

Volunteer Travel Guide Chile - Volunteer Abroad - www.abroaderview.org

By A Broader View Volunteers Corp

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A Chilean legend maintains that after God had created the wonders of the world he had many pieces leftover. He had raging rivers, sprawling glaciers, valleys and soaring mountains, snow-capped volcanoes, sparkling lakes, beautiful forests and deserts, icy fjords and sandy beaches. Rather than let all this beauty go to waste, he put them together in a remote part of the world, and so Chile was born.

Shaped like a long narrow strip and making up the western part of South America's tail, it is 2,610 miles (4,200km) in length and at most 115 miles (180km) wide. Travelers are drawn to this country because of its multitude of natural attractions, from the northern desert to the Lake District, and the mountains and fjords of Patagonia in the south. It has some superb National Parks, including Easter Island famous for its mysterious giant statues, and numerous activities for outdoor enthusiasts.

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Chile's European heritage is evident throughout the country and travelers here are likely to feel more familiar with its culture than those of the neighboring countries, with their strongly indigenous lifestyles. There are still local traditions persisting in parts of Chile however, and together with the European influence this makes for an interesting juxtaposition, providing a distinctive culture. The people are resilient, cordial and warm, from the fashionable capital city of Santiago to the isolated island of Chiloé, and Chilean hospitality is renowned.

Besides natural beauty and an interesting blend of cultures, Chile offers the visitor excellent wines and seafood, unique handicrafts and shopping, and a variety of characteristic architecture, making it a beautiful and memorable place to visit.

The Basics

Time:

Mainland is GMT -4 (GMT -3 from October to March). Easter Island is GMT -6 (GMT -5 from October to March).

Electricity:

Electrical current is 220 volts, 50Hz. Round two-pin plugs and round three-pin plugs (in-line) are used.

Language:

The official language is Spanish.

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Communications:

The international access code for Chile is +56. The outgoing code is 00 followed by the relevant country code (e.g. 0044 for the United Kingdom). The area code for Santiago is (0)2. Internet cafes are available in the main towns. A number of telephone companies offer different rates for national and international calls, depending on the time of day. Public phones are widely available and international call centers are available in most shopping malls. Mobile phone companies have roaming agreements with most international cell phone companies; otherwise mobile phones can easily be rented. A GSM 1900 network is in operation. Internet cafes are widespread, particularly in the big cities.

Health

There are no vaccination requirements for entry to Chile, but a typhoid vaccine is recommended for travelers other than short term travelers who restrict their meals to major restaurants, hotels or cruise ships. Water is generally safe in the cities, but should be treated in the rural areas; bottled water is widely available for drinking. Santiago is severely polluted and this could cause respiratory problems or eye irritations, particularly from May to August. Travelers visiting the Andes Mountains should be aware of altitude sickness, and ascend slowly to allow the body to adjust. Health care in urban areas is adequate, but hospitals and clinics are extremely expensive and usually require payment in cash. Health insurance is strongly recommended.

Embassy of Chile, Washington DC, United States: +1 202 785 1746

Embassy of Chile, London, United Kingdom: +44 (0)20 7580 6392

Embassy of Chile, Ottawa, Canada: +1 613 235 4402

Embassy of Chile, Canberra, Australia: +61 (0)2 6286 2430

Embassy of Chile, Pretoria, South Africa: +27 (0)12 460 8090

Embassy of Chile, Dublin, Ireland: +353 (0)1 667 5094

Embassy of Chile, Wellington, New Zealand: +64 (0)4 471 6270

Foreign Embassies in Ecuador

United States Embassy, Santiago: +56 (0)2 232 26

British Embassy, Santiago: +56 (0)2 370 4100

Canadian Embassy, Santiago: +56 (0)2 652 3800

Australian Embassy, Santiago: +56 (0)2 550 3500

South African Embassy, Santiago: +56 (0)2 231 2860-3

Honorary Consul of Ireland, Santiago: +56 (0)2 245 6616

New Zealand Embassy, Santiago: +56 (0)2 290 9800

Chile Emergency Numbers

Emergencies: 133 (Police); 131 (Medical).

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Airports

Santiago Arturo Merino Benitez International Airport (SCL)

Location: The airport is situated 13 miles (21km) north west of Santiago.

Time: Local time is GMT –5 (GMT –4 from the second Sunday in October to the second Saturday in March).

Facilities: Facilities at this extremely well equipped airport include Business and Internet Centers, bureau of change, banks and ATMs, duty-free shops as well as a variety of other retail stores, restaurants, cafes and bars, a post office, tourist information, travel agencies and hotel reservations. There are also plenty of children's play areas available.

Departure Tax: Passengers with a passport from Australia, Canada, United States or Mexico are required to pay a reciprocity tax on entering the airport. Australians: US\$56, Canadians: US\$132, US nationals: US\$132, and Mexicans: US\$15.

Website: www.aeropuertোসantiago.cl

Passport & Visa

Visa Agencies:

Avoid the stress and queues, get a visa agency to arrange your visa.
Travel Visa Pro, San Francisco, USA. 1-888-470-8472 or www.TravelVisaPro.com
Global Visas, London, UK. 0207 190 3903 or www.globalvisas.com

Entry requirements for Americans: No visa is required by US nationals for visits of up to 90 days, but a US\$131 reciprocity fee, payable in USD cash on arrival, will be charged for tourists. The receipt is regarded as a multiple entry visa and is valid until expiry of passport. A passport is required for travel to Chile.

Entry requirements for UK nationals: UK nationals do not require a visa for visits of up to 90 days. A passport is required.

Entry requirements for Canadians: No visa is required by Canadians for visits of up to 90 days, but a US\$132 reciprocity fee, payable in USD cash on arrival, will be charged for tourists. The receipt is regarded as a multiple entry visa and is valid until expiry of passport. A passport is required for travel to Chile.

Entry requirements for Australians: No visa is required by Australians for visits of up to 90 days, but a US\$61 reciprocity fee, payable in USD cash on arrival, will be charged for tourists. The receipt is regarded as a multiple entry visa and is valid for three months. A passport is required.

Entry requirements for South Africans: South African nationals must hold a passport. A visa is not required for stays of up to 90 days.

Entry requirements for New Zealanders: New Zealand nationals must hold a passport. A visa is not required for a stay of up to 90 days.

Entry requirements for Irish nationals: Irish nationals must hold a passport, but a visa for a stay of up to 90 days is not required.

Passport/Visa Note: Passengers must hold a Tourist Card (issued free of charge on arrival for 90 days) and sufficient funds to cover intended period of stay. A return or onward ticket is not required if holding a credit

card or sufficient funds to purchase a ticket. Passengers with a passport from Australia, Canada, United States or Mexico are required to pay a reciprocity tax on entering Santiago airport before passing through Customs. Fees are US\$61 for Australians, US\$132 for Canadians, US\$131 for US nationals and US\$23 for Mexican passport holders. This tax must be paid in US dollars cash; it is paid once and remains valid until the passport expires (for Canadians and Americans) or for three months (for Mexicans and Australians).

Note: Passport and visa requirements are liable to change at short notice. Travelers are advised to check their entry requirements with their embassy or consulate.

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