

Santiago to Patagonia

14 days | Santiago to Punta Arenas



Discover Chile in all its glorious natural beauty from the glittering lakes of Puerto Varas, the scenic archipelago of Chiloé, the panoramic views from Punta Arenas and the jagged granite peaks of the Paine massif. Along the way visit traditional fishing villages, observe comical penguins and explore Torres del Paine national park in your way.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Santiago – half day city tour of colonial architecture and traditional neighbourhoods
- Puerto Varas – attractive city on the shores of Lake Llanquihue
- Puerto Montt – scenic views across the bay and the lively fishermen's market
- Lago Todos los Santos – the Petrohué waterfalls and ecological village of Peulla
- Chiloé – archipelago of islands with quaint fishing villages and stilt houses

- Punta Arenas – Chile's southernmost city and the Magellanic penguin colony at Seno Otway
- Torres del Paine – the giant vertical towers of the Paine massif

What's Included

- 13 nights STANDARD accommodation. Upgrading to SUPERIOR or DELUXE accommodation options are also available upon request. Accommodation rating – See Trip Notes for details
- 13 breakfasts, 3 lunches and 4 dinners
- Airport arrival and departure transfer on day 1 and day 14
- Services of local English-speaking specialist guides
- Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary
- City tour of Santiago and Puerto Montt on a shared basis (private touring available for a supplement)
- All relevant transfers and transportation on a private basis unless otherwise stated
- Touring of Punta Arenas and Castro; sailing trip on the Todos Los Santos and visit to Petrohue waterfalls; visit to the Seno Otway penguin colony and optional activities in the Torres

del Paine National Park on a private basis

What's Not Included

- International flights and visas
- Laundry, drinks and items of a personal nature
- Tipping – an entirely personal gesture
- Domestic flights – South American airpasses are available with LATAM and other airline carriers when booked in conjunction with international flights, offering significant savings on domestic flights. Please ask a member of the team for more information.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Santiago

Bienvidos a Chile! Upon arrival into the airport you will be met and transferred to your hotel in Santiago. The rest of the day is free for you to get out and explore. **Overnight – Santiago**

Day 2 : Santiago City Tour

Encircled by snow-capped Andean peaks, the city of Santiago enjoys a particularly spectacular setting. This morning join a scheduled tour of the city to discover Santiago's appealing blend of the old and new. Walking

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to the Plaza de Armas gaze at the handsome colonial architecture including the grandiose Catedral Metropolitana, the Post Office and the Santiago City Hall. Continue to the Government Palace and the older neighbourhood of Plaza Concha y Toro marked by cobblestone streets and elegant 20th century mansions. Heading east through neighbourhoods with a thoroughly modern appearance stop at a local handicrafts store where you can try a Pisco Sour. **Overnight - Santiago (B)**

Day 3 : Puerto Varas



Santiago – Puerto Varas. This morning you will be transferred to the airport for your flight to Puerto Montt in the southern region of Chile's Lake District. On arrival you will be collected and transferred to your hotel in Puerto Varas, a smart little town with excellent tourist facilities. Remainder of the day at leisure. **Overnight - Puerto Varas (B)**

Day 4 : Puerto Montt sightseeing

Located on the shore of the Pacific Ocean, Puerto Montt is the region's prime fishing centre. Joining a scheduled tour this morning you will visit the Cathedral in Puerto Montt, as well as the lively seafood market and colourful handicraft market of Angelmó. You'll also visit the Sagrado Corazón de Jesús church and enjoy the panoramic views of Tenglo Island from the bay. Heading back to Puerto Varas the afternoon will be free for you to soak up the vistas of Lake Llanquihue or make the most of the city's good food and beautiful gardens. **Overnight - Puerto Varas (B)**

Day 5 : Petrohué waterfalls and Peulla village

Bordering Argentina, the Parque Nacional Vicente Pérez Rosales is a stunning collection of pristine lakes and forests with the Lagos Todos Los Santos its centrepiece. This morning visit the Petrohué waterfalls and enjoy a sailing trip on the Todos Los Santos Lake taking in the sights of the Osorno, Puntagudo and Tronador volcanoes. At the far end of the lake is Peulla, a small ecological village of 150 inhabitants where you can opt to partake in the adventure activities available. **Overnight - Puerto Varas (B)**

Days 6-7 : Chiloe



Departing Puerto Varas begin the journey to the haven of rural tranquillity that is the Chiloé archipelago. From the small fishing village of Pargua board a ferry that crosses the Chacao Chanel with the chance to see sea lions and playful dolphins along the way. On arrival at Chiloé our first stop is the town of Chacao where innumerable black-necked swans gather along the shoreline. Caulin Bay is our next stop where a walk along the beach might bring meetings with the local residents harvesting seaweed and transporting their yield by oxes. Continue to the charming town of Castro for lunch at a local restaurant and an afternoon tour. Visit the municipal market, the main plaza and the majestic Iglesia San Francisco.

Day 7 is a free day for you to explore Castro further. Head to the waterfront to see the traditional palafitos, Chile's last remaining fishermen's houses on

stilts, or sample Chiloé's national dish curanto at a restaurant in town.

Overnight - Castro (2) (B:2)

Days 8-9 : Punta Arenas

This morning transfer to the airport for your flight to Punta Arenas in southern Patagonia. On arrival you will be transferred to your hotel. On the morning of day 9 enjoy a city tour of Punta Arenas. First stop is the Cerro de la Cruz view point for magnificent panoramic views of the city's colourful rooftops, the Strait of Magellan and in the distance, the large island of Tierra del Fuego. Back in Punta Arenas visit the main square with its many beautiful buildings and the Salesian Museum, displaying a complete collection on Patagonian Indians, flora, fauna, history and economy.

In the afternoon take an excursion to the colony of Magellanic penguins at Seno Otway. Beachfront hides allow visitors to observe the birds amble out of the water for feeding time. The route here along the Strait of Magellan is particularly scenic as it passes into Patagonian steppe. **Overnight - Punta Arenas (B:2)**

Days 10-13 : Torres del Paine



On the morning of day 10 you will be transferred to your hotel in the Torres del Paine National Park. Home to the incredible Paine Massif, a small range of mountains with unusual, twisted peaks, the national park is a striking expanse of flat brown pampa and glacial lakes. Over the next four days you will have ample opportunity to partake in the many activities offered by your hotel. You might spend one day

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trekking the Ascencio Valley getting up close to the astounding Towers of Paine mountain range or horse ride to Cerro Paine for spectacular views of the Nothofagus forest. You could take a ferry across Pehoe Lake to Grey Glacier View Point for striking vistas of the centenary icebergs or you could trek to Sarmiento Lake to examine the calcium carbonate formations. The activities and excursions on offer will ensure you see the very best of this incredible national park. **Overnight – Torres del Paine** (B:4, L:3, D:4)

Day 14 : Punta Arenas

Today marks the end of your incredible adventure. After breakfast and hotel check out you will be transferred to the airport in Punta Arenas for your onward departure journey. (B)

BEFORE YOU GO

Tipping

Tipping is an essential part of the culture. For a job well done, we would suggest for your tour guide: USD \$5-6 per traveller, for each day of sightseeing.

For your driver and On The Go Representative we'd recommend USD\$2-3 per traveller for each day of service. Tipping is an entirely personal gesture and ultimately the amount is up to you.

Accommodation ratings

On our Private trips, you can often choose your style of accommodation. The price quoted on our website is reflective of the included accommodation, please see the "included" section on the first page of this document for details. Should you opt for an alternative hotel category, this will be confirmed in writing with the respective price on your invoice.

For further details about the indicative hotels, please see the "hotels" tab on our website. Here we rank hotel's in their respective country (REGIONAL

CATEGORY) – but we also tell you how it ranks by Western standards (OUR CATEGORY).

STANDARD – Equates to a Western 3-star standard, always featuring en-suite rooms and usually a restaurant.
SUPERIOR – Equates to a Western 4-star standard, featuring en-suite rooms and usually a restaurant and often a swimming pool and/or a fitness centre.
DELUXE – Equates to a Western 5-star standard, usually featuring spacious, en-suite rooms, a restaurant, swimming pool and fitness centre and an array of amenities, excellent service and customer care.
LUXURY – Equates to a Western 5-star plus standard – the creme de la creme. Featuring spacious, en-suite rooms, a restaurant, swimming pool and fitness centre and an array of amenities, this accommodation is a cut above the rest. Sheer opulence!

What To pack

For day-to-day wear you should go prepared to encounter all seasons. Both warm clothing and a sun hat are essential at altitude; a light fleece jacket and a Gore-Tex outer shell makes a good combination. Trousers or shorts made from light, quick-drying synthetic materials also work well. It can get very cold at altitude, particularly after sundown and so warm clothes are essential as is a good waterproof jacket.

Strong, comfortable footwear is also essential and you should bring insect repellent, sun block and sunglasses. You should take swimwear for visits to thermal baths. A torch can also be useful during your time on the salt flats. Temperatures can drop well below freezing at night, so thermal underwear is advisable, as well as thick socks and gloves and a hat that will cover your ears.

If you plan to go to good restaurants or out on evening entertainment trips, you might want to bring something a bit

smarter as well (although formal attire will not be required).

A daypack is useful for carrying rainwear, snacks, books and a water bottle. Those who feel the cold should take thermal underwear. To ensure your comfort while walking in Patagonia, you should bring good waterproof walking boots (tried and tested so you don't get blisters) as well as a good water/windproof (not just shower-proof) jacket and trousers, a warm hat and a scarf.

The sun can be strong so take a hat with a visor, sunglasses and sunblock. Some walkers find hiking poles helpful, and binoculars are useful for bird- and wildlife spotting.

Chile Country Guide

Chile – Fact File

- Official Name: Republic of Chile
- Capital: Santiago
- Population: 18 million
- Total Area: 756,102 square kilometres
- Official Language: Spanish
- Religions: Roman Catholics 77%, Protestants 16%
- Voltage: In Chile the standard voltage is 220 V and the frequency is 50 Hz. You can use your electric appliances in Chile, if the standard voltage in your country is in between 220 - 240 V (as is in the UK, Europe, Australia and most of Asia and Africa).
- Dialling Code: +56
- Time Difference: GMT/UTC -4 . For other time differences please visit www.timeanddate.com
- Airport Departure Tax:\$30 USD

Chile – Visas

Most nationals, including citizens of the EU, North American and Australasia do not need to acquire a visa in advance to enter Chile. However some nationalities must pay an entry fee on arrival by air (e.g. United States \$100, Canada \$55 and Australia \$34, these costs may change). Entry is granted on production of a passport

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valid for more than six months, a return air/bus ticket and proof of funds to support yourself for the duration of the stay. Most nationalities can enter for up to 90 days, although it's up to the immigration official to decide whether you're allocated 30, 60 or 90 days on arrival. Visa requirements do change periodically so you should check for the latest information on your specific visa requirements with your local Chilean Embassy or Consulate well in advance of your planned date of travel.

APIS and ESTA - important flight information:

ESTA - if flying to the US, or via the US you will need to fill in your application to ESTA online.

This costs \$14 per person. This must be done by you personally.

Passports must also be machine-readable (MRP). Avoid locking suitcases if transiting the USA, as their customs authorities retain the right to break into them.

APIS - Many countries now oblige airlines to provide additional information about passengers prior to the flight departure. This Advance Passenger Information (APIS) must be supplied to us promptly in order to issue tickets and avoid fare increases. We will provide the airlines with the relevant details if we are booking your international flights. If the information is not provided you may be denied boarding.

Chile - Climate

Chile is very long and narrow (it is no more than 180 km wide at any point) and the Andes Mountains are a dominant feature running down the entire length of the country. Because of its length, Chile encompasses a variety of climates (the country contains both arid deserts and icebergs). There's no one time that's perfect to visit every part of the country, but it seldom rains during October to March, humidity is low, midday temperatures reach about

32°C and the nights are cool. It is colder and rains a lot in Santiago and in the south in May to August. A sweater (and, in the south, a heavy jacket) should be taken no matter when you go, as nights can be cool-to-cold nearly everywhere.

Santiago, due to its position in the central region, has a Mediterranean climate with well-defined seasons. Spring, between September and November is mild, which contributes to the flourishing green colour of the plants and trees. Summer, between December and February, is dry and hot although at night it cools down slightly, and on the coast this temperature drop can be much more extreme. Autumn is between March and May, and temperatures decrease gradually. Daytime winter temperatures are reasonable but mornings can be very cold.

Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

Chile - Money

Important In Latin America you will have problems changing the US\$100 CB B2 2001 series notes and it is important you do not to bring them. In some countries banks won't even take them. The serial number is located in the top left hand corner and bottom right hand corner on the side with the President's face. This serial number starts with CB and then a few more numbers and then directly under that B2. At the bottom of the note near the signature of the Treasurer it says which series of notes it is and it is there that it says 2001 series.

Local currency

The monetary unit in Chile is the Chilean peso, which is divided into 100 centavos. For up-to-date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.xe.com.

Changing money, credit cards & ATMs

We recommend that you bring cash/ travellers cheques in US dollars only. Visa, Mastercard, Diners and American Express are the best credit cards to bring however there can be problems at times getting money out from ATMs, so make sure you have sufficient cash for emergencies. Travellers cheques must be changed before 12pm except at 'casas de cambio' (which do tend to offer better rates than banks anyway).

There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency that you may bring into Chile, however very large sums should be declared on arrival. There is often a general lack of small change and we recommend maintaining a supply of small denomination notes and coins. When arriving at the Santiago International Airport we suggest that you get some Pesos at one of the little banks just inside the luggage hall or use one of the ATMs outside the terminal. Change enough money to see you through the first few days of your trip - particularly if it is a weekend.

Chile - Local Transport

Much of Santiago can be visited on foot. There is a very good underground metro system which has three lines and is very cheap at US\$0.40-\$0.60 per journey. You can also buy a 10 journey card for about US\$4. The last trains are at around 10pm. There are local buses called micros, which are also cheap, but you should try to have the right change (ask at the hotel reception for prices). They also have 'colectivos' (shared taxis on fixed routes). We recommend the use of taxis at night as they are fairly cheap and usually have meters - just make sure that the driver turns it on when you get in. Remember that you will pay more for taxis at night.

Chile - Food & Drink

All meals are included when camping and lunch is included on travelling days in the truck. When staying in hotels all meals are at your own expense.

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As a guideline a simple snack (e.g. a sandwich) can cost as little as US \$1.50, a light meal will cost around US \$5-8, and a meal in one of the better restaurants in Santiago will compare with developed countries in the west. Obviously this does depend on what you order and if you have wine or other drinks which will certainly increase the bill. In cheaper restaurants where Chileans and backpackers eat, you can get meals for as little as US\$3 if you shop around.

Your tour leader will be able to recommend restaurants.

Food

In Chile the basic diet focuses around chicken, beef or seafood, mostly with french fries or rice (or both) and sometimes salad. Compared to countries further north, Chile's cuisine is quite creative and tasty. 'Cazuela de ave' is a stew of large chunks of chicken, potatoes, rice, onions with green peppers and 'pastel de choclo' is a casserole of beef, onions and olives topped with a maize mash baked in an earthenware bowl. 'Parillada', a mixed grill of meats, offal and intestines served at your table in a charcoal brazier (miniature barbecue) is popular here as in all the southern countries. Other favourite dishes include 'lomo ala pimiento' (pepper steak) and 'humitas' (mashed corn mixed with spices and butter baked in a maize leaf).

Seafood is the basis for many of Chile's favourite dishes and the 'congrío' is their national fish. One of the most popular ways to serve it is 'caldillo de congrío' (a soup with large pieces of the fish with onions and potato balls). Other delicious fish include 'corvine' (bass), 'albacore' (swordfish) and 'cojinoa' (no translation). Try a 'paila choncha' (a bouillabaisse type dish with heaps of flavour) or a 'parillada de mariscos' a mixed seafood grill. There is a whole host of other seafood available including

clams (almejas), mussels (choritos/ cholgas), sea-urchin (erizo), barnacles (picorocos) and seaweed.

Typical snacks are 'emanadas de pino' (pasties with onions, raisins, olives meat and peppers) and 'prieta', a blood sausage (black pudding) stuffed with cabbage

Vegetarians

If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. However vegetarian alternatives are becoming more popular you will just have to search a little harder for the restaurants that cater to your tastes. Our tour leaders will do their best to provide interesting vegetarian alternatives when arranging group meals in the campsite, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drink

All drinks such as water, soft or alcoholic drinks are at your own expense at all times. The following is a guideline for drinks bought in a shop in the street. Prices in restaurants and hotels can sometimes be more than double the prices specified below:

- 1 litre of water US\$1.50
- 30cl bottle of soft drink US\$1
- 30cl bottle of beer US\$1.50
- 50cl bottle of beer US\$3

You should be wary of drinking the local tap water (especially outside of Santiago). Bottled water, carbonated soft drinks and fruit juices are widely available and much safer. However fruit juices are sometimes made from unboiled tap water, so could upset your stomach. An easy way around this is to order the juice 'con leche' with milk instead. For decent coffee try one of the cafe chains: Cafe Haiti, Tio Pepe or Cafe Brasil.

In Chile some of the hotels we use have bars or serve alcoholic drinks. If there is not a bar in the hotel then there is

sure to be one within walking distance. In more up-market hotels, imported beers and spirits are available, but tend to be expensive. Alternatively there is an array of local rums, gins, brandy available and the fabulous Chilean wines which can be extremely cheap (from US\$1.50 a bottle). There are various brands of beers including Cristal, Escudo, Austral, Heineken and Royal Guard (light), there is also a brown ale type beer from the south called Malta. Please note that many places will charge a refundable deposit for the bottles.

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