

CHILE - VALPARAISO

Chile is situated at the Southwest of South America. Chile's continental area is 756.626 square Km., its continental length is 4.329 Km. and its average width is 200 Km. with approximately 15.000.000 inhabitants. Chile is a mountainous country. It has two cordilleras, the Cordillera de Los Andes and the Cordillera de la Costa.

Useful Information for the Tourist

Valparaiso: this pleasant zone of propitious climate bases its economy on agriculture, mining, industry and tourism. The latter offers a complete variety of attractions that includes practically all of the tourist activities such as, camping, hiking, skiing, fishing, hunting, enjoying beaches, water sports, archaeology, local gastronomy, a Casino, recreational and cultural events, plus the prestige of its tourist centers like Viña del Mar, Algarrobo, Portillo, Jahuel, Zapallar and Easter Island among others.

Climate and Meteorology

The Region of Valparaiso has a Mediterranean weather, with a long dry season in summer time, between the months of October and April, and an intense, rainy period mainly between June and August. Important climatic variations exist between the coast and the interior of the region. This is due to the oceanic influence, the geographical features and altitude. At the same time, the behavior of the climatic elements such as, temperature, precipitations, pressure and winds, also differ between the coast and the interior region. The temperatures of the V Region are moderate and favorable to the development of the different regional activities. The lowest temperatures are from May to August with an average of 11,4°C. The highest temperatures correspond to January with an average of 17,7°C.

Economy

The Region of Valparaiso reunites in its seven provinces and 38 communes a wide variety of activities, including tourism, marine-harbor, agro-industry, fishing, mining, manufacturing, financial services, and science and technology provided by the regional university system. The regional economy is characterized by a diversified productive profile. The economic strength of the region of Valparaiso originates on its productive diversification.

Geographic Location

Valparaiso's location is 32° 34' South Latitude and 70° 72' West Longitude. The V Region limits to the North with the Region of Coquimbo, to the East with the Republic of Argentina, to the South with the Metropolitan Region (Santiago) and to the West with the Pacific Ocean. The islands located in front of the coast depend administratively of this region. These include the Juan Fernandez Archipelago and a few northern ones like San Felix, San Ambrosio, Salas y Gomez, and the legendary Easter Island.

Biogeography

The vegetation of the area corresponds to a semi-arid and sub-humid zone, presenting xerophilous and mesophilic vegetation, as well as shrubs and trees. The "chagual", carob tree, "litre" and "boldo" are the representative plants of the zone. The Fauna related to this zone corresponds to "condor", "fox", "culpeo", "quique" and "huairavo".

Entering the country

- Foreign tourists must carry their valid passports.

- Argentinean tourists can carry one of following documents: valid passport without visa endorsement, identity card, registration certificate or civic notebook.
- Tourists from Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay must carry one of following documents: valid passport without visa endorsement or identity card.
- Tourists from countries who do not maintain diplomatic relations with Chile will be asked to carry a valid passport, in addition to the register of their passport or consular endorsement granted by the Chilean authority overseas or by the International Police that verified their exit.
- When entering Chile, the visitor receives a Tourist Card, valid for 90 days. Do not lose it: it should be returned when leaving the country. The easiest way to renew it is by leaving the country and entering again. The renovation in the corresponding office lasts 30 days and costs 100 dollars (loss/renovation).
- Generally, in Chile it is always necessary to carry identification papers.
- When driving into Chile, the holder of the vehicle should carry identity documents of the vehicle, crediting the property or the authorization to drive it in bordering countries.
- Once leaving national territory, visitors will not be able to exit without the automobile unless the Regional Service of Customs authorizes the visitor.
- The following items cannot be entered the country: guns, ammunitions, elements and merchandises that go against the moral, health, and the national security.
- Hotels are classified from 1 to 5 stars.
- The products in the national territory are taxed with the I.V.A. (tax to the added value), which corresponds to the 19 %. Normally this is already added to the product's price.

Security

Chile is a remarkably safe country for visitors, safer than the majority of the countries of this continent. Only in the big cities it is necessary to take the normal precautions against pick pocketing, especially in the subway, omnibuses and the most concurred streets.

Tourists may find useful the following pieces of advice: avoid visibly wearing valuable objects and carrying large sums of money; always watch your purses and luggage; do not exchange money on the street, but do so only in the authorized Money Exchange agencies.

It is forbidden to drink alcohol on the street.

Passport loss

In case of passport loss, please warn "Carabineros de Chile" (Police Department) and request a replacement in the corresponding Consulate. In case of loss of the Tourist Card, please take your passport and ticket to the "Jefatura Nacional de Extranjería" (National headquarters of Foreign affairs) and International police, located in General Borgoño Anevue 1052, Santiago, phone number 56 2 7371292 to obtain a replacement.

About Seafood:

The Valparaiso area is prodigal in fish and seafood, which can be tasted in traditional "chupes" "mariscales" (mixed seafood), and "caldillo" (seafood soup). Worth trying are the corvinas (sea bass), sierras, congors, hakes and scads served fried, cooked in the oven or grilled in any restaurant of the coast.

Dollar

The average exchange rate of the US\$ during December 2003 was \$ 580. This is the free exchange rate and varies according to the demand.