

Discover Nature's Icy Wonders on a Chilean Glacier Cruise

Glaciers are some of the most impressive natural phenomena and as the world warms up and its icy regions start to shrink, tourists become keener and keener to see these wonders for themselves while they still have the chance. Adventurers do not have to head all the way into remote Arctic and Antarctic regions to enjoy these sights because some of the best and most accessible ones are actually in South America.



2.7% of Chile is covered in glaciers with some impressive sights for tourists to enjoy. The Chilean fjords provide a vast network of icy channels and impressive scenery to inspire travelers but there are two glaciers in particular that are must-see destinations for adventurers.

The first is Amalia Glacier in Bernardo O'Higgins National Park, a tidewater glacier of the Southern Patagonian Ice field that makes for a stunning sight at the foot of the Reclus volcano. This glacier is a key part of many cruise itineraries of the region because it is guaranteed to impress with its grand size and the sense that passengers really are in a remote and wild part of the world. It can get pretty chilly around Amalia but viewing it from a ship's deck and watching dolphins swim by definitely takes the edge off.



The second glacier that tour operators tend to head for is Pio XI Glacier, another example of beauty and icy wilderness but one with a characteristic that makes it unique among glaciers. Most of the world's ice sheets and glaciers are shrinking beyond our control due to global warming but this incredible structure is actually growing in length and density.

The result is a vast stretch of ice expanding beyond 1265 square kilometers – the size of a city – that provides a great stopping point for a day trip and exploration or just a photographic highlight on a longer voyage of the Chilean fjord system.

Specialized Patagonian glacier cruises allow visitors the chance to get up close to the landscape and its wild inhabitants. The beauty of taking a cruise to see these glaciers is that it gives visitors the chance to not only make the most of their time at these icy wonders, through specially chartered tours and day trips, but to enjoy the majesty of the Chilean scenery as a whole.



The activities sections of many Chilean glacier cruises highlight the photographic opportunities and the array of animal and plant life; these fjords are diverse regions with waterfalls, vegetated islands and lakes and are home to some extraordinary creatures including seabirds, penguins, whales and seals. Many of these sights can be snapped from the comfort of the cruise ship but chartered kayaking trips and hikes bring tourists even closer to the wild nature of remote Patagonia.

The Chilean fjords and Patagonian wilderness may not be the first place tourists think of when they contemplate glaciers and polar exploration but many major operators are now providing glacier cruises from key South American ports like Valparaiso and Buenos Aires to give visitors a chance to get up close to these landscapes and their wildlife in comfort and have a truly memorable trip.

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