

IIE Passport Focus... *Chile*

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Chile Fast Facts

Capital:
Santiago

Language(s):
Spanish

Population:
16,134,219

Religion(s):
Roman Catholic 89%, Protestant 11%,
Jewish less than 1%

Currency:
Chilean peso (CLP)

Major Events:
Independence Day, 18 September (1810)
Semana Santa
Battle of Iquique, 21 May
1973 Military Coup, 11 September
Navidad and other religious holidays

Online Resources

Embassy of Chile, Washington DC
www.chile-usa.org

Chilean Government
www.chileangovernment.cl

Chilean Cultural Heritage Site
www.chileanheritage.com

**Benjamin A. Gilman International
Scholarship Program**
www.iie.org/gilman

National Security Education Program
www.iie.org/NSEP

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Whether you're looking for the fast-paced modern adventure or a taste of the laidback Latino lifestyle, you will find both studying abroad in Chile.

Though Chile covers roughly the same amount territory as Texas, it is only 265 miles from east to west at its widest point. Bordered by Argentina, Bolivia and Peru and sandwiched between the Andes and the Pacific on South America's Southern Cone, Chile spans a distance north to south equal to that between Juno, Alaska and Mexico City. Chile's unique geographical orientation makes the country a haven for scientists and nature-lovers. Lauca National Park in the north, for example, is famous for its wildlife and geography, boasting over 100 different species of birds and Chungara Lake, one of the highest in the world. The glacier panoramas of Laguna San Rafael National Park in Patagonia, too, are truly majestic.

Amidst this magnificent landscape lie a variety of modern cities. The country's capital, Santiago, is a sophisticated metropolitan center of over 5 million people, accounting for a third of Chile's population. An ideal location for students, Santiago simultaneously embodies the traditional



and the modern. At the Museo Chileno de Arte Precolombino, for example, students have the opportunity to see Chinchorro mummies, which are thousands of years older than their Egyptian counterparts. Santiago is also one of the main financial centers of South America, generating 45 percent of Chile's GDP. Home to international institutions and corporations such as the Economic Commission for Latin America, Hewlett-Packard, JP Morgan, Intel, Coca-Cola, and Reuters, Santiago is truly a global business hub.



In the midst of rapid economic development and increasing regional

and global influence, Chile makes a dynamic study abroad destination. Boosted by record-breaking copper prices, the Chilean economy has seen impressive growth and is considered one of the strongest and most stable in Latin America. Additionally, Chile makes an ideal destination for students interested in studying political history, having emerged from the military regime of Augusto Pinochet in 1990 with a freely elected President. Since then, the Chilean democracy has thrived. In 2006, Chileans elected their first female president, Michelle Bachelet. The country has a rich cultural heritage, with its indigenous Inca and Araucanian traditions, and the legacy of over a hundred years of Spanish rule prior to Chile's independence in 1810.

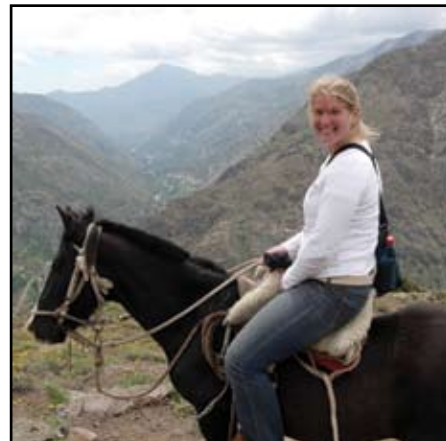
Chile's education system is one of the strongest in South America. Some of Chile's finest institutions include Universidad de Chile, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Universidad de Viña del Mar and Universidad de la Frontera. In addition to those students interested in learning Spanish, the high-caliber Chilean universities attract students from a variety of disciplines. Anthropology students will delight in learning about indigenous groups such as the Mapuches or Araucanians (the two largest in Chile) in addition to the Aymaras, Licanantay or Atacameños, Rapa-Nui (Easter Island) and Kawazkar. Archeology students have the opportunity to journey to San Pedro de Atacama to visit the 16th century adobe buildings and excellent archaeological museum.



In addition to appreciating Chile's educational opportunities, cosmopolitan cities and geographical wonders, students studying in Chile rave about the people.

Another fascinating Chilean city is the seaport, Valparaíso. With Latin America's oldest stock exchange, Chile's first public library, and the oldest Spanish language newspaper in continuous publication in the world, Valparaíso was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site. An inspiration to famous Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, the city is built on the hillsides overlooking the Southern Pacific and is famous for its unique architecture and quaint cobblestone streets. Though not the country's capital, Valparaíso is home to the National Congress and serves as a major commercial harbor, naval base and cultural center. It is also home to nine of Chile's fine universities, including the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, making it a major educational center and great potential destination for study abroad students.

In addition to appreciating Chile's educational opportunities, cosmopolitan cities and geographical wonders, students studying abroad in Chile rave about the people. Full of spirit, energy and personality, Chileans won't let you leave until you've had a cup of coffee in their home and at least tried to dance la Cueca, the national dance of Chile. By the time students leave, they can't help but shout "Viva Chile!"



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<http://info.iiepassport.org/country/chile.html>