



SSAFR 2019

CHILE

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Information**

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welcome

With its snow-capped mountains, dazzling lakes, the world's highest and driest desert, breathtaking glaciers and icefields, and a 3,500-mile coastline, this is a land of superlatives and contrasts on a remarkable scale. Its unique natural characteristics aside, Chile is something of an anomaly in Latin America, admired as much for its rock-solid economy, social and political stability, and the superb infrastructure of its capital city, as it is for its fruit, wine, and talent for rescuing miners from seemingly impossible situations. Since 1989, the country has grown year after year, recovering admirably from almost two decades of dictatorship to become an example of industry, resilience, and creativity. The country has become the business hub for multi-national companies, while at the same time encouraging a strong entrepreneurial culture, all of which places it among the world's most notable emerging nations.

the basics

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| Population: | 18.1 million (UN, 2017) |
| Official Language: | Spanish |
| Capital city: | Santiago |
| Area: | 291,930 sq. miles (756,096 km ²) |
| Major religion: | Roman Catholic |
| Life expectancy: | 76 years (men), 82 years (women) (UN) |
| Monetary unit: | Chilean peso (CLP) |
| Main exports: | Copper, fish, fruit, paper and pulp, chemicals, and wine |
| GDP per capita: | US\$13,793 (World Bank, 2017) |
| Internet domain: | .cl |
| National Day: | September 18 |
| Borders with: | Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina |

infrastructure

Chile is internationally recognized for its outstanding developments in the areas of architecture, design and both road and housing infrastructure, even in the most challenging of geographical conditions. Santiago – the nation's capital – boasts the most advanced road network of any South American city; High-speed highways connect to a system of tunnels that cross the city. Moving throughout Chile is convenient, easy and safe, as the country has excellent land transport networks and air transport connections. It has a modern infrastructure, services certified to international standards, a world class international airport, and a range of hotels that grows in quantity and quality in its main destinations, as well as excellent conference facilities. Chile's advanced communications systems, logistics, and world-class air and sea ports have helped connect it to world markets and bridge distances with other global business centers.

economy

Chile has a mixed economy, which means that it is made up of both private and state-owned corporations. The privately-owned businesses are regulated by limited government policies. The economy of Chile is one of the most secure and productive in South America, ranked by the World Bank as a high-income economy. The leading industry products include: copper, fish processing, iron and steel, other minerals, wood products, cement, and textiles. Chile's major trading partners are China, the United States, Japan, South Korea, and Brazil. The country has signed more free trade agreements (FTAs) than any other nation. It has FTAs with more than 90% of its trade partners, including Australia, China, India, Japan, Mexico, the US, and the EU. In international comparisons of competitiveness and economic freedom, Chile is at the forefront of Latin America, and despite its emerging status, it ranks

alongside the most developed economies in the world. Chile is an outlier in Latin America precisely because it is so politically and economically stable. Chile's capital, Santiago, has been in the top three since 2005 in the yearly rankings of The Best Cities to do Business in Latin America, published by the business magazine *AméricaEconomía*. Santiago is also becoming a hotbed for start-ups and entrepreneurs, and it is therefore no surprise that many multi-national companies are choosing Santiago as their regional headquarters, while others are relocating to the city given the favorable business climate and transparency. In a world of constant change, Chile is a beacon of economic and institutional stability.

geography

A land of unparalleled diversity and contrasts, with formidable natural beauty, Chile covers a total area of 291,930 sq. miles (756,096 km.²), which is equivalent to twice the size of Japan, or France and the United Kingdom combined. It is the longest country in the world from north to south at 2,674 miles (4,303 kilometers), or 38 degrees of latitude. That's Stockholm to Marrakech or Los Angeles to New Jersey! Chile has more Pacific coastline than any other country. It is an incredibly narrow country, rising from sea level to a staggering 22,610 feet (6,893 meters) at Nevado Ojos del Salado (the highest active volcano on Earth) in just 160 miles. Chile shares borders with Argentina, Peru and Bolivia, but is the only South American nation not to border Brazil. Alexander Selkirk and Charles Darwin explored the country extensively, and their respective voyages were well documented. Over 20% of Chile's land mass is protected, a total area larger than the entire landmass of Costa Rica and 4% of UNESCO's World Biosphere Reserves are found in Chile. From the peaks of the Andes and the salt flats of Atacama to the pampa and ice fields of Patagonia, Chile is truly a geographical wonder.

icons

The enormous diversity offer Chile makes for some highly contrasting icons. The north of the country is dominated by the Atacama Desert which extends south as far as the semi-arid Elqui and Limari Valleys. Chile's Central Region includes Santiago, Wine Country, and the coastal cities of Valparaíso and Viña del Mar. Further south, the spectacular Lakes Region is the starting point of Patagonia, which ends in the southern tip of South America. Another icon is Easter Island, the mysterious Polynesian island home to over 600 moai statues.

unique diversity

The scenic contrasts of Chile are astounding. Its national parks total 14 million hectares and within them a diverse range of ecosystems co-exist and have deservedly been declared World Biosphere Reserves. Chile is blessed with stunning geographical contrasts; from Atacama, the world's highest (and driest) desert, through the lush landscapes of Wine Country and the Lakes Region, to the glaciers, mountains, and Pampa of Patagonia. Add to that the omnipresent Andes mountains, 3,000 miles of coastline, five UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and the world's clearest skies, and it is safe to say that few countries can boast such diversity. The 18 million people that Chile's population are as diverse as the land itself. Proud pockets of indigenous cultures remain today, forming part of Chile's rich cultural tapestry. The Mapuches – Chile's largest indigenous group – make up approximately 300,000 inhabitants, concentrated around Temuco, between the Biobío and Toltén rivers. Their culture and traditions are very much alive today, in language, crafts, and especially in cuisine, which is experiencing a resurgence thanks to Chilean chefs who have taken traditional recipes and ingredients and have transformed them into fine dining experiences around the world. In the north of the country, the Aymara and Atacameño communities populate the Altiplano on the Bolivian border, and the Atacama Desert respectively. The Rapa Nui people of Easter Island (2,700 inhabitants), have their own language and a distinctly Polynesian culture. Their traditions are best observed during the annual Tapati celebrations in February.

Elsewhere in the country, Germans, Croats, the Spanish, and the British have all left their mark, creating a unique blend of traditions, architectural styles, cuisine, and of course faces.

food and drink

While Chilean cuisine may not enjoy the celebrity status of that of its Peruvian neighbors, there is something of a culinary revolution taking place. Chile's meat, fish, seafood, fruit, and vegetables simply explode with flavor, but for too long Chilean dishes tended to be understated, perhaps lacking the creativity found elsewhere in South America. Chileans dine much later than in Europe and North America; the more upscale restaurants don't open for lunch until 1.00pm, and dinner begins at around 8.00, although most don't even start getting busy until well after 9.00pm. Chile is a producer of excellent wines. It is no surprise then that most restaurants have an extensive wine list. The good news is that Chilean wine is great value for money. A good bottle can be bought a local store for under US\$10 and will normally cost double that in restaurants. Try Carménère; a smooth red once considered a lost variety after being wiped out in Europe, but now thriving in Chile. Perhaps the most emblematic drink is the pisco sour, a heady mix of grape brandy, lemon juice, and simple syrup. It is the perfect aperitif, so start your meal the way Chileans do.

quick facts

- ❖ Chile covers a total area of 291,930 sq. miles (756,096 km.²). That is twice the size of Japan, or France and the United Kingdom combined.
- ❖ Chile is the longest country in the world from north to south at 2,674 miles (4,303 kilometers), or 38 degrees of latitude. That's Stockholm to Marrakech!
- ❖ Chile rises from sea level to a staggering 22,610 feet (6,893 meters) at Nevado Ojos del Salado; the highest active volcano on Earth.
- ❖ Chile shares borders with Argentina, Peru and Bolivia, but is one of just two South American nations not to border Brazil (along with Ecuador).
- ❖ Over 20% of Chile's land mass is protected. That is a total area larger than the entire landmass of Costa Rica!
- ❖ 4% of UNESCO's World Biosphere Reserves are found in Chile.
- ❖ Chile is home to the oldest mummies in the world; the Chinchorros are preserved by the arid conditions of the Atacama Desert.
- ❖ Chile has thirty-one National Parks and forty-eight National Reserves, the largest of which covers an area greater than Belgium!
- ❖ The skies of the north are so clear that the world's foremost astronomical observatories are found in the area between the Atacama Desert and the Elqui Valley.
- ❖ The name 'Chile' may come from the indigenous word 'chilli', which means 'where the land ends', or the onomatopoeic "cheele-cheele", the Mapuche imitation of a bird call.
- ❖ Scottish sailor Alexander Selkirk was marooned for four years on the Juan Fernández Islands. After being rescued, he published his story of survival, which was the inspiration for Daniel Defoe's classic novel Robinson Crusoe.
- ❖ People on the island of Chiloé have a novel way of moving house. They literally move the house! Known as a 'minga', the event brings the entire community together to move a house from A to B. The islanders place the house on tree trunks, after which it is dragged by oxen to the new site. A huge feast is served afterwards.
- ❖ Chile's Lakes region has a distinctly Germanic feel. The region was the destination for thousands of German migrants in the 1850s, to work mainly in agriculture and the timber industry. The German influence is visible today in the region's architecture, cuisine, and even the character of its people.