

Chile: The Dissident Burial Site in Valparaiso

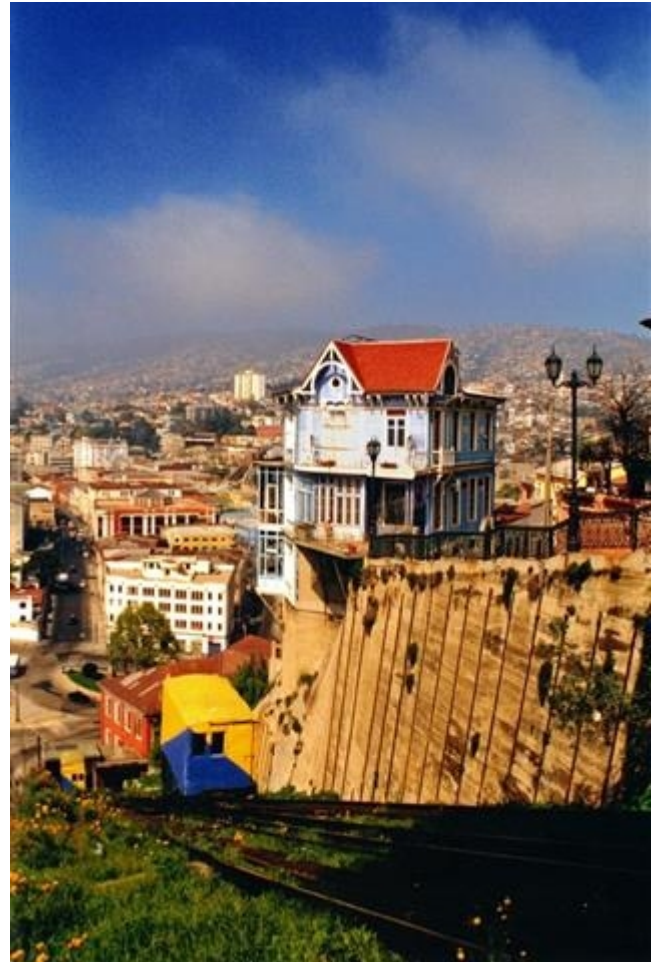
When one hears the name of Valparaiso it is mostly to think of the place where people embark to go on a cruise. Valparaiso is located at the Pacific Ocean just 1.5 hours west from Santiago International Airport. Its picturesque layout enhanced by the surrounding hills that seem to dive into the Ocean, remind us that this was once the most important harbour in South America before the Panama Canal was opened for navigation in 1914.



The city itself shows interesting architecture with the influence of different cultures. It is worthwhile enjoying the lovely Boutique Hotels, delicious seafood and many other things.

Founded in 1536 the town went through many historical stages. It was in the 18th century when the first immigrants mainly from Germany, Italy and England came to Valparaiso hoping to find new opportunities and a better place to live.

The different nationalities influenced not only the fast growing of the city but also gave her a special cultural touch. In the following years Valparaiso became famous as it was one of the first cities in South America having electricity and streetcars which arrived here even before they made it to Berlin. One witness of the interesting cultural and religious influence is the **Dissidents Burial Site**.



A mixture of different religions has been created by the inhabitants of Valparaiso throughout the years. The name "Dissident" was given to people who professed another religion than the Catholics. Those people were not allowed to be buried on a Catholic Burial Sites which made it happen that many of them found their last peace in the Sea or in the surrounding hills of Valparaiso.

Finally in 1823 Sir George Seymour bought a piece of Land on the Panteon Hill with a spectacular view of the city and the surrounding mountainside. He created a place where from now on the Non-Catholics as well could rest in peace.

The first impression once you get there is the simplicity of the tombs. The "Dissident" always tried to stay very basic as the decent belief was most important. The tombs show names and messages of and for the people that found their last peace at the Dissidents Burial Side. They are mainly written in English and German. Even today, do Visitors find relatives at this place sending them back to a time many years ago.



There are a lot of stories about this place. One tells about a North American Frigate that has been sunken in the shores of Valparaiso by the English Navy in 1814. Years after this event the British Council George Seymour took the remains of the sailors to the Dissidents graveyard where they still rest in peace. In 2005 the Dissidents Burial Site was declared as a National Monument and is one of the most famous burial sites in the world.

Valparaiso offers many different alternatives of Lodging. You can stay in traditional houses which have been refurbished as boutique hotels with cosy rooms and lovely views over the bay of Valparaiso. Different interesting excursions can be done to explore the city and surroundings.

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