often quoted only in dollars.) Credit cards and traveler's checks are accepted in most resorts and in many shops and restaurants in major cities, though you should always carry some local currency for minor expenses like taxis and tipping. Once you stray from the beaten path, you can often pay only with pesos. In Chile, the peso is indicated with "\$" while amounts in U.S. dollars are preceded by "US\$" or "\$US."

ATM

There are two main ATM networks (cajero automático) in Chile, Redf and Redbanc. ATMs are widespread, even in rural areas.

However, many tend to run out of cash after 4pm, so it's best to plan ahead. Most ATMs typically accept Cirrus and Maestro (MasterCard). ATMs that accept Visa (Plus) and AmEx are available, but a lot harder to find. ATMs will usually display the logos of all the cards they're compatible with. You can also check whether an ATM is available near you by using online locators. Most ATMs have an English language option. However, you'll need to select the extranjeros (foreign clients) option after you key in your PIN in order to make a withdrawal with your foreign card.

HELPFUL INFO

Climate

In Chile there is a wide variety of climates: desert but mild in the north, Mediterranean in the centre, oceanic in the south, and cold in the Andes. The country has a very unique shape, being about 4,300-kilometres (2,700-miles) long from north to south, stretched from 17 to 56 degrees south latitude, and narrow, so it obviously has different climates and environments. Being located in the Southern Hemisphere, in Chile the seasons are reversed in comparison with North America or Europe.

Electricity

In Chile the power sockets are of type C and L. The standard voltage is 220-V and the standard frequency is 50-Hz.



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Technology & Communication

Chile is very much a 'connected' country, with some of the best Internet and mobile coverage in South America. Its telephone and mobile services are fairly wide reaching and well established, but telecoms remains a growth industry in Chile and some less than ideal conditions do exist.

Infrastructure & Transport

Over the period 2009–2014, the value added of the transportation sector of Chile expanded at a real CAGR of 6.4%, well above the average increase of the overall economy (CAGR of 4.6%). As a result, the sector's contribution to GDP increased to 4.7% in 2014, up from 4.3% in 2009. At present, Chile has one the most developed transportation networks in terms of size, quality and efficiency in South America, with the World Economic Forum (WEF) ranking Chile 50th in its 2014/2015 global ranking for quality of transport infrastructure. According to an EMIS Insight estimate, in 2014, road was the main transport mode in Chile, with a 58.1% share in passenger movement, mainly due to a large urban bus fleet, followed by railway, including the underground service, with a 40.9% share. The air and maritime transport modes had marginal shares of 1.02% and 0.01%, respectively. Regarding cargo, maritime was the main transport mode, with a 51.6% share, followed by railway (32.4% share), road (15.7% share) and air (0.4%).



In Case Of An Emergency

It is highly important to remember emergency numbers in Chile. You can dial these 3-digit numbers from any phone in Santiago and other major cities. Tourists are prone to pickpocket, theft, and purse or camera snatching. Beware also of currency switching. The emergency number for the police (Carabineros) is 133. For medical emergencies, dial 131 for ambulance, or better yet call HELP, a private ambulance service that can be relied for a quicker response time and is equipped with the latest medical equipment. HELP's number is 631-0310.

Language

Spanish is the most widely spoken language in Chile. The variant of Spanish spoken in the country is Chilean Spanish. It is a dialect of Spanish that is significantly different from the Castilian variant of Spanish, but is similar in pronunciation to the Andalusian Spanish. About 14-million Chileans speak the language. Several other indigenous and immigrant languages are also spoken in the country.



LGBT Travel

Gays and lesbians visiting Chile will most likely not encounter any prejudice or outward intolerance. However, public displays of affection between same sexes are rare, even in metropolitan cities such as Santiago. In general, attitudes, especially those of Chilean men, toward gays and lesbians are not very liberal, owing in part to the Catholic, conservative nature of their society. Homosexual relationships have only recently been declared officially legal, and many gays and lesbians are not actively open about their orientation outside their own circles. In Santiago, the two most gay-friendly neighborhoods are Bellavista and Parque Forestal (also known as Bellas Artes).

Religion

Chile separated church and state in 1925, though religion is a big part of private life here all the same. The biggest religion in Chile, by far, is Christianity. Chilean Christians account for 72% of the population, split mostly between Roman Catholics and Protestants. Beyond that, all manner of faiths are represented. Chileans follow Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and more.



Getting There

Most people fly into Chile, arriving at Santiago's modern international airport, though some travel by land from neighbouring countries, and a handful arrive by sea. Chile's main airline LATAM, connects both Europe and the US with Chile. British Airways also flies to Santiago via Sao Paulo in Brazil (the second leg is operated by LATAM), Air France flies from London via Paris, and Air Canada arrives from London via Toronto.

The major airport is: Santiago Arturo Merino Benitez International Airport.

Driving

Chile shares a northern crossable border with Peru and Bolivia, and Argentina is to the east. There are more than 30 border crossings accessible by road with Argentina, although in winter months many are closed due to snow (remember, the daunting Andes separate the two countries). The two most commonly used border crossings by road are the Paso Internacional Los Libertadores, also called Cristo Redentor, a breathtaking mountain pass in the Andes between Mendoza, Argentina and Santiago, Chile, reaching elevations of 3,200-m (10,000-ft) and including some intense switchbacks. The other popular crossing is the Pajaritos crossing (also known as Paso Cardenal Antonio Samore) between Villa La Angostura, Argentina and Osorno, Chile. Note that many border crossings are paved highways, although some, especially towards the far south of Chile or the far north in Atacama, are gravel roads. Many are not accessible by public transportation, and close for the winter due to snow. It's best whenever possible to check ahead of time with either the nearest tourism office or gendarmeria (border police) office to make sure that the crossing is open.

THE EXPERIENCE

Culture

Chile's social mores reflect the European ancestry of the majority of its population, and travellers from the West will have little trouble fitting in, especially if they have a good grasp of Spanish. Chileans are not especially ebullient and high-spirited, particularly when compared with their Argentine neighbours and are often considered rather formal. However, they are also known for their quick wit and wordplay, and considering its relatively small population, Chile has produced an impressive array of writers, poets, artists and musicians. The overwhelming majority of Chileans identify themselves as Catholic, and the church still has significant (though waning) influence in the country.

Bucket List

Hike the W Trek in Patagonia's Torres del Paine National Park

Learn to surf in Pichilemu

Go ziplining in the Cajón del Maipo

Raft the raging Futaleufu River

Sandboard down the desert dunes in Iquique

Ride one of Valparaíso antique funiculars up its famous hills

Compete in an adventure race in Chile.

Family Travel Highlights

- Picnic with the flamingos in Parque Bicentenario
- Play at being a castaway on Robinson Crusoe Island
- Stroll along the seaside boardwalk at Viña del Mar
- Visit the Mirador Interactive Museum in Santiago
- Take rides all day long at Chile's biggest amusement park
- Go skiing in the Three Valleys of the Andes

Tourism Authority

“SERNATUR” is the abbreviation for the Servicio Nacional de Turismo (National Tourism Service). This is a government department dedicated to the promotion and strengthening of tourism in Chile. The Santiago office is located on Avenida Providencia 1550 (between Metro Manuel Montt and Pedro de Valdivia). There is also an office out at the Santiago Airport. You can go into the office, or call +56 22 731 83 10.



Foods To Try

Pastel de Choclo: corn casserole with meat stuffing

Cazuela: homemade stew with beef, chicken, corn, rice and potatoes

Asado: barbecue of beef, pork or chicken

Reineta, Congrio, Corvina: the most typical fish

Locos: a rare type of mollusks

Jaiva: shrimp, crab

Centolla: king crab with tender meat of reddish color

Drinks To Try

Mote con Huesillos

Maté

Pisco

Chicha

Bilz Y Pap

Cola De Mono

Malta Con Huevos

Guindado



Photography Hot Spots

Isla de Pascua (Easter Island)

Valparaiso

Carretera Austral (Austral Road)

Caleta Tortel

National Park Laguna San Rafael

Atacama Desert and San Pedro Atacama

Pucon and National Park Huerquehue

Elqui Valley

Barrio Concha y Toro

Barrio Yungay

Souvenirs To Buy

Karün

GreenGlass

Onitas

Emboque

Indio Picaro

Trompo

Moai Statue

Gorro chilote

Mapuche poncho

Lapis lazuli moai

Pottery

