

TOP 10 TRAVEL DESTINATIONS IN CHILE TO VISIT



While traveling may be out of the question for some people at the time of world health crisis, others dream of visiting stunning places with a rich history. Chile is one of such countries offering fascinating sights and breath-taking nature. Tourism-review.com presents the best travel destinations in Chile worth exploring.

Santiago

The capital and largest city of Chile was founded on February 14, 1541 and is currently divided into 37 communes. The urban aesthetic, whose backdrop is the Andes Mountains, has stood out for its high-quality infrastructure and architecture, in addition to the diversity of activities without having to go far: from trekking in the neighboring hills, to cultural tours to the Palacio de la Moneda.

As for cultural tours, there are many options in Santiago, including one of Pablo Neruda's houses in Barrio Bellavista, the Museum of Memory, and the Pre-Columbian Art Museum, among others.

Santa Lucía hill is one of the most-visited public parks in the country, offering a panoramic view of the city. There's also Fort Hidalgo, one of the colonial relics that can be found in Santa Lucía. Another hill that attracts tourists is San Cristóbal, in which the Funicular of Santiago has become a mandatory stop for many.

Atacama Desert

The Atacama Desert is considered the driest place in the world, and one of the most visited travel destinations in Chile, covering about 105,000 square kilometers. Although its number of visitors peaks in spring, when the famous event of the flowering desert occurs, there are many attractions throughout the year, such as El Tatio Geyser. This geyser is located in the Andes Mountain of Northern Chile at about 4,320 meters above the sea level, and reaches a temperature of up to 85 °C.

Valle de la Luna or Valley of the Moon, famous for having a surface that resembles the Moon's, is part of the Salt Flat Cordillera, like the Valley of Death, in which people can sandboard or simply admire the incredible rock formations that seem to be shaped like sculptures.

One of the greatest attractions in Atacama is its astrotourism. San Pedro de Atacama is a privileged place to watch the sky since it has little light pollution and there is virtually no humidity.

Easter Island

The remote volcanic island, located in the Polynesian Triangle, is officially part of the Valparaíso Region, making it a special territory of Chile. The "navel of the world" only has one city, Hanga Roa, where the Father Sebastián Englert Anthropological Museum, indigenous communities, and the Tau Kiani Botanical Garden, with more than 3,000 plants, can be found.

The most famous beach on the island is Anakena, known for its white sand and turquoise waters.

There are two platforms of moai, although the most imposing ones are in Ahu Tongariki, a platform of almost 220 meters with 15 stone statues.

One of the most interesting places would be Ahu Te Pito Kura, facing La Pérouse Bay, where a toppled moai can be seen. However, right next to it, there is a large spherical stone called Te Pito O Te Henua (translated as “the navel of the world”) and if you bring a compass to this location, it will rotate in circles without being able to point north.

Chiloé

The Chiloé Archipelago is known for its beautiful landscapes, imposing nature and the famous palafitos (stilt houses). Every year, thousands of tourists are lured by its magical appeal and folklore, marked by many myths and legends such as the Trauco or the Pincoya.

One of the most visited spots of Chiloé is Muelle de las Almas (Pier of Souls), located in the Cucao area. It is a work created by artist Marcelo Orellana, inspired by a local legend that says that when a person dies on the island, the soul haunts the cliffs in Cucao hoping to find eternal rest.

The palafitos of Castro are the signature attraction in Chiloé. These constructions draw attention for their height and bright colors. However, nature is one of the most captivating attractions on the island. For example, the Puñihuil penguin colony, declared a heritage site, is the only place in the world where the Humboldt and Magellanic penguins coexist.

Chañaral de Aceituno

More than 100 kilometers north of La Serena, in the Atacama region, there is a small cove that has been a favorite destination for years in Chile since it is the ideal place for whale watching.

The fishermen have specialized in this practice and offer daily trips to see different species, such as the fin whale (the most common, which measures approximately 27 meters), the humpback, the minke and even the blue whale.

However, whales are not the only attraction in this coastal town. Chañaral Island, located right in front, is one of the three islands that make up the Humboldt Penguin National Reserve. In there you can spot penguins, wolves, sea lions, various birds, dolphins, and whales. The reserve is considered a biodiversity hotspot.

Valdivia

Known for being Chile’s rainiest city, Valdivia is surrounded by green areas, wetlands and rivers, making it a privileged natural environment. One way to confirm this is by visiting Oncol Park, which is only 28 kilometers from the city and where you can watch various species of ferns, amphibians and birds.

In 2016, UNESCO declared Valdivia a Capital of Culture due to its heritage.

The Feria Fluvial (River Fair) turns Valdivia into one of the most scenic markets in a unique location near the Pedro de Valdivia Bridge, which connects the city center with Teja Island.

Torres del Paine

Torres del Paine National Park is one of the most popular destinations in Chile. Some call it the 8th Wonder of the World and it was elected as the fifth most beautiful place on the planet by National Geographic. Torres del Paine was also designated a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 1978.

Overseen by CONAF (the National Forest Corporation of Chile), this national park is considered one of the most pristine places in the country. Due to its exuberant landscape and the daily sighting of animals, it is a famous tourist attraction that also offers different activities.

One of the busiest trails is at the base of the towers, which lasts around 8 hours round trip. For a more relaxed alternative, you can drive down the path that leads to the Cuernos viewpoint and enjoy the beautiful panoramic views.

One of the great landmarks of Torres del Paine is Glacier Grey, which has an area of 270 square kilometers. People can hike to visit the glacier, but there is also the option to appreciate it from boat or, for the more adventurous, kayaking among its icebergs.

Valparaíso

Valparaíso is a unique city with bright but mesmerizing colors in which thousands of tourists gather every year. The houses are painted with colorful murals, and in the city there are different elevators to go up the hills. Due to its bohemian nature and architecture, Valparaíso was declared a World Heritage City.

Called the “Jewel of the Pacific”, this city is the seat of the Congress and home of the Chilean Army, as well as La Sebastiana, another one of Pablo Neruda’s houses.

Of its 42 hills, the Concepción hill stands out for an architecture influenced by German and English immigrants; Alegre hill, with its colorful facades; and the Bellavista and Florida hills, known as “El Cerro de los Artistas” (The Artists hills) for their striking buildings.

Arica

Known in Chile as “the city of eternal spring” due to its weather, this town has more than 20 kilometers of beach where surfing tournaments have taken place, including the World Surf Championship in 2007.

Even so, one of the must-see travel destinations in Chile is without a doubt the Morro de Arica, a 130-meter-high rock from which you can see the entire city. The museum, monuments and canyons in Arica are a testament of the historical importance of this place.

Arica is also the host city of one of the most important carnivals in South America: the Andean Carnival con la Fuerza del Sol (Andean Carnival with the Force of the Sun). The carnival takes place every year at the end of January and beginning of February and lasts three days in which Andean dances, native dances from the highlands and regional traditions can be seen.

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