



Specializing for 30 years in customized nature, cultural & adventure tours to Latin America

CHILE

Custom Sample Itinerary
Patagonia (Torres del Paine National Park)
with the Atacama Desert of northern Chile & Coastal Valparaiso
14 days/13 nights
(can be adjusted longer or shorter according to preference)

[Map of South America](#) (interactive links)

[Chile Destination Map](#)



TRIP RATING: Easy to Moderate Walking & Cultural Adventure, Grade (II) - This active trip includes lodge based hikes and outdoor excursions according to interest at elevations below 2,500 ft in Patagonia and Valparaiso and above 7,000 ft in Atacama. Scenic overland drives are sometimes on dirt roads. Ideal for travelers seeking world-renowned mountain scenery, expert guides, friendly locals, great food and fine hotels!

A personalized guided trip with your own private guide and vehicle/driver in Santiago and Valparaiso. In Torres del Paine National Park and Atacama, you'll have an all-inclusive stay with daily excursions led by on-site expert guides in small groups.

INTRODUCTION:

Patagonia . . . the name conjures up images of gauchos riding vast, windswept expanses and recalls the era of the cowboy and westward expansion in the American West. True to this vision, the sparsely populated plains and peaks of southern South America are scattered with enormous *estancias*, or sheep and cattle ranches, and contain some of the Continent's most impressive and dramatic wilderness areas. Torres del Paine National Park, offer some of the most spectacular destinations in the Western Hemisphere and should be on every hiker's list! Explore beneath the park's towering granite walls and icy peaks, considered by many to be South America's top adventure travel destination.






The intriguing **Atacama Desert** of northern Chile is home to red rock canyons, high steppe and towering Andean volcanoes creating the ideal soft adventure destination. The unusually clear and dark skies make for some of the best star gazing in the world (several observatories are located here) and the region lends itself to active travelers, photographers, nature lovers and wildlife enthusiasts. With well-preserved pre-Columbian and colonial ruins, it's an archaeological and cultural haven. Year-round warm temps (70-80F) and ample sunshine ideal for active pursuits among salt lakes, geysers, hot springs, volcanic peaks and traditional rural villages. Charming boutique hotels, located in San Pedro (elev 7,900 ft), provide an ideal base for hiking, backcountry jeeping, sandboarding, biking and soaking up the relaxed pace of the local lifestyle.

Coastal **Valparaiso** is known for a rich cultural art scene, great food and boutique accommodations such as the Hotel Casa Higuera. The historic old town is a UNESCO World Heritage site for its hills covered by multi-colored houses back-dropped by the port and bay below. Unique funicular turn-of-last-century elevators are fun to ride to connect the city's upper and lower






sections. You can also explore a museum featuring the work of Nobel prize winning poet Pablo Neruda. Nearby is the sister city of Viña del Mar where you can walk on the beach and enjoy a nice meal. En route to or from Valparaiso, you'll pass through Chilean wine country where we can plan a stop at a vineyard in the Casablanca Valley according to interest.

As a gateway to Chile, **Santiago** is a modern capital with lively neighborhoods home to intellectuals, artists, restaurants, creative boutiques and avant-garde galleries along friendly tree-lined pedestrian streets. Pablo Neruda, Chilean Nobel Prize winning poet, resided here. Local markets display artisan wares and Chile's beautiful semiprecious stone – lapis lazuli. All International flights arrive and depart Santiago, extra time in the Chilean wine region near the capital can be arranged.

DATE TOURING / HOTELS / MEALS (indicated as B,L,D)

<p>DAY 01</p>	<p>TO CHILE Depart home on an overnight flight to Santiago.</p>	
<p>DAY 02</p>	<p>SANTIAGO / ATACAMA DESERT Arrive in Santiago this morning, clear customs and meet resident guide providing connection assistance to a flight from Santiago north to Calama (2 hrs). Meet Atacama staff providing a shared group transfer 1.5 hours to San Pedro to check-in to your desert lodge to begin your 5 day/4 night stay.</p> <p>Excursions are in small groups with up to 8 guests with an expert local guide for hiking, nature safaris, photography, biking and soaking up the relaxed pace of the local lifestyle. The intriguing Atacama Desert of northern Chile is home to red rock canyons, high steppe and sacred Andean mountains creating an ideal soft adventure destination. The unusually clear and dark skies make for some of the best star gazing in the world (several important observatories are located here) and the region lends itself well to active travelers, photographers, nature lovers and wildlife enthusiasts. With well-preserved pre-Columbian and colonial ruins, it is also an archaeological and cultural haven. Year-round warm temps (70-80F) is ideal for active pursuits among salt lakes, geysers, hot springs, volcanic peaks and small villages that seem to relate more culturally to neighboring Bolivia. (B,D) Alto Atacama Desert Lodge & Spa or Tierra Atacama Hotel (both are all-inclusive offering daily small group excursions & all meals)</p> <p>Air note: We recommend a 2.5 hour minimum connection on arrival to Santiago.</p>	 
<p>DAY 03 DAY 04 DAY 05</p>	<p>ATACAMA Small group guided full day touring based from hotel in Atacama. (B,L,D)</p> <p>Recommended highlights to experience during your time in Atacama: Valley of the Moon: An area of polychromatic desert landscapes and box canyons formed by the erosion of salt mountains creating an almost lunar-like landscape. Observing the strange sculpted rock formations with the Licancabur Volcano looming in the background makes for a special sight at sunset.</p> <p>Atacama Saltbeds (Salar de Atacama): Rich in minerals including borax and lithium. Enjoy panoramic views back-dropped by impressive volcanoes. The Chaxa Lagoon has 3 species of flamingos, <i>taguas</i> and other local bird species where brackish water emerges. Enjoy majestic sunset views.</p> <p>El Tatio Geysers: The highest geyser field on earth at 14,175 ft elev. This is best explored towards the end of your visit in order to properly acclimatize. The visual impact of 40 geysers, thermal wells and steaming fumaroles at sunrise, in the azure clarity of this high altitude desert, is unforgettable. An easy walk on a trail within the geothermal field provides views of geysers, fumaroles, springs, and local fauna. Breakfast is served picnic-style at the geyser field.</p> <p>Rural villages: The local residents are primarily shepherds practicing agriculture and local commerce. In Toconao, houses and the church are built of white volcanic stone, giving the town a unique appearance and special atmosphere.</p>	  

	<p>Guatin Canyon: Located at the confluence of the Puritama River, carrying warm mineral water and the Purifica River, a clear cold stream. Hike and explore following the Vilama creek for 2.5 hours. This unique ecosystem supports the Cardon cactus, which can reach 26 feet and live up to 500 years.</p> <p>San Pedro church, a national monument overlooking the San Pedro River is home to Pukara de Quito, a 12th century Indian fortification. Nearby, are remains of Catarpe ruins, a former Inca administrative center.</p> <p>Astronomy from the Observatory: With a native Atacaman, learn more about the indigenous cosmovision and the constellations of the llama and the fox, among other wonders of the starry desert sky. From the observatory, view the rings of Saturn, the craters of the moon, nebulas and supernovas, depending on the phase of the moon and the time of year.</p>	 
<p>DAY 06</p>	<p>ATACAMA / SANTIAGO / VALPARAISO Morning touring in Atacama. Depart the lodge with a shared transfer to the airport for a flight from Calama south to Santiago (2 hrs). Reception by your private local guide in the capital and transfer by private vehicle 1.5-2 hours to the Pacific coast and check-in to your boutique hotel on a hill overlooking the port city of Valparaiso for a 3 day/2 night stay. Valparaiso was the most important Pacific maritime port before the opening of the Panama Canal. It is still a working port but has become known more recently as Chile's art capital with vibrant contemporary street art and gallery workshops. Dinner is on your own to relax at the hotel. Hotel Casa Higueras or Palacio Astoreca Hotel</p>	
<p>DAY 07</p>	<p>VALPARAISO / VINA DEL MAR After breakfast, meet your guide and private vehicle at the hotel to begin a day tour of historic Valparaiso. With history as a port, Valparaiso is a bit gritty around the edges, but that is part of the cultural allure and charm that travelers have come to love while exploring this colorful corner of Chile. The many hills here are covered with a multi-colored panorama of painted houses crowding every nook and cranny creating a dramatic backdrop. Learn how the 19th Century architecture helped the city receive inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Visit the local La Sebastiana Museum of Pablo Neruda, the late Chilean Nobel Prize winning poet. Ride on one of Valparaíso's signature funiculars to a view-point overlooking the city, two dozen of which were built at the turn of last century to connect the city's upper and lower sections. Lunch is included at a top restaurant in town with views of the bay.</p> <p>This afternoon, continue to the garden city of Viña del Mar, a short drive up the coast, for a walk on the beach boardwalk to admire the more modern Vina skyline and local palaces. This afternoon visit the Museum of Archaeology & History Francisco Fonck with your guide, home to Chilean cultural and natural history artifacts from Easter Island and coastal Chile. Later, return to your charming hotel in Valparaiso with dinner on your own to dine out near the hotel. (B,L) Hotel Casa Higueras or Palacio Astoreca Hotel</p>	 
<p>DAY 08</p>	<p>VALPARAISO / SANTIAGO / PATAGONIA Pick-up after breakfast to depart Valparaiso and transfer 1.5 hours by private vehicle with your guide to the airport. Check-in for a flight from Santiago south to Punta Arenas (3 hr 20 min). Arrive to Punta Arenas, the southernmost city in the world. Meet local staff and transfer with other guests 3 hours north across the Patagonian plains to the town of Puerto Natales on the shores of Last Hope Sound. After a rest break, continue driving 1 hour towards Torres del Paine National Park. The Paine massif comes into view towering above the plains in the distance.</p>	

	<p>Drawing closer to the deep blue waters of Sarmiento Lake, you'll see the impressive granite towers of the park's namesake. Established in 1970 and given World Heritage status in 1978, the park's name (pronounced pie-knee) translates to "blue" in the Mapuche Indian language. The park is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and is considered the 8th Wonder in the World. Check-in to the Tierra Patagonia Hotel to begin a 6 day/5 night stay. Relax and unwind over dinner at the hotel. (B,D)</p> <p>Tierra Patagonia Hotel</p> <p>Air note: According to your travel dates, we can check for a more direct flight to Puerto Natales instead of Punta Arenas to reduce drive time this afternoon.</p>	
<p>DAY 09 DAY 10 DAY 11 DAY 12</p>	<p>PATAGONIA / PAINE PARK / TIERRA</p> <p>Tierra works as an all-inclusive package of services and amenities. Upon arrival, the guide desk helps to fine tune activities for your stay according to your interests, activity level, weather and updates from park authorities about trails and lake conditions. The maximum group size is 8 travelers, along with a bilingual guide.</p> <p>Daily Guided Excursions: You decide how active you want to be choosing from half or full day excursions that help you discover the landscapes and wildlife of this singular wilderness setting, as well as the unique way of life of its human inhabitants, the gauchos and baqueanos.</p> <p>A large variety of excursions are offered at Tierra Patagonia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • half or full day hikes • glacier viewing • mountain bike touring • horse riding • scenic photography voyages by van or modern catamaran • special interest activities such as lake kayaking, fly fishing, indigenous rock art of ancient peoples, birding in search of condors & ancient lake shore geology, can be arranged in advance at extra cost <p>After a day of exploring, enjoy the cozy on-site reading and movie lounge or the full service spa with pool, Jacuzzi and massage rooms. There is a boutique displaying regional artisan work and outdoor essentials. All meals at Tierra are included in a relaxed setting in the restaurant with picture windows where you can try gourmet dishes sourced from nearby estancias blending tastes and traditions of Patagonia's heritage such as hearty stews, slow-cooked soups, Chilean sea bass, vegetable medleys and tasty meat dishes for which the region is known. (B,L,D)</p>	  
<p>DAY 13</p>	<p>PATAGONIA / SANTIAGO / DEPARTURE</p> <p>This morning, depart Torres del Paine National Park by shared vehicle 1 hour to Puerto Natales. Continue 3 hours south to the airport for a flight from Punta Arenas to Santiago (3 hr 20 min). Connect in the Santiago airport on your own to your international overnight flight home. There are VIP lounges in the airport where you can relax prior to your flight. (B)</p> <p>Air note: According to your travel dates for Patagonia, we can monitor for more direct flights from Puerto Natales instead of Punta Arenas to Santiago to reduce overland time.</p>	
<p>DAY 14</p>	<p>HOME</p> <p>Arrive in your gateway city this morning to clear customs and make onward connections home.</p>	

Meals: B=breakfast; L=lunch; BL=box lunch; D=dinner. If a meal is not indicated, you have flexibility to dine out at your leisure.

NEXT STEP: Please contact Tom Damon to setup a custom planning phone call. With your feedback on the destinations, activities and accommodations in this sample itinerary, Southwind will create a custom proposal tailored to your travel style, goals, dates and budget. Your proposal will provide Land Cost pricing and more details. Accommodations shown in this sample are in the 4-5 star category with superior or preferential rooms with views. Optional upgrades to exclusive top tier hotels can be provided during the planning. Note that space or room types cannot be guaranteed until a design fee or deposit is paid and Southwind receives confirmation. It will help to finalize plans at your soonest convenience for best selection. For high season or holiday dates, we are able to place a complimentary hold with a design fee to help secure space while we fine tune your itinerary.

We look forward to having you travel with us in Argentina & Chile!

For more information please contact your personal Travel Consultant:
Tom Damon Direct: 720-414-5569 (calls or text) Email: Tom@southwindadventures.com



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