

EXPLORE!



Atacama to Paine

CHILE - TRIP CODE TDP

DISCOVERY

Why book this trip?

Outdoor lovers will be in their element on this tour through some of South America's most outstanding landscapes. Chile is a land of extremes, showcasing barren desert moonscapes, dramatic granite spires and verdant farmland peppered with emerald lakes. You can't fail to be wowed by this country's seriously impressive scenery.

- **San Pedro** - Walk in the Moon Valley and on the Salar de Atacama
- **Puerto Varas** - Hike in Chile's Lake District, around the Osorno Volcano
- **Torres del Paine** - Discover the glacial lakes and mountain ranges of one of the most impressive locations on earth
- **Why not extend your trip?** - This trip can be extended with four days on the mysterious Easter Island (trip code: TDPE)



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 12



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



TRANSPORT
Bus
Flight



ACCOMMODATION
2 nights
comfortable
guesthouse
10 nights
comfortable 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: Comfortable 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: Comfortable 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: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



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 the cultural and natural diversity of this town. 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 Tocalana, 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: Comfortable 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: Comfortable 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: Comfortable 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 volcanic 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: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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

We fly to Punta Arenas today - our journey is normally in the afternoon but flight schedules can change. On arrival into Punta Arenas we take a public bus for the three hour drive 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: Comfortable 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: Comfortable 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 primitive 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: Comfortable Guesthouse



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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 excursion starts with a zodiac ride down the Serrano River for one and a half hours, reaching Puerto Toro where we will hike for 30 minutes to get up-close to the Serrano Glacier. After our hike we then board a larger vessel and continue our journey south for another one and a half hours arriving for a well-deserved barbecue lunch at a traditional estancia. 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: Comfortable 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: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 13 - Trip ends in Santiago

The trip ends in Santiago 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

-4

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

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

Zodiac return to Puerto Natales - Approx US\$200 including lunch and observation stops

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

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. However, you might want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, your leader may organise a group's tips kitty for included activities and meals and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow US\$ 60, approx. 41'750 Chilean Pesos for group tipping

For all non-included services and meals on your trip please tip independently at your discretion.

Local fees

All passengers arriving with passports from Australia, Canada or the USA will have to pay a 'reciprocity

tax' before getting into the immigration 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

Chilean Peso (CLP)

Recommended Currency For Exchange

You can choose to either change your money in advance or on arrival at the airport. Here you will find both ATMs and Bureau de Change. The exchange rate with the CLP is approximately CLP 880 to the British Pound. We recommend you take some emergency cash in USD as the GBP exchange isn't very good. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they may not be accepted. Please check on line for up to date information

Where To Exchange

Tour Leader will advise on arrival

ATM Availability

ATMs can be found in the major towns and cities for cash withdrawals in CLP. Always have some cash back up as they are not always reliable

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit card are widely accepted in many shops and restaurants but some may be subject to a service charge

Travellers Cheques

We do not recommend Travellers Cheques

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

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 online - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> no later than 72 hours prior to travel. Travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely to 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:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta.asp>

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply 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 complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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.

Additional Information





Extend your trip with a visit to Easter Island

Extend your trip

Why not extend your trip with 4 days on the mysterious Easter Island. Explore the magnificent stone heads, or Moai, that stand sentinel across the rugged coastline. Click [here](#) for more details.

Reviews



**AWARD WINNING
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