



Chile: Top to Toe

Active Immerse Yourself Tour | 16 Days | Physical Level 3

Santiago – Valparaíso – 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.

- Valparaíso by day and night
- Take a walk in moon valley
- Altiplano lakes and mountains
- Volcan Osorno 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 guides and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking Local Guides

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

South America Active Immerse Yourself Tours:

Active tours combine the key sights with more energetic pursuits such as hiking and cycling. This allows us to explore more and discover the destination in greater depth. These tours are designed to provide a wide range of activities to ensure a varied and culturally immersive experience. These tours include:

- Cycling or walking through classic sites
- Unique cultural experiences and encounters
- Off the beaten track destinations
- More evenings at leisure for independent exploration.

Physical Level 3:

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 3 on the physical level scale. A good level of fitness is required as you need to be comfortable walking for 2-3 hours and covering longer distances.

- A number of destinations on this tour are at altitude. San Pedro de Atacama sits at 2,400 metres above sea level - 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 Local Guides 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.

Joining Your Tour

The tour is 16 days in duration including international flights. Travellers booked on 'Land Only, the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to reservations. Join the tour on Day 1 in Santiago and end the tour on Day 14 in Santiago. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

Itinerary – Chile: Top to Toe

Days 1: Fly Australia to Santiago

Meals included: Dinner

Fly to Chile's sophisticated capital Santiago, arriving the same day due to crossing the International. You will be met at the airport and transferred approximately 40 minutes to your hotel. Enjoy the rest of the afternoon at leisure before a welcome dinner.

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: Santiago

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

This morning, embark on a city tour will allow you to experience its eclectic contrasts. Stroll around the Plaza de Armas and the Cathedral to admire the colonial facades, before walking down Ahumada Boulevard, the city's main commercial street. Explore the bohemian Bellavista by road, and drive up San Cristobal Hill for views over the city and the towering Andes Mountains. Finish the tour in the modern area of Santiago to wander the chic neighbourhoods. Your afternoon is at leisure.

Day 3: Santiago to Valparaiso

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Travel 3 hours to the coast, to visit the manicured seaside resort of Vina del Mar and the bohemian port town of Valparaiso. Visit the beach area of Renaca before riding on a funicular up into the hills to explore, stopping for a visit to Chilean poet Pablo Neruda's house. Transfer 20 minutes to your hotel in the captivating city of Valparaiso.



Destination Information

Viña del Mar – In complete contrast and a mere 10-15-minute drive from Valparaiso is the relaxed beach resort of Viña del Mar. Wide tree lined boulevards make up the city and the popular beaches spread as far as the eye can see.

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 up and down through the city is on the city's old funicular lifts.

Day 4: Valparaiso to San Pedro de Atacama

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Rise early and transfer approximately 2 hours to the airport to board your flight to Calama, the flight is 2 hours and 10 minutes. On arrival, transfer 1 hour 50 minutes to your hotel in the desert oasis town of San Pedro de Atacama. This afternoon, you'll see some of San Pedro's most famous landscapes with a drive out to Death and Moon valleys, some of the direst spots on the planet.

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 5: San Pedro 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 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 6: San Pedro de Atacama

Meals included: Breakfast

Rise early 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 at best at sunrise. Have a guided walk amongst the mud craters and small bubbling geysers. Wander freely before travelling through the Andes Mountain Range with impressive views of Putama Volcano and Tocarपुरi Mountains. Visit the small desert village Machuca to see the typical terrace farming system, mud houses with straw rooves, 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 7: San Pedro de Atacama to Puerto Varas

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

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. This afternoon tour the city with visits including the Plaza de Armas, the Cathedral, and Maunel Montt lookout which offers great panoramic views and stopping at Angelmo cove. Continue about an hour to Puerto Varas to check in to your hotel



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 8: Puerto Varas

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Depart to Pargua and board the ferry over to the Chiloé to visit the largest island, Isla Grande. The ferry journey is 40 minutes. Arrive at the village of Chacao for a short stop and then continue to Dalcahue, where you'll have free time to explore, and the city of Castro. Visit Ancud, where you'll see the Main Square, the Regional Museum, the Local Market, the Huaihuen Hill and the San Antonio Fort. Have lunch and then return to your hotel.

Destination Information

Chiloé - Known for its iconic wooden churches built by Jesuit missionaries in the 17th and 18th centuries, its wild remote national parks and forests and unique spiritual culture.

Day 9: Puerto Varas

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Travel to the surrounds of Llanquihue Lake and to the village of Ensenada, a small village at the foot of Volcan Osorno. Take the hike through the volcano's plentiful nature, making several breaks on the way, to reach the visitors centre at 1240 metres altitude. Head to Perez Rosales National Park to Petrohué Falls, where you will walk on the boardwalks to admire the flowing river over the large masses of crystalized lava, formed by the volcano's eruptions.

Destination Information

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

Day 10: Puerto Varas to Puerto Natales

Meals included: Breakfast

Transfer back to the airport and fly further south to Punta Arenas, a city that sits at the end of continental South America on the Straits of Magellan. The flight is approximately 2 hours 15 minutes. From there, you will be transferred 3 and a half hours to your hotel located in Puerto Natales.

Destination Information

Puerto Natales – Famous as the gateway to the Torres del Paine National, Puerto Natales is a popular tourist town.

Day 11: Puerto Natales

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Rise early and transfer to the pier to start sailing on the gloomily named Ultima Esperanza (Last Hope) Fjord, a body of water that is set in a magnificent landscape. After 3 hours navigation, arrive at the thousand-year-old glacier of Mount Balmaceda, habitat to cormorants and sea lions. Continue to the end of the fjord and take a short walk for approximately 1 km through native forest to the foot of Serrano Glacier, part of the Southern Ice Field. Return to your hotel for your evening at leisure.

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 12: Puerto Natales

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 mountain massif 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 13: Puerto Natales to Santiago

Meals included: Breakfast

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.

Days 14 - 16: Depart Santiago

Meals included: Breakfast

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



Chile: Top to Toe Travel Information

Visas

Australian 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. Wendy Wu Tours does not provide a visa service for Worldwide tours and you will need to obtain a Brazil Visa before you depart 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 7 whilst visiting the El Tatio Geysers you will reach altitude of 4300 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 acclimate. 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 guide. Your guide 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 can affect anyone at any time and symptoms may vary. In some instances, a short spell on Oxygen can help enormously. Our guides are trained in this and in many hotels and coaches and restaurants oxygen is available. 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 foods available.

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from business 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 the Australia and South America. All group tour hotels have private bathroom facilities and air conditioning where needed. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your Local Guide. 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 pants, with the option to turn into a short pant (rain pants optional), a fleece jacket for colder parts 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.

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 lapislazuli (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 Local Guides. There will usually be no more than 28 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

Local tipping is customary in South & Central America. However, this can often lead to awkwardness in knowing when it is appropriate to tip and how much. For your convenience, with years of experience in providing the best customer service, Wendy Wu Tours operates a kitty system on your Group Tour so your Local Guide will look after this aspect of the trip for you. This ensures the amounts paid are reasonable for you and still fair to the local people. The suggested total amount is specified for each Group Tour and will be advised again on your final documentation. Tipping is paid in USD or other local currencies if specified. Any additional tipping you feel is appropriate is welcomed at your discretion.

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 2-3 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.

Before You Leave

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.travelvax.com.au.

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.smartraveller.gov.au as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

Last updated 29/03/19