



Chile: Top to Toe

Latin America Flexible Tour | 14 Days | Physical Level 2

Santiago – Valparaiso – San Pedro de Atacama – Puerto Varas – Puerto Natales

Travel the length of Chile, from the barren beauty of the Atacama and altiplano of the north, via the lakes and volcanoes of the Lake District, to the spectacular mountains and glaciers of Patagonia in the south.

- Valparaiso by day via funicular
- Take a walk in the Moon Valley
- Altiplano lakes and mountains
- Osorno Volcano scenic hike
- Lake cruise and glaciers
- Admire Torres del Paine



Chile: Top to Toe inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated
- Touring with National Escort and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking Local Guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Safe and secure with AFTA, ATAS and CATO

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, tipping, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary.

Latin America Flexible Tours:

Latin America tours are run in similar fashion to other Wendy Wu Tours in that you have a National Escort travelling with the group for the entirety of the trip. Due to the distances covered and the specific guiding expertise needed for each individual place visited, you will also be accompanied by our dedicated and professional local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

The cost of your tour includes most meals, however on occasion you will have the opportunity for some free time around meal times to experience the local restaurants for yourself. At these times meals will be at your own expense. The meals which are included in your tour are clearly stated on each individual day of the itinerary below.

Our Latin America tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of this continent on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. We are sure you will have a wonderful time - prepare to be immersed in the authentic charm of the countries you will visit.

Physical Level 2:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights. 'Chile: Top to Toe' is rated 2 on the physical level scale. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You'll be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- A number of destinations on this tour are at altitude. San Pedro de Atacama sits at 2,400 metres above sea level and Tatio Geyser reaches over 4000 metres – activity at these altitudes will be at an easy pace.
- You will be required, on several occasions, to climb on and off boats without assistance and spend an extended amount of time on boats in open water.
- There will be several days of sightseeing on foot for a period of time and in some cases for an extended period of time

Of course, our National Escort will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. If you require any more information about the pace of our tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

Itinerary – Chile: Top to Toe

Day 1: Fly to Santiago

Meals included: Dinner

Fly from Australia to Chile's capital Santiago, arriving the same day due to crossing the International Date Line. You will be met at the airport and transferred approximately 40 minutes to your hotel. This afternoon you have an optional walking tour of Santiago, including visits to the Plaza de Armas (the heart of the old colonial centre), the Royal Court Palace and the Government Palace, before a welcome dinner this evening.

Destination Information

Santiago - Santiago is a vibrant and cultural city set on the plains of the Andes and home to 40% of Chile's population. Split into 32 boroughs (comunas), each area has its own distinct character, yet all the streets are alive with the energy of the city.

Day 2: Discover Valparaiso

Meals included: Breakfast

Travel 3 hours to the coast to visit the bohemian port town of Valparaíso. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Valparaíso is a unique and delightful tangle, draped over a series of hills. Funiculars connect the industrial seafront with the cerros (hills) neighbourhoods, each a maze of colourful, artfully-dilapidated mansions and enchanting street art. Ride the funicular up into the hills to explore, stopping to visit Chilean poet Pablo Neruda's house. Return to Santiago this afternoon.



Destination Information

Valparaíso – Overlooked by an imperious hillside and set on a wide bay, Valparaiso is considered to be the most captivating and unique city in Chile. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2003, the colourful houses are dotted across the hillside in a haphazard, disorganised fashion and the main method of getting around is on the city's old funicular lifts.

Day 3: San Pedro de Atacama

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Rise early today to transfer to the airport and fly to the northern city of Calama (2 hours 10 minutes approximately), from where you will drive to the desert oasis town of San Pedro de Atacama before enjoying a local lunch in Ayllu de Coyo. Explore some of San Pedro's most famous landscapes with a drive out to Death and Moon valleys, some of the driest spots on the planet. With lonely volcanoes populating the horizon, enjoy the views and the silence as the afternoon sun turns the hues of the rock from orange, to red to purple.

Destination Information

San Pedro de Atacama - San Pedro de Atacama is a town sitting in the Andes mountains of North East Chile. The dramatic surrounding landscape incorporates desert, salt flats, volcanoes, geysers and hot springs.

Moon Valley – The Moon Valley is a vast lunar backdrop of scattered hills in the Atacama Desert. The Valley is at its most impressive at sunset and sunrise when the sunlight creates a magical series of colours from orange to purple and pink.

Day 4: Salar de Atacama

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Travel approximately 2 hours to the otherworldly Salar de Atacama, the largest salt flat in Chile. Visit Chaxa lagoon, part of the Los Flamencos National Reserve en route to reach Miscanti and Miniques lagoons, which sit on the high plains at the base of two colossal volcanoes of the same names. Travel to the village of Socaire. Here you will see ancient agricultural terraces with irrigation channels. After lunch, travel to another peaceful village with typical colonial architecture built in Liparita (volcanic stone), Toconao. Explore the village before returning to your hotel.



Destination Information

Salar de Atacama – The largest salt flat in Chile is an intriguing natural phenomenon. The basin was formed by evaporated water which flowed down from the Andes. There are numerous lakes within the basin, some of which are home to frolicking flocks of flamingos.

Day 5: El Tatio Geysers

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Rise at approximately 4.30am and travel for around 2 hours deeper into the Atacama to visit El Tatio Geysers. Set within a ring of volcanoes, there are about 80 lively geysers and fumaroles, which are best at sunrise. Have a guided walk amongst the mud craters and bubbling geysers. Wander freely before travelling through the Andes Mountain Range with impressive views of Putama Volcano and Tocopuri Mountains. Visit the small desert village of Machuca to see the typical terrace farming system, mud houses with straw roofs, and its local fauna such as llamas, alpacas and flamingoes. This afternoon, travel to an archaeological site where you can see Petroglyphs, stone sculpted figures with drawings of llama and shamans, among others. Then, visit the Rainbow Valley. Keep an eye out for the wild vicunas as you journey to and from San Pedro. Today is a full day touring. This day you will be reaching an altitude of 4320 metres above sea level for a short period of time.

Destination Information

El Tatio - Set within a ring of volcanoes, El Tatio is the world's third largest geyser field with about 80 lively geysers and fumaroles. The spectacle is best observed at sunrise when the geysers are at their most active.

Day 6: Puerto Varas

Meals included: Breakfast

This morning, transfer back to Calama and board your flight to Puerto Montt, the gateway to Chile's spectacular Lakes District. The flight is approximately 5 hours via Santiago. Continue about an hour to Puerto Varas, a charming town on Llanquihue Lake that is dominated by two snow-capped volcanoes. Check into your hotel for a relaxing evening.



Destination Information

Puerto Varas – Known as the city of roses, Puerto Varas is a scenic city sitting in the shadow of two impressive volcanoes, Osorno and Calbuco.

Day 7: Osorno Volcano

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Travel further around Llanquihue Lake to the village of Ensenada at the foot of Osorno Volcano, where you'll take an easy hike on the volcano's verdant slopes to reach the Osorno Ski Mountain Centre at 1,240 metres. Travel through Perez Rosales National Park to Petrohué Falls, where boardwalks will help you admire the turquoise waters and lush greenery of the Petrohué River. You will finish the day with a boat tour across Todos Los Santos Lake, where wonderful views of the forest, mountains and Osorno Volcano await.



Destination Information

Osorno Volcano - A 2,652-metre tall volcano in Los Lagos Region of Chile, it is noticeable for its similar appearance to Mount Fuji.

Day 8: Puerto Natales

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Visit a local fish and artisanal market this morning on the way to Puerto Montt. Fly to Punta Arenas followed by a 4-hour ground transfer to Puerto Natales, arriving at your hotel in the late evening.

Destination Information

Puerto Natales – Just a drive away from Argentinian Patagonia, Puerto Natales was founded in 1911 as a port for the booming sheep industry. Nowadays it is more commonly known as the gateway to the Torres del Paine National Park, with tourism being a key contributor to the town's economy.

Day 9: Puerto Natales' Optional Tours

Meals included: Breakfast

You have a day at leisure today, but with the option to book onto one of two tours. Either sail on the gloomily-named Ultima Esperanza (Last Hope) Fjord to Mount Balmaceda Glacier before continuing on foot to the magnificent Serrano Glacier or visit a local estancia for a glimpse of daily life on a traditional ranch and to enjoy a typical Patagonian asado lunch.



Destination Information

Ultima Esperanza - In 1557 Juan Ladrillero, a Spanish explorer, gave the channel its name when he believed travelling through it was his last opportunity to reach the Strait of Magellan, though he was met with a dead end.

Day 10: Torres Del Paine National Park

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Enjoy another full day excursion, this time to the UNESCO World Heritage-designated Torres del Paine National Park. Spend the day amongst this breathtaking example of resplendent nature spotting large herds of guanacos as you go. Visit the Salto Grande of the Pehoé River, with the impressive mountains of Torres del Paine in the background. Then visit Lake Pehoé, Lake Grey and Grey Glacier. After lunch, on the way back to Puerto Natales stop at Milodon Cave where the remains of a prehistoric animal were found in the last century. Today includes lots of walking on uneven ground; sturdy walking shoes are recommended.



Destination Information

Torres del Paine National Park – A picturesque and staggeringly beautiful national park packed with waterfalls, lakes, glaciers and jagged peaks. The park's best-known view is of the jagged granite towers from which the park takes its name.

Day 11: Santiago

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Transfer back to the airport in Punta Arenas and board your flight to Santiago. The flight is approximately 3 and half hours. On arrival, transfer to your hotel, where the rest of the day is at your leisure, with a farewell dinner this evening to round off the trip.



Days 12-14: Fly Santiago to Australia

Meals included: Breakfast

Today you will transfer to the airport for your flight to Australia. Arrive home in 2 days due to crossing the International Date Line once again.

Chile: Top to Toe Travel Information

Visas

Australia passport holders currently do not require a visa to enter Chile. Your passport needs to be valid for at least six months beyond your intended return date to Australia. To stay up to date with the latest visa requirements, visit www.smartraveller.gov.au

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with us that you take out suitable travel insurance. You must provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24-hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. These details will be available to your local guides should they be required. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Altitude

On this tour you will be spending several nights at altitude – in San Pedro de Atacama at 2,400 metres, on day 6 whilst visiting the El Tatio Geysers you will reach altitude of 4,300 metres. At these sort of altitudes, Altitude Sickness is a risk. Symptoms may include dizziness, fatigue, nausea and shortness of breath. It is recommended that travellers utilize their first day in high-altitude destinations to acclimatise. To help you acclimatise we have designed our tours to be at a slower pace with more convenience stops and more free time, during the first few days. Staying hydrated, eating light meals and following a very light schedule will all help. We recommend that any symptoms that are unusual should be brought to the attention of your National Escort. Your National Escort will be extremely well-trained in dealing with its effects – taking it easy and taking some time to acclimatise are the best ways to prevent and combat it. Serious cases, meaning that you must descend immediately, are rare. We have adapted the itinerary to make sure that your time at these heights is as relaxed and easy as possible.

There are no specific factors, such as age or fitness, that can cause you to suffer from altitude sickness. This can affect anyone at any time and symptoms may vary. All the hotels that we have selected to use on our programmes provide oxygen free of charge, please ask to use this. There is medication - that can help treat and prevent symptoms. Consult a doctor before taking any of these medications, before engaging in strenuous activity at high altitude and regarding any necessary vaccinations in plenty of time before travelling.

Eating in Chile

The diversity of the landscape provides Chile a tremendous amount of produce, meat and seafood, essentially unparalleled in the rest of the world. The unique environments are well represented in Chilean cuisine, being equally as varied. Typical dishes are hearty and filling, containing a combination of meat or seafood and vegetables, often put into a crust. A great example of Chilean cuisine are *empanadas*, which are fried beef, onion and olive dumplings, served all throughout the country. Others include a thick stew called *cazuela de ave* and an indigenous recipe of corn, onions cooked in cornhusks called *humitas*. Because of its long coast, seafood is a staple in many dishes, especially across the centre and south. Chile's supply is funnelled into Spanish-influenced dishes such as marinated shrimp and paella. Meals in Chile are culturally considered as a time for families to gather at home, especially around lunchtime, which is the primary meal of the day.

Whilst we strongly recommend trying as many local dishes as possible, Chile also has a wide range of international dishes and local wines to enjoy.

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from corporate hotels to rainforest lodges. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality may exist between Australia and Latin America. All group tour hotels have private bathroom facilities and air conditioning where needed. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

Clothing

On this tour, you will be travelling through various regions of Chile with quite diverse climates especially in the Atacama Desert and in the Torres del Paine National Park where all four seasons can be experienced in one trip. It is recommended to bring lots of layers including the following: T Shirts made of breathable materials, hiking trousers, with the option to turn into a shorts, a fleece jacket for colder parts (during your visit to the Tatio Geysers on day 6, early morning temperatures may be as low as -6 degrees Celsius) and the evenings and a waterproof jacket as shell layer or a light rain jacket, a scarf and hat, warm socks., sensible walking shoes and small back pack that fits into your main hand luggage to carry your daily essentials.

Transport

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers between destinations. Roads in Chile have generally been improved over recent years, but please be aware traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. There may be sections of road where the surface may be comparatively bumpy, but our drivers will do their utmost to lessen the impact.

Planes: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines. Within Latin America flights are often changed multiple times before departure, both timings and flight numbers. The utmost care will be taken to ensure that your final documents will have the latest information, however your local guide will confirm this in destination. Boarding passes can be collected directly at the airport. The flights booked as part of your itinerary will always reflect the best timings to suit the touring itinerary, with direct flights wherever possible, however due to limited schedules some flights may require an early departure or late arrival.

Souvenirs

There are plenty of interesting bits and pieces to buy as souvenirs in Chile, such as indigenous textiles, handicrafts and artworks. The most popular items to pick up are lapis lazuli (blue stone) and copper handicrafts. There will be some opportunities during your tour to pick up souvenirs.

Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by National Escorts. There will usually be no more than 20 travellers in each group.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so.

Tipping Policy

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and Latin America is no exception. We will provide suggested tipping amounts with your final documents for your convenience, however tipping is entirely at your own discretion.

Luggage

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each, a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

After your booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive an email with your confirmation invoice, along with a link to our website where you can find your visa information (if applicable) and other important information. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

Itinerary changes

It is our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

Optional Activities

Please note that any optional activities offered and booked in destination are not recommended or organised by Wendy Wu Tours and therefore should be undertaken at the customers' own risk. You may also be required to sign a waiver form before any of these such activities.

Last updated: December 2019