

# Chile Uncovered

**Tour Style:** Worldwide walking holidays

**Destination:** Chile

**Trip code:** EIWHW

**Trip Walking Grade:** 3



## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

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From the cosmopolitan sights of Santiago to the arid landscapes of the Atacama Desert, the strip of a country between the Andes and the Pacific caters for every type of adventurer and walker. Enjoy a variety of walks across Chile's stunning landscapes and marvel at nature at its boldest and striking. Further highlights include geysers, volcanoes, flamingo-filled lakes, star-filled skies, penguin colonies, and a wealth of cultural and architectural thrills in the vibrantly-painted harbour city of Valparaíso.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

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- Full programme of guided walks and sightseeing led by experienced local leaders
- Comfortable accommodation
- 12 breakfasts, 10 lunches and 10 dinners
- All sightseeing and entrance fees (as per itinerary)
- Air-conditioned transport
- Internal flights
- Return flights from the UK including hold baggage and airport transfers

## HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

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- Visiting the Atacama Desert, the world's driest non-polar desert
- Exploring the colourful port town and UNESCO World Heritage Site of Valparaíso
- Sampling wines in Chile's Casablanca Valley
- Admiring the El Tatio Geysers at sunrise
- Discovering the Puñihuil penguin colony
- Hiking around the snow-capped Osorno Volcano

## TRIP SUITABILITY

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This trip is graded Activity Level 3.

Part-day and full-day walks of up to 9 miles (15km) with up to 1,950 feet (600m) of ascent.



## ITINERARY

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### Day 1: Depart The UK

Our with-flights guests depart the UK on an overnight flight to Santiago

### Day 2: Santiago

We arrive in Santiago de Chile and transfer to our hotel where we are joined by our without-flight guests.

We'll head out on a private guided tour to discover both sides of Santiago de Chile – a vibrant, modern metropolis and a former colonial capital. We'll begin with a visit to the presidential palace, named La Moneda because the splendid building once housed the national mint. Many other sights in the historic centre are clustered around Plaza de Armas including the impressive cathedral, the beautiful old post office, and the Palacio de la Real Audiencia, now home to the National History Museum.

Leaving the centre, we'll travel towards the soaring Andes, past the Cerro San Cristóbal, which towers over the city with a great white statue of the Virgin Mary crowning its summit. Continue through Vitacura, nicknamed 'Sanhattan' because of its skyscrapers. There's also the Parque Bicentenario Vitacura, where you can see Chilean Flamingos and Patagonian blacktail swans, as well as indigenous plants.

We'll round off our afternoon with dinner in one of the restaurants in the Borderio/Bellavista area.

### Day 3: Cajon Del Maipo

This trekking tour first follows the route "Meseta Trek", then proceeds to climb an additional 500 metres higher into the spectacular Cordillera. After leaving the Meseta route, the path climbs steeply upwards to "La Campana", a 1800m high bell-shaped mountain that dominates the landscape around the sanctuary. The view from here is breathtaking and with a bit of luck you might be able to watch the condor flying its orbits. During the trekking tour you can often enjoy an unobstructed view of the Maipo River and the surrounding mountains. After a rest at La Campana, we continue on to "Cruce de los Maquis", a stream crossing in a small native forest and its seasonal pool is perfectly suited for a small refreshment. After another break, we descend the mountain to the Meseta route and then follow a different trail down to the river Maipo. The tour ends at its starting point.

**Distance:** 6km

### Day 4: Valle De La Luna

One of the best-known destinations between Calama and San Pedro is the Valle de la Luna. This tour into the rugged beauty of the Atacama Desert begins at dusk. With the Licancabur volcano providing the backdrop, strange salt and rock formations in the middle of the valley's barren sandy landscape really do look like a moonscape. After a tour past the bizarre natural rock and salt shapes, you will pass by the bizarre rock formation "Tres Marías" Finish the tour at a viewpoint where you overlook the Kari-Canyon and wide parts of the desert, you can even catch a glimpse at the Salar de Atacama. The setting sun bathes the landscape in a light that changes with every minute, providing a mesmerising play of colours.

### Day 5: Atacama Salt Lake

Head south from San Pedro de Atacama through the desert landscape to the impressive Salar de Atacama, one of the largest salt lakes in the world. En route, visit Toconao, a small village with buildings made entirely from white volcanic stone and see Laguna Chaxa. This is part of the Reserva Nacional de los Flamingos, and is a great place to get close to these unusual birds. Next there will be the chance of an insight into daily life on a traditional Atacameña farm. Take a tour of the farmland and learn about regional fruit and vegetable cultivation, as well as livestock farming in this challenging terrain. Learn about the typical homemade products, such as quince juice, fruit syrups, candied quinoa and guanaco paté, then enjoy lunch and sample some of the regional produce. After lunch in the farm you will return to San Pedro

In the evening join us on an Astronomy tour, there are few places in the world where the sky is as clear and the view of the stars so good, as in northern Chile. It is therefore no surprise that several of the world's most important international observatories are here. Astronomers from all over the world are regularly drawn here for their research. The observation centre Space Obs in San Pedro de Atacama (San Pedro de Atacama Celestial Observatory) is situated close to the Tropic of Capricorn, and is open to the public. During your visit, an expert explains the basics of astronomy and, with the help of an extra strong laser pointer, highlights special features of the southern hemisphere. You will also get an unforgettable glimpse of the distant stars and galaxies by looking through a telescope.

### Day 6: The Guatin Valley

The Guatin Valley contains the confluence of two rivers: one comes from the Puritama thermal springs and carries earth and minerals in its warm waters; the other is the Purifica River that originates in the Andes. This extraordinary mixture of hot spring water and clear melt water creates a unique ecosystem in the Guatin

Canyon, and a hike here is rewarding, not least for the giant candelabra cacti that grow in the canyon, some of which are already up to 500 years old. This pleasant hike begins in the Guatin Canyon, whose vibrant red rocks provide a wonderful display of colours. The walk along the canyon floor follows a steady incline through unique local flora, before reaching the area near Puritama thermal springs (entrance fee not included). Return to San Pedro

**Distance:** 4km / **Initial Altitude:** 2,450m / **Maximum Altitude:** 3,475m

## Day 7: El Tatio Geysers And Return To Santiago

Those who wish to experience the El Tatio Geysers have to get up early, to ensure a timely arrival at the geyser field at sunrise. The fountains, located over 4300m/14,108ft, shoot up to 10m/33ft high. The sun's first rays reflecting countless colours as they mingle with boiling jets coming from the geysers create a strong contrast with the rising steam and the surrounding summits. After the spectacular show there, you have the choice of recovering from the morning chill and warming up in natural pools created by hot springs. The tour begins in the very early hours of the morning in San Pedro, to ensure a timely arrival at the geyser field at sunrise. The return drive to San Pedro takes place around midday.

## Day 8: Puerto Montt

You will be picked up at the airport and start your city tour through Puerto Montt. Founded by German settlers in 1853, Puerto Montt is also known as the 'Gateway to Patagonia'. This is where the Carretera Austral begins and where ships set off for Tierra del Fuego, the Magellan Strait, and to Patagonia's glaciers.

Later, continue to Puerto Varas, a small, nice town located in the shore of the Llanquihue Lake, with fantastic views towards volcanoes Osorno, Puntagudo & Calbuco.

Time permitting, on arrival in Puerto Varas and after check in at the hotel, leader will take the group to a nice walk in the beautiful Cerro Phillipi park located near the hotel.

## Day 9: Paso Desolación

In the morning, you will set off on a full-day hike at Osorno Volcano.

The journey takes you by bus along the shore road of Lake Llanquihue with breathtaking views of the Osorno and Calbuco volcanoes. You continue on a quite adventurous gravel road to the former refuge La Picada, the starting point of your trekking tour. You will hike along the lava slopes of the snow-covered volcano Osorno - enjoying constant views of temperate forests and volcanoes. After about an hour of trekking, you will catch your first glimpse of the turquoise-blue Todos Los Santos Lake, which lies deep below you, framed by high mountains. In the afternoon, you will reach the small settlement of Petrohue, located directly by the lake, where your vehicle will be waiting for you. Return to Puerto Varas

**Distance:** 12 km / **Initial Altitude:** 205m / **Maximum Altitude:** 1,116m

## Day 10: Alerce Andino National Park

Why not spend a day in the Alerce Andino National Park and let yourself be captivated by its primordial, enchanted-seeming forest. The park is located south-east of Puerto Montt, at the beginning of the Carretera Austral, and covers an area of almost 40,000ha. Half of the park is practically untouched Valdivian temperate rainforest, in which around fifty small lakes hide. Frequently, there are also rocky peaks rising up out of the forest. The park takes its name from the alerce trees: giant conifers that reach dead straight for the sky and are capable of becoming several thousand years old. A lovely picture is created whenever individual rays of sunshine penetrate the dense greenery, just like light streaming into a cathedral.

**Distance:** 7.5km / **Initial Altitude:** 129m / **Maximum Altitude:** 310m

## Day 11: Ancud And The Puñihuil Penguin Colony

This day trip begins early in the morning at the hotel in Puerto Varas, setting off south, towards Pargua, where the car ferry crosses to Chiloé – an island full of myths, legends and very special people. The first stop on the

island is the Bay of Caulín, where black-necked swans and other bird species can be observed during summer. After that, you will reach Ancud, the northern-most town and former capital of the island, where you get a brief insight into the lifestyle of the island's inhabitants, known as 'Chilotes' in Chile. You will also see fishing boats, the harbour, and the market. Fortifications dating back to the era of the War of Independence are also visited in Ancud. Afterwards, the journey continues along the northern coast of Chiloé, before reaching Puñihuil. Weather permitting; you will take a boat tour to one of the rocky outcrops in the sea, where the penguins nest during the breeding season. This place is known as Puñihuil and houses one of the greatest natural treasures of the region: the "Pingüíneras" - a rocky landscape consisting of three volcanic islands, where Humboldt and Magellanic penguins nestle from October to March each year. A variety of seabirds such as the Kelp goose, cormorants, gulls, otters and sea otters can also be observed here. You will get an introduction to the history of the "Pingüínera" and then start your trip on the boat, where you will go along the islands and watch the animals from the boat.

## Day 12: Casablanca Valley

Your guide will meet you at the airport in Santiago and bring you to your hotel in Valparaíso. On the way, you will visit Viña William Cole or similar, here we will start a biking tour through the vineyard and afterwards enjoy a lunch and wine tasting.

After this relaxing and entertaining tour and enjoy lunch, we continue to the coast city of Viña del Mar.

## Day 13: Valparaíso

During this extensive city walking tour you will be acquainted with the history of Valparaíso whilst getting around the harbor city's adventurous geography by foot and by public transport – just like the residents! Firstly, you will take the metro to the main square and the port from where you will continue to the Southern city district Playa Ancha. Here you will explore the beautiful Paseo 21 de Mayo with its wonderful view and you will learn about the British immigrants who lived there. One of the historic funicular railways will bring you back down towards the city centre. You will then take the trolley bus to the main square Sotomayor. Afterwards, you will visit the hill Cerro Alegre and Cerro Concepción which are considered UNESCO World Heritage sites. After a stroll along Paseo Dimalow you will return to the city centre descending in the funicular Reina Victoria. Along the way you will be provided with a snack to reload your batteries.

## Day 14: Departure Day

Our tour finishes here, and we bid farewell to our without flight guests. With-flight guests transfer to Santiago airport for the return flight back to the UK.

## Day 15: Arrive UK

Arrive back in the UK

## ACCOMMODATION

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### Panamerican Hotel Providencia, Santiago - Chile

In the heart of the lively Providencia quarter, the hotel is within easy reach of many shopping and gastronomic options. Welcoming rooms and a pleasing garden with a pool and terrace offers an intimate and relaxed atmosphere. The hotel restaurant offers delicious fare with a strong focus on typically Chilean dishes.

### Hotel La Casa De Don Tomas, San Pedro De Atacama - Chile

Located in the magic splendor of the archeologically capital, San Pedro de Atacama desert area in the northern Chile, Hotel La Casa de Don Tomas offers its guests the best in comfort and ambiance

## Holiday Inn, Santiago Airport - Chile

A sleek, contemporary design and a convenient location

## Cabaña Del Lago Hotel In Puerto Varas - Chile

Set on the shores of Lake Llanquihue and offering panoramic views of Puerto Varas and the volcanoes in the surroundings.

## Hotel Pullman San Martin, Viña Del Mar - Chile

Located by the sea, just a few steps from Acapulco Beach. Enjoy the beautiful sunset on the terrace, plus the infinity edge pool while sipping a delicious drink after your day walking.

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## USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

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### Weather & Seasonality

Chile has great climatic diversity due to its length and position, crossing a tremendous range of latitudes. Expect a dry climate in the Atacama Desert and Santiago. Temperatures are generally around 20 °C in the daytime for the times of year in which we visit but drop lower in the evenings – particularly in the desert, as well as generally being lower when at elevation – so make sure you pack some warmer layers.

### Joining Instructions (With Flights)

Book your holiday 'with flights' and you can choose to depart from a range of UK airports\* to your destination. For latest flight times and prices please call us on 0203-974-8865 or email [reservations@hfholidays.co.uk](mailto:reservations@hfholidays.co.uk)

If you choose to book your flights with us, we automatically include return transfers between the destination airport and hotel.

### Joining Instructions (Without Flights)

If you prefer to book the holiday without flights and make your own travel arrangements you will still be able to make use of the return group transfers between the airport and hotel, which are included in the cost of your holiday. You must contact us on [+44 \(0\)20 3974 8865](tel:+442039748865) or email [reservations@hfholidays.co.uk](mailto:reservations@hfholidays.co.uk) at least 8 weeks before your holiday start date to provide your flight details if you wish to join the transfers. If you do not contact us, we will assume you are making independent travel arrangements.

If you are arriving ahead of the group, and are meeting them at the first hotel, please leave a message at the hotel reception for the HF Holidays' leader or local leader, detailing your room number, and a mobile telephone number if possible. The leader will contact you once the group arrives. If you are arriving after the group, a message will be left for you at the hotel reception, welcoming you and giving details of the time and place to meet the group.

### Essential Information

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing.

#### Essentials

- Walking boots
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers

- Insulated jacket/top
- Walking clothing
- Walking socks (plus spares)
- Sunhat
- Gloves/mitts and warm hat
- Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity)
- Headtorch
- High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)
- Sunglasses with a dark lens
- Rucksack (15-30 litres)
- Mobile phone
- Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)
- Passport
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy
- UK Global Health Insurance Card (**formerly known as EHIC**)

### Recommended

- Collapsible walking poles
- Swimwear and travel towel
- Snacks
- Dry bags
- Rubbish bags
- Insect repellent

### Optional extras

- Camera
- Sit mat
- Flask for hot drinks
- Durable lunch box
- Gaiters
- GPS device

## Safety On Your Holiday

Once you have made your booking, you will receive a pre-holiday questionnaire where we ask for details of next of kin and insurance details. **You must complete and return this to us - we need to have this from you at least 10 weeks before travel.**

Please also inform us of any medical situation which may affect your enjoyment of the holiday. This is important because our leaders must consider both group and individual safety at all times.

Whilst out with the group, we respectfully request that you:

- Please listen to any safety instructions and other directions from the leader
- Keep group members in view, especially if weather or visibility is poor
- Please stay where you are if you become separated from the group. The leader will retrace their steps to find you.

Each leader carries a first aid kit but is not allowed to supply any medication including aspirin, paracetamol, antihistamines and antiseptic cream. You may wish to bring these items with you in your own kit (see Suggested Kit List).

In the unlikely event that your leader is incapacitated, please use any emergency kit in their rucksack and call emergency services on 911. Please then call our emergency number (sent in your final dispatch) and let us know there is a problem.

## Dietary Requirements

Please contact us as far in advance as possible if you have any specific dietary requirements and we will do our best to meet your needs.

If you require a specific meal on the flight, please let us know as soon as possible, and no later than 96 hours before travel.

## Vaccinations & Health

This information is subject to change. In all cases, we **highly recommend** you consult your GP for up to date details and for more information on what is appropriate to your situation at least 10 weeks before travel.

As a rule, travellers should be up to date with their routine vaccinations and boosters as recommended in the UK - including, for example, the MMR and diphtheria, tetanus and polio vaccines.

Requirements can change, and we recommend you check in good time ahead of your holiday.

Some travellers may also require or wish to consider vaccines for:

- Diphtheria
- Hepatitis A and B
- Rabies
- Tetanus

There have been some confirmed cases of Dengue fever in Easter Island. You should take steps to avoid being bitten by mosquitos; there is no vaccine.

Please note: the use or possession of some common prescription or over-the-counter medicines is banned in some countries.

If you will be carrying medication, please check with the country's embassy/consulate prior to travel. As an extra precaution, it is recommended to:

- Keep medication in its original packet
- Take a copy of your prescription
- If possible, ask your chemist to write the name of your medication in the language of the country you're visiting

For further information on country specific advice, visit [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk) or [www.traveldoctor.co.uk](http://www.traveldoctor.co.uk).

## Passports & Visas

Passports must be valid for the duration of the stay; we also generally recommend that passports have at least 6 months validity from the date of your departure from Chile, but this is not an official requirement.

Visas are not required for British passport holders visiting for less than 90 days. On arrival in Chile, you will need to complete the appropriate arrival/immigration form. The immigration authorities will issue you with a *Tarjeta de Turismo*: this is a white, A5 sized form and must be retained to present to immigration when you leave Chile. As of 9th May 2020, Australian citizens will need a visa to enter Chile. The maximum length of stay is 90 days. The visa must be applied for at the Chilean consulate closest to your place of residence. The cost is approximately 145 USD. Other passport holders and nationalities should consult the embassy for advice.

Requirements may change and it is your responsibility to ensure you meet the entry requirements. For more information regarding entry requirements for Chile, see the [FCO website](#).



## Useful Information

### Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so, and advise us of the insurance company and policy number.

We work with Campbell Irvine to provide you with competitive single and annual multi-trip insurance. Please see our website for more information and details of how to contact them for a quote: <https://www.hfholidays.co.uk/about-us/booking-information/insurance>.

For more information about healthcare abroad and its costs, please visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/>.

If you are arranging your own travel insurance, please ensure it is adequate for your specific itinerary. Generally, this should include cover for walking at altitudes over 2,000m, which will cover you for a wide range of our holidays. The walking on this holiday is at altitudes below 4,500m – El Tatio Geysers are the highest point at c. 4,000m.

Spanish is spoken in Chile; some basic pleasantries include:

*'Hola'* – Hello

*'Adiós'* – Goodbye

*'Sí'* – Yes

*'No'* – No

*'Por favor'* – Please

*'Gracias'* – Thank you

*'¿Habla usted inglés?'* – Do you speak English?

English is also generally widely spoken in Santiago.

## Luggage

### Baggage Allowance

1 piece checked-in luggage, max. 23kg. Size should not exceed 158 linear cm. Hand luggage allowance is max. 5kg. These maximums are determined by the internal flight luggage allowance.

Please check details of your airline's baggage allowance, as shown on your e-ticket. Remember to also check any connecting flights you may have booked.

### Lost/Damaged Luggage

If your bag or its contents are damaged or lost while in the airline's care, this should be reported to the baggage service agents at the airport on arrival. They will assess the damage; in some cases, the airline may decide to settle your claim immediately.

You will be given a reference to quote to your insurance company if an immediate settlement is not possible - in many cases, baggage claims can only be accepted in writing. A baggage claim form must be obtained from the airport.

## Local Currency

Chilean Peso (CLP, CH\$). US Dollars are the easiest currency to change while on holiday, but it is possible to obtain Chilean pesos in the UK.

We recommend you budget approx. US\$50-70 per person, per day for drinks, meals which are not included and, of course, any souvenirs you may wish to buy!

## Local Time

GMT/UTC -4 hours during daylight savings (typically October-May) in mainland Chile. GMT/UTC -6 hours on Easter Island.

## Electricity

Electricity supply is 220V, 50Hz and round two-pin plugs are used. We recommend you take a universal plug to cover all possibilities.

## ATM Availability

ATMs can be found at airports and town centres but may incur high withdrawal fees for foreign cards. Major credit cards are accepted in most places, but we recommend you have cash in smaller denominations for rural areas.

## TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

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These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

**Document produced:** 09-09-2024

