

Chile and Easter Island



TRIP OVERVIEW

From the cosmopolitan capital of Santiago, to the stunning mountain side vineyards of Colchagua and the unique landscapes in the Atacama Desert, northern Chile boasts some unforgettable highlights. Add to this the mysterious Easter Island, one of the most isolated places on earth endowed with the striking moai statues, this 14 day magical tour offers the very best this region has to offer.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Chile & Easter Island. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as visa requirements.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 1: UK to Santiago

Depart London on your scheduled, overnight flight to Santiago in Chile, via Sao Paulo, Brazil.

DAY 2: Santiago D

On arrival in Santiago, you will be met and transferred to your hotel where you can enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.

DAY 3: Santiago B

Set against a spectacular backdrop of snow-covered Andean peaks, Santiago's sparkling skyscrapers run amidst leafy neighbourhoods and peaceful parks. This morning's tour takes you through the historic heart of the downtown area to the Plaza de Armas, centre of the city's old colonial core and home to the impressive 18th century government palace and the beautiful baroque cathedral. The provincial Santa Lucia Hill reveals the site where Spanish conquistadors founded the city and is now adorned with wonderful facades, fountains and stairways affording far reaching views over the city and mountains beyond.

DAY 4: Santiago & Colchagua Valley B/L

Today your group will journey south along the Panamerican Highway, through the central valley, to Colchagua. Surrounded by majestic mountains, pass through sun-scorched terrain, rolling hills and idyllic vineyards on the way to the sleepy country town of Santa Cruz. The tour continues to a local vineyard to see where some of the country's very best red wines are produced. Located in one of the New World's finest wine regions, enjoy some tastings of award winning cabernet sauvignons and wonderfully rounded merlots before returning to your hotel.

DAY 5: Santiago to San Pedro de Atacama B

A morning flight from Santiago takes you to Calama in the Atacama Desert. Occupying a 1000 kilometre strip of land west of the Andes, Chile's Atacama Desert is the driest place on earth. The resulting eerie landscapes are beautiful beyond belief, boasting unique and unworldly vistas like nowhere else on earth. Wind-sculpted canyons, extinct volcanoes and salt lakes turn from orange to crimson and gold throughout the day before the huge, clear night skies reveal an unparalleled stargazing haven. On arrival, transfer to the oasis town of San Pedro in the heart of this fascinating desert and late afternoon climb the sweeping sand dunes of the Moon Valley to watch a mesmerising sunset.

DAY 6: San Pedro de Atacama B/L/D

This morning you will travel to the incredible Salar de Atacama. Chile's largest salt flat is an immense expanse of thick salt clusters and one of the world's largest lithium reserves as well as home to many native bird species. Cross the crunchy crystalline edge of this immense barren salt basin to the Chaxa Lagoon, where you can get up close to dozens of flamingos foraging in the mineral rich waters. Continuing on, you will reach the nearby Miscanti and Meñique Lagoons. With intense blue-coloured waters, the shimmering lagoons are located at the base of impressive snow-capped volcanoes and command incredible views over the unique landscape. After lunch, return to San Pedro to enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.

DAY 7: San Pedro de Atacama B/L

Rise before dawn to drink your morning coffee at the world's highest geothermal field. Situated some 4,300 metres above sea level in the Andean mountain range, the dramatic craters of Tatio Geysers are one of the regions true marvels. Ringed by volcanoes, over 80 gurgling geysers awake early, forcing fumaroles in multiple vibrant colours high into the air as rays of sunshine pierce the columns of white steam. As the sun warms the earth, you can take a bath in the hot thermal public pools nearby or spend more time walking around these natural wonders. Arriving back in San Pedro, the rest of the afternoon will be at leisure for you to rest or further explore the town at your own pace.

DAY 8: San Pedro de Atacama to Santiago B

This morning transfer to Calama airport for your flight to Santiago. On arrival you will be met and taken to your hotel to spend the evening.

DAY 9: Santiago to Easter Island B

After breakfast you will depart mainland Chile on your flight to Easter Island. This tiny island, formed from volcanic rock in the middle of the Pacific Ocean is the most remote inhabited island in the world. Known as Rapa Nui to its locals, the UNESCO World Heritage Site is unlike anywhere else on earth.

DAY 10: Easter Island B/L/D

Head south along the coast to discover the mysteries surrounding the island that have fascinated travellers and scholars for centuries. Thought to have originally been thickly forested and rich in wildlife, the now barren landscapes suggest a rapid population growth that soon outpaced the island's natural resources. Travel to Ahu Tongariki, the largest Ahu (shrine) on the island to witness the enigmatic moai statues, some of the most iconic images of Easter Island. Believed to have been created as part of a Polynesian tradition to protect the inhabitants, these sublime works of art were carved out of volcanic rock between the 11th & 14th centuries and on a scale seen nowhere else on earth. The tour concludes at the beautiful beach of Anakena boasting soft white sands surrounded by a lush coconut tree forest. Enjoy some free time or take a refreshing swim in the Pacific Ocean's warm waters before heading back to your hotel for a good night's rest.

DAY 11: Easter Island B/L

This morning, drive up the extinct Rano Kau volcano with magnificent panoramic views of the entire island, to the ceremonial village of Orongo. High on the crater's rim, the last stage of indigenous Easter Island culture saw individuals competing here to be crowned as the birdman cult king by scaling the vertical slopes and perilous rocky waters below. Numerous petroglyph images can be found here, thought to represent the winners and worship the god of fertility, Makemake. This afternoon, venture out to explore some more of the nearby shrines and archaeological sites including Puna Pau; a small crater where the red stone for the pukao, or topknot, for the moai statues comes from and Ahu Akivi which is home to seven moai, all of equal shape and size.

DAY 12: Easter Island B

Today has been left free as a day of leisure for you to relax at your hotel or further explore the surrounding areas at your own pace.

DAY 13: Easter Island to Santiago B

Transfer to the airport to fly to Santiago where, on arrival, you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

DAY 14/15: Santiago to the UK or Extension B

This morning you will be taken to the airport in time to catch your overnight return flight to the UK, via Sao Paulo, Brazil, or continue on to your chosen extension.

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP

Accommodation

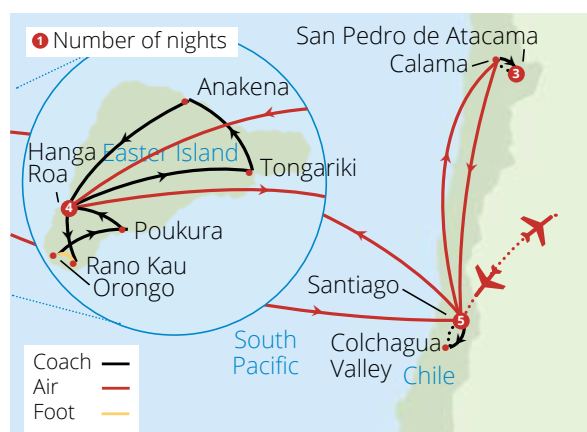
Your accommodation is selected for convenience, location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotels to lodges. Hotel accommodation is generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note there is no international classification system for hotels, and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and Chile and Easter Island. All group tours hotels have private bathroom facilities and air-conditioning, where needed. If you are staying in a lodge during your tour, plumbing and electricity supplies can vary and, in some cases, infrequent, with electricity only being accessible during certain times of the day.

Rest assured that all accommodation used by Mercury Holidays is regularly inspected by our staff and partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

Please note: final confirmation of your hotels will be sent in a document approximately 10 days before you travel.

Meals

Breakfast is always western style and served in the hotel each morning. Lunch and dinner where applicable will be taken either in local Chilean restaurants or in your hotel. Please note drinks are not included. Please note the lunch provided on days 6, 7 and 10 will be a lunch box.



ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On arrival in Chile you will be met by a representative from our local agent, **Pure Chile**, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/Pure Chile representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. If you cannot see your representative they will be at Exit Gate 4. There are many illegal taxis operating around Santiago Airport and they have been known to steal from tourists. Official taxis are dark blue in colour. Your guide will be on hand 24 hours a day should you have any queries. However, if you need to contact Pure Chile during your stay the details are:

Pure Chile

Nueva Providencia 2214, office 186
Tel: 0056 9 5681 6943
E-mail: sales@pure-chile.com or info@pure-chile.com

Emergency contact information

The arrangements in Chile are handled by our representatives 'Pure Chile'. If you need to contact them during your stay you can find the 24-hour emergency contact details below:
Telephone: 0056 956816943

WHAT TO PACK

- Sunscreen and hat in summer
- Thermal/warm clothing (for the Atacama Desert)
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Camera and charger
- Loo paper for public WCs
- Binoculars
- Personal first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc
- An electric plug converter - three different plug sockets are used, so it is best to bring a multi-adaptor

FLIGHT INFORMATION

IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details, including terminal, airline and baggage allowance, will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure. A printed E-ticket is no longer required at check-in, all you need to do is present your passport to the staff at the desk and your boarding pass will be given to you.

Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking, lounges or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras
Tel. 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

Visas

If you are a British passport holder a visa is not required for entry into Chile. Further visa advice should be sought from the applicable tourist authority for other nationalities and for general queries. We strongly advise you to check with your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy for the most up-to-date guidelines regarding required passport validity.

Insurance

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call 0800 781 4237 and quote 'WK830' for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury holidays 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.

Health and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check any health and vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include; www.fco.gov.uk, www.travelhealthpro.org.uk, www.hpa.org.uk, your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with a good level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves climbing of steep stairs and getting on and off coaches. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties. All our tours feature a "Tour Pace" to help find the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights, climb stairs and get on and off coaches and boats. The tour pace for Sacred Peru is rated as Advanced. A higher level of fitness as required as you may be on your feet for most of the day though this will be interspersed with regular breaks and very from day to day. You will be walking around the sights, getting on and off coaches, trains, boats and climbing steps which may be irregular. There may be some time spend at high altitude. You will stay in variety of hotels, possibly including overnight trains, and accommodation standards may not match those you are used to at home. Our 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.

Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 10, and the maximum will be 30. If in the unlikely event there are less than 10 people booked on your tour date, we will endeavour to reduce any disruption to your holiday and try to operate your tour with lower passenger numbers. If

we are not able to operate your departure date, then you may be asked to change to a different date and a full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

Tour Guides

This is a fully escorted tour with local guides throughout ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

Private Tour

If you have booked a private tour then you will be accompanied by a Driver Guide or a Driver and Local Guides. These will be available to you during all scheduled sightseeing. Private Tours can depart on any day of the week depending on flight and train schedules and the opening days of the attractions. They will follow the itinerary as described in the brochure unless you have been advised otherwise and you will still have all of the same meals, sightseeing and local excursions included.

Tipping

Tipping is a common practice in South America and it is customary to tip approx. USD£3-£4 per person per day which is split between the driver and the local guide. Tips can be given at the end of each day, or at the end of the tour. Tips are accepted in US dollars and local currencies.

Currency Exchange

The currency in Chile is the Chilean Peso, also known as CH\$. US Dollars are widely accepted in Chile should you wish to keep an alternative currency on you. During your stay on Easter Island U.S Dollar (\$) may not be accepted in some small businesses, shops and restaurants. It is advised that you should convert some money in to the local currency (Chilean Peso). Please be aware that card facilities are hard to find on Easter Island, there are only three ATMs (Only accept MasterCard) on the island so it is more preferred to use cash. We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. It is important that you budget carefully and ensure you have the right form of currency before you arrive in the country. Cash machines will also be available throughout the tour in order to withdraw money in your local currency.

Personal Expenses

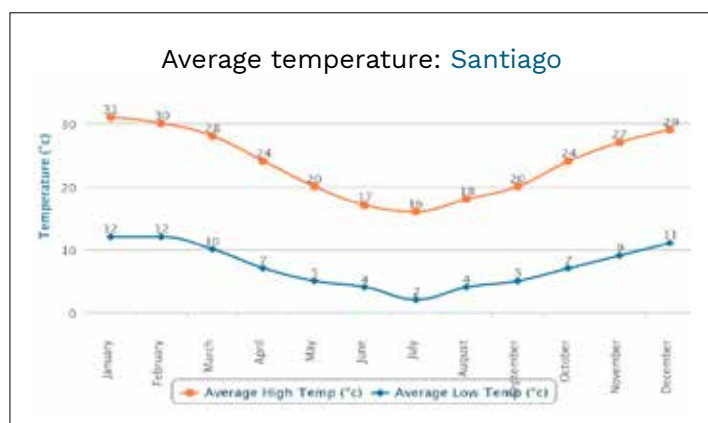
You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, any meals not included in the itinerary as well as drinks and any additional snacks. Approximately £200- £400 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour. It is a good idea to try and maintain a supply of small notes and change in the local currency for tipping or small purchases.

Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction and/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



Viña Del Mar Beach Stay Extension

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522



TRIP OVERVIEW

Located on the Pacific Coast of central Chile, enjoy three nights in Viña del Mar. Simply relax on the golden sandy beaches just a short walk from your hotel, or stroll along the manicured boulevard lined with palm trees.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension to Viña del Mar.

Viña del Mar:

Viña del Mar, meaning "Vineyard of the Sea", is a city and commune on central Chile's Pacific coast. Often referred as "La Ciudad Jardín" ("The Garden City"), Viña del Mar is located within the Valparaíso Region, and it's Chile's fourth largest city. It is known for its placid resorts, malls, extensive coastal high buildings, hotels and various entertainment venues. A Mediterranean climate prevails and an appealing array of sandy strips beckon.

Hotel

Your stay will take place at the 4★ Marina del Rey Hotel or the 5★ Sheraton Miramar on Bed & Breakfast, unless otherwise stated at booking.

All internal transfers are included.

Hotel contact information:

4★ Marina del Rey Hotel

Address: Ecuador 299, Viña del Mar, Región de Valparaíso, Chile
Telephone Number: 0056 32 238 3000.

5★ Sheraton Miramar

Address: Armada de Chile 15, Viña del Mar, Chile.
Telephone Number: 0056 32 238 8600.

Tour Guides

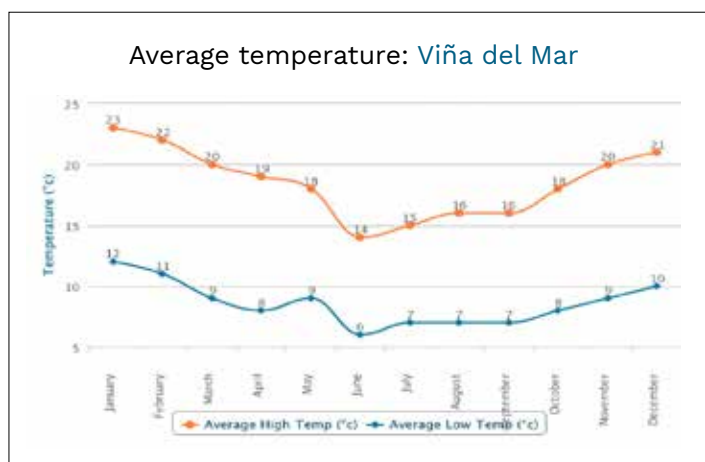
Your stay in Viña del Mar is not escorted by a tour guide.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any lunches and dinners, as well as personal purchases, such as souvenirs, laundry, drinks and snacks.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



Sheraton Miramar

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0333 003 0522**

Puerto Varas Extension

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522



TRIP OVERVIEW

Explore the Lake District of Chile where you will stay in the city of Puerto Varas, also known as the 'City of Roses'. Relax on the shores of the second biggest lake in Chile, Llanquihue Lake, and admire the breath-taking backdrop of the conical Osorno Volcano and the snow-capped peaks of Mt Calbuco and Mt Tronador.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension to Puerto Varas.

Puerto Varas (3 nights):

Explore lovely, compact Puerto Varas on foot, the best way to take in views of Osorno Volcano and the wooden colonial homes built by German immigrants in the early 1900s. Several are designated as national monuments. Located on the shores of Lago Llanquihue, Chile's second-largest lake, the village is the low-key antidote to the Lake District metropolis of Puerto Montt and serves as a jumping off point for fly-fishing, whitewater rafting, horseback riding and sea kayaking excursions.

Hotel

Your stay will take place at the 4★ Hotel Cabanas del Lago or the 5★ Hotel Cumbres Puerto Varas on Bed & Breakfast, unless otherwise stated at booking.
All internal transfers are included.

Hotel contact information:

4★ Hotel Cabanas del Lago

Address: Klener 195, Puerto Varas, X Región, Chile.

Telephone Number: +56 65 220 0100.

5★ Hotel Cumbres Puerto Varas

Address: Av. Imperial 0561, Puerto Varas, Décima Región de Los Lagos, Chile.

Telephone Number: +56 65 2 222 000.

Tour Guides

Your stay in Puerto Varas is not escorted by a tour guide.

Personal Expenses

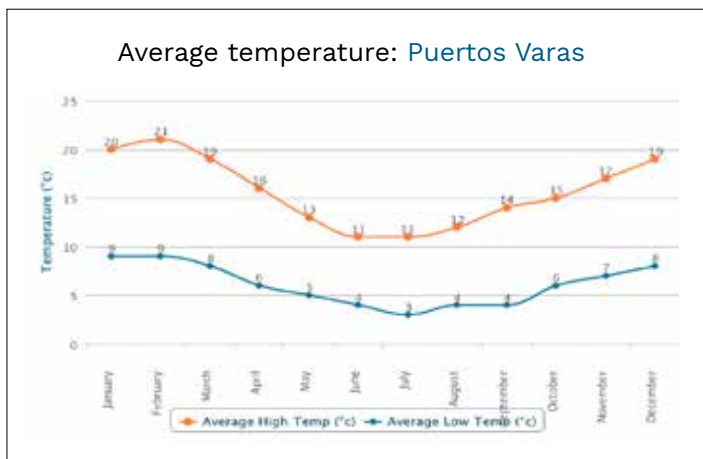
You will need to take money with you to cover any lunches and dinners, as well as personal purchases, such as souvenirs, laundry, drinks and snacks.

Please note:

You will spend 1 night in Santiago at the 4★ Hotel Fundador prior to your return flight to the UK.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



Hotel Cumbres Puerto Varas

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0333 003 0522**