


Contrasts of Chile

Hotel-to-hotel upper  guided walking

- Stunning natural beauty: awesome glaciers, spectacular fjords, snow capped Andes
- Amazing culture and history: Inca fortresses, Indian villages, ancient rock art
- Close encounters with guanaco, llama, pink flamingo and Andean condor
- Fabulous wines, gorgeous cuisine and lovely traditional, boutique and family hotels
- Warm, friendly people, with lots of Latin American spirit!



Chile's incredible geography encompasses some of the most amazing contrasts imaginable. This guided walking holiday spends four days in lush wine country south of Santiago, five unforgettably vivid days in the thin air of the high Atacama and a final five days in wild Patagonia. Walking in the vineyards and Patagonia is  level, with walks between 3000m and 4500m adding extra challenges in the Atacama.

Following a day discovering glorious cathedrals and palaces in Santiago, we drive south into Chile's world famous wine country, where cowboys tip their hats to steam train drivers, and where vines flow through steep valleys like emerald rivers, overshadowed by the snow capped Andes.

After three days exploring the coastal ranges and Andes foothills, we fly north to the frontier desert oasis of San Pedro in the moonscapes of the Atacama Desert, the driest place on earth. Here we'll walk on 100m high sand dunes, enjoy breakfast by steaming geysers, and see bright pink flamingo mirrored in clear lakes below cobalt blue skies.

From San Pedro we fly south with stunning views of ice fields to Patagonia and traditional Coihaique for the final four nights. This is pristine walking country - serrated peaks, sparkling glaciers and clear lakes are interspersed with pine forest and poppy strewn meadows. Here we'll discover three National Parks and Reserves, ending the trip with an amazing full day excursion to the San Rafael Glacier UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The 70m glacier wall is kaleidoscope of blues, and drinks on board are chilled with 10,000 year old ice from nearby icebergs!



CONTRASTS OF CHILE | DAY BY DAY

Day 1 Arrive in Santiago

After meeting you at the airport we enjoy lunch before an optional walking tour of Santiago.

Day 2 Santa Cruz Vineyard 12km/7.5mi/5hr

From Santa Cruz vineyard, a steep trail leads from deep green ranks of vines up to an azure hill lake fringed with wild pansies. We return along a high ridge before descending for a delicious wine tasting!

Day 3 Pichilemu Beach 6km/4mi/3hr

The tour begins in the town of Pichilemu where we visit the C19 Ross Park, now a National Monument. A quick beach stop, then off to Punta de Lobos for a chance to spot sealions.

Day 4 High Andes Walk 14km/9mi/6hr

Today we tackle the spectacular Andes foothills – a bracing ascent through pine and eucalyptus leads to a panoramic plateau, dwarfed by 180° views of 6000m high snow-capped peaks. After lunch we descend to a gorgeous rock pool and waterfall for a swim, before we return to the hotel.

Day 5 Santa Cruz to Atacama

After a visit to Santa Cruz's amazing museum charting Chilean history we return to the airport for our 2 hour flight to the Atacama. We're met and then taken on a short tour of San Pedro's narrow streets - lively restaurants, pretty plazas and local Indian color is all on the doorstep - before dinner at our boutique hotel.

Day 6 Salt Range Ridge and Canyon Walk 10km/6mi/5hr

Passing a ruined Inca fortress, we hike past shattered blood red rock formations sparkling with crystallized gypsum, before descending a 100m sand dune! After lunch at the hotel we explore a scarlet salt canyon, then relax at a viewpoint with a cold sundowner.

Day 7 Tatio Geysers and Rock Pools 5km/3mi/2.5hr

An early start for breakfast at 4300m - the highest geyser field in the world! Clouds of steam rise into the thin, cold air, before a safari spotting guanaco leads to an uphill red river canyon walk, vivid with lush bamboo and cardon cacti.

Day 8 Machuca Valley 14km/9mi/6hr

From 4000m with pink flamingo and curious llamas, we descend a gorge to picnic at an abandoned riverside Indian village. Our rugged descent finishes amid terraces of garlic and fava beans. Enjoy dinner tonight under the breathtaking diamond-studded night sky looking out for shooting stars.

Day 9 Atacama to Patagonia

Sit back and enjoy views of emerald lakes and royal blue fjords as we fly (4.5 hours) from the Atacama down to the wilds of Patagonia. We receive a warm welcome at our hotel in a converted sawmill run by Señor Angel Lara and his family, and take a tour of this charming country town before a welcome dinner with our guide in the hotel.

Day 10 Coihaique National Reserve 12km/7.5mi/5hr

We ascend a trail through natural Coigue forest on a steep trail past pine fringed lagoons – above the tree line we have views from Andes to Pacific for our picnic. We pass strawberry vines and Antarctic beech trees on the descent. Stroll with the locals by the fountains in the pretty plaza before dinner.

Day 11 Laguna San Rafael National Park

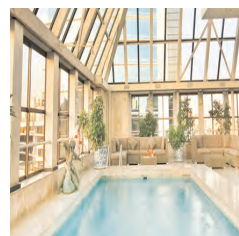
A full day luxury fjord cruise with porpoising dolphins and vivid blue icebergs leads to San Rafael glacier – a UNESCO biosphere reserve. Drift ice crackles around us on an optional excursion in small zodiac boats. On the way back, watch the sunset on mountains from the cocktail deck.

Day 12 Cerro Castillo National Reserve 16km/10mi/6hr

The National Reserve of Cerro Castillo is meltingly beautiful - glaciers sparkle below jagged peaks as we walk on patchwork farms through meadows of chestnut horses, and by deep blue lakes. We'll spot gaucho cowboys from our hilltop picnic spot, before we descend to return to Coihaique.

Day 13 Leave Chile

WHERE YOU STAY



Park Plaza Hotel ★★★★★
Santiago Day 1



Hotel Santa Cruz ●●●●●
Santa Cruz Days 2+3+4



Alto Atacama Hotel ★★★★★
San Pedro de Atacama Days 5-8



El Reloj Hotel ●●●●●
Coihaique Days 9-12

For extra nights we recommend Santiago.

"We found Chilean hospitality wonderful - they were all more than excellent!"

Mrs Howles

Dates and Prices

Departs selected Mondays	Tour Only
2012 departures	
Mar 6, Nov 13	\$7,860

Singles: Add \$147 per night for sole occupancy of a double room.

Child: This holiday is unsuitable for children under 12.

Room upgrade: Prices from \$45 per person, per night, based on 2 sharing.

Holiday type: Guided walking, hotel-to-hotel, groups of typically 6-15 people on each tour.

Departs: Selected Mondays from Mar 5 to Nov 12.

Duration: 15 days (12 nights) including travelling time.

Meals: Buffet breakfast, 10 lunches and 10 evening meals.

Other details: For "What your holiday price includes," see "Holiday Planning" section pp 48-51.

Tailor-made travel choices

Nearest Arrival Airport: Santiago Merino Benitez Airport

Flights can be arranged from most US/CANADA airports, with connecting transfers as required, prices and details on request.

The above prices include our standard transfers: Santiago Merino Benitez Airport at 09:35, (transfer to hotel, 30 mins, provided).

Return: Santiago Airport by 16:35 (transfer provided).

Tour only: Transfers included from Santiago Merino Benitez airport at 09:35, and for the flight back to Santiago Merino Benitez airport arriving at 16:35.

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CONTRASTS OF CHILE | WALKING DETAILS



Walkers should be comparatively fit and confident especially as some of the walks are at altitude. Walks are on ash, gravel and loose stone paths in the Atacama - there is one 4m ladder descent on day 7. Sturdy walking boots essential, poles recommended. Note: Anyone with a pre-existing medical condition should seek GP advice before booking this holiday.

Average daytime temperature (°C):
 29 FEB 27 MAR 22 OCT 26 NOV

Average monthly rainfall (mm):
 3 FEB 5 MAR 15 OCT 8 NOV

Further details at www.breakaway-adventures.com