

# CHILE

**(Including Patagonia)**



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.

Santiago ~ Elevation: 1555 feet / Latitude: 33 23S / Longitude: 070 47W												
Average Temperature												
°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	70	68	65	59	53	48	47	50	53	58	63	67
Average Precipitation												
in.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	---	0.1	0.2	0.5	2.3	3.1	3	2.1	1.1	0.5	0.2	0.2

  

Easter Island ~ Elevation: 154 feet / Latitude: 27 09S / Longitude: 109 25W												
Average Temperature												
°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	75	75	75	73	70	67	66	65	66	67	69	72
Average Precipitation												
in.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	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 in 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 & FLIGHT TIME

Chile is 5 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (GMT -5), and is in the same time zone as the Eastern U.S., which is also GMT -5. It gets a bit more complicated when the country observes EST from November to March, and CST from April to October. **Easter Island** is an hour later, or GMT -6 (GMT - 5 from second Sunday in October to second Saturday in March).

Santiago from Miami is approximately 8½ hours; from New York, approximately 12 hours; and from Los Angeles, approximately 13 hrs. Flight time from Santiago to Easter Island is approximately 5½ hours; and from Santiago to Punta Arenas (Patagonia) is approximately 3½ hours.

## PASSPORTS & VISAS

**Passports:** For international travel, a U.S. passport valid for at least six months from date of departure, containing **at least** two blank pages is necessary.

**Visas:** U.S. and Canadian citizens do not require visas in advance. Citizens from other countries should consult the nearest Chile consulate.

**Important:** Please check your passport prior to travel:

- 1) It is valid for at least 6 months after the date of travel.
- 2) You have sufficient blank pages for visa 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.

## AIRPORT FORMALITIES

Nationals of U.S., Canada, and Australia entering Chile for tourism purposes will be charged a processing fee payable on arrival and in cash only. For nationals of the USA the fee is US\$61, for nationals of Canada, the fee is US\$55. Fees are subject to change without notice.

**International Departure Tax:** Chilean departure tax for international flights is US\$18 or its equivalent in national currency. For domestic flights, distances under 500km, the departure tax is approximately US\$8 (or peso equivalent). Always ask for a receipt; it is mandatory. Be sure you have the exact change. Credit cards or travelers checks are not accepted for payment of taxes.

Please note that we do our best to keep current on fees and taxes, but they are subject to change without notice.

**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. Regulations frequently change. For a list of exempt items and other current information, go to the Customs & Border Protection homepage: [www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/home.xml](http://www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/home.xml) or write the U.S. Customs Service, Box 7407, Washington, DC 20044.

## HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

**Inoculations:** Chile requires no vaccinations for entry from any country; however, typhoid, polio, tetanus and hepatitis immunization are always recommended if not up to date. All vaccinations should be recorded on an International Health Certificate, available from your physician or health. Please check the latest regulations with your local health office or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Hotline for travelers: 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747) Fax: 1-888-CDC-FAXX (1-888-232-3299) Main telephone number in Atlanta: 1-404-332-4559 Internet home page: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

As for every trip you take abroad, general good health is required. If you should become ill during your visit, first contact the nearest available doctor. Should additional assistance be required, contact our representatives for further details. They are able to provide you with the name of an English speaking physician or telephone your embassy for advice. Big Five Tours is also in daily contact with our representatives. Health insurance is strongly advised during any foreign travel.

**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.

## DEALING WITH JET LAG

With the joys and adventures of international travel come certain unavoidable inconveniences such as occasional lost luggage or bouts of jet lag. In fact, studies reveal that as much as 90% of long distance travelers experience a degree of jet lag.

Jet lag describes that out-of-sorts feeling associated with long flights, particularly those across time zones. Symptoms and severity vary but may include drowsiness, fatigue, irritability, difficulty concentrating, headaches, insomnia, and swelling of the extremities.

The number of time zones crossed affects the severity of jet lag. The internal body clock follows circadian rhythm, which is controlled by the hypothalamus that processes nerve signals. That clock is designed for regular cycles of light and darkness. Depending on the number of time zones crossed, it may take several days for that rhythm to be restored. But that is not the only influence. Other factors include cabin pressure, stale air, lack of humidity, and your overall physical condition at the beginning of your trip.

Although jet lag can not be completely avoided, there are simple things you can do to help minimize its affects.

- Start your trip well rested with a good night's sleep. Getting adequate rest before starting on your journey will help minimize the amount of catching up you'll have to do when you arrive at the destination. Once home, try to schedule a day of rest before returning to work.
- Drink plenty of fluids -- water and juices will help you to stay well hydrated. Seasoned travelers recommend that you carry a bottle of drinking water with you and drink eight ounces every hour.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine just before and during flights. Both possess diuretic properties that promote dehydration. Alcohol also causes drowsiness and contributes to feeling sluggish.
- Once settled onboard, reset your watch to the time zone to which you are traveling. This small act helps you begin adjusting to your destination's local time.
- As much as possible, create a dark environment during flight. Studies have shown that bright lights strongly affect individuals' body clocks. If necessary, try eyeshades and earplugs to help block distractions and convince your body that it is nighttime. Closing window shades and turning off overhead lights may also help. Sleep on the plane if your flight has an early morning arrival time.
- Wear loose-fitting clothing and comfortable shoes that will help in the event you experience mild swelling. Experienced travelers often bring lightweight slippers to wear during flights.
- Although not always feasible, look for opportunities to walk around while in flight. Do simple isometric exercises (contracting and relaxing as many muscle groups as possible) in your seat. These will improve circulation, help promote increased alertness, and reduce chances of swelling.

- If you arrive in the morning, plan to stay awake. If possible, wait until the local bedtime to sleep. Many people swear that this is key in determining how quickly they adapt to local conditions. You will sleep better and will be less likely to suffer insomnia than if you nap upon arrival.

- During extended stopovers, showers are sometimes available. If you have the opportunity, shower. Trans-Pacific pilots report that taking a shower in Hawaii helps them recover more quickly from the general effects of jet lag after the flight.

## SAFETY

Common sense safety precautions you normally observe when traveling anywhere should be followed to minimize the risk of personal injury or property loss. Leave jewelry at home! Do not leave cash, traveler checks, airline tickets, etc. in an unattended room, even in a locked suitcase. Most of the lodges and hotels have safe deposit facilities at the front desk for your valuables. Use them. Like any big city, Santiago has its share of crime. One should be aware and alert to the surroundings as you would in any city today. Be careful while walking in the downtown area, especially in the late afternoon, after dark, or on weekends, even in well-traveled areas. In Santiago and other large Chilean cities, thieves thrive on rush-hour crowding on the street and aboard public transportation. Be careful when carrying purses or cameras. Do not carry large amounts of currency or valuables. Do not walk around unfamiliar cities alone at night. Be wary of entering into conversation with unknown people on the street. These are the same precautions a visitor would observe in any city in the world including in North America. Common sense is the best defense.

## LUGGAGE

**Traveling light is always the first and best rule!** We recommend passengers limit their luggage to one medium-sized soft bag per person or two small duffle bags. 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.

Generally speaking, from the US, economy class passengers are allowed to check in two (2) normal size pieces of luggage (each piece measuring no more than about 62 linear inches, which means length plus width plus height), and not exceeding 70 pounds per bag.

Scheduled flights from other countries and within foreign countries generally limit luggage to 44 pounds total, plus one carry-on personal item. Further restrictions apply for charter flights. We will advise you of those restrictions in your final documents.

Most airlines now allow only one carry-on bag in addition to one personal item such as a laptop or handbag. Most bags within the 22 x 14 x 9 (or, a total of 45 linear inches) size restriction will be considered legal carry-on size by major domestic U.S. airlines. Many US airlines check-in desks have sizing boxes within which your bag must fit.

All luggage should have identification inside as well as secure baggage tags on the outside. Please note that the US National Transportation and Safety Board now suggests that you do not lock your checked luggage. If a screener has to open your bag, the locks may have to be broken. This applies to flights within the US and international flights originating in the US. This, however, does not address other international travel issues. We suggest that you lock your luggage and bring a couple of spare locks in the event, one or more are cut off. But the choice is up to each individual traveler to make.

## CLOTHING

Overall emphasis should be on comfort: sports clothes for day. Clothes should be washable and loose fitting. Cotton or cotton-synthetic combinations are preferable to pure synthetics that 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.

### What Should I Pack For Patagonia?

Explorations in Patagonia require the following items be brought on the treks: *a parka or waterproof windbreaker, waterproof trousers (long underwear or thermal underwear is advisable in some cases), high quality hiking boots (leather / waterproof fabric), comfortable gloves, a hat to protect from the wind, sunglasses with fasteners, lip protection, sneakers, camera and / or video camera*

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

## CAMERAS & FILM

**Photography:** Always approach people with an attitude of respect and ask permission before taking photographs. Do not take anyone's picture without permission. Many times it is necessary to negotiate a fee beforehand. The same general rule about asking permission also applies to photographing places of worship, religious festivals, and rural homesteads. Never take any photos of airports, police or government buildings, military installations, or borders.

**Equipment:** Bring cameras and lenses you are comfortable using. If you get new equipment before you go, do so as far in advance as possible. Shoot and develop at least a dozen rolls before departure to work out problems. And, don't forget your camera operation manual, filters, and a flash unit. *Cameras should be packed with good cushioning.* The roads are sometimes rough, and constant vibration can do damage. Keep your camera with you as much as possible, and do not leave it on the floor of vehicles when on the road.

**Lenses:** A combination of fixed and/or zoom lenses with focal lengths from 28 mm to 200 mm is a good for general travel photography, although you can take excellent photographs with only a 50 mm lens. Zoom lenses such as 35-80mm, 70-210 mm, or 100-300 mm will help you capture the sights in a variety of different settings. Many times, however, animals are very close and you will not need high-powered zoom lenses. But serious photographers will want them handy. A macro lens is helpful for shooting close-ups, but a good set of extension tubes will work very well. A 2x converter is also a handy.

**Film:** It is always best to bring along whatever you need with you. Film is generally more expensive abroad and may be hard to locate. Larger hotels may sell film, but it will be expensive. You'll be surprised at how much film you use when you are trying to capture all those special moments and rare sights. Even those not all that interested in photography will probably shoot a couple of 36-exposure rolls per day, and enthusiastic shooters will easily double or triple that amount. Be sure film is fresh and, when possible, keep it refrigerated. A film speed of ASA/ISO 64 is an excellent choice for color slide film. Use this speed when possible rather than higher speed films. There is a noticeable difference in quality that it is worth the extra effort to keep your camera steady at a somewhat slower shutter speed than you would otherwise use. For color prints, there are several good choices, including Kodak and Fuji films (ASA/ISO 100 & 200) for daylight photography, ASA/ISO 400 & 1000 are good for lower light and nighttime situations.

*Avoid airport x-ray machines whenever possible and request a hand search of your film only.* While security people are often obliging, some are not so allow a little extra time. X-rays are cumulative on exposed and unexposed film so the more times film is x-rayed, the more risk of damage. This is especially true with older machines found in many countries. Lead bags for film are available for purchase and are worth the small investment. Do not have film in your camera because it may be opened for inspection.

**Note:** Recent news reports warn that new explosive detectors used in more than 100 US airports to scan checked baggage will ruin unprotected, unexposed film. This technology will eventually be in place at all airports worldwide. Experts suggest either carrying your film in your carry-on luggage and/or placing film in safety, lead-lined bags to prevent X-ray damage

**Video:** If you are planning to shoot video on a safari, be sure to bring plenty of tape and batteries with you. Do not plan to buy videotape abroad. Videotape is not affected by airport x-ray - only magnetic fields or prolonged exposure to heat will damage videotape. Your battery charger should be capable of automatically adjusting to 240 volts. You will probably have no problem finding a plug in most of the lodges and larger tented camps, but be prepared with plenty of batteries.

**Batteries:** Put fresh photo-quality batteries in your camera and other electric equipment before you leave and bring at least two sets of spare batteries with you. Your camera will be useless without them, and batteries are expensive and may be hard to find.

## CURRENCY / BANKING

**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 marketeers.* Cambios are open 9:00 am-7:00 pm daily.

**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.

## HOURS OF OPERATION

**Business Hours:** 0900 - 1730 Monday to Friday.

**Banking Hours:** 0900 - 1400 Monday to Friday.

**Shopping Hours:** 0900 - 2000 Mon - Fri, and 1000 -1400 Sat. Large shopping malls are open between 1000 and 2100 Monday to Saturday.

## COMMUNICATION

**Language:** Spanish, but English is widely spoken.

**Telephone:** Full IDD available. Country code: 56. Outgoing international code: 00. Cheaper rates are applicable 1800-0500, Monday to Friday and all day Saturday, Sunday, and public holidays.

**Fax:** Services available in main towns.

**Telegram:** Services available in main towns.

**Post:** Daily airmail services to Europe take approximately three to four days. Post office hours in Santiago: 0900-1800 Monday to Friday; 0900-1230 Saturday.

## ELECTRICITY

220 Volts, 50 cycles. A voltage converter and a two-prong plug adapter are necessary for U.S. appliances. Three-pin plugs and screw-type bulbs are used.

## FOOD & DRINK

**General Precautions:** All water should be regarded as being potentially contaminated. Water used for drinking, brushing teeth 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. Only eat 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 only eat light foods the first day or two, and not to consume alcohol. You may suffer some digestive problems, light dizziness or headache.

**Cuisine:** Having said that, Chile offers some delightful dining opportunities and is famous for its wines. 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*.

**Drink:** Chile is famous for its wine 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 also used to make the sweet brown *chicha* as well as *aguardiente*, similar to brandy. Beer is drunk throughout the country. While many restaurants and hotels offer entertainment there are also a number of independent discotheques, nightclubs and late night cabaret spots.

## 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.

## TIPPING

Tipping is not compulsory, nor are there fixed amounts, however, the following is a general guideline to assist you.

**Restaurants And Bars** add 10% to bill, however, waiters will expect a 10% cash tip in addition.

**Hotel Staff:** All hotel taxes and service charges have been included in the cost of your tour, so unless someone provides you with extra service like room service, you need not tip. Always check your bill first to see if a service charge has been automatically added. If not, it is customary to tip about 10% of the bill.

**Baggage Handling:** We suggest \$1.00 per bag.

**Guide / Naturalist:** \$5 - \$7 per person per day for services rendered by any licensed guide/naturalist.

**Driver:** \$2 - \$3 per person per day for services rendered by driver.

**Cruise Vessel Crew:** \$5 - \$7 per person per day for entire crew (not guides).

**Taxis:** Taxi drivers do not require tips although, you may round off the fair for convenience.

## INTRODUCTION TO CHILE

Chile is a 2,500-mile long ribbon of land on South America's Pacific coast. Rarely more than about 124 miles wide at any given point, Chile is bordered by Peru and Bolivia on the north, and by Argentina on the east. Its northern border is in the tropics, while its southern tip reaches into the Antarctic. In fact, Chile covers part of Antarctica, and also lays claim to the offshore territories of Easter Island (approx. 2,299 miles west), Juan Fernández (approx. 435 miles west) and half of the southern island of Tierra del Fuego, which it shares with Argentina.

Author Benjamín Subercaseaux described Chile as "an extravaganza of crazy geography," which includes a razored and sculpted coastline well endowed with premiere beaches and bays perfect for fishing and swimming.

Chile is divided into four main regions, each spanning the narrow width of the country. Starting at the northern end, great volcanoes, desolate lava fields and huge trackless dunes characterize the desert of Antarctica, Arica, Iquique and Antofagasta are the major northern cities.

Central Chile is dominated by Mt. Aconcagua, highest peak in the Western Hemisphere (approx. 23,000 ft.) -- all of which is in Argentinean territory, but towers over Chile's rich and fertile vineyards. The central region boasts world-renowned ski resorts inland as well as miles of fine beaches along the coast. Santiago, the capital city, Valparaiso and Viña del Mar are all located in this region.

Chile's Lake Region is an unspoiled paradise between the sea and the mighty Andes. It is a region of sparkling clear lakes, snow-capped volcanoes and miles of wilderness. In winter, modern resorts cater to skiers from around the world. Temuco and Puerto Montt are this region's major cities.

In the Great North, some weather stations have never recorded rainfall, a decided counterpoint to the storm- and snow-prone region of Patagonia.

This variety of terrain supports a wide array of distinctive flora and fauna, which are protected by an extensive system of national parks throughout the country -- one of Chile's major tourist attractions. Within the parks, visitors discover animals ranging from endangered vicuñas (wild relatives of alpacas) and Patagonian guanaco (wild relatives of Andean llamas) to flamingos and pelicans as well as penguins, otters, and sea lions. Chilean plant life includes stands of araucaria, also called the monkey-puzzle tree), cypress, and rare alerce trees, which are similar to California's giant redwoods. Sadly, outside protected areas, extensive logging continues to denude the landscape at an alarming and increasing rate.

## PRINCIPAL REGIONS

**Santiago:** Sprawling outwards and upwards, Chile's capital, Santiago, is immense. Its central core, however, is manageable and relatively small - a roughly triangular area. The Rio Mapocho runs along its northern edge. It's a city of grand thoroughfares and plazas, lined with public buildings and churches, and circled by parks. The grid plan imposed by the Spanish, however, is conducive to traffic jams and pollution.

A statue of the Virgin Mary stands guard over the city from the peak of the 860-meter Cerro San Cristóbal, part of the Parque Metropolitano recreational area.

The city's attractions include the colorful Mercado Central; the historical center of Plaza de Armas; the pedestrian mall of Paseo Ahumada (haunt of buskers and pedlars); and the huge, late-colonial Palacio de La Moneda, which was the former mint, a presidential residence, and the site of Allende's last stand.

Santiago's also has plenty of museums, including the beautifully arranged Pre-Colombian Museum and the Museo de Santiago. The Palacio de Bellas Artes, modeled on the Petit Palais in Paris, maintains a fine collection of European and Chilean art.

Bellavista, known as the 'Paris quarter', is one of the city's liveliest areas, with countless ethnic eateries and an active crafts fair on Friday and Saturday evenings.

**Valparaíso:** Lying 120km northwest of Santiago, Valpo is Chile's principal port and second-largest city. Founded in 1536, it is the country's oldest city and is currently being considered for inclusion on the UNESCO list of *World Heritage Cities*.

Despite the size, it's Chile's most distinctive city and one of South America's most intriguing. Occupying a narrow strip of land between the waterfront and the nearby hills, its convoluted center has distinctive, sinuous cobbled streets, and is overlooked by precipitous cliffs and hilltop suburbs that are accessed by funicular railways and stairway footpaths. Its natural-history, fine-arts and maritime museums are justly famed, and Muelle Prat is a redeveloped pier with a lively market area.

**Viña Del Mar:** Chile's premier beach resort is only 10km north of Valparaíso, and is popularly known as the Garden City because of its manicured subtropical landscape of palm and banana trees. Horse-drawn carriages trot past attractive turn-of-the-century mansions on both river and beach frontages. Other attractions are the white-sand beaches, numerous parks, and notable museums housed in restored mansions. The town is also home to Chile's national botanical garden, comprised of 61 hectares of native and exotic plants.

**La Serena:** The beachside city of La Serena is one of Chile's oldest post-Columbian cities. The region's silver, copper, and agriculture were so important that the city had its own mint. Today, La Serena maintains a colonial air, although it is threatening Viña del Mar's supremacy as premier beach resort. Apart from a string of beautiful beaches, attractions include a handful of museums and a number of nearby quaint villages and vineyards.

**Parque Nacional Puyehue:** Situated in the beautiful Lake District, this is Chile's most popular national park. It preserves 107,000 hectares of verdant montane forest and starkly awesome volcanic scenery. Dense forest hides puma, the rare pudú (a miniature deer), and abundant bird life such as the Chilean torrent duck. Here, too, are examples of some of Chile's strange plant life, in particular the umbrella-leaved nalca and multi-trunked ulmo. Nature trails, ski resorts, thermal springs, and waterfalls are a few of the many attractions which draw visitors.

**Puerto Montt:** Settled by German colonists in the mid-19th century, this is one of southern Chile's most important cities. It features middle-European architecture, with shingles, high-pitched roofs and ornate balconies. The redwood cathedral on the city's plaza is the city's oldest building, dating from 1856. The city is the transport hub and access point to the southern Lake District, the island of Chiloé, and Chilean Patagonia. The nearby port of Angelmó and the island of Tenglo offer a more relaxed atmosphere. Angelmó has an outstanding crafts market and fabulous seafood.

**Parque Nacional Torres Del Paine:** Near Chile's fragmented southern tip, this park is a showpiece: a world biosphere reserve with all the diverse scenery of Alaska in only 180,000 hectares. The Torres del Paine are spectacular granite pillars soaring almost 2000 meters above the Patagonian steppe. Cascading waterfalls, sprawling glaciers, dense forests, and the chance to see Patagonian guanaco make it a truly awesome experience.

**Parque Nacional Lauca:** This is another world biosphere reserve, 160km north-east of Arica, near the Bolivian border, encompasses Lake Chungará, one of the highest lakes in the world. It is spectacularly situated at the foot of dormant twin Pallachata volcanoes. There is extensive bird life along the shores of Lake Cotacotani, and panoramic views from the 5300-metre-high summit of Cerro Guane Guane.

**Volcán Osorno:** This flawless cone sits in the Parque Nacional Vicente Pérez Rosales, the first national park in Chile, and is surrounded by wonderful natural attractions. Beautiful Lago Todos Los Santos is the centerpiece of the park, and overlooks a wooded vista toward the volcano. Ferry trips to nearby villages are available and visitors can climb Osorno, also popular for skiing.

**Chiloé:** Only about 180km long and 50km wide, the Isla Grande de Chiloé is a well-watered, densely forested island of undulating hills, with a temperate maritime climate. It is linked to the Chilean mainland by ferries departing from the island's northern tip. Its towns feature distinctive shingled and stilt houses. The weather is known for rain and fog. When visible, however, a majestic panorama across the gulf to the snow-capped volcanoes of the mainland is revealed. Ancud and Castro are the only two sizeable towns, on the island, but there are over 150 picturesque wooden churches servicing smaller villages. Parque Nacional Chiloé protects extensive stands of native coniferous and evergreen forest and a long and almost pristine coastline. The rare pudú lives here.

**Parque Nacional Laguna San Rafael:** Despite the difficulty and expense of getting here, this glacier-filled, 1.7-million hectare park in southern Patagonia is the most popular attraction in the Aisén region. It encompasses some of the most spectacular fjord and mountain scenery in the world, and is dense with floating icebergs. The terrain is unforgiving for hikers, but the rewards are many. Marine and bird life include various species of duck as well as albatross, Magaellan penguin, otter, sea lion, and elephant seal. In the surrounding forests and uplands, pudús, pumas and foxes thrive.

**Easter Island (Rapa Nui):** Lying 3700km west of the Chilean mainland is enigmatic Easter Island is the world's most remote and renowned inhabited island. It is actually more Polynesian than Chilean. The presence of Pacific Islanders in this isolated part of the world is as much a mystery as how their descendants managed to design and sculpt the hundreds of colossal statues (moai) from hard volcanic basalt - let alone transport them from the inland quarries to the coast.

## PATAGONIA: THE ULTIMATE FRONTIER

The most famous region of Chile, Chilean Patagonia offers all the dramatic landscape one would expect from the world's ultimate *land's end*. Here, the South American continent falls away in a dazzling explosion of islands, glaciers, icebergs, and mountains. Many consider it Mother Nature's grand finale. Chilean Patagonia is itself composed of two sub-regions -- the northern Aisen, and, to its south, Magallanes.

Isolated from the rest of Chile by fierce storms and impassable mountains, Magallanes can be reached only by air or overland from Argentina. Magallanes is also home to the southern city of Punta Arenas, which first became prosperous during the California gold rush. The city's site on the Pacific side of the Magellan Strait made it an ideal transshipment point for cargoes rounding the continent. Later, the city became the capital of Chile's wool industry, which produced some of the richest barons on the continent.

This remarkable region is known a variety of natural wonders including: Torres del Paine Range that rises some 9,000 feet; Cuernos del Paine that reaches 6,300 feet; hypnotic waterfalls of Salto Chico and Salto Grande; Grey, Pingo, del Frances, and Dickson glaciers; Pehoe, Nordenskjold, Sarmiento, Pingo, and Dickson lakes; and Verde and Azul lagoons.

**Torres Del Paine National Park:** Torres del Paine National Park is located in the heart of the Chilean Patagonia region, 400 km (250 mi) north of the regional capital, Punta Arenas.. It is set in the imposing mountain range of the same name.

**Flora & Fauna:** The region is home to 105 different species of birds. In the plains and mountains areas, 25 different species of mammals roam freely and can be observed at close distance, especially the famous guanacos (a close relative of the llama family), armadillos, foxes, and, at times, the imposing puma.

The flora of the region includes forests of lenga and coigue that are indigenous to the region. Flowers and a wide variety of shrubbery form part of its rich vegetation.

**Altitude:** Although the region is host to mountains of heights up to 9,000 feet, the plains of the park are only a few feet above sea level (138 ft.)

**Climate:** The park has a microclimate. The short distance separating it from the ocean produces mild temperatures. Although rain is present year round, rainfall never exceeds 85 mm. A thin layer of snow may cover some areas of the park during the winter months (June-September), never preventing explorations. Generally in November, there are gusts of strong winds (up to 110 km/hr) which assure alternating cloudy and sunny moments. The winds producing this ever changing weather conditions come primarily from the west. Winters tend to be calm, with moderately cold clear days. Rainfall is moderate. Snow is more likely to fall in the highlands of the park. A light snowfall may happen in the lake area only during a few weeks in the year.

## ATACAMA DESERT

**Climate:** The Atacama Desert is high with most elevations averaging more than 8000 feet, and cold. Average temperatures range from 32° to 75° F (0° to 25° C).

Known as the "North of Chile," this region stretches from highlands of the Andean Altiplano over the golden sands of the Atacama Desert as far as the shores of the Pacific Ocean. Diverse, surprising, majestic and relatively untouched, this is a land of salt flats, geysers and volcanoes, and expanses of land. Signs of life include occasional llamas, vicunas, flamingos, and alpacas.

**Desert In The Highlands:** The Chilean Altiplano, situated in the foothills of the Andean Mountain Range, about 13,123 feet above sea level, is an unspoiled beauty. Here, visit the Lauca National Park, a natural monument declared a World Biosphere Reserve.

It is the most arid desert in the world. Spectacular landscapes and natural phenomena abound wherever you look: startling landscapes of volcanoes, lagoons, salt flats, and small pre-Hispanic settlements. A wide variety of animal life such as llamas, vicunas, guanacos, alpacas, flamingos and wild duck create a lasting impression of wildness.

And in all this vastness, tiny villages such as Parinacota, Caspana, Socoroma, Surire or Isluga still maintain the traditions of their Aymara ancestors. The influence of Spanish colonization is still evident in the architecture of their churches.

The main cities of the North, Arica, Iquique, and Antofagasta are situated on the coast. All have airports linking them to the rest of the country, and are connected by road to each other and to the most important sightseeing areas.

Calama, about 133 miles from Antofagasta, is in the middle of the desert is an ideal base camp for trips to El Tatio Geysers about 11,647 feet above sea level, where great pillars of water and steam rise some 33 feet high and reach temperatures of 185 degree F.

To the south about 62 miles lies the arid wasteland of the Valley of the Moon.

Towards the north, the village of Chiu-Chiu has several attractions including the nearby 492-foot deep Chiu-Chiu Lagoon, an astonishing natural phenomenon in the middle of this vast desert.

From Calama, you can also visit the huge amphitheatre of the biggest open-cast mine in the world -- Chuquicamata. As the largest of twelve salt flats in the Northern Region, the Salt Lake of Atacama is especially interesting. It stretches out like a vast white lake as far as the eye can see and its banks are the habitat of unique species of fauna.

From trekking desert vistas to sunbathing north coast beaches to shopping in the Arica or Iquique -- the choices are many and varied in this fascinating land.

## ARCHEOLOGY, HISTORY & MYSTERY

For more than 10,000 years these lands have been inhabited by man, and evidence of his presence can be found throughout this area from the Pacific coast to the high Andean Mountain Range about 19,685 feet above sea level. In the Azapa Valley not far from Arica, the museum of San Miguel de Azapa exhibits especially 'prepared' mummies dating from 10,000 BC, the oldest in the world yet to be discovered. The museum also houses a fine archeological collection of some 20,000 objects discovered in this area.

From the road, the huge geoglyphic paintings adorn hillsides and are still visible. These gigantic drawings, of which the most important are those of Lluta, Azapa, Pintados, Cerro Unitas and Tiliviche, remain wrapped in mystery to this day.

World-renowned museum is located in San Pedro de Atacama about 62 miles from Calama. The small village was once the center of the Atacamanian civilization. This museum

contains a collection of over 300,000 pieces, including pottery, woven fragments and mummies discovered in this area. The ruins of Indian fortresses or 'pukaras' such as Quito, Lasana and

Turi remain in the North of Chile.

# **CLOTHING/PACKING CHECKLIST**

Check the items below to be taken with you on your trip. Additional items may be added in the blank spaces provided. This is not intended as an all-inclusive list, but only as a suggested packing guide.

## **CLOTHING – WOMEN**

- Comfortable outfit for air travel
  - Sandals or casual shoes
  - Walking shoes or tennis shoes
  - Rubber thongs (shower)
  - Hat
  - Windbreaker or jacket
  - Pullover sweater or sweatshirt
  - Long pants \*
  - Shorts \*
  - Socks
  - Short sleeve shirts \*
  - Long sleeve shirts \*
  - T-shirts
  - Pajamas
  - Light-weight robe/cover-up
  - Swim-suit/cover-up
  - Casual slacks/skirt
  - Blouses
  - Belt(s)
  - Underwear
  - Scarves
  - Costume Jewelry
- 

## **CLOTHING - MEN**

- Comfortable outfit for air travel
  - Sandals or casual shoes
  - Walking shoes or tennis shoes
  - Rubber thongs (showers)
  - Hat
  - Windbreaker or jacket
  - Pullover sweater or sweatshirt
  - Long pants \*
  - Shorts \*
  - Socks
  - Short sleeve shirts \*
  - Long sleeve shirts \*
  - T-Shirts
  - Pajamas
  - Light weight robe/cover-up
  - Swim trunks
  - Casual slacks
  - Shirts
  - Belt(s)
  - Underwear
- 

## **TOILETRIES**

- Anti-malarial pills
  - Vitamins
  - Aspirin/Tylenol
  - Motion sickness pills
  - Short-acting sleeping pills
  - Decongestant
  - Antibiotic
  - Lomotil / Pepto-Bismol
  - Antacid
  - Antibiotic ointment
  - Insect repellent
  - Sun screen/Sun block
  - Lip balm
  - Shampoo & Conditioner
  - Prescription medications
  - Band-Aids
  - Deodorant
  - Toothpaste & toothbrush
  - Feminine Hygiene supplies
  - Dental floss
  - Mouthwash
  - Hairbrush/comb
  - Razor
  - Q-Tips/cotton balls
  - Nail clippers
  - Nail file
  - Tweezers
  - Make-up
  - Hand lotion
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## **CAMERA EQUIPMENT**

- Camera/Lenses
- Plenty of film
- Lead Protective Film Bags
- Camera bag
- Lens filters
- Cleaning Fluid/Tissues
- Lens Brush/Puffer
- Extra Batteries/Charger
- Flash & Flash batteries
- Zip-lock bags
- Camera instruction book
- Stick-on labels for film
- Video Camera/Charger
- Blank video tapes

## **SUNDRIES**

- Passport
- International Certificate
- Vaccinations-Health Card
- Airline tickets/vouchers
- Money Pouch
- Credit Cards
- Travelers Checks
- Small calculator
- Sunglasses
- Prescription glasses
- Eyeglass case
- Small Alarm Clock
- Converter/plug set
- Binoculars
- Small flashlight
- Sewing kit
- Small scissors
- Kleenex
- Handi-wipes
- Zip-lock bags
- Travel clothes line
- Pillowcase for dirty clothes
- Small notebook or journal
- Pen
- Deck of cards
- Books/Magazines
- Address book for postcards
- Photocopy of passport and airline tickets
- Hard candy
- Bandana
- Extra sm. Collapsible bag
- Neck pillow for airline travel

## **OTHER**

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\*Clothing should be comfortable