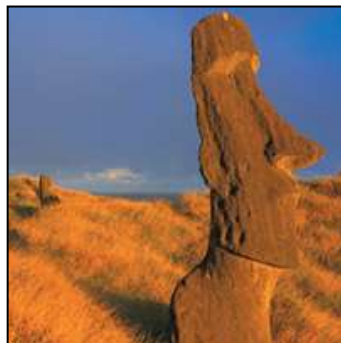


Destination Information Guide

Chile

(Including Patagonia)



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Welcome to the World of Big Five!

The following general outline offers practical information, suggestions and answers to some frequently asked questions. It is not intended to be the definitive guide for your trip.

Big Five Tours & Expeditions is pleased to welcome you on this exciting adventure. We take great care to insure that your travel dreams and expectations are well met. Our distinctive journeys allow you to experience the finest aspects each destination has to offer. We also aim to provide you with a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the places you'll visit and the people you'll meet.



Santiago, Chile

Elevation: 1555 feet Latitude: 33 23S Longitude: 070 47W

Average Temperature

YEAR	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
°F • 58	70	68	65	59	53	48	47	50	53	58	63	67

Average Precipitation

YEAR	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
in. • 13.4	---	0.1	0.2	0.5	2.3	3.1	3	2.1	1.1	0.5	0.2	0.2

Punta Arenas, Chile

Elevation: 121 feet Latitude: 53 00S Longitude: 070 51W

Average Temperature

YEAR	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
°F • 44	51	51	48	44	39	36	35	37	41	44	47	50

Average Precipitation

YEAR	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
in. • 15.6	1.4	1.1	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.1	0.9	1.1	1.2

Puerto Montt, Chile

Elevation: 282 feet Latitude: 41 25S Longitude: 073 05W

Average Temperature

YEAR	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
°F • 51	58	58	55	51	49	45	44	45	47	50	53	56

Average Precipitation

YEAR	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
in. • 78.1	4	3.8	5.4	6.5	9.5	9.4	9.7	8.5	6.2	5	4.9	4.8

Easter Island, Chile

Elevation: 154 feet Latitude: 27 09S Longitude: 109 25W

Average Temperature

YEAR	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
°F • 70	75	75	75	73	70	67	66	65	66	67	69	72

Average Precipitation

YEAR	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
in. • 44.6	3.6	3.4	3.4	4.6	5	4	3.7	3.4	3.3	2.9	3.2	3.6

WEATHER

The climate is agreeable and, given the country's enormous length, quite varied. The north experiences extremes of desert weather, meaning hot, dry days and freezing nights, except along the coast, where the ocean helps provide a mild climate year-round. Santiago has hot summers, cool springs and falls, and gray winters. Farther south, in the Lake District, be prepared for hot days, cold nights, and rain. Further south of Punta Arenas, summer temperatures are seldom higher than 68 degrees F, with snow and icy winds in the winter season. Chile's seasons are the reverse of North America's, with winter running June through August and summer in January and February.

Tourism peaks during the summer, except in Santiago, when most Santiaguinos head for the coast. Even though prices are at their highest, it's worth braving the summer heat if you're interested in lying on the beach or enjoying the many concerts, folklore festivals, and outdoor theater performances offered during this time.

TIME ZONE

Chile is GMT - 4. The country observes EST from November to March, and CST from April to October. **Easter Island** is GMT - 6; then, GMT - 5 from second Sunday in October to second Saturday in March.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

PASSPORTS: For international travel, U.S. and Canadian passports must be valid for at least six months from date of departure, and contain at least 3 blank pages.

VISAS: Many countries require travelers to obtain visas prior to arrival. **U.S. residents:** Big Five Tours & Expeditions has appointed Trivisa to process required visas. You will find the necessary forms from Trivisa's website at: www.trivisa.com. Please use account code JP1551, and follow directions. **Canadian residents:** please contact the nearest consulate.

Important: Even if you do not need a visa prior to departure, please check your passport well in advance of departure to insure:

- 1) It is valid for at least six months after the date of travel.
- 2) You have sufficient blank pages for visa/entry stamps that will be added as you travel in and out of various countries.

Please note: pages reserved for amendments and endorsements cannot be used for visas.

Note: Travel with photocopies of all important documents in a safe place in the event your passport or other documents are lost or stolen. Also, it's a good idea to have an extra passport photo with you. As a tourist, you will need to produce your passport when checking into hotels, changing money or travelers' checks and to prove your identity when requested by authorities.

Important: Even if you do not need a visa prior to departure, please check your passport well in advance of departure to insure:

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Please note: *Pages reserved for amendments and endorsements cannot be used for visas.*

AIRPORT FORMALITIES

Arrival tax: Nationals of U.S. entering Chile for tourism will be charged a processing fee of \$131 per person, payable by credit card, or in cash, US dollars.

This fee is subject to change without notice. Also, please note that the fee must be paid before you go to customs, so look for the signs for the booth to pay the fee. The signs are there but difficult to follow the arrows. After obtaining your luggage, exit the airport. If you have booked a complete package with Big Five tours, a representative will be holding a sign identifying

you or him/her. **International Departure Tax:** For international flights - US\$30 or its equivalent in national currency. **Domestic departure tax:** for flights under 500 km, approximately US\$8 (or peso equivalent). Always ask for a receipt; it is mandatory. Taxes are paid in cash only, and be sure you have exact change. Please note that we do our best to keep current on fees and taxes, but all government fees are subject to change without notice.

CHILE CUSTOMS

Duty-Free: The following goods may be imported into Chile without incurring customs duty: 400 cigarettes and 500g of tobacco and 50 large cigars or 50 small cigars; 2.5 liters of alcohol (only for visitors over 18 years of age); a reasonable quantity of perfume. You may bring into Chile, free of customs duty, various items for personal use or gifts not exceeding \$300 in value. Also laptops, camcorders, sports equipment, such as fishing gear, bicycle, skis, tennis rackets, surfing boards, etc. may be brought in free of duty for personal use and should be taken along when leaving the country.

Prohibited Items: Meat products, flowers, fruit and vegetables unless permission is sought with the Department of Agriculture in country of origin prior to traveling. All narcotics. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in Chile are strict, and convicted offenders can expect jail sentences and heavy fines.

US CUSTOMS

Returning U.S. residents are allowed to bring back \$800 worth of merchandise duty-free. There are limits on some items. Regulations frequently change, however, so check with your nearest customs office for a list of limited and exempt items, or write the U.S. Customs Service, Box 7407, Washington, DC 20044. Or, visit their web site www.customs.ustreas.gov.

CANADA CUSTOMS

Returning to Canada, declare all of goods acquired while outside Canada, such as purchases, gifts, prizes or awards that you are bringing with you or are having shipped to you. Include goods that are still in your possession that you bought at a Canadian or foreign duty-free shop. For more information, within Canada call the Border Information Service at 1-800-461-9999, or visit CBSA Web site at www.cbsa.gc.ca.

HEALTH

International travelers should be in generally good health. Talk with your personal physician about any shots or boosters recommended depending on your personal health profile and your itinerary. Tetanus and polio vaccines should be up to date. Be prepared to take precautions against sunburn with sunscreen and lip

balm. Any vaccinations you have should be recorded on an International Health Certificate, available from your physician or health department.

At the time of this writing, no inoculations are required for entry into Chile.

US residents: Check the latest regulations with your local health office or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747); fax: 1-888-CDC-FAXX (1-888-232-3299), or their main telephone number in Atlanta, 404-332-4559. Or, visit the CDC Internet home page at <http://www.cdc.gov>.

Canadian residents: Check the latest regulations with your local health office or the Public Health Agency of Canada visit the PHAC Internet home page at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/index-eng.php>.

Yellow Fever: Yellow fever inoculation is required only if one of the following applies:

- If you are coming from any area other than the United States, Europe, or Canada.
- If you are traveling between countries, and one of those countries have areas where Yellow Fever can be found.

Other risks: Immunization against hepatitis A is advised. Epidemic outbreaks of meningococcal meningitis occur. Chagas' disease has been reported in rural areas but other insect-borne diseases are largely absent. Rabies is present in animals. For those at high risk, vaccination before arrival should be considered. If you are bitten, seek medical advice without delay.

Please note: If you are on medication, be sure to bring enough for the duration of the trip. Prescription medicines should always be carried in their original containers in your hand luggage. If you wear contact lenses or glasses, we suggest you bring an extra pair and cleaning fluid.

Health insurance is strongly advised during any foreign travel. Health insurance is strongly advised during any foreign travel. Your medical insurance may not be valid abroad. US Medicare programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the country. Uninsured travelers, who require medical care overseas, may face extreme difficulties.

CLOTHING

*For general clothing information, please review the **Travel Handbook** in your pre-departure materials. See pre-departure information for general packing check list.*

Overall, emphasis should be on comfort: sports and casual clothes for day. Clothes should be easily laundered and loose fitting. Cotton or cotton-synthetic combinations are preferable to pure synthetics, which may hold in heat. A light nylon windbreaker may come in handy early mornings or late afternoons. In major cities and in better restaurants, appropriate attire is required just as it is at home.

For Patagonia

Explorations in Patagonia require the following items be brought for treks:

- Parka or waterproof windbreaker,
- Waterproof trousers (long underwear or thermal underwear is advisable in some cases)
- High-quality hiking boots (leather/ waterproof fabric), are essential
- Warm gloves, hat and scarf to protect from the wind.
- Sunglasses, with fasteners to prevent them blowing away in the wind.
- Lip protection

Laundry: Laundry can be done at the major hotels. Note that there are no laundry facilities in remote areas or on cruise vessels.

LUGGAGE

*For general baggage information, please review the **Travel Handbook** in your pre-departure materials.*

In this security conscious era, airline luggage restrictions may change without notice. Also, luggage limits vary depending on ticket class, plane size, destinations, etc. It is always best to confirm with airlines for specific limitations. Scheduled flights from other countries and within foreign countries generally limit luggage to 44 pounds total, plus one carry-on personal item. Further restrictions may apply for charter flights. This will vary according to destination. We will advise you of those restrictions in your final documents.

MONEY

Currency: Chilean Peso (peso) = 100 centavos. Notes are in denominations of peso 20,000, 10,000, 5,000, 2,000, 1,000 and 500. Coins are in denominations of peso 100, 50, 10, 5 and 1. Copper-colored coins have replaced light-weight aluminum coins that are no longer legal tender. ***Please note, that bills larger than Ch\$1,000 may be difficult to get changed in small villages.***

Currency Exchange: Foreign exchange transactions can be conducted at commercial banks, *cambios*, or authorized shops, restaurants, hotels and clubs. *Visitors should not be tempted by the premiums of 10-15% over the official rate offered by black marketers.*

Credit Cards: Diners Club, Visa, American Express and MasterCard are accepted. Check with your credit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other available services.

Traveler's Checks: Must be changed before 12:00 noon in most places, except in *cambios*, which also tend to offer better rates than banks. There may be some difficulty exchanging traveler's checks outside major towns. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travelers are advised to take traveler's checks in US Dollars.

COMMUNICATION

Language: Spanish is the official language, but English is widely spoken.

ELECTRICITY

220 Volts, 50 cycles. A voltage converter and a two-prong plug adapter are necessary. Three-pin plugs are also used. If you would like more information, visit this site: World Electric Guide:

<http://www.kropla.com/electric2.htm>

FOOD & DRINK

All water should be regarded as being potentially contaminated. Water used for drinking, brushing teeth, cleaning contacts, or making ice should have first been boiled or otherwise sterilized. Milk is pasteurized and is safe to drink without boiling, except in very remote areas of the countryside. Eat only well-cooked meat and fish, preferably served hot. Pork, salad and mayonnaise may carry increased risk. Vegetables should be cooked and fruit peeled. In places of altitudes above 8,000 feet, we recommend that you eat light foods the first day or two, and don't drink alcohol. You may suffer some digestive problems, light dizziness or headache. That said, Chile is famous for its wines such as Undurraga, Cousino Macul and Concha y Toro, which are exported to the United States. *Pisco* is a powerful liqueur also distilled from grapes. Grapes are used to make the sweet brown *chicha* as well as *aguardiente*, similar to brandy. Beer is available throughout the country.

From north to south, Chilean cuisine is as varied and unexpected as the country's marvelous geography but national dishes include *empanada* (meat, chicken or fish, with onions, eggs, raisins and olives inside a flour pastry) and *humitas* (seasoned corn paste, wrapped in corn husks and boiled). Fresh-baked bread, in a variety

of styles, is available in local *panaderias* in even the smallest towns. A surprising variety of excellent sandwiches make for good, quick meals. Local specialties also include cazuela, beef or chicken stew flavored with Chile's unique herbs; porotos granados, semi-ripe beans cooked with corn, squash, and sweet basil, and often served with beef and tomatoes; *cazuela de ave*, soup with rice, vegetables, chicken and herbs; *bife a lo pobre*, steak with French fries, onions and eggs; and *parrillada*, a selection of meats grilled over hot coals. Seafood is abundant and outstanding -- particularly exotic shellfish. *Paila marina* is a delectable shellfish stew available throughout the country. The huge lobsters from Juan Fernández Islands are well known. Abalone, sea urchins, clams, prawns and giant *choros* (mussels) are also common. And, sweet-toothed visitors will be satisfied by locally made Italian-style ice cream (*helado*) and deserts made with *dulce de leche*, also known as *manjar*.

SHOPPING

Special purchases include textiles such as colorful hand-woven ponchos as well as vicuna rugs, bronze and copper items. Chilean stones such as lapis lazuli, jade, amethyst, agate, and onyx, are all good buys. Artisans offer a wide range of goods made from copper, bronze, and leather, and a good selection of Chilean handicrafts can be found in shops throughout the country. Santiago is peppered with both small boutiques and malls in Providencia and downtown. Both Ahumada and Huerfanos are traffic-free streets with many shopping opportunities. Taxi drivers do not require tips although you may round off the fair for convenience.

TIPPING

Tipping should be done at your discretion and as a reward for good or exceptional service.

For general tipping guidelines please refer to:

www.cntraveler.com/travel-tips/travel-etiquette/2008/12/Etiquette-101-Tipping-Guide

CHILE TRADITIONS

Handshaking is the customary form of greeting. Most Chileans use a double surname and only the first part should be used in addressing them. Normal courtesies should be observed when visiting local people. Entertaining at home is common, and it is acceptable for invitees to give small presents as a token of thanks. Informal, conservative clothes are acceptable in most places but women should not wear shorts outside resort areas.

SUGGESTED READING LIST

Many comprehensive and readily available guides produced by Lonely Planet, Fodor, Insight, The Rough Guide, etc., many books relating this destination. Here are a few selections we thought might interest you. Longitude Books at <http://www.longitudebooks.com> has an extensive collection of books, searchable by country.

BY NIGHT IN CHILE

Roberto Bolaño, Chris Andrews (Translator)

During the course of a single night, Father Sebastian Urrutia Lacroix, a Chilean priest who is a member of Opus Dei, a literary critic and a mediocre poet, relives some of the crucial events of his life. He believes he is dying, and in his feverish delirium various characters, both real and imaginary, appear to him as icy monsters, as if in sequences from a horror film. Among them are the great poet Pablo Neruda, the German novelist Ernst Junger, and General Augusto Pinochet - whom Father Lacroix instructs in Marxist doctrine - as well as various members of the Chilean intelligentsia whose lives, during a period of political turbulence, have touched his own.

CHILE: A TRAVELER'S LITERARY COMPANION

Katherine Silver (Editor)

Traverse Chile's diverse literary and geographic landscape with its best contemporary writers. Arranged geographically, these 20 stories -- many of which appear in English for the first time -- guide the reader through Chile's unique regions. Let Ariel Dorfman take you to Santiago with a prodigal son, discovering his own country for the first time; travel to the remote south with Enrique Valdes; and enjoy the charms of Valparaiso with Pablo Neruda, one of Chile's two Nobel Prize winners. With the return of democracy to Chile, large numbers of Americans and Chilean expatriates are rediscovering the rich cultural allure of Chile, as well as the draw of its unrivaled eco-diversity. Chile is an excellent literary guide for globetrotters and armchair travelers alike.

IN PATAGONIA

Bruce Chatwin, Nicholas Shakespeare (Intro)

An exhilarating look at a place that still retains the exotic mystery of a far-off, unseen land, Bruce Chatwin's exquisite account of his journey through Patagonia teems with evocative descriptions, remarkable bits of history, and unforgettable anecdotes. Fueled by an unmistakable lust for life and adventure and a singular gift for storytelling, Chatwin treks through "the uttermost part of the earth" - that stretch of land at the southern tip of South America, where bandits were once made welcome - in search of almost-forgotten legends, the descendants of Welsh immigrants, and the log cabin built by Butch Cassidy.

A HISTORY OF CHILE, 1808-2002

Simon Collier, William F. Sater

A History of Chile chronicles the nation's political, social, and economic evolution from its independence until the early years of the Lagos regime. It explores the growth of Chile's agricultural economy, during which the large landed estates appeared; the nineteenth-century wheat and mining booms; the rise of the nitrate mines; their replacement by copper mining; and the diversification of the nation's economic base. This volume also traces Chile's political development from oligarchy to democracy, culminating in the election of Salvador Allende, his overthrow by a military dictatorship, and the return of popularly elected governments.

BIRDS OF CHILE

Alvaro Jaramillo, Peter Burke (Illustrator), David Beadle (Illustrator)

Representing a great diversity of habitats, from the Andes in the north down to the tundra and sub-Antarctic rainforest of Tierra del Fuego in the far south, Chile is the breeding ground or temporary home to 473 known species, including 9 found nowhere else in the world. All are here, including those offshore in Easter Island, the Antarctic Peninsula region, the Falklands and South Georgia. In addition to being a friendly and fruitful birding destination in its own right, Chile is the starting point for many Antarctic cruises." Succinct, identification-focused text and distribution maps share a page opposite each of the 96 color plates to allow quick and easy reference.

MY OLD MAN AND THE SEA: A FATHER AND SON SAIL AROUND CAPE HORN

Daniel Hays, David Hays

Some fathers and sons go fishing together. Some play baseball. David and Daniel Hays decided to sail a tiny boat 17,000 miles to the bottom of the world and back. This is their story. David is romantic, excitable, and reflective; Daniel is wry, comic, and down-to-earth. Together their alternating voices weave a story of travel, of adventure, and of difficult, dangerous blue-water sailing. The Caribbean, the Panama Canal, the Galapagos Islands, Easter Island, Cape Horn, the Falklands - these far-flung places spring vividly to life in *My Old Man and the Sea*. Father and son don't always get along, though. Daniel has been an uneasy and uneven student. Now, just out of college, he's unsure what to do next. He sees his father growing older, slower, more forgetful. David is haunted by memories of his own father, of the things they never said to each other, and the fear that he'll make the same mistakes with his son. But he gets angry when Daniel treats him like an old man. On this voyage, the son will become the captain, and the father will relinquish control. Before long they are at sea, headed for the huge waves and unceasing wind of the Southern Ocean with only their skill as sailors, a compass, a sextant, a ship's cat, and Sparrow, the 25-foot boat they've built together. Lovers of sailing and travel books will find this often hilarious, often moving tale of voyage and self-discovery to be in the tradition of Farley Mowat's *The Boat Who Wouldn't Float*, Bruce Chatwin's *In Patagonia*, and Paul Theroux's *The Happy Isles of Oceania*.

CULTURE AND CUSTOMS OF CHILE

Guillermo I. Castillo-Feliu

Chile's natural beauty, fascinating history, cultural traditions, and warm people are uniquely evoked in *Culture and Customs of Chile*. Chilean American Castillo-Feliu effectively conveys how Chile's geography has helped to shape it into a modern, socially responsible model in Latin America. Students and other readers will learn how this small country has contributed to the hemisphere's stature, from a stable political scene to seafood-inspired cuisine. Chile's lively history forms the backdrop for a survey of a wealth of social riches. The literary lion Pablo Neruda, Andean music, and fine wine are just a few of the highlights found herein.

TRAVELS IN A THIN COUNTRY: A JOURNEY THROUGH CHILE

Sara Wheeler

Squeezed between a vast ocean and the longest mountain range on earth, Chile is 2,600 miles long and never more than 110 miles wide - not a country that lends itself to maps, as Sara Wheeler discovered when she traveled alone from the top to the bottom, from the driest desert in the world to the sepulchral wastes of Antarctica. Eloquent, astute, nimble with history and deftly amusing, *Travels in a Thin Country* established Sara Wheeler as one of the very best travel writers in the world.