

ADOPTING IN CHILE

A long road to becoming a family



Chile: geographical facts



The territory of Chile is located in the southwestern portion of the South American continent, beginning at 17° 30' S latitude and extending until 90° S latitude. The continental length of the nation is approximately 4,200 km. (2,610 mi.) and is 8,000 km. (4,971 mi.) if the Chilean Antarctic territory is taken into consideration. Chile also includes Easter Island or “Rapa Nui”, the Juan Fernández Islands, the San Félix, San Ambrosio, Salas y Gomez islands, as well as 200 miles of sea territory and the corresponding continental shelf.



Chile: borders and surface area

Bordering Chile are Peru to the north, Bolivia and Argentina to the east, the Pacific Ocean to the west and the South Pole to the south.

Surface area:

Mainland and possessions: 756,626 km² (470,145 mi²)

Antarctic territory: 1,250,000 km² (776,714 mi²)

Total area: 2,006,626 km² (1,246,859 mi²)



Climate types

Chile's more than 5 thousand kilometers of length allows the country to have many different climates, from the arid desert lands in the north to torrential rains in the south. Nevertheless, considering official definitions, the climates of Chile can be divided into three categories: arid, temperate and cold.

THE NORTH: arid climate

This area includes the northern part of the country, between the cities of Arica and Santiago, with certain variations in some locations.

Here, the coastal mountain range acts as a "weather screen", blocking the passage of humid wind that moves off of the ocean. This explains why the Atacama Desert, which is one of the driest places in the world, can be found in the north of Chile. Between the cities of Arica and La Serena, the climate is arid and desert-like, with an average annual temperature of 18°C (64°F) along the coastline. The days here are characterized by cloudy mornings and warm, sunny afternoons. The further inland you go, the drier the climate becomes, with temperatures varying from 35°C to 0°C (95°F to 32°F) from day to night. There are areas where it never rains and other areas where occasional winter precipitation allows for impressive desert flower blooms. As the altitude increases, thermal oscillation becomes more noticeable and nighttime temperatures can drop below freezing. The stretch of land between La Serena and the north of Santiago is characterized by the presence of a warm and arid prairie climate, with temperatures that are slightly lower and a small increase in precipitation and humidity.



CENTRAL ZONE: temperate climate:

Almost all of the rest of the country falls under the temperate climate category, although different versions can be observed depending upon each specific zone. In general, this climate is characterized by being very pleasant with notoriously pronounced seasons.

Between Santiago and Concepción, which is a predominately agricultural area, the climate is temperate and mediterranean, featuring dry summers and winters with approximately 340 to 1,200 mm (13 to 47 inches) of rain. The average annual temperature hovers around 14 to 15°C (57 to 59°F).

From Concepción to Puerto Montt, the climate is temperate and rainy, with lower temperatures and higher levels of precipitation that can surpass 2,500 mm (98 inches). This climate allows for the development of native forests and an active farming industry.

To the south of Puerto Montt, until 47°S latitude, there is a temperate maritime climate. This area is notorious for high amounts of rainfall, though temperatures remain quite moderate due to the maritime influence. Finally, south of 47°S latitude, is a cold temperate climate, with rainfall measuring between 4,000 to 7,000 mm (157 to 275 inches) annually.

SOUTHERN ZONE: cold climate:

Some variations can be noted in this area depending on the landscape and proximity to the sea.

In the patagonian Andes, the climate is cold with temperatures of -2.5°C (27°F) in the winter and no more than 12°C (54°F) in the summer.

Here, rainfall reaches no more than 350mm (14 inches).

The tops of the Andes Mountains have a high altitude, cold and icy climate with snow and very low temperatures.

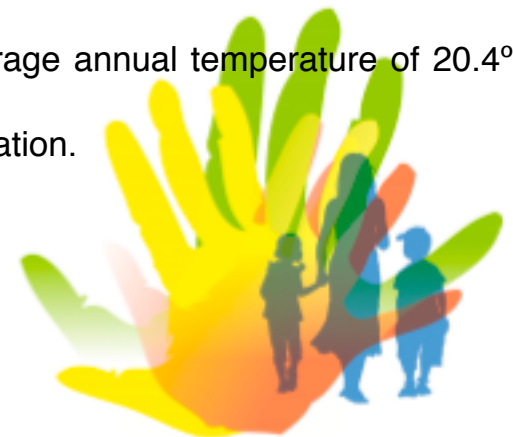
In Antarctica, there is a cold polar climate with strong winds and temperatures that remain under 0°C (32°F) practically year-round.

Easter Island and Juan Fernández

Easter Island has a warm subtropical climate with rainfall year-round and a very pleasant average annual temperature of 20.4°C (68.7°F).

The Juan Fernández Islands feature a temperate mediterranean climate with year-round precipitation.

The average annual temperature is 14°C (57°F).



Government System

The current Constitution was approved in 1980. The government is separated into three branches: the Executive Branch, led by the President of the Republic; the Legislative Branch composed of the Chamber of Deputies and a Senate; and the Judicial Branch. The current President of Chile is Sebastián Piñera Echenique (National Renovation Party).



Health information

No vaccinations are required to enter Chile, since diseases such as malaria or hepatitis are not of concern.

The water is completely potable, however it is recommended that you accustom yourself to it gradually and it is even advisable during your first few days in the country to consume bottled water, which can be purchased at stores.



General information

•Capital	Santiago
•Human development index	0.867 (40°)
•Population	16,134,219 inhabitants
•Urban population	90.2%
•Population density	21.31 inhabitants/km ²
•Population of Santiago	4.6 million inhabitants
•Population growth	1.1%
•Average age	30.04 years
•Life expectancy	76 years
•Infant mortality	12 for every 1,000 children <5 years of age
•Adult literacy	95.7%
•Language	Spanish and some indigenous languages, such as Mapudungún (or Mapuche), Quechua and Rapa Nui
•Religion	76.7% Catholic, 13.25% Evangelical, 10.05% Other
•Fertility rate	2.4
•Population living below the poverty line	13.7%
•Population living in extreme poverty	3.2%



The Chilean flag



The origin of the current Chilean flag marked the nation's milestone of independence. The colors of red, blue and white respectively represent the blood shed in the War of Independence, the clear blue color of the Chilean skies and the white snowcapped peaks of the Andes Mountains. The five point star symbolizes the State powers that guard the honor of the Nation.



The national dance



Cueca has been the national dance of Chile since 1979, but has been observed in the country since approximately 1824. According to some folklorists, the dance has a zoomorphic explanation, referencing the movements a hen makes while being courted to mate by a rooster. The man dances in the form of a circle around the woman and mimics the enthusiasm shown by a rooster in its amorous conquest. Meanwhile, the woman takes on a more defensive and evasive role.



Chilean bills



\$1,000 pesos, equivalent to \$2 US



\$2,000 pesos, equivalent to \$4 US



\$5,000 pesos, equivalent to \$10 US



\$10,000 pesos, equivalent to \$20 US



\$20,000 pesos, equivalent to \$40 US



Holidays

Chile celebrates between 7 to 10 holidays per year. Some of the holidays have their origin in the Catholic Church and others in Chilean history. When planning your trip, it is advisable to take into consideration which days are holidays, since public organizations and services such as banks, offices, stores and businesses are closed on these days.

-January 1st:	New Year's Day
-March or April:	Holy Week
-May 1st	Labor Day
-May 21st	Navy Day
-June 29th	Saint Peter and Paul
-August 15th	Assumption of the Virgin
-September 18th	Independence Day, National Holiday
-September 19th	Day of the Armed Forces
-October 12th	Day of the Race
-November 1st	All Saints' Day
-December 8th	Day of the Immaculate Conception
-December 25th	Christmas



Common Chilean words or “chilenismos”

A pata: To travel a long distance without using a vehicle, or by foot.

Achuntar: To get something right, point out or to do something just right.

Al lote: Unordered, relaxed, without rules, at random.

Al tiro: Immediately.

Amurrarse: To get upset, get angry, become depressed.

Aperrar or someone “aperrado”: To have a good attitude, to be a fighter, to be perseverant, to get things done despite adverse conditions.

Apestar or someone “apestado”: To get angry, upset or bored.

Arrugar: To back out of something, have second thoughts or quit.

Bacán: Good, incredible, excellent, spectacular.

Barsa: Nervy, shameless.

Bolsero: Someone who is always asking for things from other people.

Buena leche: A good, honest person that is sincere and has good intentions.

Bronca: Rage, anger, upset.

Cabra/o: A young child.

Cabreado: Bored, tired, unmotivated.

Cabritas: Popcorn.

Cachar or cachai: To look, see something, understand or grasp.

Cachipún: Children’s game played by making hand symbols (“Rock, Paper, Scissors”)

Cacho/ito: A problem, something difficult or unattractive to resolve.

Caleta: A lot, many, a significant amount.

Canchero: A person with a lot of personality, high self esteem and who is very daring.

Dale: Expression equivalent to saying “Ok”, “fun”, “understood”, or “go ahead”



Common Chilean words or “chilenismos”

Echar la foga: To scold or severely reprimand someone.

Embarrarla: To ruin something or a situation.

Encachado: Adjective to describe something top quality, good, new or beautiful.

Engañito: Gift, present.

Filo: It doesn't matter.

Fome: Boring.

Fonda: A place where the National Holiday is celebrated.

Gallo/a: Used to describe a young person.

Guagua: Baby.

Guata: Stomach, belly.

Harto: A lot, many. // Tired or irritated.

Heavy (“Jevi”): Fantastic, great. // Impressive, intense.

Hocicón: Someone who talks a lot, says more than they should.

Inflar (a alguien): To pay attention, to take into consideration.

Inflado: Something that has been given more value than it really deserves.

Irse al chanco: To do something excessively, go overboard.

Jarana: Party, Fun.



Common Chilean words or “chilenismos”

La dura: *The truth, seriously.*

La firme: *The truth, seriously.*

La pulenta: *The truth, seriously.*

Lata: “tener lata”: *To be bored. // “dar la lata”: to bore others. // “dar lata”: make someone feel lazy.*

Malulo: *Adjective To describe someone who does mischievous things (generally used to describe a child).*

Mano de guagua: *Cheap, selfish, stingy.*

Marraqueta: *Type of bread.*

Micro: *Public transportation bus.*

N (“ene”): *A lot, many.*

Nada que ver: *Expression to say “it has nothing to with that”.*

Nanai: *Affection, kisses and cuddles.*

Ni ahí: *I don’t care.*

Ñeque: *Strength or technique applied to something. // Effort.*

Ojo: *Pay Attention!*

Once: *Time of the afternoon corresponding to tea time, when bread is eaten with various foods.*



Common Chilean words or “chilenismos”

Paleta: A good friend, generous, someone with a good attitude.

Pan comido: Something easy to do, not difficult.

Papaya: Easy.

Parar los carros: To call attention to something or scold someone.

Pasar piola: To go unnoticed.

Patero: Someone who is too understanding and accommodating to their superiors.

Patudo: Someone who is very nerdy, a bit abusive and shameless.

Pega: Work, position or occupation.

Pelar: To criticize or speak badly about someone behind their back.

Peludo: Difficult, complicated. Used to describe someone old or mature.

Penca: Something bad, boring, lame or bad quality.

Pescar: To take into consideration, pay attention.

Picada: A very inexpensive place to eat or obtain a service. It is a good piece of information, a good recommendation or exclusive information.

Pipí or pichí: Urine.

Piquero: To jump head first into a swimming pool.

Piti: Someone who cannot see well.

Plancha: Shame.

Pololo/a: An unmarried couple in a romantic relationship.

Porro: Lazy, not studious. Also: A marijuana cigarette.

Pucha: A common exclamation.



Common Chilean words or “chilenismos”

Quemado: Someone with bad luck.

Quiltro: A derogatory term to refer to a dog (or other domestic animal) born as the result of a crossing between different or unknown breeds. Also used to refer to street dogs.

Rallado: Crazy.

Rasca: Of bad quality or bad taste.

Rollo: Problem, complication. // A section of fat on an obese person, particularly in the abdominal area.

Sacar pica: To cause jealousy or envy in someone.

Sacarse el pillo: To justify oneself, argue a situation, free oneself of guilt.

Sapear: To spy, watch or listen in.

Subirse por el chorro: To abuse the trust of another person.

Tata: Grandfather.

Talla: Joke.

Tener patas: To have a lot of personality, be daring, or

Tuto: Sleep. “Tener tuto”: To be sleepy.

Último: “Ser último” is to be pathetic, the worst.



Common Chilean words or “chilenismos”

Vaca: Dumb, idiot. / Collection of money between many people.

Vacuna: Someone known for making things look like something they really are not.

Vale callampa: Without value, without importance.

Vender la pomada: Someone who has the ability to promote certain things or ideas.

Viejo pascuero: Santa Claus.

Virarse: To leave somewhere.

Ya: Ahora: “hazlo ya” / Understood, OK, Will do: “ya, lo haré” / Ready, finished: “ya lo hice”



Santiago de Chile



The capital of Chile, founded in 1541, is the most populated urban area (with a little over 4 and a half million inhabitants) in the country and is one of the most modern cities on the continent.

Among the city's attractions are parks, museums, art galleries, palaces, and monuments. Blessed with modern buildings, an extensive and effective underground subway system (Metro), as well as city centers and large green areas, Santiago is a must see for those wanting to experience the heart of Chile. The city serves as a starting point to travel to other regions in the the north and south of the country.

A little over 2 hours from the coast, the city has spread towards the mountain range, where it is possible to have both the city and the countryside in the same place.

<http://www.sernatur.cl>



The Metropolitan Region



Santiago is located within the Metropolitan Region, which has a semi-arid mediterranean climate with an average temperature of 13.9°C (57°F) and an average annual precipitation level of 330 mm (13 inches).

The Metropolitan Region has a population of 5,257,937 inhabitants, with 97% living in urban areas and 3% living in rural sectors.

The economy is based on the production of machines, equipment, food, metal products and textiles. There are also several packaging plants for agricultural products. The wine industry is also becoming more developed here, especially in the southern and western areas. Retail business is another major source of economic development in the region.

Santiago, as the capital of Chile, receives the highest number of foreign travelers and is a place with a wide array of business, adventure and traditional tourist attractions.



Places to visit in Santiago



Plaza de Armas

Known as the heart of Santiago, this plaza has many civic and religious buildings nearby. Data from the year 1541, notes it as a geographical point of reference to measure distances throughout the country. The plaza is surrounded by important historical buildings, such as the *Palacio del la Real Audiencia*, and *La Casa de Gobernadores de Chile* (which today house the Santiago Municipal Building and the Central Post Office, respectively), the *Catedral Metropolitana* and the *Portal Fernández Concha* building. Located within the plaza is the equestrian statue of Pedro de Valdivia, who was the founder of Santiago.

Plaza de la Constitución

Located in front of the main entrance to the “La Moneda” National Palace, this plaza is surrounded by impressive buildings belonging to the so-called “civic neighborhood”. Here, visitors can watch the changing of the Palace guard, performed by the Chilean National Police (*Carabineros*) every two days.

Plaza Mulato Gil de Castro

This plaza is located at José Victorino Lastarria 305 and 307. It is a small group of antique homes that make up an interesting and harmonious cultural and artistic center. Nearby, there are several art schools and studios, bookstores, galleries, theaters and restaurants that give the location its own style and movement. Also located here, is the Archeological Museum of Santiago, which houses ever-changing exhibits of archeology, anthropology and pre-Columbian Chilean art.

Cerro Santa Lucía

It was at the foot of this hill that Santiago was founded in 1541 by Spanish conquistador Pedro de Valdivia. The location is a nice place to go for a walk, with small plazas, lookouts and monuments.



Places to visit in Santiago



Parque Forestal

This beautiful walkway was built on the banks of the Mapocho River and features leafy trees. It runs along the southeast side of the river and is decorated with various monuments. The location is also home to the *Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes* (National Arts Museum), the *Museo de Arte Contemporáneo* (Contemporary Art Museum) and the *Museo de Arte Popular Americano* (Museum of Popular American Art).

Parque Metropolitano

Located at Pio Nono 450, this is the largest city park in the country. It is made up of the San Cristóbal, Chacarrillas, Gemelos and Pirámide hills. At the top of San Cristóbal hill is a statue of *La Virgen de la Inmaculada Concepción* (Virgin of the Immaculate Conception), which stands more than 14 meters high. Attractions here include a zoo, two swimming pools, picnic areas, restaurants, a playground and a botanical garden.

Parque O'Higgins

This is an old, but well-conserved park that opened in 1873. It was a mandatory stop for Santiago residents traveling by horse and buggy at the end of the 19th century. Today, it continues to be one of the most popular parks in the city, with beautiful gardens and walkways, as well as several attractions that include: a geological and paleontological museum, an aquarium, an insectarium, the famous amusement park *Fantasilandia* and a lake with pedal boats that can be enjoyed on a sunny day.



Places to visit in Santiago

Parque de Las Esculturas

This park is located at Santa María 2201 and contains an outdoor exhibit of select national and international award-winning sculptures made of metal, wood, fibers and other materials. The privileged location, on the banks of the Mapocho river near green areas makes this park a unique alternative for those wanting to experience both culture and nature.

Parque Quinta Normal

Located at Matucana 520, for those who like sports this park offers tennis courts, soccer fields, jogging tracks and bicycle lanes, skating areas, a lake with rowboats and playground equipment for children. The park houses the museums of Natural History, Science and Technology, and Railways and is home to a wide array of different types of trees.

Barrio Bellavista

Located on the northern side of the Mapocho River, at the foot of San Cristóbal hill, this picturesque neighborhood shows the bohemian side of Santiago with art galleries, cafes, theaters and restaurants. The busiest moments here are Fridays and Saturdays after 10:00 p.m.

Club Hípico

The Club Hípico is located at Blanco Encalada 2540. The location was inaugurated in 1870 with a clear influence of the French Baroque style with walkways and gardens, terraces and stairways. Classic horse races are held on six Sundays throughout the year.

Planetario

Located at Avenida Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins 3349, the planetarium is an audiovisual center with a semi-spherical screen that simulates the night sky with projections of the stars and space. The location has exposition rooms, a cafeteria and souvenir shops.



Places to visit in outside of Santiago

- In the area near the mountains just outside of Santiago, there are many winter resorts, such as Farellones, La Parva, El Colorado and Valle Nevado that open during the winter season from June to October. Near Valle Nevado is El Plomo hill, where an Incan mummy was once found and is now conserved at the Museum of Natural History.
- San José de Maipo and the area nearby are home a stretch of mountain towns (San Alfonso, El Manzano, San Gabriel, El Melocotón, Las Vertientes, La Obra, El Canelo, Guayacán, El Volcán and Lo Valdés); the Lagunillas Ski Center; El Morado National Park, which features a glacier and a lake; and the Morales y Colina hot springs. This area is known for outdoor recreation centers, the sale leather and wood handicrafts and the production of fruit, especially grapes.
- Pirque is an area that possesses the old world and traditional Concha y Toro Vineyard (1883), as well as the Rio Clarillo National Reserve.
- Pomaire is a town famous for its clay pottery that is made into utensils or decorations. Here, you can also taste typical Chilean food.
- In the outlying areas around Santiago, there are picturesque towns such as Buin and Paine, where life revolves around agriculture.



Other tourist destinations



San Pedro de Atacama:

This is a small town located on one of the oases that can be found in the Chilean altiplano of the II Region.

This geographic area has some of the highest peaks in the Andes Mountain Range.

Home of the Atacama culture, this town currently has approximately 2,500 inhabitants.

Great importance has been given to the location, since it is considered to be the archeological capital of Chile and is known for its extreme terrain, characterized by beautiful landscapes and always clear blue skies.

<http://www.sanpedroatacama.com>

Other tourist destinations



Easter Island:

Called *Rapa Nui* or *Te Pito Te Henua*, Easter Island is the most inhabited remote island in the world. It is where one of the most complex cultures was developed -comparable only to major megalith cultures (Egypt, Maya, Inca)- in conditions of extreme isolation.

The line between myth and reality becomes blurred in this land where an extraordinary culture was created, making Rapa Nui a valuable archeological treasure beyond the borders of Chile.

<http://www.portalrapanui.cl>

Other tourist destinations



Viña del Mar

Located 112 km. to the northeast of Santiago and adjacent to the city of Valparaíso, in front of the Pacific Ocean and at the mouth of the Marga Marga stream, it is also known as the “Garden City”.

The city is an important tourist and industrial area and is one of the most renowned beaches in Latin America. It is also the location where the annual *Festival Internacional de la Canción* (International Song Festival) is held.

Valparaíso

Located 112 km. to the northeast of Santiago along a large bay on the Pacific Ocean, the city of Valparaíso is home to approximately 275,000 people.

The city is an important seaport and industrial center and is one of the largest cities in the country. Economic activities here include food processing, fabric confection and generation, petrochemical products, as well as metals and leather. Valparaíso is also home to the National Congress of Chile.

http://www.turismochile.com/guia/valparaiso_y_vina_del_mar/

Other tourist destinations



Pucón

Located at the “*entrance to the cordillera*” at the foot of the Villarrica volcano, this small town has become the most popular tourist location in the south of Chile. It is an area with beautiful natural attractions that are ideal for practicing adventure sports.

http://www.gochile.cl/Attr_s/htm/pucon.asp

Villarrica

Located 87 km. to the southeast of Temuco and 27 km. from the town of Pucón, this city was founded in the year 1552 by Gerónimo de Alderete in an effort to exploit gold deposits and form a winter passage point from the pampa and the Atlantic Ocean.

The town is located on the shore of a lake that shares its name and is a passage city for tourists that visit Pucón, Lican Ray and the Villarrica Volcano each year.

<http://www.turismochile.com/guia/villarrica>

Other tourist destinations



Torres del Paine National Park

This national park is located in the XII Region of Chile, between the Andes Mountains and Patagonian steppe in the Province of *Ultima Esperanza*, in the municipality of Torres del Paine.

The Torres del Paine National Park has an area of 181,000 hectares (447,260 acres), with roads for vehicles and paths for hiking.