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Chile

Official Name: *Republic of Chile*

LAST UPDATED: JUNE 19, 2015

Embassy Messages

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Quick Facts

- **PASSPORT VALIDITY:**
For the duration of stay
- **VACCINATIONS:**
None
- **BLANK PASSPORT PAGES:**
One page required for entry stamp
- **CURRENCY RESTRICTIONS FOR ENTRY:**
None
- **TOURIST VISA REQUIRED:**
Not required for stays 90 days or less
- **CURRENCY RESTRICTIONS FOR EXIT:**
None

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Embassies and Consulates

[U.S. Embassy Santiago](#)

**Avenida Andres Bello 2800, Las Condes
Santiago, Chile**

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Destination Description

In addition to its stunning natural beauty, the Republic of Chile has a large, educated middle class and a robust free-market economy. Santiago and other large cities have well-developed tourist facilities and services, although the quality of tourist facilities may vary outside major populated areas. Spanish is the national language. English is frequently understood in major tourist hotels and resorts but is not widely used outside those areas. Read the Department of State [Fact Sheet on Chile](#) for additional information on U.S.-Chile relations.

Entry, Exit & Visa Requirements

U.S. citizens entering Chile must have a valid passport. U.S. citizens traveling to Chile for recreation, tourism, business, or academic conferences do not need to obtain a visa prior to their arrival in Chile. A Tourist Card will be issued for a stay of up to 90 days. An extension of stay for another 90 days is possible upon payment of an extension fee at the [Chilean Immigration Office](#) located at San Antonio 580, Santiago; telephone (56) 2 2550-2469. The Tourist Card must be surrendered upon departure. Failure to submit this card upon departure may result in delays until a replacement is obtained. If lost or stolen, the Tourist Card must be replaced by the [International Police](#) (website is in Spanish only) at their nearest headquarters or at the international airport prior to departure.

If you have stayed in Chile for more than the allowed time period, you will not be allowed to leave the country without paying a fine. This fine cannot be paid at the airport, so you should pay it before attempting to depart Chile. To pay the fine prior to your departure, you should go to the [Departamento de Extranjería](#) and make an *autodenuncia* or complaint against yourself in the Sanciones office. Upon doing this, you will be told how much the fine will be, and once you pay it, you can depart Chile. If you attempt to depart Chile without paying the fine, your passport will be confiscated by the airport police, and they will give you directions on how to pay the fine. This process involves going to multiple Chilean government offices, first to find out how much the fine is, then to pay the fine, next to show that you have paid the fine, so that you can get a document indicating your passport should be returned, and lastly, to retrieve your passport. The entire process may take several days and could take up to three weeks.

U.S. citizens travelling to Patagonia, primarily the Torres del Paine National Park, often seek to cross into Argentina at the Calafate crossing. Payment of a reciprocity fee is required to cross into Argentina, and there are no facilities at that border crossing to do so. As a result, travelers are often sent back into Chile to find an internet cafe to pay their fee online, and are sometimes stranded because their transportation has already departed the border.

U.S. citizens, who intend to work, live, or study in Chile must apply in advance for a Chilean visa.

All people traveling on official business in possession of an official or diplomatic passport must obtain a visa at a Chilean Embassy or Consulate before traveling to or through Chile. If you hold an official or diplomatic passport and are traveling for tourism or personal reasons, you should obtain a tourist passport to present upon arrival in Chile as the authorities will not grant you a tourist visa or Tourist Card without one.

Ensure that you have appropriate documentation to enter Chile. U.S. passports must be in good condition and valid for the period of stay. The U.S. Embassy cannot secure entry on your behalf if you arrive without a valid U.S. passport, with a passport that is damaged or mutilated, or if you arrive without a visa when one is required.

For up-to-date information on visa requirements, visit the website of the [Embassy of Chile](#) in Washington, D.C.

Chile imposes strict restrictions on the importation of agricultural products. Visit the [Ministry of Agriculture](#) website (Spanish only) for current guidelines. You must declare all agricultural items, including fruit provided on incoming flights and packaged products. If you fail to declare food items, you may be detained and fined a significant amount. For further information regarding Chilean customs regulations, visit the [National Customs Service](#)

[website](#) . For general information regarding customs, please read our [Customs information page](#).

The U.S. Department of State is unaware of any HIV/AIDS entry restrictions for visitors to or foreign residents of Chile.

Entry / Exit Requirements for Dual Nationals: Dual U.S./Chilean nationals must enter and exit Chile using their Chilean passports, and they must enter and exit the United States using their U.S. passports. A naturalization certificate is not a valid travel document. The Government of Chile considers all persons born in Chile to be citizens, even if they have since acquired U.S. citizenship. The Embassy has seen cases of U.S. citizen children, born in the United States to Chilean parents, who entered Chile on U.S. passports, being required by Chilean authorities to obtain Chilean passports in order to leave the country. This generally occurs when the child overstays the 90-day tourist entry period. Contact a [Chilean Embassy or Consulate](#) for more information. The U.S. Embassy cannot intervene if Chilean officials prevent a dual citizen from departing Chile due to lack of a Chilean passport.

Entry / Exit Requirements for Minors: In an effort to prevent international child abduction, Chile has put in place strict requirements for the entry/exit of minors under the age of 18. Even when the minor is traveling with both parents, the parents will be required to show evidence of their relationship to the child when departing the country. Please carry an original birth certificate or a certified copy of the original.

Minors who are present in Chile on a visa category other than tourist will always be **required** to submit a written notarized authorization from any non-traveling parent(s) and a birth certificate **at the time of departure**. In Chile, the authorization can be executed before a local notary public. If the non-traveling parent(s) is in the United States, the written authorization can be notarized and executed directly at the [Chilean Embassy or Consulate](#) . If the non-traveling parent is in the United States and is unable to visit the Chilean Embassy or a Chilean Consulate, the authorization can be executed by a U.S. notary. However, an authorization executed by a U.S. notary must be authenticated to be valid in Chile. This means that after the document is notarized, it must be authenticated through a chain of steps involving submission to local, state, and national authorities before it can be submitted to the Chilean Embassy or Consulate. [Click here](#) to find additional information on the authentication process. Note that the final step in the process is to submit the document to the Chilean [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) in Chile to authenticate the signature of the Chilean official in the United States. This is a lengthy process and should be commenced well in advance of travel.

A minor entering Chile as a tourist will generally not be required to present a written notarized authorization from the non-traveling parent(s) at the time of departure **if the minor leaves with the same adult companion with whom the minor entered Chile**. The minor's immigration record will be annotated to record the name of the adult(s) with him or her at the time of entering the country. However, we recommend traveling with a written notarized authorization from the non-traveling parent in order to avoid misunderstandings and ensure a smooth exit out of the country. On occasion, a parent traveling with their minor child for tourism purposes has encountered difficulty exiting the country because they did not possess a notarized statement from the non-traveling parent. Minors departing alone or in the company of another party are required to submit a written notarized authorization from the non-traveling parent(s) and birth certificate. If the

authorization is notarized outside of Chile, it must be authenticated following the steps in the paragraph above.

The written notarized authorization should be in Spanish and include the following: 1) the full name of the custodial and/or non-custodial parents(s) or legal guardians; 2) the parents' full address; 3) the full name of the child; 4) the child's date of birth, place of birth, passport number and date of issuance; 5) full name and passport details of the person accompanying the minor; 6) dates of travel, including arrival and departure information; 7) address where the minor will reside; and 8) explicit authorization that a minor can travel alone or in the company of another person.

The U.S. Embassy is unable to assist with requests for assistance in resolving entry and exit issues for U.S. citizens. The Chilean [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) provides detailed information about requirements for children traveling into and out of Chile.

Information about [dual nationality](#) or the prevention of [international child abduction](#) can be found on our website.

Safety and Security

Demonstrations occur frequently. Although most are peaceful and have pre-approved routes, they sometimes become violent or change course with little warning. Demonstrations are common on March 29, the Day of the Young Combatant, and September 11, the anniversary of the 1973 coup against the government of President Salvador Allende. Even demonstrations that are meant to be peaceful can become violent and unpredictable. Labor strikes can be sources of risk as well; striking workers have been known to block roads and throw rocks in rare cases. Avoid demonstrations if possible. Be alert and aware of your surroundings and pay attention to the local news media.

There is an increasing risk to the public from explosive and incendiary devices randomly placed in public spaces throughout Santiago. These devices have been found recently at ATM's, metro stations, and churches. Anarchist groups often claim responsibility for these acts, and the Chilean government investigates these incidents as acts of terrorism.

Remain vigilant and avoid suspicious packages or unattended backpacks in public areas as well as on public transportation in Santiago. If a suspicious object is encountered, move away from the area and alert authorities immediately.

Araucanía Conflict: The Mapuches, an indigenous group, make up a small percentage of the Chilean population and are concentrated in Araucanía and Santiago. Elements within some Mapuche communities are engaged in a conflict over land and indigenous rights in Chile. Violent individuals and activist groups seeking redress for grievances sometimes utilize protest tactics, including burning of structures and pastures, attacks on trucks and other equipment, and death threats. There have been several attacks, allegedly perpetrated by Mapuche members, in the region of Araucanía (Region IX, in south-central Chile) since 2012 which have resulted in deaths. Other attacks on property have taken place in the same area. These attacks have targeted multinational forestry corporations and private Chilean landowners, rather than U.S. citizens or other foreigners. Nevertheless, U.S. citizens are advised to exercise caution when traveling in the Araucanía region.

Visitors to Easter Island may occasionally encounter non-violent demonstrations. Such demonstrations have caused minor disruption at the airport and closure of some government facilities. Demonstrations may result in minor inconveniences and occasional delays.

To stay connected:

- Enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) so we can keep you up to date with important safety and security announcements.
- Follow the Bureau of Consular Affairs on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).
- Bookmark the [Bureau of Consular Affairs website](#), which contains the current [Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts](#) as well as the [Worldwide Caution](#).
- Follow the U.S. Embassy in Chile on [Twitter](#) and visit the Embassy's [website](#).
- In the event of an emergency, contact us at 1-888-407-4747 toll-free within the United States and Canada, or via a regular toll line, 1-202-501-4444, from other countries.
- Take some time before traveling to consider your personal security and checking for useful tips for [traveling safely abroad](#).

CRIME: Most foreigners visit Chile without incident. The security environment is generally safe, and there is comparatively less violent crime

experienced in Chile than other Latin American countries. Nevertheless, street crime, telephone scams, and residential break-ins are common, especially in Santiago, Valparaiso, Antofagasta, and Iquique. As in any large city, be cautious and aware of your surroundings. Be alert for pick-pocketing, purse and camera snatching, and thefts from backpacks and rental cars. Petty crime is common in major tourist destinations, in hotel lobbies and restaurants, near ATM machines/banks, internet cafes, at bus and subway stations, and in cruise ship ports. Exercise caution when touring Cerro Santa Lucia, Cerro San Cristobal, Mercado Central, Plaza de Armas, Bellavista, and Barrio Lastarria as pick-pocketing and muggings occur frequently in these areas. Criminals usually work in groups and employ a variety of ruses to distract and victimize unsuspecting visitors. One trick is for someone to spray mustard or another substance on the tourist from a distance. A pickpocket will then approach the tourist offering to help clean the stain, and while doing so, s/he or an accomplice robs the victim. In 2014, there were numerous reports of ATMs being blown up, often in the very late evening/very early morning hours, in order to steal money. In these cases, the motive is theft, not terrorism. A few taxi drivers engage in currency switching and overcharge with altered taxi meters. Incidents of individuals smashing car windows of occupied vehicles stopped in traffic and taking items of value on seats have occurred. Drivers should keep car doors locked at all times and valuables out of sight while driving and while the vehicle is parked.

Additionally, residential burglaries, to include home invasions, and vehicle theft have increased in the metropolitan Santiago area. Vehicle theft is also a serious problem in northern Chile (from Iquique to Arica) where the likelihood of vehicle recovery is extremely low. Credit card fraud/cloning has also become a concern. Never allow your credit card to be charged outside of your direct view and always ensure that the card you receive back is not a substitute.

Your passport is a valuable document. Report the loss or theft of a U.S. passport to the police and to the U.S. Embassy immediately. Secure your passport and other valuables in a hotel safe, and carry a photocopy of your passport for identification purposes. Leave copies of your passport and important documents with family members in case of emergency. For information about measures you can take to protect yourself overseas, see our pamphlet [A Safe Trip Abroad](#).

Counterfeit and pirated goods may sometimes be available in Chile, and transactions involving such products are generally illegal under local law. In addition, bringing such goods back to the United States may result in forfeitures and/or fines. More information on this serious problem is available in the [intellectual property section of the U.S. Department of Justice website](#) .

VICTIMS OF CRIME: If you or someone you know becomes the victim of a crime abroad, you should contact the local police and the nearest U.S. Embassy or consulate. We can:

- Replace a lost or stolen passport.
- Help you find appropriate medical care if you are the victim of violent crimes such as assault or rape.
- Put you in contact with the appropriate police authorities, and if you want us to, contact family members or friends.
- Help you understand the local criminal justice process and direct you to local attorneys, although it is important to remember that local authorities are responsible for investigating and prosecuting the crime.

The local equivalents to the "911" emergency lines in Chile follow an ABC-123 plan:

131 - Ambulancia / Ambulance

132 - Bomberos / Fire Department

133 - Carabineros / Police Department

Please see our [information for victims of crime](#), including possible victim compensation programs in the United States.

Local Laws & Special Circumstances

CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While in Chile, you are subject to Chile's laws and regulations. Chilean laws may differ significantly from those in the United States. You may not have the same protections available to you as under U.S. law, and penalties for breaking the law can also be more severe than in the United States for similar offenses. Persons violating Chile's laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested, or imprisoned. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in Chile are strict, and convicted offenders can expect lengthy jail sentences and fines. Persons engaging in sexual conduct with children and using or disseminating child pornography in a foreign country may be prosecuted in the United States. Please see our information on [Criminal Penalties](#).

Based on the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, bilateral agreements with certain countries, and customary international law, if you are arrested in Chile, you have the option to request that the police, prison officials, or other authorities alert the U.S. Embassy in Santiago of your arrest, and to have communications from you forwarded to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: Chile lies in an active seismic zone and is prone to major earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions. Several of the strongest earthquakes in history have occurred in Chile. Prepare yourself for a natural disaster by consulting the websites of the U.S. [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\)](#) and Chile's [Oficina Nacional de Emergencia \(ONEMI\)](#).

Minefields are found in Chile's northern border region with Peru and Bolivia and around the southern border with Argentina in Patagonia. Minefields are generally marked, but markers may have shifted or may not be visible. Follow clearly identified roads and trails when traveling in minefield areas. Border crossings should only be made at authorized locations. Consult with park or other local officials concerning minefields and other hazards.

Chile is a popular destination for outdoor and adventure sports. Despite the best efforts of local authorities, assisting persons lost or injured in isolated and wilderness areas can be problematic. Before you go, learn about local hazards and weather conditions. You can obtain information in Spanish about parks and wilderness areas from the [Chilean Forestry Service](#), mountain climbing from the [Federacion de Andinismo de Chile](#), and weather forecasts from the [Chilean Meteorological Service](#). Forest fires can be a problem in many areas of the country, including areas frequented by tourists. Historically many fires occur during the dry summer months of December, January, and February, sometimes burning hundreds of acres. Check the [Chilean National Travel Board](#) (Spanish only) or the [Chilean Federal Emergency Agency](#) websites for alerts. Inform park rangers, police, or other local authorities of your itinerary, and report missing or injured persons to the police immediately.

Chile's mountains and ski resorts are the recreational destination for hundreds of skiers and snowboarders each year. The main ski centers in Chile have good safety standards with well groomed runs, ski and snowboard lessons with certified instructors, and clear signals for closure and opening of runs. Skiing and snowboarding, however, are inherently dangerous sports and injury or death is always a possibility. Skiers and snowboarders should respect the rules of each ski resort and be aware that skiing or boarding out of bounds is extremely dangerous.

Outdoor sports and travel in Chile have a slightly higher degree of risk than in the United States. While the infrastructure and safety standards are

generally good, the distances between some centers for outdoor sports and top notch hospital care can be extreme, delaying treatment times. Additionally, Chile's geography means a long medical evacuation to the highest level trauma centers in the country, located in Santiago. While clinics and hospitals in smaller cities can be superb in many respects and have saved the lives of several critical accident victims in recent years, some citizens may prefer post operative care in Santiago or the United States. Medical evacuation is expensive and can be difficult to arrange. We strongly suggest that all travelers, but especially "adventure" travelers, procure medical evacuation insurance prior to arrival

A recent decree signed by the Minister of Interior, based on a law for protection of national parks and monuments provides authority to regional governors to expel foreigners from Chile for damaging objects or places that are part of the national heritage. In 2015, two U.S. citizens were expelled from Torres del Paine National Park for igniting a fire in a small camp stove in a designated no fires area. Smoking a cigarette in these areas can also result in a large fine and expulsion from the park and from Chile. Travelers should make a point to learn all the rules of visiting national parks and observe them strictly.

WOMEN TRAVELER INFORMATION: If you are a woman traveling abroad, please review our travel tips for [Women Travelers](#).

LGBT RIGHTS: There are no legal restrictions on adult same-sex sexual relations or the organization of LGBT events in Chile.

There have been cases of discrimination due to sexual orientation and gender identity reported, including cases involving violence or death. According to the Organization for Transgender Dignity and Diversity, authorities have appeared reluctant to investigate and prosecute cases involving anti-LGBT violence or discrimination. Laws also prevent transgender persons from changing gender markers on government-issued identity documents, including national identity cards and university diplomas, to match their outward appearance or chosen expression.

For more detailed information about LGBT rights in Chile, you may review the State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014. For further information on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) travel, please read our [LGBT Travel Information](#) page.

ACCESSIBILITY: While in Chile, individuals with disabilities may find accessibility and accommodation very different from the United States. While steps are being taken to improve conditions for persons with disabilities, many public places are not adapted to accommodate these needs. For information on handicap accessible locations in Santiago and other locations in Chile, you can visit [MapCity.com](#) (Spanish only).

Health

Santiago has two main private hospitals that are accredited by The American Hospital Association and meet U.S. standards: [Clinica Alemana](#) and [Clinica Las Condes](#) . Both have international patient departments and experience with some international insurance companies. There are many other good options in Santiago and the country in general. Medical care in Chile is generally good, though it may not meet U.S. standards in remote areas. Major hospitals accept credit cards, but many doctors and hospitals in Chile expect immediate payment in cash. Prescriptions written by local doctors and over-the-counter medicines are widely available. Medicare and many U.S. local insurance companies do not cover medical expenses in Chile. We strongly recommend that travelers in Chile purchase international medical insurance before traveling. Medical care in Chile is extremely expensive for those who do not have insurance.

Air pollution is a major health concern in Santiago, resulting in severe bronchial ailments affecting infants, small children, and the elderly. The most severe air pollution occurs during the winter (May through August).

The ozone layer is especially thin over parts of Chile. Take precautions to protect yourself from ultraviolet radiation.

You can find detailed information on vaccinations and other health precautions on the [CDC website](#) . For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad, consult the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) website](#) , which contains additional health information for travelers, including [detailed country-specific health information](#) .

Travel & Transportation

TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS: While in Chile, you may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States:

- Right-hand turns are prohibited at red lights unless otherwise posted.
- Major highways in and around Santiago collect tolls through the use of an electronic transmitter (available at www.concesiones.cl).
- Secondary and mountain roads may be poorly maintained, poorly lit, and may lack guardrails.
- Some primary roads to remote tourist attractions are not paved, but are well maintained, with graded gravel.
- Many drivers do not signal lane changes and rarely yield to merging traffic.
- Many drivers exceed posted speed limits, do not maintain safe distances, and do not observe posted road signs.
- Major arteries in Santiago may switch directions during morning and evening rush hours.
- Drivers must carry sufficient Chilean pesos to pay frequent highway tolls.

Chile has modern infrastructure. Taxis and public transportation are plentiful and relatively inexpensive. Avoid using unmetered taxis; if you do use an unmetered taxi, agree to a fare before embarking. To use the [public bus system](#) in Santiago you need to obtain the prepaid "Bip" card. This card can also be used when traveling on the Santiago [subway](#) .

Driving under the influence of alcohol in Chile is severely punished ("Zero Tolerance" policy) and can result in incarceration.

Visitors for fewer than 90 days can rent a car and drive with a valid U.S. license, though insurance may not be available in some forms for drivers without a Chilean or international driver's license. Visitors in Chile for longer than 90 days must have a valid Chilean driver's license. The police may fine foreigners for driving without a valid driver's license.

Please refer to our [Road Safety](#) page and the website of [Chile's national tourist office](#) (Spanish only) for more information.

AVIATION SAFETY OVERSIGHT: The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has assessed the Government of Chile's Civil Aviation Authority as being in compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aviation safety standards for oversight of Chile's air carrier operations. Further information may be found on the [FAA's safety assessment page](#) .

[Please see the Fact Sheet for this country.](#)

Assistance for U.S. Citizens

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