



PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

ACTIVE CHILE: HIKING, CYCLING AND KAYAKING IN THE LAKE DISTRICT AND PATAGONIA

13 days from £4,180pp

CHILE / SANTIAGO AND THE VINEYARDS / CHILEAN LAKE DISTRICT (NORTH) / CHILEAN
LAKE DISTRICT (SOUTH) / TORRES DEL PAINE NATIONAL PARK / PATAGONIA

WITH OVER 40 YEARS EXPERIENCE, NO-ONE KNOWS LATIN AMERICA LIKE WE DO

EXPERIENCE SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY

WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

A passion for the region runs through all we do

All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America

Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

Fully bonded and licensed

ATOL-protected

On your side when it matters

Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks

We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions

Let us show you the Latin America we know and love



OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

Explore Chile's volcanic and glaciated wilderness landscapes on foot, by bike, or on the water. Chile hosts some of the most dramatic scenery in the world and has a good infrastructure for outdoor activities. Osorno volcano and the Torres de Paine National Park are the pinnacles of its natural scenery.

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| DAY 1 | Arrive in Santiago. Transfer to your hotel in the Providencia district. |
| DAY 2 | Fly to Temuco, transfer to Pucón. |
| DAY 3 | Hiking in Huerquehue National Park. |
| DAY 4 | River rafting on the River Trancura. |
| DAY 5 | Public coach to Puerto Varas. |
| DAY 6 | Cycle along lakeshore to Frutillar. |
| DAY 7 | Kayaking on the Reloncavi Estuary. |
| DAY 8 | Fly to southern Patagonia and transfer to Torres del Paine National Park. |
| DAY 9 | Trek along the Valle del Francés – part of W Trek. |
| DAY 10 | Hike towards the Grey Glacier – part of W Trek. |
| DAY 11 | Hike to the foot of the towers, the “Torres” del Paine. |
| DAY 12 | Fly back to Santiago. |
| DAY 13 | Transfer to airport for international flight home. |

ITINERARY

Chile, with its long Pacific coastline extending from the northern desert through the lush pastures of the volcano-studded lake district to the glaciers of Patagonia, is one of Latin America's most rewarding countries for outdoor adventures.

There's a well-developed infrastructure to cater for the demand for outdoor adventures. Chile offers a range of well supported and guided activities including hikes, volcano climbing, river rafting, horse riding and mountain biking. While the country lacks visible historical culture, it makes up for it with its exquisite natural landscapes.

This private holiday includes different outdoor experiences: hiking, biking, river-rafting and kayaking. The hikes are challenging: you'll enjoy them best if you are used to walking for several hours a day in countryside which can be steep and rocky.

Good weather can't be guaranteed of course in a region of fast-changing climatic conditions, but in the southern summer – November to March – you have a good chance of catching some clear, sunny days, promising a magical experience.

DAY 1

Arrive in Santiago. Transfer to your hotel in the Providencia district.

Your hotel is in the pleasant residential and commercial quarter of Providencia. Santiago is set in a broad valley between ranges of the Andes, with lofty snow-capped peaks, and a smaller coastal range with a distinctly Mediterranean feel.

Santiago is a huge metropolis, a mix of the old and the contemporary, with quarters of tree-lined avenues and affluent tranquillity, and others full of commercial bustle. Poorer districts sprawl on the outskirts. The historic core, although small, has some notable buildings of cultural significance.

DAY 2

Fly to Temuco, transfer to Pucón.

Fly to Temuco in the lake district and drive to lakeside Pucón. This is a picturesque region of ancient forests straddling hills lorded over by snow-capped volcanoes, with hot springs and crystalline streams, interspersed by flowery meadows and cattle pasture.

Situated on the south-eastern shore of Lago Villarrica, Pucón, with its sandy volcanic beaches is a major lake district destination for Chilean holidaymakers during their high summer. The town is crammed with small shops, bars and restaurants.

Towering above Pucón is the region's most famous landmark – Villarrica volcano (2,840m). The resort's surroundings are an adventure playground offering many guided outdoor activities.

DAY 3

Hiking in Huerquehue National Park.

A guided hike in Huerquehue National Park, one of our favourite Chilean day treks. It's a walker's paradise of bright beech trees and lofty araucaria (evergreen conifers). The park is home to condor, mountain fox and the rare Darwin frog. It's a 5-6 hr round-trip hike to Laguna Verde and Laguna Toro; steep, but well worth the climb. Once at the top the views of these crystal clear lagoons hidden among lichen-draped forests and monkey puzzle-clad mountains are stunning.

DAY 4

River rafting on the River Trancura.

Today there's a guided river rafting adventure not far from town. The effervescent river Trancura tumbles through Villarrica National Park and disgorges into Lake Villarrica. While the upper sections of the river are turbulent and split by cliffs and boulders, you'll raft on the lower reaches of the river, just 10 minutes' drive from the town, calmer and more tranquil.;

The rapids here are rated as grade 3, which means that you will have the excitement of a ride through white water and fast currents, negotiating rocks, eddies and waves. Between the rapids sections however you can sit back and paddle, enjoying a leisurely ride with views of the meadows and snow-capped volcano Villarrica. You'll have a fully qualified pilot, or capitán, as they are called locally.

DAY 5

Public coach to Puerto Varas.

Travel by public bus to Puerto Varas, an attractive town is set amid verdant pasture and meadows on the shores of Lake Llanquihue. It was colonised by Germans at the turn of the 20th century and its architecture and sedate style reflects this, but it is now a fast-growing tourist resort. The town's main attraction is a jade alpine lake framed by tree-clad hills and beyond, one of the most perfectly shaped snow-capped volcanoes in the world – Osorno.

DAY 6

Cycle along lakeshore to Frutillar.

Hop on a bike for a leisurely couple of hours' cycling along the lakeshore to Frutillar. You'll ride for 30km, passing elegant old homes, volcanic-sand beaches, and – on a clear day – a fabulous view across Lake Llanquihue towards Osorno and Calbuco volcanoes, perhaps even the 3,500m summit of Tronador, an extinct volcano in the Argentine lake district.

The ride is mostly on dirt roads with some hilly stretches towards the end of the ride, between Llanquihue and Frutillar. Once in Bavarian-influenced Frutillar, visit the town's pride and joy, the Teatro del Lago, its recently-completed theatre which overlooks the lake and relax with coffee and homemade cake. No need to worry about the ride back: a driver will be waiting to take you to Puerto Varas.

DAY 7

Kayaking on the Reloncavi Estuary.

Another trip out on to the water, this time in kayaks on the tranquil Reloncavi Estuary. Travel by road around Lake Llanquihue to the town of Ensenada where you will put on your kayaking gear and continue to Ralun Bay in the Reloncaví estuary: your kayaking adventure starts here.

Several national parks and wilderness forests fringe the rivers and estuaries of this peaceful region, making of it a beautiful natural environment for a water-borne trip. As you navigate the waters you see the Yates and Hornopiren volcanoes rise into view.

You will eventually arrive at a countryside house where you will have lunch. Afterwards you will have some time to take a relaxing walk and enjoy the open air, before once again boarding your kayak to continue your journey across the fjord to the backwater town of Cochamó, which has a lighthouse and old wooden church.

DAY 8

Fly to southern Patagonia and transfer to Torres del Paine National Park.

Fly from Puerto Montt airport to Punta Arenas (or Puerto Natales) in southern Patagonia (2hrs). On a clear day you have other-worldly views of the swirling meringue of the southern icecap, its fjords, volcanoes and glaciers. Before touchdown you see the rust-brown stain of the Patagonian steppes, pitted with small lagoons stretching out towards the Straits of Magellan.

The region's fortunes were only briefly revived during a gold rush, and the sheep-rearing business has never really recovered from the collapse of the price of meat and wool. Drive on into Torres del Paine National Park. The scenery becomes more dramatic as you approach the towering massif which looms up on the horizon.

This superb wilderness is dominated by a monumental granite massif of smooth rock towers and icy pinnacles. Milky blue and gem-sharp emerald lakes, sinuous rivers, glaciers and wind-scoured steppes have created a remarkable and unique environment. A UNESCO biosphere reserve, the area is a natural habitat of over 150 species of birds (flamingos, condors, eagles and ostriches) and 25 species of mammal (including guanacos, armadillos, silver foxes and pumas). Guanacos (camelids) graze peacefully while ostriches scamper across the plains and condors soar above.

DAY 9**Trek along the Valle del Francés – part of W Trek.**

Set off on a trek to Valle Francés (French Valley) along a steep trail which infiltrates the very heart of the Paine Massif. An active walk leads you to the hanging bridge over the Rio Francés at the foot of the south-eastern face of the massif, where there is a truly stupendous view. Continue up the trail until reaching the upper section of the valley and admire a group of contorted geological formation.

An optional trek to the remote, bleaker Mirador Británico is possible. After lunch you descend through a rippling terrain of mixed grassland and light forest until reaching the Paine Grande campground on the peaceful shores of turquoise Lake Pehoe, with access to warm showers and a hot meal.

DAY 10**Hike towards the Grey Glacier – part of W Trek.**

Today you hike from the refuge along the shores of Lake Pehoe to the northern end of glacial Lago Grey. The lake's chilly waters are dotted with icebergs which have broken off from the wall of Glacier Grey which plugs the lake.

Enjoy a picnic lunch before boarding the boat that sails to the forbidding blue face of the glacier. There's plenty of time to marvel at this calving ice monster during the boat ride across the lake.

In poor weather, you'll trek up to the sightseeing point offering a spectacular view of the glacier. Then you'll return on foot to Paine Grande and take a catamaran to Pudeto's dock, from where you're driven back to your accommodation.

DAY 11

Hike to the foot of the towers, the "Torres" del Paine.

The goal today is to complete the most celebrated trekking trail in Torres del Paine. You walk from the Camp towards Hostería Las Torres and join the uphill path to Ascencio valley on the towers' eastern face. Emerald green southern beech forests and rustling streams border the trail towards the valley.

Climb the steep moraine, a mass of boulders leading towards one of the world's most famous views overlooking the towers, gigantic vertical slabs of rocks rising like an open hand towards the sky. These are the remains of a great cirque sheared away by the forces of glacial ice.

After an uphill slog, the towers eventually come into full view, rising majestically before you, with the glacial lake visible below. After feasting on the view and your picnic, you backtrack along the same trail through Ascencio valley and return to your accommodation for the evening.

DAY 12

Fly back to Santiago.

Transfer to the airport in Punta Arenas or Puerto Natales and fly back to Santiago for a final night.

DAY 13

Transfer to airport for international flight home.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

Services of our team of experts in our London office

Services of Journey Latin America local representatives and guides

All land and air transport within Latin America

Accommodation as specified

Meals as specified

Excursions as specified, including entrance fees

INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

Day walk in Huerquehue National Park

Half-day river rafting on the Rio Trancura (class 3)

Full-day kayaking in the Reloncavi fjord

Half-day cycling along the shores of Lake Llanquihue

Day walks in Torres del Paine National Park

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

Tips and gratuities

Meals other than specified

International flights to Latin America

Airport taxes, when not included in the ticket

Optional excursions

ESSENTIALS

TRANSPORT

2 flights (longest 4hrs); 3 scenic road journeys (longest 7hrs).

ACCOMMODATION

In Santiago and Puerto Varas you'll be staying in mid-range hotels. At the EcoCamp you'll spend 3 nights in igloo-type tented domes. The rooms have either double or twin beds and shared bathroom facilities with hot water. During your trek, 1 night is in tents at a campground in Torres del Paine with access to shower facilities and hot water.

MEALS

Breakfast daily; lunch days 3 & 7; dinner day 8, full board days 9-11.

GUIDES

We carefully select our local partners, some of whom we have worked with for over 25 years. Their English-speaking guides understand the expectations of our clients very well, and are consistently singled out for praise by the latter on their return.

SUMMARY OF NIGHTS

13 days, 12 nights: Santiago 1; Pucón 3, Puerto Varas 3; Torres del Paine National Park 4; Santiago 1.

CURRENCY

The unit of currency in Chile is the Chilean Peso.

HOW TO TAKE IT

Cash machines are available in all major cities and towns, and so taking a debit or credit card with a PIN number is the most convenient way of withdrawing money while on your trip, and in most shops and restaurants you can also pay by card. However, since cards can get lost, damaged, withheld or blocked, you should not rely exclusively on a card to access funds. We recommend that additionally you take a reasonable quantity of US dollars cash (no more than is covered by your insurance), which you can exchange into local currency, and possibly some travellers' cheques (American Express are the most widely accepted), though these are gradually falling out of use. Dollar bills should be in good condition, soiled or torn bills may be refused. You can take sterling, but the exchange rate is not always competitive or even available, restricting the number of places where you can change money.

DAILY SPEND

It is very difficult to give a guideline for essential expenses but a budget of around US\$40 for the few days when you are not on the trekking excursions will cover food, drinks and the odd souvenir. Eat at the best restaurants and you will pay more.

TIPPING

Tips are expected and local guides often rely on their tip as a significant proportion of their income.

Most service industry workers will expect a tip of some kind and so it is useful to have spare change for hotel porters, taxi drivers and the like. It is common to leave 10 – 12% in restaurants.

INSURANCE

Travel insurance is essential.

Details of our recommended policy can be found on our Travel Insurance page.

VISAS

Holders of a full British passport do not require a visa, although passports must be valid for at least 6 months after the trip begins. Anyone with a different nationality should enquire with us or check with the relevant consulate.

If flying to the US, or via the US you will need to fill in your online ESTA application.

AIRPORT TAXES

If you have purchased your flights through Journey Latin America, the international departure tax is usually included in the ticket.

TRIP SUITABILITY

This is an active outdoor journey. There are several public coach or minivan rides, and three internal flights.

The holiday includes hikes in rocky and hilly terrain. You need to be fit and preferably have some walking experience. You do not need rafting experience as you will be well briefed (you must follow the captain's instructions when you are on the water!), but you may well get wet, and there will be exhilarating moments when you plunge through the rapids. The cycling is gentle and mostly flat, and away from busy roads.

Be prepared for 3 nights' camping in furnished and relatively comfortable fixed tents and 1 night in a mountain refuge.

There's an age minimum of 12 years for this holiday (the rafting element).

CLIMATE

In Santiago, October and November and March and April see temperatures between 15 and 25°C and a good deal of sunshine. January and February are hot, around 30°C.

Expect a temperate climate in the lake district, with plenty of warm sun but also showers in summer. January and February are very crowded with local holiday-makers.

In the Torres del Paine National Park, the best months for hiking are March to April. It can be quite busy in summer (December to January). Days are long and mild then but it can be windy, as in spring (September to October).

CLOTHING AND SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Bring practical, comfortable clothing and a light-weight jumper. If you plan to eat in smart restaurants, although clothing is not formal (no need for jacket and tie), something quite smart would be appropriate.

For the hiking, light and preferably waterproof walking boots with good grip are essential. Protective clothing such as a fleece and GoreTex-type breathable and waterproof outer shell are advisable. You may need a sun hat and also a woolly one, gloves and a scarf. That said, it can be hot in the summer, so bring along some shorts and a T shirt and be prepared to carry the rest!

Hiking poles are also an asset.

Life-jacket and helmet are provided for the rafting.

Please get in touch with the office before departure if you have any doubts. Good equipment is very important and hard to come by in Latin America.

VACCINATIONS

Preventative vaccinations are recommended against the following; polio; tetanus; typhoid; hepatitis A. For specific requirements you must consult your GP.

You can also find helpful information on the Masta Travel Health website.

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

GIVE US A CALL

We'd love to chat

0208 747 8315

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm

Saturday & Sunday: Closed

SEND US AN EMAIL

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