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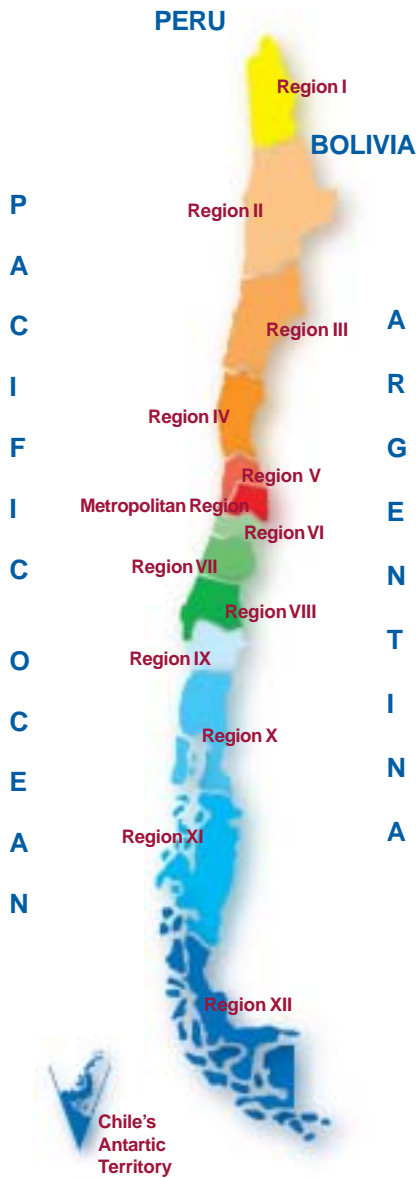
Would you like to relax on a beach, hike through the hills, work on a farm, run Class 5 river rapids, ski down the slopes of a volcano, catch an enormous trout, view penguins in their natural habitat, hunt wild boars, live among the Mapuche people, observe wildlife, or travel to Antarctica? Come to Chile!

Summer in Chile

While inhabitants of the northern hemisphere shiver with cold and face snowstorms and freezing rain, it is summer in Chile – and February marks the peak of the season. The climate is pleasant, and there are abundant natural environments and spectacular panoramas to appreciate and explore. There are also opportunities to learn more about the country, to practice extreme sports – or simply to relax and enjoy oneself.

The diversity of landscapes – in a country that begins in the desert and ends in the ice – is the first attraction. High-quality hotel infrastructure, first-rate highways, and an excellent level of security ensure an agreeable stay for visitors.

Chileans are conscious of their country's special natural endowments, and places such as the Atacama Desert, Easter Island and Patagonia have always been highlights of interest for foreign tourists. In fact, much of the country's territory can practically be considered a natural reserve, still largely unexplored. Bounded by the Andes mountains and the Pacific Ocean, the country's isolation serves as a plus for vacationers. At the same time, a communications system considered



among the world's most modern allows visitors to remain connected, even from the most remote locations.

In recent years, great efforts and enormous investments have been devoted to the development of the tourist industry. The government has worked closely with the private sector to identify new investment opportunities and facilitate their implementation. In fact, tourism has enjoyed one of the most dynamic growth rates within the services sector during recent years: 12% annually.

Special emphasis has been placed on training guides and making information available to tourists. Another innovative aspect has been the incorporation of indigenous peoples into the touristic management of tour routes and historical sites which they know better than anyone else.

During 2004, 1.8 million foreign tourists visited the country, spending over 1.25 billion dollars. Projections for the next five years foresee a flow of three million visitors per year, accompanied by revenues of 1.7 to 2 billion dollars annually.

With these tourists in mind, the country has developed various itineraries to help visitors get to know the country. Of course, many travelers prefer to choose their destinations spontaneously. But in recent years, a number of innovative "routes" have been created that go beyond traditional tourist attractions, permitting visitors to concentrate on a specific region, topic or interest.

These circuits vary from well-known highlights, such as the tempting Wine Route, to the Health Route, which includes thermal baths throughout Chile.

It is only a matter of choosing.

A tour of the past

The rich archeological, indigenous and cultural heritage of the *Norte Grande* or Great North (Chile's First and Second Regions) has much to offer visitors.

The "Aima Route", on the high plains, or *altiplano*, is operated by the Aymara people, descendants of the region's original inhabitants. It begins in Putre, a tiny village at an altitude of 3,500 meters, and passes through the Lauca National Park, including Chungará Lake – the world's highest, at 4,500 meters above sea level – and the Parinacota Volcano. Another alternative includes Putre's surroundings as well as a visit to the snow-peaked Payachata Mountains, the geoglyphs of the Salar de Pintados, and the Salar de Surire.



Parinacota Volcano

The Second Region also offers a fascinating window into the past.

The "Saltpeter Route" explores various *oficinas salitreras*, villages inhabited from the late 19th to mid-20th century by



Humberstone saltpeter plant

DID YOU KNOW?

- ★ The most-visited places during the 2004 tourist season were Puerto Natales, Punta Arenas, Arica, Puerto Montt, Viña del Mar, Coihaique, and Pucón.
- ★ For the British, a trip to Chile seems to have become an indispensable travel option. According to a survey conducted by *The Guardian* newspaper, the country is regarded as the best long-distance tourist destination.
- ★ In a study carried out by Sernatur, nature and security were found to be the attributes most highly valued by German, Spanish, and U.S. travelers.

Chileans and foreigners attracted by the area's unique natural deposits of sodium nitrate or saltpeter. This "white gold rush" provided valuable revenue to the State, permitting the construction of notable engineering projects throughout Chile.

Today, the saltpeter settlements are ghost towns. Of the dozens which sprang up during the period, only one inhabited town, María Elena, remains. However, several villages have been restored in recent years, and there are plans to turn them into living history museums where visitors can see how their inhabitants, the *pampinos*, lived and worked.

San Pedro de Atacama (population 2,500), an oasis in the midst of the desert, is considered the epicenter of the country's archeological heritage. Its adobe buildings mimic the desert's ochre and golden hues, with added touches of green, covered by the intense blue of the sky.

The town is visited by more than 30,000 tourists each year, many of whom use it as a starting point for trips to the centuries-old village of Tulo, the natural reserves of the Puna wetlands, the Miscanti and Meñique Lakes, the Salar de Atacama, and the Valley of the Moon, in addition to the Tatio Geysers and Los Flamencos National Reserve. San Pedro's Archaeological Museum displays an important collection of artifacts from the Atacama culture.

The Lincahuasi rural tourism network, administered by members of the Atacama community, provides interesting alternatives for visitors, including unusual tour routes and comfortable rural inns located in the region's indigenous villages.

The results of this initiative have been very positive: while visitors learn more about the culture and traditions of this indigenous group, the community gains an effective way of making a living, while deterring the large-scale emigration of its young people to the cities.

In two and a half hours, by minibus and on horseback, "The Olive Route" provides a view of the 3,500 hectares planted with olives in the Azapa Valley. Through visits to the leading farms and groves of this rural sector, it familiarizes visitors with the *raima* (the olive harvest and collection process), the selection of the best olives and their transformation into olive oil.




San Pedro de Atacama's church



Valley of the Moon



Tulo

FACTS

In Arica, six tour providers allow visitors to fly over the geoglyphs of the Azapa and Lluta Valleys in a paraglider, to appreciate the figures in their full splendor.

The website www.sanpedroatacama.com offers a wide range of information, including how to get there, where to stay, what to see, and where to enjoy local cuisine or shop for handicrafts. A true virtual showcase, it includes panoramic 360° images of the area's attractions.

The High Andean Integration Route, which will unite San Pedro de Atacama with Machu Picchu, in Peru, is currently under construction. The roadway passes through Bolivia, where part of its route coincides with the ancient Inca Trail. The Chilean segment, traversing 990 kilometers of high plains, salars, and Andean villages, will be completed by mid-2005.

The government, through the Ministry of National Assets, the National Forestry Corporation (Conaf), the National Monuments Council and the National Corporation for Indigenous Development (Conadi), has initiated a campaign to return many of the area's tourist attractions to the local indigenous peoples. The program includes the training of trilingual guides, fluent in Spanish, English and Kunza (the now-extinct language of their ancestors).

DID YOU KNOW?

- ★ The starting point for the Aima Route is a traditional *chujlla* (a circular, straw-roofed dwelling) exhibiting samples of typical utensils and clothing. There, visitors can learn Aymara weaving techniques and interact with the domesticated llamas which will accompany them on their Andean adventures.
- ★ Neglect nearly destroyed the 3,000-year-old village of Tulo. However, 25 Atacama families from the town of Coyo rescued the site. Today it includes a dining hall as well as an exhibit center displaying artifacts used by their ancestors.

FACTS

Currently, tourism contributes 4% of Chile's GDP.

Citizens of nations with which Chile maintains diplomatic relations are merely required to show a valid passport to enter the country. Tourist visas are necessary only for those coming from Peru, Venezuela, and New Zealand.

On the other hand, visitors arriving from countries with which Chile does not have diplomatic relations require a tourist visa, with the previous authorization of the Foreign Ministry.

Visitors from Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay may enter Chile with only their current national identity cards or documents.

Land, sea and sky

Farther to the south, three national parks offer very different options for those who enjoy hiking and exploration in environments scarcely touched by human beings. In the Andes, the Nevado de Tres Cruces Park features salars, lakes, and various Andean ecosystems; on the coast, Llanos de Challes offers a great variety of flora and fauna; while Pan de Azúcar shelters marine animals such as the fur seal; birds such as eagles, condors, and kestrels; and guanacos and foxes in the more densely-vegetated areas.

Off the coast of an inlet called Punta Choros lie three small islands: Choros, Damas and Chañaral de Aceituno, which make up the National Humboldt Penguin Reserve. There, bottlenose dolphins, sea lions, Humboldt penguins, and sea otters coexist in harmony.

The zone's exotic wildlife attracts adventurers and nature lovers, leading the inhabitants of the local fishing villages to abandon their nets and dedicate themselves to tourism. Many of them carry visitors on their boats to Choros Island – where disembarking is prohibited – for a close-up view of the dolphins and sea lions. On Damas, the smallest of the three islands, visitors can camp on a tranquil beach with turquoise waters, completely isolated from civilization.



El Tololo observatory

The sky over the Fourth Region of Coquimbo, which offers an average of 300 cloudless nights per year, is the main attraction of an increasingly popular tourist circuit known as the "Route of the Stars." Its five professional and two touristic observatories delight both scientists and visitors, making the zone South America's most important astronomical center.

Two smaller observatories specially constructed for tourists, Mamalluca and Collawara, offer excellent facilities where visitors can enjoy a window on space and learn about the origins of the universe, using telescopes dedicated exclusively to them.



Nevado Tres Cruces

DID YOU KNOW?

- ★ Nobel Prize-winning poet Gabriela Mistral was born in the city of Vicuña, in the Elqui Valley. A museum there is dedicated to her life and work.
- ★ The Fourth Region is a very popular tourist destination. The visitors, chiefly Chileans and Argentines, are attracted by its mild climate and extensive beaches, many with white sand and calm seas.



Mamalluca observatory

FACTS

Seven- to nine-day expeditions to the Ojos del Salado volcano, 6,893 meters above sea level, are organized by specialized companies at a cost of some 1,200 dollars per person.

The scientific observatories El Tololo and La Silla can also be toured by the public, but visitors must make appointments well in advance.

The area is also the center of the country's production of pisco (distillate made from grapes). The "Pisco Route" takes visitors to production facilities, both modern and traditional, located in the enchanting Elqui Valley. It also includes a stop at the country's first Pisco Museum, where visitors can learn more about the history and production of this alcoholic beverage made from Chilean grapes, as well as the contributions of the pre-Columbian Molle and Diaguita cultures to the process.



Elqui valley



Reñaca beach

Captivating verses

The Valparaíso region boasts one of the country's most diverse touristic offerings. With some 120 kilometers of beaches and numerous valleys, it is a favorite destination among Chileans, as well as one of the regions most visited by foreign tourists.

In a six-hour tour, visitors can explore the "Shore of the Poets", a circuit which traces the footsteps of renowned poets Pablo Neruda, in Isla Negra and Valparaíso; Vicente Huidobro in Cartagena; and Nicanor Parra in Las Cruces. The idea, initiated by a group of local businesspeople, is to highlight some of the writers' favorite places.

In the case of Huidobro and Neruda, the tours include visits to their homes and gravesites, where participants can view the unique constructions in which the poets spent important periods of their lives, as well as the environment that inspired many of their works.



Pablo Neruda's house in Isla Negra



FACTS

In February, the International Song Festival is held in Viña del Mar. Artists from all over the world participate in a six-night event which brings together more than 15,000 people daily.

Easter Island was discovered in 1722 by the Dutch sailor Jacobo van Roggeveen, on Easter Sunday: hence its name. It has been part of Chilean territory since 1888. In 1995, UNESCO declared it a World Heritage Site.

In January and February, Valparaíso will be visited by 26 cruise ships with more than 80,000 tourists on board.

A paradise in the middle of the Pacific

Extinct volcanoes, petroglyphs, meadowlands, an agreeable climate, and beaches with warm water and soft sand — all of this awaits visitors as they arrive on isolated Easter Island, attracted by the mystery of the moais: colossal sculptures of volcanic rock, weighing up to 85 tons.

Rapa Nui, as its inhabitants call it, holds an inexplicable enchantment; the island seems to be cloaked in an aura of magic. Perhaps it is the fresh, aromatic air, or the landscape's explosion of colors. Life there follows a different rhythm. The islanders are welcoming to visitors, but jealous guardians of their traditions and language.

During February, everyone enthusiastically prepares for the *Tapati Rapa Nui*, or "Easter Island Week," which is celebrated by the inhabitants each year. More than a festival, it is a true expression of local culture.

Traditional sports competitions are held, such as the *haka pei* — in which participants slide downhill on the trunks of banana plants — in a sort of Easter Island triathlon. The islanders also compete to display the finest body paintings and the most outstanding skills in traditional handicrafts: carvings in wood or bark and threaded shell necklaces. The island's cuisine is also well-represented, as is Polynesian dancing, one of the most spirited competitions, in which some foreign tourists — to the delight of the locals — are bold enough to participate.





The majestic mountains

In the central zone, home to the capital, Santiago, the landscape is dominated by the majestic Andean mountain chain, which runs along the eastern edge of nearly the entire country.

The municipalities bordering the hills have implemented a program aimed at recovering and conserving nearly 648,900 hectares for the community, through the creation of an enormous ecological reserve. The plan includes the establishment of eight trails – four of which have already been marked out – so that travelers can appreciate the region’s flora and fauna while enjoying a panoramic view of the valley and the city of Santiago.

Only an hour from the capital, the Maipo Canyon is also ideal for hiking excursions. It is home to El Morado National Park: 3,000 hectares which



include a glacier, mineral water springs, and a lake, nestled at 2,400 meters above sea level, which remains frozen from June to October. The Maipo River is a favorite for whitewater rafting up to Grade 4, and sites equipped for camping have been set up on its shores.

The “Routes of the Sun” provide a further alternative for touristic pursuits close to the capital, offering excursions to historical and cultural sites, visits to educational farms and wineries, and opportunities to enjoy local cuisine and handicrafts. The “Clay Route” combines gastronomy with traditional artisanship: after a typical lunch, visitors tour the pottery-making village of Pomaire and the Greda Educational Farm, where children, above all, can learn to transform clay into art.

The “Cheese Route”

Only 60 kilometers from Santiago, the town of Melipilla offers an ideal opportunity to learn about and appreciate the most time-honored Chilean traditions. Visitors to the area can gain a taste of country life by following the innovative “Cheese Route.”

During enlightening and enjoyable circuits of the agricultural townships of Mallarauco, Codigua, and Puangue, visitors can tour cheesemaking operations, educational farms, producers of *chicha* (fermented grape juice), tree nurseries, and outstanding examples of the zone’s colonial architecture, while enjoying the inns and restaurants of the zone.

FACTS

Santiago has 6,038,974 inhabitants.

In summer, high temperatures range from 28 to 33 degrees Centigrade. At night, however, the air cools to a pleasant average of 20 degrees.

Visitors can also tour the historic center of El Monte township, 50 kilometers from Santiago; the Monteverde Winery, which offers wine tasting and a ride in a *coloso* (a wagon pulled by a tractor); the beekeeping operation in San José de Melipilla, where they can learn about history and production of honey and propolis; or Curacaví, with its delicious cakes and other sweets.



The "Wine Routes"

Without a doubt, the best-known touristic trails, among both Chileans and foreigners, are the "Wine Routes" of the Sixth and Seventh Regions – although other wine-producing areas of the country are also developing a growing number of attractive tours. Chile's winegrowing region, includes eight different valleys with their own unique characteristics and wines.

The vintners of the Cachapoal, Colchagua, Maule, and Curicó Valleys have established tours of the extensive vineyards which blanket a large proportion of Chile's central zone. One of the most innovative options is the Colchagua Valley's "Wine Train." In renovated train cars, pulled by an antique steam locomotive, some 400 participants can enjoy wine tastings as they tour the area in segments of approximately one hour between stations.



FACTS

The first "Wine Route" was created in 1996, covering the vineyards and wineries of the Colchagua Valley, in the heart of the Chilean countryside. In 2000, the U.S. periodical *Travel and Leisure* named it as one of the world's 25 most interesting tourist destinations.

Currently, Chilean wines are exported to more than 100 countries in all parts of the world.

During 2004, Chile's wine exports totaled approximately 800 million dollars, a figure 25% greater than that of the preceding year.

The Volcanic Caves Park, located along the road to the Villarrica Volcano, features a lava tunnel 600 meters deep, formed during one of the volcano's many eruptions. Natural features marking the various volcanic events can be seen in its interior.



Between lakes and volcanoes

South of Concepción (800 kilometers south of Santiago), the landscape becomes greener and wetter, and volcanoes, forests, hot springs, torrential rivers, and lakes of varying sizes are characteristic features. For many decades, this part of the country has been a favorite among foreign tourists, who visit during all seasons of the year.

A 500-kilometer tourist circuit skirts the Ninth Region's imposing volcanoes. Known as the "Route of the Volcanoes," it traverses three national parks, passing numerous crystalline lakes as well as islands with pristine forests and enormous monkey puzzle trees. Another route extends from the coast to the mountains, passing Mapuche and Pehuenche indigenous communities.

Ten Mapuche-Pehuenche families from the Ninth Region, along with a group of Austrian investors holding concessions in the Los Arenales ski center, on the slopes of the Lonquimay Volcano, have formed an association to sell tour packages in Europe. Visitors are welcomed in ten cabins constructed in the style of the *ruca* – the traditional Mapuche dwelling – where their hosts demonstrate indigenous customs and provide guided tours of their ancestral lands.



An outstanding attraction in the northern part of the Tenth Region is the "Seven Lakes" district. The Pirihueico, Panguipulli, Calafquén, Riñihue, Neltume, Pellaifa, and Pullinque Lakes are connected, each draining into the next. Visitors to their shores can view dramatic landscapes and waterfalls, sample delicious local cuisine, and shop for handicrafts.

From Panguipulli Lake, enjoyable excursions can be taken to the country's only navigable international crossing, the beautiful Huilo Huilo Ecological Reserve, or the "Route of the Wild Boar". The population explosion of these wild relatives of the pig has brought a significant economic opportunity for the zone, inspiring an ongoing search among craftspeople, exporters and restaurateurs to devise new ways to utilize this natural resource. Boar hunting is permitted during all year.



Visitors to the lakes can also enjoy the “Health Route,” which includes 14 thermal springs nestled among spectacular landscapes. The spas feature modern buildings, both indoor and outdoor pools, and a diverse offering of massages and relaxation therapies.

Farther south, 12 more lakes lie among craggy mountains and snow-capped volcanoes, most notably the Osorno Volcano (2,661 meters). The largest of the lakes is Llanquihue, with a surface area of 877 km². All of them provide opportunities for fishing and aquatic sports, and visitors to the area can choose from a wide range of lodgings, from well-equipped campsites to luxurious hotels and private cabins.



Puerto Varas

The “Route of the Colonists” is named in honor of the thousands of European immigrants, mainly from Germany, who arrived in the region starting in the mid-19th century. It highlights purdy constructions includes homes, churches, cemeteries, orchards, and colorful gardens in the surroundings of Frutillar and Puerto Octay, the first German settlement in the zone.

Many of the homes are inhabited by the original colonists’ direct descendents, who have set up family museums displaying photographs, clothing, furniture, and domestic implements from the era. Some even offer lodging, and there are campgrounds and comfortable local inns nearby.



This region also includes the magical island of Chiloé. There, the options for visitors are abundant: touring the channels by boat; visiting wooden churches dating from the 16th and 17th centuries; exploring Chiloé National Park; or simply wandering through the markets and conversing with the local people. The “Pupelde River Route,” which departs from the city of Ancud, offers a view of the operations where oysters and large mussels (*choros zapatos*) are cultivated.



Where the land ends

The best time to visit Chile’s extreme south is in summer, when temperatures rise to a pleasant average of 15 degrees Celsius.

Sport fishing enthusiasts can find their paradise in the Eleventh Region. Its fjords, rushing rivers, channels, and islands are ideal places to fish for salmon as well as rainbow, brown, and brook trout, which grow to considerable size. The fishing season extends from October to April.

FACTS

This zone is home to five of the country’s 32 national parks.

In 2001, 16 Chiloé churches were placed on the World Heritage List by UNESCO.

In Valdivia, visitors can board “El Valdiviano,” a locomotive dating from 1913, for a tour along the banks of the Calle-Calle River. After a pleasant ride through leafy forests, the travelers are welcomed in Antilhue (28 kilometers away) with traditional dishes, hearth-baked bread, German-style *kuchen*, local cheeses and homemade jams.

This season, 30 cruise ships will dock in Puerto Montt, carrying approximately 70,000 tourists. Two additional ships will visit Castro and Valdivia.



The Pan-American Highway, which traverses the continent from top to bottom, ends in the roadway known as the Carretera Austral. The route threads its way through forests and around rivers and lakes, with some segments carved directly into the rock. Paved with gravel, it becomes increasingly rugged and narrow as it provides access to a landscape of extraordinary beauty.

From Puerto Montt to Villa O’Higgins, it winds for 570 kilometers past snow-capped mountains, lakes, and torrential rivers, among them Chile’s most powerful, the Baker.



FACTS

One of the most pleasant ways to get to know the Aysén Region is to stay in one of its country lodges, nestled within virgin forests and offering breathtaking views of mountain peaks or rivers and lakes with emerald or turquoise waters. Most offer a high level of amenities, including thermal baths, jacuzzis, excellent cuisine, and organized tours of the surrounding areas.

Punta Arenas is the starting point and main service center for activities involving the Antarctic. Its airport receives tourists, researchers and military personnel from Chile and abroad.



Visitors should not miss the chance to visit Caleta Tortel, a picturesque village with fewer than 400 inhabitants. A place of nearly incredible beauty, it has no streets at all: instead, people walk on a network of footbridges constructed from cypress wood.

Among steep hills, swamps, thick forests, and enormous canyons, numerous areas have been designated as protected wilderness, where visitors can enjoy long excursions on horseback, hikes or boat trips to the famous glacier at Laguna San Rafael, a colossal natural monument.

Torres del Paine National Park is perhaps the best-known image of the Magallanes Region, with its towers and peaks regularly appearing in the world's leading travel magazines. However, it is only one of the attractions of this zone. The others include exploring the southern channels; visiting the area's

vast cattle ranches; crossing the Straits of Magellan in a kayak or inflatable boat; or embarking for Antarctica.

The culture of the zone's original inhabitants, the Yagan, has also inspired the creation of interesting touristic offerings. The "Scenic Route," which tours Ambarino Island by land, includes visits to archaeological sites or *conchaes* (heaps of shells and other artifacts) and a Yagan cemetery, as well as a trek to the Dientes de Navarino mountains. On the "Maritime Route," tourists sail through the Murria Channel to Cape Horn National Park, with a stop on Horn Island, which offers an abundant variety of plant life found nowhere else in the world.

Antarctic tourism has become a thriving enterprise. During the 2004 season, more than 22,000 tourists, mostly from the United States and Europe, visited the frozen continent. A favorite activity is cross-country skiing over the ice.

DID YOU KNOW?

- ★ More than 20,000 tourists arrive at San Rafael each year. In modern ships, they travel to the ice fields and then board smaller boats for a tour of the inlet. At the end of the excursion, participants enjoy a glass of whisky chilled with centuries-old ice.
- ★ The San Rafael glacier was discovered in 1654, when privateer Francis Drake undertook an expedition to the southern channels. With five ships, he set sail from the island of Chiloé toward the Straits of Magellan, finding this natural wonder during the journey. It was christened San Rafael because the day of its discovery, September 29, is the archangel's name day.
- ★ The "Penguin Route" is traversed by some 40,000 people each summer who come to observe the Magellanic penguins nesting along portions of the route between Punta Arenas and Otway Inlet.



Laguna San Rafael



Torres del Paine

Adrenaline to the maximum

Chile is also a paradise for lovers of extreme sports. Diving, windsurfing, rafting or kayaking in rivers or the sea; trekking, free climbing, mountain biking and rally sports; or paragliding, hang gliding and bungee jumping – all of these can be practiced in Chile, thanks to its diverse and “crazy” geography as well as an expanding selection of tour operators and outfitters.

More than 100,000 Chileans enjoy these vigorous sports in their free time, joined by an increasing number of visitors from other parts of the world. The attraction can be seen in the country’s 4,000 kilometers of coastline, two mountain chains (the Andes and the Coastal Range), torrential rivers, and sparkling lakes. For example, the Futaleufú River, in the extreme south, is rated Grade 5 and considered among the world’s most tempting (and challenging) sites for whitewater rafting.

The best places for scuba diving lie between the First and Fifth Regions. The extreme north (Arica to Antofagasta) offers warm waters, excellent visibility of more than 25 meters, and abundant flora and fauna. At Punta Choros, divers can encounter dolphins and whales, although the waters are colder: around 13° C.

According to experts, the best place for surfing in Chile is Pichilemu Beach (206 kilometers south of Santiago), although impressive waves can also be found at Chinchorro, Punta Gruesa, Tocopilla, Bahía Inglesa, Papudo, and El Tabo.

For rafting fanatics, running the rapids of the Maipo, Biobío, Trancura and Futaleufú will not result in disappointment.



The Chilean Trail

Along the base of the Andes, winding through its lower valleys, a unique trail is being constructed. From Visviri on the northern Altiplano to Cape Horn in the south, the 8,000-kilometer Chilean Trail will invite travelers to explore the country on foot, by bicycle or on horseback.

The Chilean Trail is one of Chile’s Bicentennial projects, announced by President Ricardo Lagos in his address to the nation on May 21, 2000.

The 1.2-meter-wide path will traverse lands once inhabited by the Inca, Aymara, Atacameño, and Pehuenche peoples. Equipped with signposts, camping areas, and basic lodges every 30 kilometers, it will also offer informational placards to help educate its users about the flora and fauna of each zone. The trail will pass by 270 villages, including 70 indigenous communities, and connect some 40 national parks and reserves.

To date, 37 segments distributed throughout the country’s 13 regions have been completed, representing a total of approximately 1,000 kilometers. The finished sections are located in landscapes as diverse as the northern desert, Robinson Crusoe Island and Patagonia. In the coming months, new segments will be added in areas such as the Milodón Cave Natural Monument, Nevado Tres Cruces, Easter Island and the Upper Bío Bío River.

www.senderodechile.cl



Security in Chile

One of the main concerns for Chilean authorities during the summer season is the security of the country's visitors. For this reason, the government and the police (both uniformed and civil) coordinate and implement special plans each year for the locations receiving the greatest influx of tourists.

Carabineros (uniformed police) on horses, bicycles, and motorcycles as well as in radio patrols monitor the security situation on land, while Navy officials in helicopters, ships, and inflatable boats watch over the country's waters.

In addition, Chile operates 18 tsunami early warning stations, maintained by the Navy's Hydrographic and Oceanographic Service (SHOA). The system is also connected to the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC).

In fact, Chile is the only South American country with an underwater system that detects alterations in the waves and sends the information via satellite to the United States and SHOA in order to confirm the presence of a tsunami.

The method, called Tremors (Tsunami Risk Evaluation through Seismic Moment from a Real-Time System), was created after the disaster on May 22, 1960, when strong earthquakes affecting the area between Concepción and Chiloé resulted in a tidal wave which devastated the towns of Corral and Chiloé, leaving more than 25,000 people dead.

The National Tsunami Alarm System uses information provided by a network of seismological and oceanographical stations distributed throughout the country, in addition to data from the PTWC. It is activated after any earthquake with the potential to generate a tsunami in Chile, or after an alert from the PTWC indicating that the country's shores may be affected.



Boya Dart in Iquique



During 2005, an estimated eight million Chileans will leave home to spend their vacations at a location different from their place of residence.

The National Tourism Service (Sernatur) has launched the campaign "Come, Discover Chile" (*Ven, descubre Chile*) to encourage Chileans to explore and enjoy their own country. A Cultural Tourism Guidebook and Youth Tourism Guide have also been created: the first is addressed mainly to older adults, while the second focuses on young people, offering information and opportunities to help them get to know Chile at prices that fit their budgets.



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