

Chile Uncovered & Easter Island

Trip style: Small group holidays

Destination:  Chile

Trip code: CHI18-WHW10

Grades: 1, 3

Carbon Footprint:  6220kg CO2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

From the cosmopolitan sights of Santiago to the arid landscapes of the Atacama Desert, the strip of a country between the Andes and the Pacific caters for every type of adventurer and walker. Enjoy a variety of walks across Chile's stunning landscapes and marvel at nature at its boldest and striking. Further highlights include geysers, volcanoes, flamingo-filled lakes, star-filled skies, penguin colonies, and a wealth of cultural and architectural thrills in the vibrantly-painted harbour city of Valparaíso. Then extend your Chile Uncovered holiday and spend three days exploring Easter Island. Visit this mysterious isle in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and marvel at the moai –

huge rock-carved statues of bizarrely-shaped human heads whose purpose have been lost in the mists of time.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Visiting the Atacama Desert, the world's driest non-polar desert
- Exploring the colourful port town and UNESCO World Heritage Site of Valparaiso
- Sampling wines in Chile's Casablanca Valley
- Admiring the El Tatio Geysers at sunrise
- Discovering the Puñihuil penguin colony
- Hiking around the snow-capped Osorno Volcano
- Journeying to Easter Island and marvel at the moai statues
- A more personalised experience thanks to small group sizes

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London Heathrow including baggage and transfers
- Guided walks with local leaders
- 17 nights' touring accommodation across Chile
- 17 breakfasts, 12 lunches & 13 dinners
- All sightseeing and entrance fees (as per itinerary)
- All in-destination transport and internal flights

TRIP SUITABILITY

This trip is graded Activity Level 3.

Part-day and full-day walks of up to 9 miles (15km) with up to 1,950 feet (600m) of ascent.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Depart the UK

Our with-flights guests depart the UK on an overnight flight to Santiago

Day 2: Santiago

We arrive in Santiago de Chile and transfer to our hotel where we are joined by our without-flight guests. We'll head out on a private guided tour to discover both sides of Santiago de Chile – a vibrant, modern metropolis and a former colonial capital. We'll begin with a visit to the presidential palace, named La Moneda because the splendid building once housed the national mint. Many other sights in the historic centre are clustered around Plaza de Armas including the impressive cathedral, the beautiful old post office, and the Palacio de la Real Audiencia, now home to the National History Museum. Leaving the centre, we'll travel towards the soaring Andes, past the Cerro San Cristóbal, which towers over the city with a great white statue of the Virgin Mary crowning its summit. Continue through Vitacura, nicknamed 'Sanhattan' because of its skyscrapers. There's also the Parque Bicentenario Vitacura, where you can see Chilean Flamingos and Patagonian blacktail swans, as well as indigenous plants. We'll round off our afternoon with dinner in one of the restaurants in the Borderio/Bellavista area.

Day 3: Cajon Del Maipo

This trekking tour first follows the route "Meseta Trek", then proceeds to climb an additional 500 metres higher into the spectacular Cordillera. After leaving the Meseta route, the path climbs steeply upwards to "La Campana", a 1800m high bell-shaped mountain that dominates the landscape around the sanctuary. The view from here is breathtaking and with a bit of luck you might be able to watch the condor flying its orbits. During the trekking tour you can often enjoy an unobstructed view of the Maipo River and the surrounding mountains. After a rest at La Campana, we continue on to "Cruce de los Maquis", a stream crossing in a small native forest and its seasonal pool is perfectly suited for a small refreshment. After another break, we descend the mountain to the Meseta route and then follow a different trail down to the river Maipo. The tour ends at its starting point. Distance: 6km

Day 4: Valle de la Luna

One of the best-known destinations between Calama and San Pedro is the Valle de la Luna. This tour into the rugged beauty of the Atacama Desert begins at dusk. With the Licancabur volcano providing the backdrop, strange salt and rock formations in the middle of the valley's barren sandy landscape really do look like a moonscape. After a tour past the bizarre natural rock and salt shapes, you will pass by the bizarre rock formation "Tres Marias" Finish the tour at a viewpoint where you overlook the Kari-Canyon and wide parts of the desert, you can even catch a glimpse at the Salar de Atacama. The setting sun bathes the landscape in a light that changes with every minute, providing a mesmerising play of colours.

Day 5: Atacama Salt Lake

Head south from San Pedro de Atacama through the desert landscape to the impressive Salar de Atacama, one of the largest salt lakes in the world. En route, visit Toconao, a small village with buildings made entirely from white volcanic stone and see Laguna Chaxa. This is part of the Reserva Nacional de los Flamingoes, and is a great place to

get close to these unusual birds. Next there will be the chance of an insight into daily life on a traditional Atacameña farm. Take a tour of the farmland and learn about regional fruit and vegetable cultivation, as well as livestock farming in this challenging terrain. Learn about the typical homemade products, such as quince juice, fruit syrups, candied quinoa and guanaco paté, then enjoy lunch and sample some of the regional produce. After lunch in the farm you will return to San Pedro In the evening join us on an Astronomy tour, there are few places in the world where the sky is as clear and the view of the stars so good, as in northern Chile. It is therefore no surprise that several of the world's most important international observatories are here. Astronomers from all over the world are regularly drawn here for their research. The observation centre Space Obs in San Pedro de Atacama (San Pedro de Atacama Celestial Observatory) is situated close to the Tropic of Capricorn, and is open to the public. During your visit, an expert explains the basics of astronomy and, with the help of an extra strong laser pointer, highlights special features of the southern hemisphere. You will also get an unforgettable glimpse of the distant stars and galaxies by looking through a telescope.

Day 6: The Guatin Valley

The Guatin Valley contains the confluence of two rivers: one comes from the Puritama thermal springs and carries earth and minerals in its warm waters; the other is the Purifica River that originates in the Andes. This extraordinary mixture of hot spring water and clear melt water creates a unique ecosystem in the Guatin Canyon, and a hike here is rewarding, not least for the giant candelabra cacti that grow in the canyon, some of which are already up to 500 years old. This pleasant hike begins in the Guatin Canyon, whose vibrant red rocks provide a wonderful display of colours. The walk along the canyon floor follows a steady incline through unique local flora, before reaching the area near Puritama thermal springs (entrance fee not included). Return to San Pedro Distance: 4km / Initial Altitude: 2,450m / Maximum Altitude: 3,475m

Day 7: El Tatio Geysers and return to Santiago

Those who wish to experience the El Tatio Geysers have to get up early, to ensure a timely arrival at the geyser field at sunrise. The fountains, located over 4300m/14,108ft, shoot up to 10m/33ft high. The sun's first rays reflecting countless colours as they mingle with boiling jets coming from the geysers create a strong contrast with the rising steam and the surrounding summits. After the spectacular show there, you have the choice of recovering from the morning chill and warming up in natural pools created by hot springs. The tour begins in the very early hours of the morning in San Pedro, to ensure a timely arrival at the geyser field at sunrise. The return drive to San Pedro takes place around midday.

Day 8: Puerto Montt

You will be picked up at the airport and start your city tour through Puerto Montt. Founded by German settlers in 1853, Puerto Montt is also known as the 'Gateway to Patagonia'. This is where the Carretera Austral begins and where ships set off for Tierra del Fuego, the Magellan Strait, and to Patagonia's glaciers. Later, continue to Puerto Varas, a small, nice town located in the shore of the Llanquihue Lake, with fantastic views towards volcanoes Osorno, Puntagudo & Calbuco. Time permitting, on arrival in Puerto Varas and after check in at the hotel, leader will take the group to a nice walk in the beautiful Cerro Phillipi park located near the hotel.

Day 9: Paso Desolación

In the morning, you will set off on a full-day hike at Osorno Volcano. The journey takes you by bus along the shore road of Lake Llanquihue with breathtaking views of the Osorno and Calbuco volcanoes. You continue on a quite adventurous gravel road to the former refuge La Picada, the starting point of your trekking tour. You will hike along the lava slopes of the snow-covered volcano Osorno - enjoying constant views of temperate forests and volcanoes. After about an hour of trekking, you will catch your first glimpse of the turquoise-blue Todos Los Santos Lake, which lies deep below you, framed by high mountains. In the afternoon, you will reach the small settlement of Petrohue, located directly by the lake, where your vehicle will be waiting for you. Return to Puerto Varas Distance: 12 km / Initial Altitude: 205m / Maximum Altitude: 1,116m

Day 10: Alerce Andino National Park

Why not spend a day in the Alerce Andino National Park and let yourself be captivated by its primordial, enchanted-seeming forest. The park is located south-east of Puerto Montt, at the beginning of the Carretera Austral, and covers an area of almost 40,000ha. Half of the park is practically untouched Valdivian temperate rainforest, in which around fifty small lakes hide. Frequently, there are also rocky peaks rising up out of the forest. The park takes its name from the alerce trees: giant conifers that reach dead straight for the sky and are capable of becoming several thousand years old. A lovely picture is created whenever individual rays of sunshine penetrate the dense greenery, just like light streaming into a cathedral. Distance: 7.5km / Initial Altitude: 129m / Maximum Altitude: 310m

Day 11: Ancud and the Puñihuil penguin colony

This day trip begins early in the morning at the hotel in Puerto Varas, setting off south, towards Pargua, where the car ferry crosses to Chiloé – an island full of myths, legends and very special people. The first stop on the island is the Bay of Caulín, where black-necked swans and other bird species can be observed during summer. After that, you will reach Ancud, the northern-most town and former capital of the island, where you get a brief insight into the lifestyle of the island's inhabitants, known as 'Chilotes' in Chile. You will also see fishing boats, the harbour, and the market. Fortifications dating back to the era of the War of Independence are also visited in Ancud. Afterwards, the journey continues along the northern coast of Chiloé, before reaching Puñihuil. Weather permitting; you will take a boat tour to one of the rocky outcrops in the sea, where the penguins nest during the breeding season. This place is known as Puñihuil and houses one of the greatest natural treasures of the region: the "Pingüineras" - a rocky landscape consisting of three volcanic islands, where Humboldt and Magellanic penguins nest from October to March each year. A variety of seabirds such as the Kelp goose, cormorants, gulls, otters and sea otters can also be observed here. You will get an introduction to the history of the "Pingüinera" and then start your trip on the boat, where you will go along the islands and watch the animals from the boat.

Day 12: Casablanca Valley

Your guide will meet you at the airport in Santiago and bring you to your hotel in Valparaíso. On the way, you will visit Viña William Cole or similar, here we will start a biking tour through the vineyard and afterwards enjoy a lunch and wine tasting. After this relaxing and entertaining tour and enjoy lunch, we continue to the coast city of Viña del Mar.

Day 13: Valparaíso

During this extensive city walking tour you will be acquainted with the history of Valparaíso whilst getting around the harbor city's adventurous geography by foot and by public transport – just like the residents! Firstly, you will take the metro to the main square and the port from where you will continue to the Southern city district Playa Ancha. Here you will explore the beautiful Paseo 21 de Mayo with its wonderful view and you will learn about the British immigrants who lived there. One of the historic funicular railways will bring you back down towards the city centre. You will then take the trolley bus to the main square Sotomayor. Afterwards, you will visit the hill Cerro Alegre and Cerro Concepción which are considered UNESCO World Heritage sites. After a stroll along Paseo Dimalow you will return to the city centre descending in the funicular Reina Victoria. Along the way you will be provided with a snack to reload your batteries.

Day 14: Santiago

After breakfast, we'll transfer to the Hotel Providencia in Santiago. The rest of the day is free for you to relax or explore the city at your own pace.

Day 15: Travel to Easter Island

Catch a flight from Santiago to Easter Island and check in at Taha Tai Hotel. Free time to settle in and explore.

Day 16: Explore Ahu Tongariki, Rano Raraku and Anakena

Our first day on Easter Island (Rapa Nui to the indigenous Polynesian inhabitants) is an introduction to its intriguing history and culture. We'll visit several restored ceremonial platforms known as ahu and enjoy our first encounter with the moai at Ahu Tongariki – the largest ahu of them all. Scattered across the island, the moai are huge, rock-carved statues of bizarrely-shaped human heads that are believed to have been erected between 1250 and 1500. Some moai stand up to 10 metres tall. Over the centuries, they have witnessed the Rapa Nui people survive civil war, famine, environmental collapse, slave raids, and contact with colonial powers. Fast forward to today and Easter Island is now a protected national park and UNESCO World Heritage Site that attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. A highlight of the day is the chance to explore Rano Raraku, a volcanic crater on the lower slopes of Terevaka – the island's highest point. For over 500 years Rano Raku served as a quarry for the volcanic stone used to sculpt the moai. You can still see incomplete monolithic figures waiting to be freed from the rock.

Day 17: Explore Ahu Akivi, Puna Pau, Ranu Kau, and Orongo

Today's Easter Island adventure takes us to Ahu Akivi, one of the few ahus not located by the sea. The seven moai figures here align with the spring and autumn equinoxes, testament to an advanced knowledge of astronomy once possessed by the Rapa Nui people. We'll stop by Puna Pau quarry and visit Hanga Poukura, an unrestored ahu on the south coast. Rounding off in Orongo, we'll drive to the rim of Rano Kau volcano for panoramic views over the sea, the town of Hanga Roa, and the Motu isles in the distance. These small islands were the focus of the so-called Birdman Cult that began in the post-moai era. Rival clans would face off in a swimming contest to the Motu, to climb and steal the first swallow's egg of the year. The winning clan was allowed to nominate Rapa Nui's king for the following year. The tour ends with a transfer to your hotel.

Day 18: Depart Easter Island

fter breakfast, we return to the airport for the flight back to Santiago. Check in at the hotel and there's free time to enjoy a final night in the Chilean capital.

Day 19: Depart Chile

Our tour finishes here, and we bid farewell to our without flight guests. With-flight guests transfer to Santiago airport for the return flight back to the UK.

Day 20: Return to UK

With-flight guests arrive back in the UK.

Hotel La Casa de Don Tomas, San Pedro de Atacama - Chile

Located in the magic splendor of the archeologically capital, San Pedro de Atacama desert area in the northern Chile, Hotel La Casa de Don Tomas offers its guests the best in comfort and ambiance

Holiday Inn, Santiago Airport - Chile

A sleek, contemporary design and a convenient location

Hotel Taha Tai, Easter Island - Chile

The Hotel Taha Tai was built on the sea shore from which it adopted its name. The hotel is located a mere 5 minutes from the urban centre of the town Hanga Roa. The hotel also has a bar and restaurant from which it is possible to enjoy the island amazing sunsets.

Hotel Pullman San Martin, Viña del Mar - Chile

Located by the sea, just a few steps from Acapulco Beach. Enjoy the beautiful sunset on the terrace, plus the infinity edge pool while sipping a delicious drink after your day walking.

Panamerican Hotel Providencia, Santiago - Chile

In the heart of the lively Providencia quarter, the hotel is within easy reach of many shopping and gastronomic options. Welcoming rooms and a pleasing garden with a pool and terrace offers an intimate and relaxed atmosphere. The hotel restaurant offers delicious fare with a strong focus on typically Chilean dishes.

Cabaña del Lago Hotel in Puerto Varas - Chile

Set on the shores of Lake Llanquihue and offering panoramic views of Puerto Varas and the volcanoes in the surroundings.

Safety information - SHARED WITH ALL WW

Please inform us of any medical situation which may affect your enjoyment of the holiday. This is important because our leaders must consider both group and individual safety at all times. Whilst out with the group, we respectfully request that you: Please listen to any safety instructions and other directions from the leader Keep group members in view, especially if weather or visibility is poor Please stay where you are if you become separated from the group. The leader will retrace their steps to find you. Each leader carries a first aid kit but is not allowed to supply any

medication including aspirin, paracetamol, antihistamines and antiseptic cream. You may wish to bring these items with you in your own kit (see Suggested Kit List). In the unlikely event that your leader is incapacitated, please use any emergency kit in their rucksack and call emergency services.. Please then call our emergency number (sent in your final dispatch) and let us know there is a problem.

Dietary requirements - SHARED WITH ALL WW

Please contact us as far in advance as possible if you have any specific dietary requirements and we will do our best to meet your needs. If you require a specific meal on the flight, please let us know as soon as possible, and no later than 96 hours before travel.

Vaccinations & health information for Chile and Easter Island

This information is subject to change. In all cases, we highly recommend you consult your GP for up to date details and for more information on what is appropriate to your situation at least 10 weeks before travel. As a rule, travellers should be up to date with their routine vaccinations and boosters as recommended in the UK - including, for example, the MMR and diphtheria, tetanus and polio vaccines. Requirements can change, and we recommend you check in good time ahead of your holiday. Some travellers may also require or wish to consider vaccines for: Diphtheria Hepatitis A and B Rabies Tetanus There have been some confirmed cases of Dengue fever in Easter Island. You should take steps to avoid being bitten by mosquitos; there is no vaccine. Please note: the use or possession of some common prescription or over-the-counter medicines is banned in some countries. If you will be carrying medication, please check with the country's embassy/consulate prior to travel. As an extra precaution, it is recommended to: Keep medication in its original packet Take a copy of your prescription If possible, ask your chemist to write the name of your medication in the language of the country you're visiting For further information on country specific advice, visit www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk or www.traveldoctor.co.uk.

Passport & Visa information for Chile and Easter Island

Passports must be valid for the duration of the stay; we also generally recommend that passports have at least 6 months validity from the date of your departure from Chile, but this is not an official requirement. Visas are not required for British passport holders visiting for less than 90 days. On arrival in Chile, you will need to complete the appropriate arrival/immigration form. The immigration authorities will issue you with a Tarjeta de Turismo: this is a white, A5 sized form and must be retained to present to immigration when you leave Chile. As of 9th May 2020, Australian citizens will need a visa to enter Chile. The maximum length of stay is 90 days. The visa must be applied for at the Chilean consulate closest to your place of residence. The cost is approximately 145 USD. Other passport holders and nationalities should consult the embassy for advice. For entry to Easter Island, you will need to complete the Rapa Nui Entry Form here: [Fui Electronico | Ministerio del Interior](https://www.fui.cl/). This can only be completed a maximum of 20 days before entry. Failure to complete this requirement before travel could result in you not being permitted to enter Easter Island. To complete the form, you will need your Easter Island flight details and the name of the hotel where you are staying, both available in your booking confirmation and trip notes. The visiting status you should select is as a TOURIST. Following submission, you will receive an email confirmation. Please print this out to present at the airport before entering Easter Island. Requirements may change and it is your responsibility to ensure you meet the entry requirements. For more information regarding entry requirements for Chile, see the FCO website.

Packing list - Overseas Guided Walking

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider

packing. Essentials Walking boots Waterproof jacket Waterproof trousers Insulated jacket/top Walking clothing Walking socks (plus spares) Sunhat Gloves/mitts and warm hat Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity) Headtorch High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30) Sunglasses with a dark lens Rucksack (15-30 litres) Mobile phone Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.) Passport Visa (if applicable) Copy of your travel insurance policy UK Global Health Insurance Card (formerly known as EHIC) Recommended Collapsible walking poles Swimwear and travel towel Snacks Dry bags Rubbish bags Insect repellent Optional extras Camera Sit mat Flask for hot drinks Durable lunch box Gaiters GPS device (excluding Bhutan, Georgia and India)
