

Information from Chile

A country of contrast and great beauty that offers the tourist security, extreme geographical contrasts and excellent services to enjoy a splendid vacation.

Geography:

With a length of 6,965 miles and average width of only 285 miles, Chile is the longest and most narrow country in the Southwestern coast of South America, which offers visitors a land of extreme geographical contrasts. The tourist can explore this country from the Atacama Desert in the north, the most arid in the world, to the volcanic peaks of the Andes and the impressive Torres del Paine National Park in The Patagonia. Down south, lakes, wild rivers and native forests offer a close contact with nature, as well as the tropical Easter Island in the Pacific Ocean and the frozen continent of Antarctic. Santiago, the capital of Chile, is a city surrounded by beautiful mountains and magnificent wine-producing valleys.

Government:

Chile is a Republic that is ruled under a democratic government. In the country there is independence between the three powers of the State. The Executive power is led by the president of the republic, who also holds the charge of Head of State. The Legal power is led by the Supreme Court, which dictates justice together with the Court of Appeals. The Legislative power is constituted by the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.

Local Currency:

The local currency is the Chilean Peso (\$). The equivalence with the dollar must be informed at the moment of the journey. As reference, the value of the currency exchange on Aug 2012 is of \$ 485 for US \$ 1. You can change currency in any bank or currency exchange agencies - no special document is required.

Official Language:

The official language is Spanish, there are also other originary languages used until today, such as Mapudungún (or Mapuche), Quechua and Rapa Nui. Besides this, most of the personnel in tourism services speak English; some also speak German and French.

Religion:

According to the last information collected, a 76,7% of the people of the country are Catholic; a 13,25% are Protestant; a 5,8% is not religious; and other religions are practiced by 4,3% of the population.

Electric Current:

The voltage used is of 220 volts - alternate type.

Transport:

Lan Chile covers airline flights, national and international sections. Sky Airline and PAL also manages airline flights, however only national sections to the North and South the country. The International Airport "Comodoro Arturo Merino Benítez" is located 20 km. to the west of Santiago. You can use different types of transport to get to the airport such as minibuses, buses and taxis. The approximate rate for the bus ride from or to the airport is of US\$ 15-25. The city of Santiago counts with an ample metro network, with six lines. There is also the possibility of taking train rides from Santiago to Chillan, city located 407 km. to the south of the Capital.

Schedule:

Banks	: Monday to Friday from 9 to 14 hrs.
Currency exchange houses	: Monday to Friday from 9 to 18 hrs. & Saturdays from 9 to 14 hrs.
Malls and Commercial stores	: Monday to Sunday from 10 to 21 hrs. In Santiago. In regions the commercial stores close normally between 14 and 16 hrs.

Local Time:

Chile is 5 hours behind GMT between March and September, and 4 hours behind GMT the rest of the year. (Except for Easter Island).

Climate:

Due to its topography and immense length from north to south, Chile has a great variety of climates, temperature variations, rainfalls that are basically functions of latitude. December - February are the hottest months throughout the country. Northern Chile receives almost no rain, except the Altiplanic. Central Chile has a Mediterranean climate, rainfall is concentrated from May - September and the rest of the year is dry and sunny. Further south, rainfalls and low temperatures are heavier in the winter months.

Sanitary Formalities:

Any vegetable or animal products or sub products in tourists luggage are completely prohibited. The entrance of some pets such as dogs and cats are allowed having the corresponding vaccines, which must be accredited with the Vaccine Certificate at the corresponding Chilean Consulate.

Vaccines:

No vaccines or medical exams are requested to enter Chile at the present moment.

Entrance Formalities:

The citizens of countries with which Chile has diplomatic relationships can enter the country with their valid passports. The citizens from Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Peru and Colombia can enter the country with their valid identity certificates.

The citizens of countries with which Chile does not have diplomatic relationships must enter the country with a tourism visa, as well as an authorization of the Exterior Relationships Ministry. The citizens of Croatia only require a valid passport, without a tourism visa - Citizens from Bolivia must have a tourism visa, without previous request. At the moment of entering Chile, the International Police will extend a Tourism Card to the tourists, this is a personal document which lasts 90 days and can be extended for another 90 days. The tourist must hand over this document at the moment of leaving the country.

Reciprocity Tax:

Passengers with Australian, Canadian, U.S.A. and Mexican passports should pay the reciprocity tax before approaching International Police.

COUNTRY TAX

- Canadá US\$ 132
- Estados Unidos US\$ 131
- Australia US\$ 61
- Albania US\$ 30
- México US\$ 23