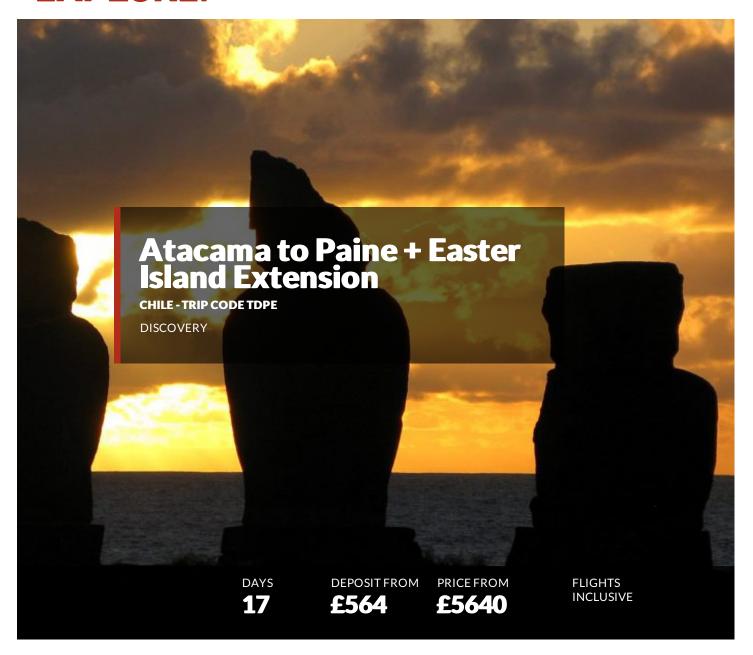
EXPLORE!



Why book this trip?

Chile is often known as the 'thin country', being 4,270km long and only 177km wide, thus making it a land of extremes, from glaciers in the south to deserts in the north. Join us as we discover the arid Atacama Desert; a barren landscape peppered with hot springs and spouting geysers. In Torres del Paine National Park we explore arguably one of the world's most beautiful national parks. Along the way we tour the capital Santiago and visit the pretty Lake District region.



INCLUDED MEALS Breakfast: 16



TRIP STAFF
Explore Tour
Leader
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



TRANSPORT
Bus
Flight



2 nights standard guesthouse 14 nights standard hotel



TRIP PACE: Moderate



GROUP SIZE: 12 - 18

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip Santiago de Chile; afternoon city tour

Joining the trip in Santiago today, our intention this afternoon is to take an orientation tour of the city by bus. One of the most scenic cities in South America, Santiago lies in the shadow of the Andes and the old part of the city, around the Alameda, contains a number of fine buildings, statues and gardens, including the impressive Presidential Palace and the monastery of San Francisco. The city is filled with museums to its colonial and pre-Columbian past and in the Bellavista district we can find the unusual house of the famous Chilean poet and Nobel Prize winner Pablo Neruda.



ACCOMMODATION:
Diego de Velazquez Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Free day in Santiago, optional Valparaiso trip

Today has been left free to explore some more of the city, to wander its streets and parks, or to taste the regional food and drink some of the famous Chilean wine. Alternatively there is the option of a trip to the nearby city of Valparaiso, Chile's culture capital. Once a colonial port linking trade with neighbouring Peru, the city suffered numerous raids at the hands of pirates, including Sir Francis Drake. Reaching the height of its prosperity during the 19th century it finally fell into decline with the onset of the steam age and the opening of the Panama Canal. Much of its colonial past has been destroyed by a number of powerful earthquakes over the years, but the city still retains some of the grandeur of its past. Today it is a major port and the surrounding hills, a natural amphitheatre covered in colourful houses and mansions, are a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



ACCOMMODATION:
Diego de Velazquez Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Fly to Calama, drive to San Pedro de Atacama; walk in Valle de la Luna

Flying to Calama this morning we transfer by private bus to the oasis town of San Pedro de Atacama, set high among the spectacular volcanoes of Los Andes Cordillera and our gateway to the dramatic landscapes of the Atacama Desert. On arrival there will be time to relax, and this afternoon we will take a walk among the dunes of the nearby Valle de la Luna (Moon Valley), a nature reserve to the west of the town, where the surreal landscape has been formed by the erosion of the salt mountains. We intend to watch the setting sun cast its golden glow across the spectacular landscape, before returning by bus back to San Pedro.



ACCOMMODATION: Iorana Tolache Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel





MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 4 - In San Pedro, walk on the Salar de Atacama

San Pedro was once the centre of the Atacama culture, before the arrival of the Spanish, and its dusty streets and evocative setting still exude an air of times long past. Over the next two days we have the chance to explore in more depth this remarkable town and its fascinating cultural and natural diversity. Our first day sees us travelling out to the gigantic Salar de Atacama to walk on the salt flats, undoubtedly one of the most dramatic natural features in the country. The barren valley of salt has been almost moulded by wind into crystalline forms on its crust - some hexagonal and others almost coral-like, or like shards of ice. Flamingoes drink from the saltwater lagoons, a flash of bright pink against the otherwise barren landscape. As well as walking in this strange setting, we visit the small village of Tocanao, known for its buildings made of the volcanic stone liparite. We visit the church and historic bell tower, as well as the booths of craftspeople who sell their wares in the small village square.



ACCOMMODATION: Iorana Tolache Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 5 - Free day; optional El Tatio Hot Springs

Our second day in San Pedro has been left free, affording the chance to do some exploring on your own. You may like to take an early morning trip out to the El Tatio Hot Springs, a geothermal field of spouting geysers and steaming fumaroles surrounded by a vista of volcanic mountains. Watching these active geysers erupting in the light of the rising sun is an impressive sight.



ACCOMMODATION: Iorana Tolache Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Fly to Puerto Montt and transfer to Puerto Varas; walk at Llanquihue Lake

Today we fly to Puerto Montt, the most important port in the south of Chile and, in a very real sense, the spot where the developed or settled population of Chile comes to a full stop. This is the gateway to the wild and rugged regions to the south and from here we drive to Puerto Varas and our hotel, based beside the shores of Lake Llanquihue. With some free time to explore we'll take a stroll on the lake shore, the second largest in Chile and one of the shimmering jewels of Chile's Lake District. Set against the backdrop of snow-capped volcanoes, this is the third largest expanse of natural water on the South American continent and presents us with a quite breathtaking setting.



ACCOMMODATION: Hotel Puelche (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - Walk around the Osorno Volcano

We have a full day of short hikes in this area, which is dominated by the classic volcanic cone of Osorno (2680m), an almost picture-perfect representation of a snowy volvanic peak. Our walk takes us through the lush landscapes of the Valdivian rainforest, the slopes of the mountain sprinkled with Andean birch, providing a haven for chingue (Patagonian skunk), culpeo (Patagonian fox), weasels and puma, whilst the bird populations boast hummingbirds, woodpeckers and kestrel. We head to the Petrohue Waterfalls, a cascading torrent of emerald-blue with a stunning backdrop of the Osorno Volcano.



ACCOMMODATION: Hotel Puelche (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Fly to Punta Arenas, drive to Puerto Natales

We fly to Punta Arenas today - flight schedules can change so this journey may be in the morning or the early afternoon. On arrival into Punta Arenas we take a public bus to our hotel in Puerto Natales. This is the gateway to the Torres del Paine national park, and from small beginnings as a tiny fishing port it has now blossomed to a hub of adventure, with an atmosphere of excitement as travellers pass through on their way to the mountains. From the edge of the town there are striking views out to the fjords, and looking back inland we see the mountains rising imposingly over us. We will arrive in the evening to Puerto Natales.



ACCOMMODATION: Natalino Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 9 - Drive to Torres del Paine National Park via Milodon Cave

Leaving Puerto Natales this morning we travel via the Milodon Cave to Torres del Paine National Park, arguably one of the world's most beautiful national parks, described by Alberto de Agostini as 'one of the most spectacular sights that the human imagination can conceive'. We spend the full day in the park and drive around the circuit with plenty of stops to take in the wild and rugged scenery. Torres del Paine is situated amidst a region of ice-capped peaks, silent blue glacial lakes and wild hill country. It is not unusual to see large numbers of guanacos here, as well as black-necked swans, upland geese, pink flamingos and the odd grey fox snooping around the human food areas looking for an easy meal. We may

even be fortunate enough to spot condors. One of the highlights of our time here will be the views of the Torres, imposing pinnacles of sharp granite that are surrounded by glacial lakes and craggy ranges, formed millions of years ago. Reaching over 2600 metres these towers are just part of an impressive range, the highest of which is the Cerro Paine Grande, presenting us with one of the most breathtaking mountain vistas on the planet. This is a place to keep an eye out for condors, rheas and guanacos. The itinerary here is kept flexible so we can make the best choices depending on weather conditions as some walks and stops may not be possible due to high winds.



ACCOMMODATION:

Cabanas del Paine Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Standard Guesthouse



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 10 - Walks in Torres del Paine National Park

Today we have the opportunity to explore this wilderness on foot. We start out on the Hunters Trail, a roughly 7.5km hike which takes 3 hours to complete. The trail crosses natural habitats of big guanaco colonies, and for the lucky few there is the chance to spot the elusive puma. Otherwise, its a great hike for seeing condors or the black-chested buzzard eagle, as well as going past the remains of cave paintings made some 6000 years ago, by the remote and primitave Aonikenk tribes of Patagonia. In the afternoon, we walk to the magnificent icebergs of the glacier-fed Lago Grey, an easy 5km hike of about 1hr in length. The scenery is magnificent throughout, and again the itinerary is flexible in case of the strong winds that sometimes whip through this wild landscape. For those who particularly wish to do the area's most iconic hike to the base of the Torres peaks, it can be undertaken with a local guide from the lodge, at an additional cost.



ACCOMMODATION:

Cabanas del Paine Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Standard Guesthouse



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

DAY 11 - Return to Puerto Natales by car, or optional zodiac boat

We have our last morning in the park before departing for Puerto Natales in the early afternoon. It's a short drive, or alternatively for those who wish there is the option to take a zodiac boat from Torres del Paine. This journey lasts a full day and includes a barbecue lunch on board, with many scenic spots on route. We come back together in Puerto Natales in the evening, and have the rest of the day free to relax or perhaps eat out at one of the town's many restaurants.



ACCOMMODATION: Natalino Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 12 - Return to Punta Arenas, fly to Santiago

This morning we transfer to Punta Arenas, from where we fly back this afternoon to Santiago. On arrival we will transfer to our hotel for the final evening of our journey through this remarkable country.



ACCOMMODATION:

Diego de Velazquez Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



DAY 13 - Fly to Easter Island

This morning you will transfer to the airport for the flight out to Easter Island, arriving early afternoon. On arrival we transfer to the hotel, after which the rest of the day is free to relax and contemplate the days ahead. This extension is not accompanied by an tour guide, but you'll have a local guide with you throughout.



ACCOMMODATION: Vai Moana Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 14 - Discover Anakena on the northern coast

Isolated amidst the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean, Easter Island has long held a sense of mystery and fascination for outsiders. Lying some 3790km to the west of Chile the island's nearest neighbour is actually Pitcairn Island (a mere 2075km away) and its giant stone monoliths have been the subject of conjecture and speculation for centuries. Also known as Rapa Nui and the Isla de Pascua, it was discovered by the Dutch on Easter Sunday 1722 (hence its European name), but the original inhabitants of this remote and dramatic island called it Te Pito O Te Henua (the navel of the world). Today it remains one of the most remarkable archaeological sites on the planet, a factor that has seen it entered onto the UNESCO World Heritage listings. The island is renowned for the magnificent stone heads, or Moai, that dot its rugged coastline, magnificent and mysterious monoliths that once numbered some 800 in all and now lie as silent and broken sentinels, looking out across the deep waters of the Pacific.

Over the next two days you will explore something more of this most majestic and unique setting. On the first day an excursion has been arranged to Anakena on the northern coast, and we explore the majestic ceremonial platform of Tongariki with its gigantic Moais, as well as the impressive volcanic crater at Rano Raraku, where the largest unfinished Moai can be found at a shocking 21 metres, and the peaceful Te Pito Kura. Anakena beach itself is the site of the village of the island's first monarch, Hotu Matua and the setting for an almost perfectly restored Moai, affording you an opportunity to get some idea of the sheer majesty and wonder that these incredible statues must have evoked.



ACCOMMODATION:

Vai Moana Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 15 - Visit the Orongo stone village and ceremonial centre

Our second day sees us visiting the village of Orongo on the southernmost tip of the island, one of the island's most culturally important sites and the setting for the annual competitions that played such a vital factor in the ancient birdman cult. Each year chosen warriors from each of the tribes would dive into the waters and swim to the nearby island of Motu Nui in search of the first of the eggs laid by the manutara (sooty tern). The successful swimmer would win the right for his clan to control the distribution rights of the island's resources for the coming year, making it not only a culturally important event, but also one that had far reaching implications for the entire population. The remains of a number of ruined buildings and petroglyphs are dotted about the site, offering a fascinating insight into the cult and its influences. After visiting the quarries at Rano Raraku yesterday, where most of the Moai were carved out of the porous tuff found within the now barren crater, we discover how far the giant figures were transported to their final site of erection. The method of transportation on wooden rollers resulted in the eventual deforestation of the island and ultimately led to the barren landscapes that we see before us today.



ACCOMMODATION: Vai Moana Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 16 - Fly back to Santiago

After a free morning you will transfer back to the airport for the return flight to Santiago and a final night in Chile.



ACCOMMODATION:

Diego de Velazquez Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 17 - Trip ends in Santiago

The trip ends in Santiago this morning after breakfast.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Country information

Chile

Climate

The best time to visit is spring (Sept-Nov) and autumn (March-April). Between June and September the heat in the northern part of the country is less intense. Remember rain can fall at any time of the year and the weather is changeable in the mountains. Easter Island has a tropical climate so is likely to be quite hot and humid. It can also rain there in the evenings and become chilly.

Time difference to GMT Plugs Religion

-4 2 Pin Round Predominantly Roman Catholic.

Language

Spanish, Aymara, Rapanui.

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Santiago - Valparaiso US\$100 (1-3pers), US\$80 (4-7pers) US\$75 (8 pers +)
San Pedro - El Tatio Geysers US\$92
Torres Del Paine - Full day base Torres US\$170
10 Zodiac return to Puerto Natales - Approx US\$200 including lunch and observation stops
Easter Island - Half day Akivi excursion - US\$39

Clothing

Bear in mind that several different climatic zones will be experienced. Lightweight clothing is necessary for mostly warm and humid daytime conditions, though evenings can be cooler. A warm jumper or fleece and a good waterproof jacket / trousers will be needed for the colder weather and winds in the far south. It can get extremely cold in the Atacama Desert so bring some warm layers and hat, scarf and gloves

Footwear

Comfortable walking bootshoes or trainers, and sandals.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of luggage and a daypack.

Equipment

Binoculars, torch, water bottle, insect repellent, sun cream (at least factor 15), a dry bag (for keeping things dry inside your daysack if it rains on walks), good quality sunglasses and a lip salve with sun protection and walking poles (if you use them).

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

You should allow US\$70 for tipping.

Local fees

All passengers arriving with passports from Australia, Canada or the USA will have to pay a 'reciprocity tax' before getting into the imigration area. Australia US\$61, Canada US\$132, USA US\$131.

International Departure Taxes

Citizens of Australia, Canada and the US will have to pay a 'reciprocity tax' to be paid on arrival before arriving into immigration. This currently costs 61USD for Australian citizens, 1532USD for Canadian citizens, 131USD for US citizens.

Chile

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£13	£20	£3.00 - 4.00	£2

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Peso.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Carry all your funds in US cash NOT Sterling. We recommend to take a minimum of US\$400-\$500 of your total spending money in cash for your tour, in mixed denominations. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they might be difficult to exchange.

Where To Exchange

Tour Leader will advise on arrival

ATM Availability

Available in Major towns. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are useful and can be used in many places, but may be subject to a service charge.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers' Cheques can be awkward or expensive to change

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Flight

Essential Information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click here.

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click here

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. Booking Conditions

Visa and Passport Information

Chile: Visas are not required for UK, New Zealand, Australian, US and Canadian citizens. Please note for Australian passport holders will have to pay a reciprocity tax before getting into the migration area. The amount to be paid for each passport holder is as follows: US\$117 (Please check as this may change)

USA (If flights transit): you will need to apply for an ESTA if you are transiting the USA as you will have to disembark and clear immigration before re-boarding for the onward flight. Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can enter the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) - where you apply for an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), which applies if you enter the country by sea or by air. This must be done on line - https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov no later than 72 hours prior to travel. Travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely be refused boarding. When completing an application for transit you should enter the words 'In Transit' with your final destination location in the address line You must have an electronic passport with a digital chip containing biometric information about the passport owner. UK passports which are biometric feature a small gold symbol (camera) at the bottom of the front cover.

If you have visited Libya, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Syria or Yemen since March 2011 or are dual nationals of these countries, you cannot travel with an ESTA. If you are a citizen of a country not included in the VWP you cannot apply for an ESTA. In both cases, you will instead need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. If you are unable to provide a valid visa before boarding flights to the US, or entering via another method, you may not be permitted to travel. For further information please check out the US embassy website. Visa applications - http://london.usembassy.gov/niv/apply.html

Canada: An electronic travel authorisation (ETA) is required by British citizens transiting via Canada. For more information see the official Canadian government website:

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers. If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer click here

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper

altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them here.

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Altitude information

Parts of this trip are undertaken at a high altitude - the realm of thin, cold, dry air. Whilst this is unlikely to be a problem it is wise to be aware of how it may affect you.

Ability to swim

An ability to swim is essential for your safe enjoyment of the water based activities on this trip. If you wish to participate in these activities then we insist that you are able to swim.

Chile

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis A. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue Fever and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Please note many countries in Central America, South America and the Caribbean require a yellow fever vaccination certificates if travelling from infected areas. A detailed list of these countries can be found on the NaTHNaC website - http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries. Also on the NaTHNaC site there is a list of Countries (and specific areas within a country) which are at risk of infection and a vaccination is therefore recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.





PRICE GUARANTEE PROMISE



AIRPORT TRANSFERS