



An introduction to Chile

We have put together this guide to introduce Chile to you knowing that it is very easy to get bamboozled by too much information. We hope this short guide will be enough to set you on the right course, without being too detailed. As such it is not meant to be definitive - for further details we strongly recommend that you look at southamericaodyssey.com/chile or get in touch as we would be delighted to talk to you all about Chile.





Country summary

Chile is an elongated country that measures 4,300km in length and only 177km wide. Chile is all about the great outdoors. In southern Chile you will find Patagonia and the world renowned National Park of Torres Del Paine.

Contrastingly, in the north the arid deserts and salt flats make for a great combination. Surrounding Santiago there are a number of marvellous wineries and lodges for some rest and relaxation. For a lover of the outdoors in search of stunning and dramatic scenery then look no further and put this place on your list.

Highlights of the county

Patagonia

This is a wild and truly stunning area of Chile - a wilderness lover's dream. Ice capped mountains make the skyline, whilst on the ground find vibrantly coloured lakes, hidden waterfalls, cool forests, meadows and roaming hardy wildlife.

Overlook the first class Torres Del Paine National Park out your bedroom window whilst staying [Explora Patagonia](#), the only lodge located in the park. Or outside the park is the luxurious [Awasi Pantagonia](#).

The Lake District

Sometimes the beauty of the Lake District gets overshadowed by the renowned Torres Del Paine National Park. However, this area is abundant in lakes, volcanoes and general natural splendour. It is still home to indigenous people, the Mapuches. The lush scenery makes for excellent mountaineering, hiking, water rafting, fishing and horseback riding. In this area, our pick of accommodation would be the [Hotel Cabana Del Lago](#), which makes coming home from an outdoorsy day very comfortable with the pool, cosy rooms and lovely view of Lake Llanquihue.

The Atacama Desert

This eerie and awe-inspiring desert – the driest place on earth - is not a wasteland, but a peaceful location with fantastic star gazing, sunsets over “The Valley of the Moon” and rough edged horizons sitting on expansive flat plains. Enjoy this unique and ghostly setting from the back of a horse in an adventurous stay, or simply from the base of the village San Pedro de Atacama.

Choose from the stylish [Alto Atacama](#) which lies just outside San Perdo de Atacama for a remote stay, or the [Tierra Atacama](#) which boasts a luxurious and modern feel.

Santiago

Santiago is a fantastic cosmopolitan city overlooked by the snowy-peaked towering Andes and coastal mountain range. Although a fun stop of after you land, we believe that the beauty of Chile lives in the great outdoors beyond the bustle of Santiago.

We suggest staying in the contemporary [Luciano K](#) hotel which is perfect situated in the bustling Lastarria neighbourhood making it a great base to explore the city from.

More places to visit in Chile

The Wine Region and Valparasio

An hour and a half's drive North-West of Santiago is the attractive and (quite literally) rainbow coloured bohemian city, Valparasio. It is nestled on a hillside resulting in its ever famous escalators which tirelessly scale up and down the city. Check out the social scene in Victoria Square, or bargain hunt for gems through O'Higgins Square's cluttered and vibrant flea-markets.



After immersing yourself in this unique city, as you travel south you can spend the night at a boutique hotel in the Chilean Wine Valleys to sip on some vino whilst soaking in the brilliant views.

Easter Island

If you have time, pop over to Easter Island off the coast of Chile, which is home to the world's largest open-air museum consisting of 600 Moai stone statues. We would recommend visiting here purely for those with an active interest in the statues – otherwise you may be disenchanted by the long 6 hour flight from Santiago to arrive at a tiny island with very cold beaches, and little shelter.

But for the keen historians, accommodation on Easter Island cannot beat the fantastic [Explora Easter Island](#) hotel.

Neighbouring countries to combine with Chile itinerary

Crossing the Andes from Chile into Argentina is possible at a number of points, though the scenery on the Argentinian side of the border is similar. One especially popular combination is to cross the border to visit the Glacier at Calafate and then fly up to the fantastic Buenos Aires and home.

General information on Chile

When is the best time to visit?

If you want to include Patagonia in your trip then the best time to visit is from October to March. During these months the weather is most agreeable, although you can still experience four seasons in one afternoon. Other areas of Chile can be visited year round.

How much does a trip to Chile cost?

There is no easy answer to this one as all of our itineraries are designed from scratch to suit your interest and budget. As a general guide then, a two week trip to Chile staying in top range hotels would cost from about £6,000 per person excluding international flights. For a full itinerary please see <http://digital.africaodyssey.com/Itinerary/Landing/A12FCF73-87DA-41B1-8823-F7953FCAAEA9>

Is the altitude a problem?

Some Northern parts of Chile such as areas in the Atacama Desert are in high altitude, which can cause altitude sickness. A holiday in Patagonia will not be so, but it is important to be aware of the altitude in your specific destinations as some of Chile's attractions are over 3,000m. It is not a problem, but just something to be wary of. Even if you are very fit, keep in mind to always stay hydrated and hopefully you will acclimatise quickly. Talk to your GP if you have any medical conditions prior to your trip.

What is the currency?

Chilean Peso is the currency. UK credit or debit cards are accepted in larger towns and cities but limits may be lower than at home. You can also exchange US dollar cash in money exchanges but rates for euros and sterling are harder to find. VAT is not included on drinks etc. in hotels if you pay in US\$ cash or card.

What is the language?

Spanish.



What is the time difference?

GMT -4 hours.

How do I get there?

BA now fly direct to Santiago though the flight is just under 15 hours

Why South America Odyssey?

First and foremost, the team here at Odyssey Travel love South America and have spent many years exploring and working in the continent in a variety of capacities. We have stayed at the hotels we work with, we have built loyal relationships with the best guides in their respective fields, and we now use our love and first-hand knowledge to craft individual tailor made itineraries. It is our intimate knowledge of the continent, combined with our relationships that help us continually deliver exceptional and authentic holidays to the continent. Our promise to you is first class service, unrivalled country knowledge and value for money.

✓ First class service ✓ Super knowledgeable itinerary designers ✓ Fantastic value for money

Our price promise

Booking through us will cost no more - and often considerably less - than booking the same trip with all the individual suppliers directly. We are able to negotiate excellent rates with suppliers, which results in savings for you. In the very unlikely event that you get a cheaper quote for the same trip from a reputable UK bonded tour operator, we will match that quote.

We are ATOL bonded (ATOL 5397) so whatever might happen to us, your money is protected.

No surcharge for currency fluctuations Once your itinerary is confirmed and your deposit has been paid, we guarantee that we will make no surcharge for currency fluctuations, whatever happens to exchange rates before you actually travel.

In summary, we are able to package a holiday for less than you will be able to arrange directly, without any exchange risk, and you will benefit from our decades of experience in arranging similar trips, our impartial opinions, and the financial security that our ATOL bond offers!