

Chile

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



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Overview

Chile stretches over 4,300 kilometers along South America's Pacific coast, squeezed between the Andes and the ocean. Few countries pack more contrast into one trip. The driest desert on Earth sits in the north, glaciers and fjords fill the south, and a fertile wine-growing valley lies in between. The capital, Santiago, sits near the country's center, framed by snow-capped peaks.

Chile suits travelers who enjoy the outdoors more than city sightseeing. Hiking in Patagonia, stargazing in the Atacama Desert, and wine tasting near Santiago are the country's biggest draws. Distances are large, so most visitors pick one or two regions rather than trying to cover the whole country in a single trip.

Money & payments

Chile writes large numbers with a period as the thousands separator, so a price tag reading $10.000 means ten thousand pesos, not ten.

Currency

CURRENCY	1 CLP	1 CLP
$	**0.000917 EUR**	**0.001024 USD**
CLP	1 EUR = 1,090.04 CLP	1 USD = 976.73 CLP

Cards widely accepted

Cards are accepted at most restaurants, hotels, and shops in cities and tourist towns. Carry cash for local markets, small food stalls, and some national park entrances. Card machines can also be unreliable in remote areas like Chiloé or rural Patagonia. ATMs (*cajeros automáticos*) are common in cities but usually charge a withdrawal fee on top of your own bank's charge.

Typical costs

Rough prices in touristic areas, per person

Hotel (double room, per night) mid-range hotel, double room	30,000 – 70,000 $ €28 – €64
Dinner (mid-range restaurant) mid-range restaurant, per person	12,000 – 25,000 $ €11 – €23
Inexpensive meal set lunch menu (menú del día)	5,000 – 8,000 $ €5 – €7
Local beer	2,500 – 4,000 $ €2 – €4
Coffee	2,000 – 3,500 $ €2 – €3
Water small bottled water	800 – 1,500 $ €1 – €1
Transit ticket Santiago metro/bus (Red) single fare	800 – 830 $ €1 – €1
Taxi (per km)	600 – 900 $ €1 – €1

Tipping

Restaurants usually add a suggested 10% tip (*propina sugerida*) to the bill. You can ask the waiter to remove it if you'd rather not pay it. Round up taxi fares instead of adding a set percentage. Guides on multi-day treks or tours in Patagonia and the Atacama Desert appreciate a tip at the end of the trip.

Restaurant ~10% suggested (propina sugerida)	Optional
Taxi round up	Optional
Tour guide tip at end of multi-day trip	Optional
Hotel small tip for porters	Optional

Electricity

Chile uses Type C and L plugs at 220 V / 50 Hz. Bring an adapter if your devices use a different plug shape; most phone and laptop chargers handle the voltage automatically.

ELECTRICITY



Type C

ELECTRICITY

Type L

220 V · 50 Hz

Language

Spanish is Chile's official language. Chileans speak fast and use many local expressions. Even fluent Spanish speakers from other countries sometimes struggle to follow conversations. English is common in Santiago hotels, tour agencies, and Patagonia lodges, but far less so in smaller towns and rural areas.

Useful phrases

Hello	Hola
Thank you	Gracias
Please	Por favor
Yes	Sí
No	No
Goodbye	Chao
Excuse me	Permiso
Sorry	Perdón
How much?	¿Cuánto cuesta?
Where is...?	¿Dónde está...?
Help	Ayuda
Cheers	Salud

Staying connected

Prepaid SIM cards from Entel, Movistar, or WOM are sold at airport kiosks and shopping malls. Bring your passport, since registration is required by law. Coverage is reliable in cities and along the main highways. Signal drops out for long stretches in Patagonia, the Atacama Desert, and on ferry crossings through the southern fjords.

Safety & emergencies

Chile is one of the safer countries in South America for tourists, but petty theft happens in crowded areas. Watch your belongings on the Santiago metro, at Cerro San Cristóbal, and in the Bellavista nightlife district. Keep bags zipped and avoid displaying phones or cameras openly. Political protests

occasionally gather in downtown Santiago; they are usually peaceful but can turn tense, so avoid the area if you come across one.

Emergency numbers

GENERAL EMERGENCY	POLICE	AMBULANCE	FIRE BRIGADE
133	134	131	130

Health

Tap water is safe to drink in Santiago and most cities. Pharmacies (*farmacias*) are widespread, with Cruz Verde and Farmacias Ahumada open late or 24 hours in larger towns. If you're heading to San Pedro de Atacama or high Andean passes, give yourself a day or two to adjust to the altitude first. The sun is strong at altitude and in Patagonia; use sunscreen even on cloudy days.

Visas & entry

Visitors from the United States, Canada, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and Australia can enter Chile without a visa for stays of up to 90 days. The same applies to most Latin American countries. Travelers from other countries should check whether they need a visa before departure.

> Visa and entry requirements change frequently. Verify current requirements with the official immigration authority or your country's embassy before travel.

Etiquette

Chileans usually greet with a single kiss on the right cheek, including between men and women who have just met. A handshake is common in business settings. Dress modestly when visiting churches, covering shoulders and knees. Chileans tend to be reserved with strangers at first, but conversations open up quickly.

Holidays & opening hours

Public holidays affect transport schedules and can close small shops, so check ahead if traveling around one. Chile's Independence Day celebrations (*Fiestas Patrias*), in mid-September, are the busiest travel period of the year. Book buses, flights, and hotels well in advance if visiting then.

Public holidays

Jan 1	New Year's Day
May 1	Labour Day
May 21	Navy Day
Jun 21	National Day of Indigenous Peoples
Jul 16	Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Aug 15	Assumption of Mary
Sep 18	National holiday
Sep 19	Army Day
Oct 31	Reformation Day
Nov 1	All Saints Day
Dec 8	Immaculate Conception
Dec 25	Christmas Day
movable — Oct	Columbus Day
movable — Mar/Apr	Good Friday
movable — Mar/Apr	Holy Saturday
movable — Jun	Saint Peter and Saint Paul

Most shops open Monday to Saturday and close on Sunday outside malls and tourist areas. Businesses in smaller towns often still pause for a longer lunch break.

Getting around

Chile's length makes domestic flights the fastest way to link its regions:

- **By air**: LATAM and Sky Airline connect Santiago with the Atacama Desert, Patagonia, and Easter Island. Flying saves days of travel compared to the bus, especially for the north and far south.
- **By bus**: Long-distance coaches (Turbus, Pullman Bus) link almost every town, with reclining seats and overnight routes between major cities. Buy tickets at the terminal or online in advance around holidays.
- **By train**: Passenger rail is limited to a few regional lines around Santiago and the central valley. It isn't a practical way to cover long distances.

Santiago is the country's main air hub, with connections to the Atacama Desert, Patagonia, and Easter Island. Punta Arenas is the main gateway to Chilean Patagonia.

Driving

Renting a car is a good way to explore the Lake District, the wine valleys near Santiago, or the Carretera Austral in Patagonia. Public transport is limited in all three.

- **Rules**: Blood alcohol limits are strictly enforced, with checkpoints common on highways, especially around holidays.
- **Tolls**: Chile's main highways, including the Panamericana (Ruta 5), charge tolls at highway plazas. Rental cars are usually fitted with an electronic TAG for automatic payment; ask your rental company how charges are billed.
- **Parking**: Street parking in cities is often managed by informal attendants (*cuidadores*) who expect a small tip. Paid garages and metered parking are common downtown.
- **Fuel**: Petrol is sold as *bencina* (95 and 97 octane); diesel is *petróleo* or *diésel*. Stations are staffed, and attendants pump the fuel for you.
- **Electric vehicles**: Charging stations cluster around Santiago. Coverage thins out fast on longer road trips, so plan charging stops ahead of time.

URBAN
50 km/h

RURAL
100 km/h

MOTORWAY
120 km/h

PETROL
Bencina 93, Bencina 95, Bencina 97

DIESEL
Petróleo diésel, Diésel

Drive on the right

No motorway vignette needed

No nationwide vignette. Most motorways and the Panamericana (Ruta 5) charge tolls at highway plazas, usually paid automatically via an electronic TAG fitted by the rental company; Santiago's urban expressways also bill by TAG or via a foreign-card portal after the trip.

Food & drink

Lunch is the main meal of the day, often eaten around 1 or 2pm. Dinner comes later and lighter, sometimes replaced by *once* — a light early-evening spread of bread, cheese, avocado, and tea, similar to British afternoon tea. Weekend family lunches can stretch for hours.

Empanadas filled with *pino* (minced beef, onion, olives, and egg) are the closest thing to a national dish. *Pastel de choclo*, a corn and beef casserole, is another favorite, along with *curanto*, a seafood and meat stew traditional to Chiloé. Street food includes *completos* (hot dogs piled with avocado, tomato, and mayonnaise) and *sopaipillas*, fried pumpkin dough eaten plain or with a sweet syrup.

Chile is one of the world's major wine producers, and a glass of Carmenère or Sauvignon Blanc is easy to find anywhere. *Pisco sour*, made with the local grape brandy, is the country's signature cocktail. *Mote con huesillo*, a cold drink of husked wheat and dried peach, is a popular summer refresher sold from street carts.

What to eat & drink

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Completo
A hot dog piled high with avocado, tomato, and mayonnaise.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Sopaipilla
Fried pumpkin dough, eaten plain or with a sweet syrup called chancaca.

DRINKS

Pisco Sour
Chile's signature cocktail, made with pisco grape brandy, lime juice, and egg white.

Mote con huesillo
A cold summer drink of husked wheat and rehydrated dried peaches in their syrup.

SIGNATURE DISHES

Empanada de pino · empanada de pino
Baked pastry filled with minced beef, onion, olives, and hard-boiled egg.

Pastel de choclo
A corn and ground beef casserole baked with a sweet-savory corn topping.

Curanto
A seafood, meat, and potato stew traditional to Chiloé, classically cooked in an underground pit.

Chile – Plan Your Trip
Turn the places from this guide into a real itinerary, with smart routing, time estimates, and everything you need for a perfect trip.
3M+ downloads · 4.6 stars · 15 years of trip planning
App Store · Google Play
Scan to download the app

Where to explore

Chile's regions are spread across a huge range of latitude, so most trips focus on one or two areas rather than the whole country.

Santiago and the coast: Santiago, the capital, sits about an hour from the Pacific coast. Nearby is Valparaíso, a hillside port city known for its street art and funiculars, and the beach resort of Viña del

Mar. Wine valleys and hot springs fill the countryside around the capital.

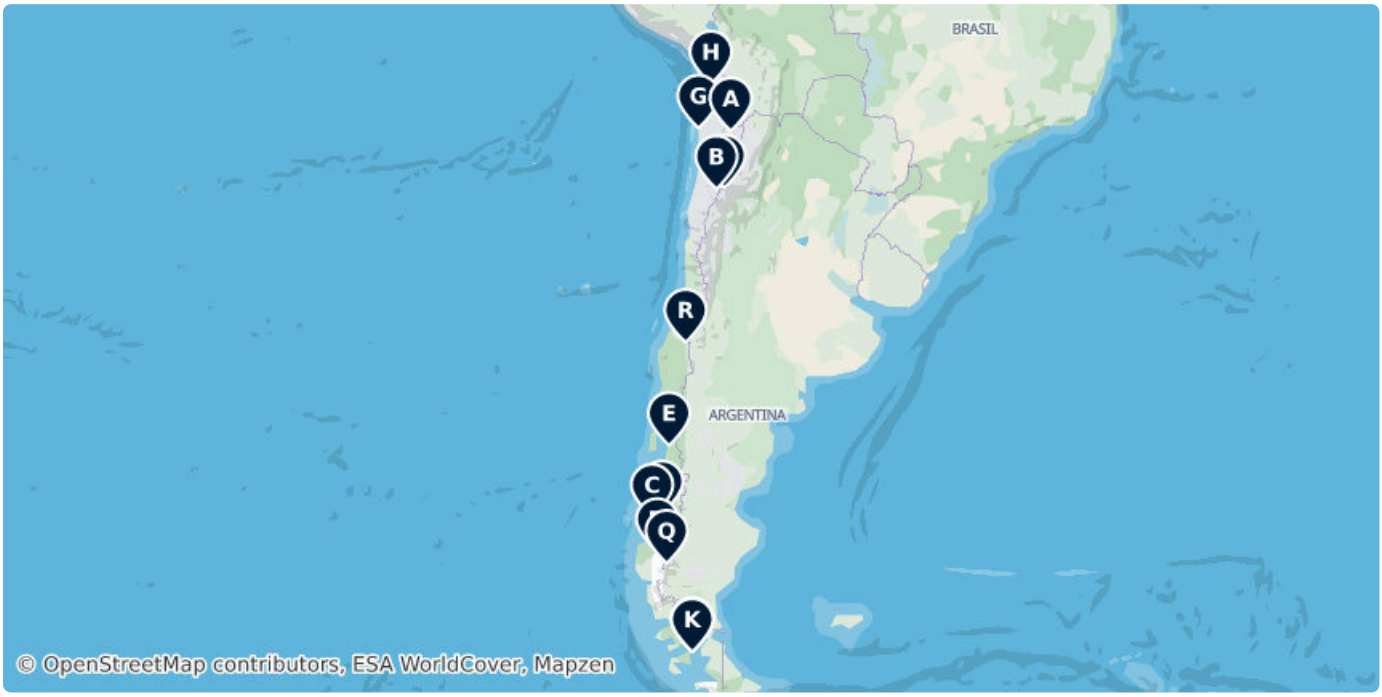
The north: San Pedro de Atacama is the base for exploring the Atacama Desert's salt flats, geysers, and stargazing tours. Antofagasta is a coastal mining city with access to desert sights, and La Serena combines colonial architecture with nearby beaches and observatories.

The Lake District and Chiloé: Pucón sits beneath an active volcano and is the region's adventure-sports hub. Puerto Varas offers lake and volcano views with a German-immigrant heritage. The island town of Castro is known for its stilted houses and UNESCO-listed wooden churches.

Patagonia and Easter Island: Punta Arenas and Puerto Natales are the gateway towns to Torres del Paine National Park, Chile's most famous national park. Far out in the Pacific, Easter Island holds the moai statues that made it famous.

Chile's Absolute Must-Sees

This collection spans the geographical extremes of Chile, from the high-altitude volcanoes and oases of the Atacama Desert to the glacial fjords of the southern Aisén and Magallanes regions. It highlights significant historical sites like the War of the Pacific battlefields and the maritime history of Punta Arenas, alongside architectural landmarks like the Sara Braun Palace. Natural features include active volcanoes, thermal springs at Chillán, and expansive ice fields like the Jorge Montt Glacier.





A Plaza Toconao

Traditional village square in the Atacama Desert, known for its 18th-century bell tower built from volcanic stone and cactus wood.

Chile (-23.19056, -68.00704)



B Nevado Tres Cruces National Park

Nevado Tres Cruces National Park is a national park in the Atacama Region of Chile, east of Copiapó.

Chile (-27.13470, -69.08270)

sernatur.cl/Areas_Silvestres/Atacama/Atacama.html



C San Rafael Lake

San Rafael Lake is an arc-shaped coastal lake located in the Aysén del General Carlos Ibáñez del Campo Region of Chile, within the national...

Chile (-46.66902, -73.93465)



D Jorge Montt Glacier

Jorge Montt Glacier is a tidewater glacier located in the Aisén Region of Chile, south of the town of Caleta Tortel.

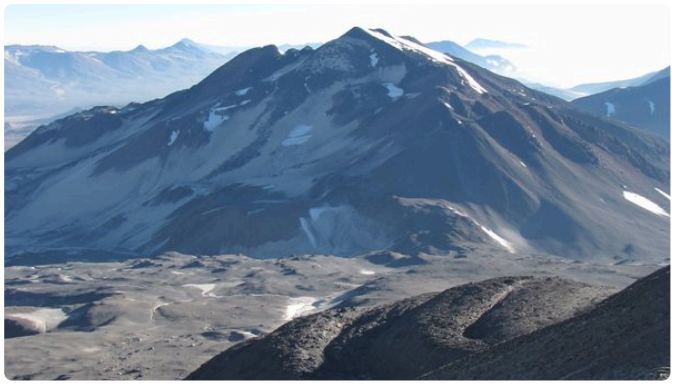
(-48.41430, -73.54446)



E Volcán Chaitén

Chaitén is a volcanic caldera 3 kilometres in diameter, 17 kilometres west of the elongated ice-capped Michinmahuida volcano and 10...

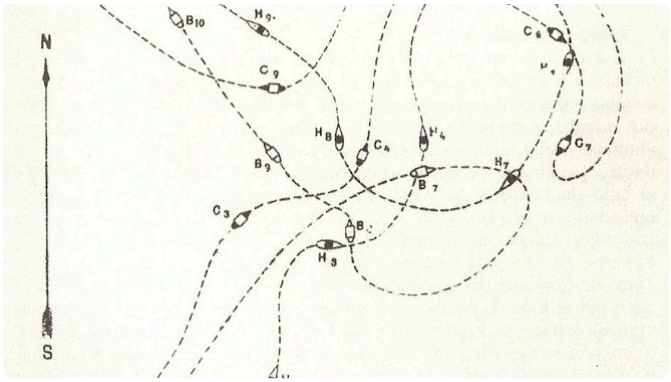
Chile (-42.83708, -72.64777)



F Cerro El Muerto

Cerro el Muerto is a range or area at the border of Argentina and Chile. It has a height of 6,510 metres.

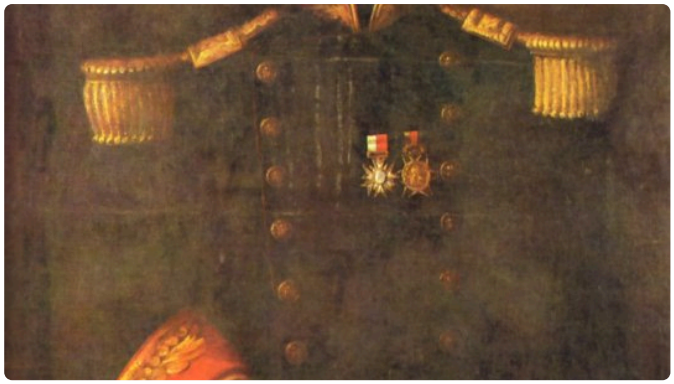
Argentina (-27.05821, -68.48414)



G Battle of Angamos

The Battle of Angamos was a naval encounter of the War of the Pacific fought between the navies of Chile and Perú at Punta Angamos, on 8...

(-22.99664, -70.43644)



H Battle of Tarapacá

The Battle of Tarapacá occurred on November 27, 1879, during the Tarapacá Campaign of the War of the Pacific.

Chile (-19.92408, -69.51096)



I Nao Victoria Museum

The Nao Victoria Museum is a private maritime museum located in Punta Arenas, Chile. It has been open to the public since 1 October 2011.

Ruta Y-565, Punta Arena, CL (-53.10762, -70.87933)

naovictoria.cl

J Casa José Nogueira

A late 19th-century mansion in Punta Arenas, once the residence of pioneer José Nogueira. It is a designated National Monument reflecting the region's sheep-farming boom.

(-53.16177, -70.90799)

K Palacio Montés Pello

Historic mansion in Punta Arenas built in the early 20th century, showcasing the neoclassical architectural style prevalent during the city's economic peak.

Chile (-53.16334, -70.90879)

L Sara Braun Palace

National Monument built between 1894 and 1905. This neoclassical mansion features lavish European interiors and was the home of influential Patagonian figure Sara Braun.

(-53.16171, -70.90779)

M Patio Palacio Sara Braun

A sheltered garden and courtyard adjacent to the Sara Braun Palace, situated within the historic city center of Punta Arenas.

(-53.16188, -70.90765)



N Quebrada de Jerez

Explore this unique wooded area with an oasis. There are even pools suitable for swimming.

Chile (-23.18993, -67.99599)

O Mirador Glaciar Exploradores

Elevated vantage point offering views of the Exploradores Glacier and the northern reaches of the North Patagonian Ice Field.

(-46.49678, -73.16423)

P Mount of the Cross

Panoramic lookout in Punta Arenas providing views over the city's rooftops, the Strait of Magellan, and Tierra del Fuego.

(-53.16021, -70.91601)

Q Fitzroy with Laguna del Desierto viewpoint

Scenic overlook near the border, offering views of the Fitz Roy massif and the waters of Laguna del Desierto.

(-48.99299, -72.83456)



R Termas de Chillán

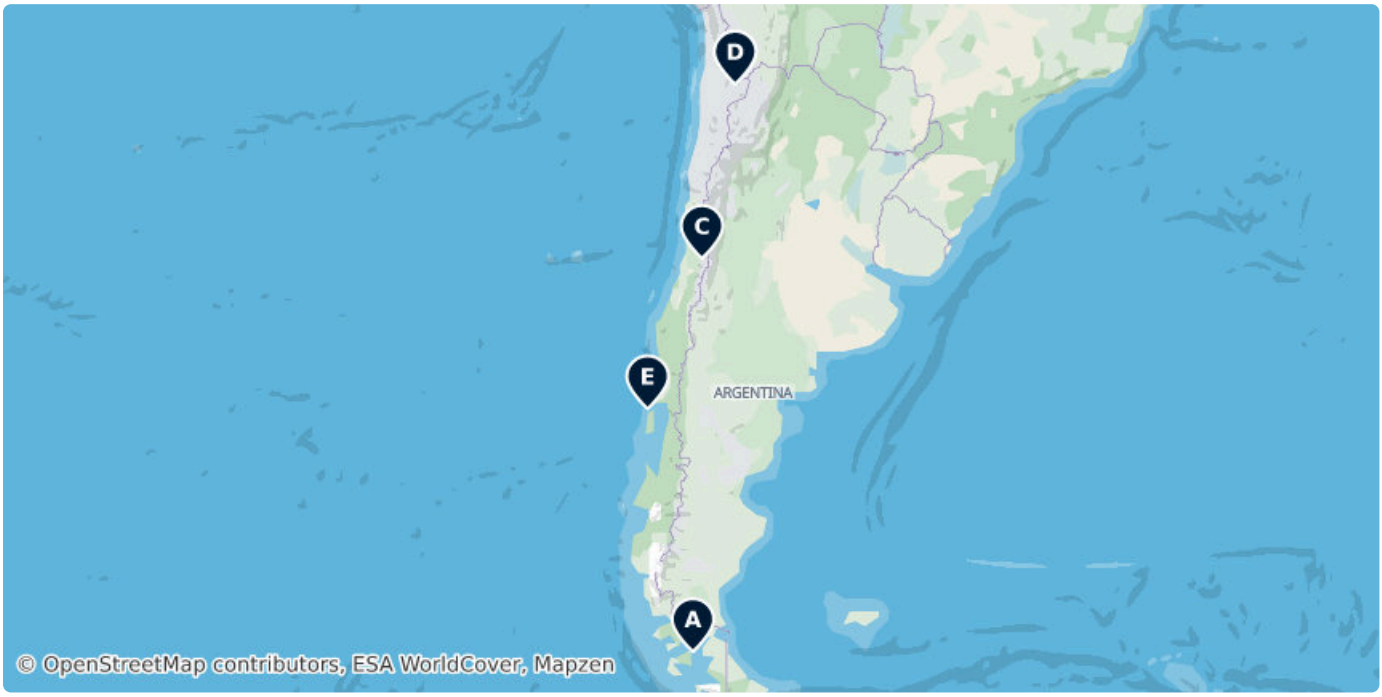
Termas de Chillán is a town located 82 km east of the Chilean city of Chillán. It has a ski center and three hotels.

Pinto (-36.90393, -71.40822)

nevadosdechillan.com/parque-de-agua

Hidden Gems

Chile's diverse geography contains several secluded sites, from the iron remains of the Lord Lonsdale shipwreck in the Strait of Magellan to the abandoned Tinoco railway tunnel in Cajón del Maipo. In the north, the Quebrada de Jerez oasis and the historic stone architecture of Plaza Toconao offer insights into Atacama culture. Further south, the Islotes de Puñihuil serve as a rare cohabitation site for Humboldt and Magellanic penguins. These locations highlight industrial history, colonial heritage, and unique ecological niches.



A Lord Lonsdale Shipwreck

These iron remains of an 1899 sailing ship sit on the shores of the Strait of Magellan. The vessel was scuttled in 1909 following a fire on board.

(-53.18238, -70.92445)



B Quebrada de Jerez

Explore this unique wooded area with an oasis. There are even pools suitable for swimming.

Chile (-23.18993, -67.99599)



C Túnel Ferroviario Tinoco

A 600-meter-long former railway tunnel on the historic Puente Alto-El Volcán line. Built in the early 20th century, the tunnel is now a pedestrian route through the mountains.

Chile (-33.74277, -70.28962)



D Plaza Toconao

This central square features a distinct bell tower constructed in 1750 from local volcanic liparita stone. It stands adjacent to the historic San Lucas Church.

Chile (-23.19056, -68.00704)



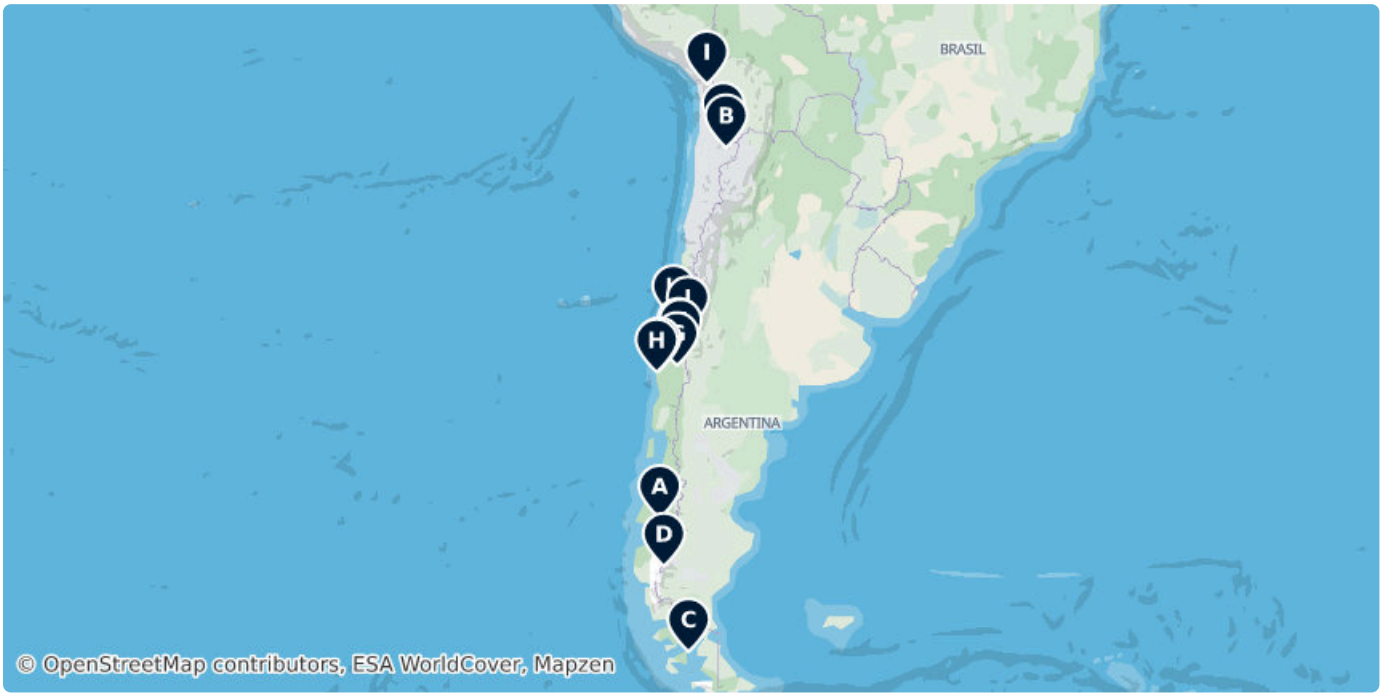
E Monumento Natural Islotes de Puñihuil

A protected natural monument consisting of three islets where Humboldt and Magellanic penguins nest side-by-side. It is one of the few locations globally where both species share a breeding ground.

Chile (-41.92636, -74.04800)

Scenic Viewpoints

This collection spans the diverse geography of Chile, from the arid Atacama Desert to the glaciers of Patagonia. It includes the historic indigenous village of Caspana with its stone terraces and the colonial Iglesia de Tignamar in the northern highlands. Southern highlights feature the panoramic Mirador Cerro de la Cruz in Punta Arenas, overlooking the Strait of Magellan, and the Mirador Glaciar Exploradores, which provides views of the Northern Patagonian Ice Field. The list also features natural pools like Pozón Andino and the coastal rock formations visible from Mirador San Pedro.



A Mirador Glaciar Exploradores

Provides views of the Exploradores Glacier and the Northern Patagonian Ice Field.

(-46.49678, -73.16423)



B Quebrada de Jerez

Explore this unique wooded area with an oasis. There are even pools suitable for swimming.

Chile (-23.18993, -67.99599)

C Mount of the Cross

Panoramic viewpoint in Punta Arenas offering vistas of the city, the Strait of Magellan, and Tierra del Fuego.

(-53.16021, -70.91601)

D Fitzroy with Laguna del Desierto viewpoint

High-altitude viewpoint offering a northern perspective of the Fitz Roy massif and Laguna del Desierto.

(-48.99299, -72.83456)



E Pincheira brothers

The Pincheira brothers was an infamous royalist outlaw group in Chile and Argentina active from 1818 to 1832.

Chile (-36.89729, -71.55363)

F Caspana

Ancient Atacameño village featuring traditional stone architecture and agricultural terraces carved into the Loa River valley.

(-22.33105, -68.21367)

G Mirador Huequecura

Overlooks the confluence of the Huequecura and Biobío rivers near the Angostura reservoir.

(-37.71236, -71.81438)

H puente lleulleu

Bridge crossing Lake Lleu Lleu, a body of water recognized for its exceptional purity and significance to the local Mapuche community.

(-38.11721, -73.39074)

I Iglesia de Tignamar

Traditional Andean church in the Arica and Parinacota Region, serving as a focal point for the village of Tignamar.

(-18.58153, -69.49418)

J Pozón Andino

Natural turquoise pool formed by the Maule River, situated within a volcanic landscape near the international highway to Argentina.

(-35.48206, -70.96697)

K Mirador San Pedro

Coastal viewpoint near Constitución providing views of the Pacific Ocean and the Piedra de la Iglesia rock formations.

(-34.75369, -72.08579)

L Mirador de los Helechos

Elevated platform within the temperate rainforest, known for its dense growth of native ferns and views of the Nahuelbuta range.

(-38.01351, -73.18250)

Mirador El Macal

Mountain overlook in the Biobío Region offering views of the Diguillín River valley and the surrounding Nevados de Chillán.

(-36.83070, -71.68770)

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