



SPIRIT  
OF THE WEST  
ADVENTURES

# ULTIMATE PATAGONIA EXTENDED – 19 DAYS GUEST HANDBOOK

19 DAY / 18 NIGHT MOTHERSHIP & SEA KAYAK EXPEDITION



# PATAGONIAN CHILE – MOTHERSHIP KAYAKING

## AT A GLANCE

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| TYPE           | Mothership & sea kayaking tour  |
| LENGTH         | <b>19 days, 18 nights</b>   |
| GROUP SIZE     | Maximum 8 guests and 2 guides   |
| ACTIVITY LEVEL | Suitable for beginners through experienced kayakers   |
| HIGHLIGHTS     | <p>Discover somewhere new every day: the route starts at the north end of the Archipelago and ends in the south</p> <p>Experience towering fjords, paddle at San Rafael Glacier and amidst the icebergs, and partake in an authentic Chilean asado (barbeque)</p> <p>Explore a region where we may see Blue Whales</p> <p>Walk along an expansive black volcanic sand beach, soak in hot springs all to ourselves</p> <p>Enjoy the comfort of sleeping and eating aboard a mothership</p> <p>Full day wine tour and tasting</p> <p>Warm and welcoming Chilean hospitality</p> <p>Personalized attention and service from knowledgeable and experienced guides</p> |
| INCLUDES       | <p>Almost everything!</p> <p>Airport transfers on scheduled arrival and departure dates, 3 nights accommodation in Santiago hotel (nights 1, 2 &amp; 18), 15 nights accommodation on the mothership, domestic flights in Chile from Santiago to Patagonia (as per itinerary), professional guides, all kayaking equipment (all double kayaks with one single for sharing amongst group), meals in restaurants or prepared by your chef of the mothership (starting with dinner on day 1 through breakfast day 19), wine and beer with meals (3-4 bottles per night for the group), park and land use permits</p>  |
| NOT INCLUDED   | <p>Expenses on day 1 and 19 (other than the airport transfers), hotel and meals outside of those listed in itinerary, cancellation, interruption and medical insurance, or personal items (toiletries, clothing, etc.), gratuities, any purchases made in stores or gift shops, costs associated with visas, entry fees, passports, vaccinations or any travel/expenses outside of what is listed in the itinerary</p>  |





# HOW & WHERE WE TRAVEL

## FROM CHILEAN WINERIES TO THE SAN RAFAEL GLACIER

Explore the beautiful outer islands of southern Chile with us! We will experience the best of what Chile has to offer in a mothership style sea kayaking tour: wine, wildlife and wilderness paired with sea kayaking in one of the most stunning places on earth, all from the comfort and convenience of our personal expedition ship.

The coast of Chile stretches for over 4300 kilometers, providing endless opportunities for kayakers. The region we have chosen for our tours is considered Northern Patagonia and is part of the Aysen Region. Most people think that the southernmost portion of Chile (Southern Patagonia) is the most rugged and wild, but think again. We will take you into difficult to access areas with stunning landscapes, abundant wildlife, hot springs and glaciers dropping into the sea, all while enjoying the Spirit of the West Adventures quality, safety and service you have come to expect.

We've designed this journey to take in the highlights and our favourite spots. After many years of exploring this region, we've crafted the ideal itinerary to share all this region has to offer. Some of the top selections include paddling in beautiful and pristine Traiguén and Goñi Islands, viewing abundant wildlife, soaking in remote hot springs, basking in the immensity of the San Rafael Glacier and taking in a traditional asado (barbecue) - all among the backdrop of volcanoes and mountains.

The tour starts in Santiago where we enjoy one day of touring and wine tastings in Chile's fantastic and plentiful wine producing regions. On our second day we travel to Patagonia via a short regional flight. We will then meet our floating home, the 64-foot motor vessel called **the Alba**. From here, we explore this incredible coastline. Keep reading for our full itinerary!





## SAMPLE ITINERARY

The route will take us all the way from the historic Island of Chiloe to the San Rafael Glacier. Highlights of this trip include soaking in remote hot springs, paddling along the dark black volcanic beaches of Bahía Tic Toc, looking for blue whales in Golfo de Corcovado, enjoying a fresh fire-roasted lamb dinner on a secluded beach, and paddling among glaciers in the spectacular San Rafael Lagoon.

### DEPARTURE DAY - DAY ZERO

Depart your home for Santiago, Chile. Most flights are overnight (approx. 10 hours from Toronto) and arrive early to mid-morning the following day.

### DAY 1

Welcome to Santiago! One or both of your guides will meet you at the international airport in Santiago, Chile, wearing their Spirit of the West Adventures t-shirts (more specific details on meeting at the airport will be sent to you just before your trip starts). If for some reason we can't meet you ourselves there will be someone holding a sign with YOUR name on it. We will then all travel back to our hotel in Providencia (a region of Santiago). In case of any problems, please note the name, address, and phone number of our hotel:

**Casa Bellavista Hotel**  
**Antonia López de Bello 0374, Providencia**  
**Región Metropolitana, Chile**  
**[casabellavistahotel.com](http://casabellavistahotel.com)**

*We will be staying at Casa Bellavista Hotel the first and second night of the tour (day 1 & 2) and then again on the last night (day 19) (all included as part of the tour). Any hotels before or after the tour (if you are fortunate to have more time to explore) would be your own responsibility. Rooms will be reserved in your individual names if you want to request to stay in the same room you will be staying in as part of the tour. Please contact the hotel for booking additional nights.*

The afternoon is yours to explore the neighbourhood and city. Depending on how you are feeling after checking into the hotel and freshening up, you may be interested in a walk through some of the local parks & around the general

area. If you prefer, please enjoy a nap or a quiet afternoon at the hotel. That evening we will all meet at the hotel and head out for a welcome dinner at one of our favourite Chilean establishments. (Please note, expenses on this day, other than the airport pickup, hotel, and dinner, are not included in the tour cost). Then it's time for a good night's sleep.

### DAY 2

Today we will be met at our hotel by our guide and driver for our adventure into the Colchagua or Casablanca Valley on a tour of this special wine region. We will have a chance to sample some of the best wines Chile has to offer, including Chilean specialties such as Carmenere and Syrah. We will enjoy lunch amidst the vines at one of the two wineries we will be visiting. Returning back to the city in time for dinner we will dine under the stars at one of the city's incredible sidewalk cafes/restaurants.

### DAY 3

After a continental breakfast at our hotel, we will transfer to the Santiago airport for our flight to Castro on the island of Chiloe. Following the 2.5-hour flight, we will have arrived in Patagonia! Our mini-van will transfer us from the airport to the historic fishing village of Dalcahue where we will meet our mothership, the beautiful Alba. The Alba is a 64-foot yacht named after the early morning. Once all settled aboard, the Captain will give us a safety briefing and we will enjoy dinner while watching the sun sink behind the islands as we motor out and anchor in a protected cove.

## THE KAYAK ADVENTURE BEGINS

Please note that while this Patagonian coastline is absolutely stunning, it can be quite exposed to wind in certain areas so we split our time between paddling and motoring to get to some of the best and most enjoyable places to paddle. Both the paddling portion and the motoring portions of this trip are weather-dependent, so the following itinerary is simply a guideline, and we will need to be flexible to work with nature. When the weather presents the best opportunity, on one of the days below

we will finish off our day with an authentic gaucho lamb asado (or BBQ). The taste of fresh lamb and vegetables slow-roasted over an open fire, enjoyed under the vast Patagonian sky, is second to none. This meal, of course, will be accompanied by vegetables and a great selection of Chilean wine and beer.

#### DAY 4

Departing our anchorage in the morning we will launch our kayaks near the mouth of Quintupeu Fiord. This spectacular steep-sided inlet also harbours an interesting history as the hiding place of the German warship Dresden during part of World War I after being pursued by the British, and before her eventual scuttling at the Chilean Island of Juan Fernandez.

#### DAY 5

Today we visit Estero Comau and take some time to luxuriate in the hot springs there. The natural springs were discovered in the 1930s and several simple “tubs” were carved out of the soft rock, making for a beautiful place to relax. Time permitting we will endeavour to get out in the kayaks as well.

#### DAYS 6 & 7

These two days we will spend much of our time cruising toward Bahía Tic Toc, passing by the wilderness shorelines of Pumalín National Park and volcanoes such as the impressive Volcán Corcovado. We'll fill the time with interpretive talks about the geology of southern Chile and blue whales, whose majestic blows we'll be looking for on the journey. When the option presents itself we'll also get out on shore to stretch our legs, launch the kayaks to go paddling, or take a short spin in the zodiac.

#### DAY 8

We'll enjoy a full paddling day in Bahía Tic Toc today, checking out extraordinary black sand beaches and looking for wildlife in the form of dolphins and sea lions. These islands are stunningly pristine and a joy to be among.

#### DAY 9

Whale watchers take positions! As we cross from Bahía Tic Toc to Melinka at the tip of the Chonos Archipelago – leaving the mainland behind – this will be one of our best opportunities for viewing the small population of blue whales that inhabits this area. Early research is still ongoing, but from its discovery by science only a few years ago it appears that the whales use the Golfo de Corcovado as a feeding and rearing ground, and the population is growing. It's difficult to describe the sensation of the entire boat being dwarfed by the largest animal on Earth.

#### DAY 10

Heading south again we'll depart our anchorage near Melinka and launch our kayaks near Isla Marta for our first Chonos paddling.

#### DAY 11 & 12

From Isla Marta, we'll continue to either Isla Kent or the mini-archipelago of Puerto Italia. Paddling among the little islands is like watching a gift being unwrapped, and we may get to walk along the exposed western beaches of Kent, looking for whale bones. Depending on weather and timing, we may also explore the complex islands and channels of the Islas Canquenes and evocatively-named Canal Carrera del Diablo (Devil's Race).





### DAY 13

Paddling today in the area around Isla Goñi we'll get a sense of a Patagonian landscape that is more often found even further south: low scrub vegetation with only a few trees near the shoreline, evidence of the harsh climate of the region. Here there are also signs of the original inhabitants of the islands, the Chonos people, in the form of shell middens (mounds of shell material deposited over many years from harvesting and consuming mussels and clams). Later in the day, we'll have the opportunity to stretch our legs with a hike on the rugged ground of Peninsula Taitao.

### DAYS 14 & 15

Another highlight of this tour is visiting San Rafael Lagoon, which is our next stop after the Isla Goñi. Having lunch near the glacier, surrounded by icebergs, we will carefully navigate our way by kayak through the icebergs to visit the region's various beaches and islets. If time and weather permits, we may undertake a walk to get to a viewpoint overlooking the glacier, looking for prints of both the small native deer called huemul ("waymool") and kodkod, small cats similar to a bobcat or lynx. The sheer size and raw power of this river of ice is one of life's more memorable moments.

### DAY 16

Today we will begin heading north again, paddling in the area of Rios Pescadores or Huemules. These two rivers, flowing down to the sea from the Patagonian interior offer a glimpse again toward the mountains. Keep an eye out for pumice stone, a volcanic floating rock!

### DAY 17

Today we will continue north toward Fiordo Aysen, paddling either in the island group southwest of Puerto Aguirre or

the Cinco Hermanas. Our last night will be spent anchored in Caleta Gato (Cat Cove, so named for the local otters).

### DAY 18

Today we say goodbye to the Captain and the crew, but hopefully, our paths will cross again soon. We will head back to Puerto Aysen in time to transfer to the Balmaceda airport for our flight back to Santiago. After a late dinner in the city, your comfortable and familiar bed will be waiting for you at the hotel. You will say goodbye to your guides this evening after they have ensured that all the arrangements for your departure are set for the following morning.

### DAY 19

After breakfast at the hotel, the airport transfer service will meet you and ensure you make it to your onward flight on time. The airport transfer and breakfast are included in the tour cost, but any additional expenses on this day are at your own expense. If you are staying in Chile, we are happy to help with additional travel arrangements.

### ADDITIONAL DAYS

Spirit of the West Adventures will ensure everyone gets safely to the airport for their journey home or help you get on your way if you are lucky enough to have more time to explore this incredible part of the world. Please note any airport transfers outside of the scheduled arrival and departure days are at your own expense.

### PLEASE NOTE

Please know that the above itinerary is meant to give you an idea of all the region has to offer. Weather, wildlife, and our fellow kayakers will help to determine the specifics of our daily route. Please also bear in mind that this is a remote and expansive area – if we find another place we wish to explore, we can do so!



# MORE ABOUT OUR FLOATING HOME

## OUR COMFORTABLE VESSEL **THE ALBA**

While we schedule our tours to try to make the most of the Patagonian weather as well as good wildlife viewing times, you never know what kind of weather you will experience. For this reason we have found that mothership kayaking is the perfect way to experience this wild and rugged area. The mothership also allows us to cover much greater distances each day and to explore areas that would take weeks to reach by sea kayak alone.

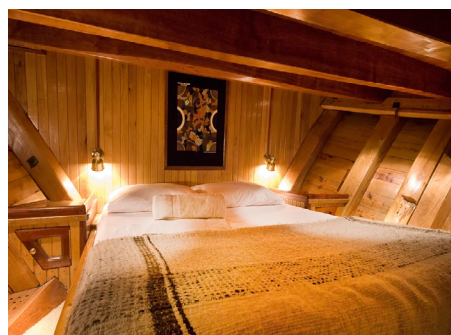


### INTERIOR OF THE MOTHERSHIP

The Alba was constructed using a unique Patagonian wood, *cipres de las Guaitecas*, used for centuries by the maritime Chiloe people. Blending the traditional artwork of experienced Chiloe boat builders with the latest technology in boat design, safety and interior finishing, the Alba offers a cozy wooden interior and comfortable cabins as well as safety and reliability. The ship features 5 guest cabins: two with double beds, two with twin beds, and one with a double bed that can be turned into two twin beds. Remember that we take a maximum of 8 guests on this tour, which allows for plenty of space. All cabins have their own bathroom complete with hot water and showers. The yacht is handled by a skilled crew and captain with decades of experience in Patagonian waters.



*A Double Cabin*



*The Convertible Cabin! Can be a double bed or two twins*



*A Twin Cabin*



## PACKING LIST

The following is a list of items recommended for your safety and comfort during your tour. It includes items suitable for the city portion of the tour as well as kayaking in the wilds of Patagonia. Please note that fashion abounds in major cities, and while quick-dry clothing is awesome for kayaking, you may feel more comfortable in other clothing when in the city and dining out. Jeans and a nice top (or similar) are acceptable for most venues in the city, but if you plan on visiting fancy restaurants a jacket and tie or skirt may be required. Casual clothing like jeans are acceptable at all establishments we visit as part of the tour.

We are fortunate to be basing the sea kayaking portion of our trip from the mothership. This awesome vessel gives us a warm and dry place to come back to each evening, but it is still important to have the proper clothing for kayaking in order to fully enjoy your experience.

**Temperatures:** In Santiago expect warm days and nights: t-shirt weather with temperatures cooling in the evenings. The conditions in Patagonia are constantly changing and we will likely experience a little bit of everything. In a single day we can experience sunshine, clouds, rain, wind and perfect calm. January & February in Patagonia is equivalent to August & September temperatures in the northern hemisphere. You are likely to experience some warmer days where we are paddling in light long sleeves as well as days where more layers are welcome. In the immediate vicinity of the glaciers it can be quite cold (it is ice after all)! It is best to come prepared for any type of weather. Remember there is no such thing as bad weather, just bad gear!

If you have any concerns or questions about this list, please don't hesitate to contact us.

## WHAT TO BRING: GENERAL

**\*Please be sure to pack all essential medications and medical devices (e.g. CPAP machine) in your carry-on bag.**

Putting an [AirTag](#) in your luggage to keep track of your baggage is also a great option to consider.

- Passport & money belt - Ensure your passport is valid for at least 6 months after your return flight. A money belt helps to keep your important documents and money close to your body and takes away the worry of travel.
- Copies of all your important documents - A simple photocopy of your passport and travel insurance details can save you a lot of hassle if you ever lose them. We also lock our passports in the safe at the hotel and travel around the city carrying only a photocopy.
- Suitcase or backpack - Ideally something with soft sides. This will help to save space on the mothership. Hybrid duffel bags with wheels are our favourite as they are easy to navigate airports with, but compress in size for storage.
- Wet shoes - A pair that can get wet such as sturdy full strapped sandals, neoprene booties, or crocs. To maximize packing space, a comfortable pair of sandals that you can wear both in the city and get wet, combined with neoprene or waterproof socks may work best. The water is quite cool and neoprene or waterproof socks are really wonderful to have!
- Walking shoes - A pair of runners or other comfortable walking shoes for exploring the cities, travel days and on-board the mothership. If you plan on doing much trekking before or after the tour, hiking boots may be in order.
- Hat - A brimmed rain/sun hat AND a wool or fleece hat for evenings or cooler days.

- ❑ Sunglasses & sunscreen (including sunscreen lip chap) - A must for protection from sun and glare off of the water. A safety cord on your glasses is a good idea.
- ❑ Small towel & bathing suit - Quick drying travel towels are handy. Don't forget your bathing suit if you wish to enjoy the natural hot springs! We will have full sized towels in our hotels and for aboard the mothership.
- ❑ Medication - If you are bringing medication please ensure that: 1) It is in its original container or one that lists the name and expiry date of the medication as well as your name; 2) you have a copy of your original prescription in case they question your drugs at the border; 3) you have the detailed instructions of your dosage and frequency; 4) **it is packed in your carry on baggage**
- ❑ Personal items - Toothbrush, toothpaste, biodegradable soap, washcloth, feminine hygiene products, hairbrush, etc.
- ❑ Ear plugs and sleep mask - Great for night flights and if your friends are snoring!
- ❑ Mask, hand sanitizer, and wet wipes – Good for safety, sanitizing or a quick wash on your travels.
- ❑ Ziploc bags - These and a large garbage bag are always handy when traveling.
- ❑ Small flashlight or headlamp - Don't forget spare batteries or your charging cord. Headlamps are preferable as they allow for hands free use and are great for reading and not disturbing your fellow cabin mates.
- ❑ Water bottle - 1 durable water bottle. Spirit of the West Adventures will provide safe drinking water during your journey with us. We do try and use purification drops to treat water when possible to cut down on plastic waste. If you plan on trekking after your tour it would be a good idea to carry some water purification tabs or drops, such as Pristine drops.
- ❑ Camera & memory cards - Packed in a waterproof bag or case. We will provide a dry bag for use during kayaking, but it is not padded. Be sure to bring lots of memory cards, spare batteries, and your charger, you won't want to miss these photo opportunities.
- ❑ Plug adapter for charging. Check your battery charger to ensure it can handle 220 voltage (most chargers for phones, computers, and cameras are dual voltage).

- ❑ Book and/or journal - Books written in English can be hard to find in Chile. Most hotels have book exchanges for when you are done. E-readers can be a great way to have lots of books handy but without the bulk and weight, again make sure your device can handle 220 volt power.

## CLOTHING: PADDLING

When choosing clothing, keep in mind that it could become cold and wet at anytime. Layering is the best way to regulate body temperature and maintain warmth. We suggest avoiding cotton (except for those hot days and in the city). Cotton has no insulation value when wet.

Clothing made of materials that wick moisture from the body and give a comfortable dry feeling even while wet is the best first layer (polypro-pylene, nylon, polyester). A synthetic material such as fleece or pile makes the best second layer to provide warmth. Wool is also suitable.

Please note: the suggested quantities below are minimum amounts to bring and we do have reasonable amounts of space for storing clothing on the mothership, so when in doubt bring it. There are NOT laundry facilities on the mothership, but you are welcome to wash out a few pairs of underwear over the course of the trip and we can dry them in the engine room.

- ❑ Rain jacket & rain pants - These are essential for staying comfortable regardless of the weather. To test your waterproofness jump in the shower and see if you stay dry! Spirit of the West will provide a paddling jacket and pants for use during the kayaking portion of the tour, but please bring your own for any additional travel days you may be planning.
- ❑ Long pants - 1 pair of fleece or warm comfortable pants. 2 lighter pairs made of a quick drying fabric. Often these pants can also double as "city or casual" pants for exploring in the city. Jeans are not recommended for kayaking, but are fine in the city or for wearing on the mothership.
- ❑ Long underwear top & bottoms - Helps to keep you warm in the evenings or as a base layer while kayaking.
- ❑ Long sleeved non-cotton shirt - 2
- ❑ T-shirts - 2-3 synthetic tops. Synthetic material dries quickly so you can wash in the evening and wear it the next day.
- ❑ Shorts - 1 quick dry nylon pair

- ❑ Warm socks - 3 pairs
- ❑ Undergarments - As you see fit. A couple pairs of synthetic underwear for paddling can be comfortable on wet days. Cotton underwear is good for evenings.

## CLOTHING IN THE CITY

- ❑ Santiago can be hot in the austral summer (January-February), but long pants or skirts are still more typically worn than shorts.
- ❑ Jeans - 1 or 2 pairs. Comfortable for wearing on the plane and around the city or boat.
- ❑ Dressy outfit option - Chileans in the city have a real sense of style. This does NOT need to be a fancy outfit, but a button up shirt, summer skirt, nice sweater and top will help you to feel comfortable in the city.

## OPTIONAL ITEMS

- ❑ Binoculars - We say optional, but they are wonderful to have while on the boat. There will be one or two pairs to share while on the boat.
- ❑ Travel neck pillow – You can purchase small compact pillows at some outdoor stores or in the airport. This may make your overnight flight much more comfortable (however most airlines provide a pillow). When on the mothership and in hotels a regular full size pillow will be provided.
- ❑ Gloves – Wool or fleece gloves can be a cozy addition to a cool day. Biking gloves (fingerless are best for dexterity) work well to protect your hands from blisters. For kayaking on cooler days we do provide Pogies which are easy to use and attach to your paddle and then you slip your hand in and out, allowing you to quickly have bare hands for taking photos etc.
- ❑ Fishing gear – Our mothership will have some basic fishing equipment available for use while on-board. If you are an expert fisher, you may wish to bring your favourite lures etc.
- ❑ Sleeping bag – You will NOT need a sleeping bag during this trip. However if you wish to do some camping/exploring before or after your tour it may come in handy.
- ❑ Beverages – There will be a good selection of drinks available on-board the mothership including beer and wine with meals (these are included in the cost of your tour). However if you wish to bring additional spirits or sodas, you are welcome

to. They can be purchased in Santiago prior to departure.

## WHAT IS PROVIDED?

- ❑ Pillow and bedding - At hotels and on board the mothership.
- ❑ Paddling jacket and pants - This is to help keep you dry when kayaking; a rain coat is still recommended for the rest of your journey.
- ❑ Pogies - to help keep your hands warm when kayaking
- ❑ All other paddling equipment

If you are planning on bringing any of your own paddling equipment please double-check the packing list to ensure you have the appropriate gear and please let our office know in advance of the tour to avoid us bringing duplicates.

## SANITATION

Each cabin is equipped with it's own bathroom. During our paddling excursions your guides will explain the most environmentally appropriate technique for using nature's bathroom. Your guide will carry a bathroom bag complete with toilet paper and hand sanitizer. They will designate an area and method that works best when nature calls. Our guides will go over these details before the tour and if you have any concerns while on tour please do not be shy to ask your guide.

While on the mothership, please use biodegradable soaps and shampoos.

Spirit of the West Adventures makes every effort to ensure we leave our area as we found it or better.





# INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL TIPS

## HOW TO GET TO CHILE

Santiago is serviced by direct flights almost daily from most major centres and by several different airlines.

When flying into Chile you will land in Santiago at Arturo Merino Benitez Airport (SCL) which is located approximately 20 minutes (21 km) from the city center. Spirit of the West Adventures will arrange transport for you from the airport to our hotel if arriving/departing on our scheduled days.

## BEFORE YOU GO

It is important to take a few easy precautions that will help to make your trip as smooth as possible and help you get over any obstacles you may face.

- Ensure your passport is current and will remain valid for 6 months after your return date.
- Purchase travel cancellation, interruption and medical insurance. This will cover you in the event of needing medical help while abroad and will cover any expenses incurred from unexpected changes in travel plans or circumstances out of your control (i.e. missed flights because of weather, lost baggage, theft, family illness). **Trip cancellation, interruption and medical coverage is mandatory to participate in Spirit of the West Adventures' Chile tours.** Learn more on our [Travel Insurance page](#).
- Make sure your inoculations are current. While there are no required vaccinations for traveling to Chile it is suggested you have Covid shots and boosters, Hepatitis A & B, and Typhoid Fever vaccinations. Please also ensure your Tetanus/ Polio/Diphtheria shot is current (you need a booster every 10 years).
- Set up a pin code that can work internationally on both your debit and credit cards (4 digits). Take your card into any branch with your current

pin and you can reset it to something easy to remember.

- Invest in some good rain gear and warm clothes for Patagonia - it will help make your trip much more enjoyable. Please see our packing list for a complete list of what to bring.
- Send yourself an email with a scanned copy of your passport, immunization record, flight details, and important numbers including travel insurance policy numbers, credit card company contact info in case of loss or theft. This way if you happened to lose your bags you can go to the Internet and have all the information handy. It is also a good idea to leave all of the above with a trusted friend or relative at home who could help you out in a pinch.
- Have fun learning about the country, read some Chilean literature, watch some soccer (football), take Spanish lessons, drink Chilean wines etc. This will all help you to get the most out of your experience.





# CHILE - THE BASICS

Chile is incredibly rich in history and has endless opportunities for exploring cultural elements of the country. The other major drawing card for travelers is the spectacular natural beauty. From the world's driest deserts in the north, to the coastal beach cities, to the wine producing valleys of the interior, to the grazing lands and the rugged beauty of Patagonia, Chile will continually amaze you.

## TIME

Mainland Chile is on GMT -4 (GMT -3 from October to March).

## SEASONS

Summer in Chile is considered to be December, January, February and the beginning of March. Temperatures in Santiago during the summer and fall can be quite warm with highs of approx. 28 degrees Celsius and lows of 15 or so. HOWEVER, temperatures in Patagonia can be quite different. Patagonia is much cooler and requires the appropriate clothing, but is well worth it. Remember there is no such thing as bad weather, just bad gear! Please see our packing list for more details.

## LANGUAGE

The official language is Spanish. There is a fair amount of slang used in everyday conversation so don't get frustrated if you don't understand everything no matter how good your Spanish is.

## ELECTRICITY

The electrical current is 220 volts and 50Mhz. The pin shape is either two or 3 round plugs. You will need an adaptor plug for any North American appliances. Universal adaptor plugs can be purchased at any travel shop or in the airport, but check to ensure your device can handle the voltage (most electronics are dual voltage, but appliances like hair driers are not).

## GRATUITIES

10% is fairly standard in restaurants, tourist facilities and for most services. Tipping taxi drivers is not expected, but rounding up is a nice gesture. Some USD or Chilean Peso cash is helpful for leaving a gratuity for your boat crew. Your Canadian kayak guides can accept e-transfers from Canadian accounts, credit card payments (3% card fee) or cash of any currency. If you don't want to carry too much cash around with you, you can take cash out of the ATM in the airport on our flight to Patagonia. A general guideline for tipping is approx. 10% but any gesture of appreciation is welcomed.

## LOCAL CUSTOMS

There are wide ranges of customs depending on which region you are in, but some general nationwide practices include:

- Bargaining is NOT practiced, the price is the price
- There is a strong emphasis on family and spending time with family
- Business culture is quite formal
- Clothing in the city can be fancy (bring a nice outfit if you plan on eating out in some of the higher end restaurants)
- Being polite and smiling can go a long way

## INTERNET & PHONE

Wireless internet can be found in most hotels, cafes and restaurants. The country code for Chile is +56. To make calls to outside the country from Chile you need to dial 00 then the applicable country code and then the number. The mobile (cellular) coverage is also quite good when in the cities but **there will NOT be cell coverage when on the mothership.**



If you need to leave emergency contact details with family or friends, please have them contact the Spirit of the West office and we will do our best to relay a message to the mothership via satellite communication.

## CURRENCY & MONEY

The Chilean Peso (CLP) is the national currency and is represented using the \$ symbol. The Peso is then broken down into 100 centavos (cents). To determine approximate current exchange rates check out [xe.com](http://xe.com).

For everyday transactions in the markets etc, local currency is preferable but you can often also use US dollars in major centers and for larger purchases such as hotels. If you use US dollars or a foreign credit card for accommodation payment you avoid paying the 19% IVA tax.

Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) are located on almost every street corner in the major cities and very few smaller towns are without at least one machine. If you have a bank card from a major network such as Cirrus and a 4 digit pin code it should work in these machines. You will likely get a better rate here than through a casa de cambio (exchange house).

Visa, MasterCard and to a lesser extent American Express and Diner's Club credit cards are accepted at most hotels, larger restaurants and shops. These cards also come in handy for cash advances from ATMs in case you have any problems with your debit/bank card.

Traveler's cheques are fairly outdated now. You can use them in major centers, but are often charged a premium on top of your purchase to use them. You often also lose out in the currency conversion process.

## SAFETY

Chile is a relatively safe and enjoyable place to travel. However, the usual petty crime of any city in the world can be found in the major centers, but if you are using

common sense and keeping your wits about you, you are unlikely to have any problems.

Being discreet about your wealth will go a long way in keeping you out of trouble – minimize your risks by not wearing flashy jewellery, carrying a wallet full of cash or having a giant camera dangling around your neck at night. A money wallet for carrying your passport and valuables in close to your body helps give you a sense of comfort when transiting in busy places (and makes it virtually impossible for pickpockets to take your important documents). Carrying only the money you will need for the day in your wallet or pocket helps make you a less desirable target for theft. Travelling with a buddy after dark is never a bad idea, but most major streets are fine to walk after dark. When in doubt take a cab. Most restaurants etc. can call you a cab or they are readily found on most streets. Avoid big protests or large gatherings in the streets so you don't get caught up in any tense situations.

The national police force, the Carabineros, are incredibly helpful and professional. You will see them wearing green uniforms and are readily found especially in cities. To reach the Carabineros from any phone, mobile or payphone dial 133. Never try to bribe the police in Chile. For emergency medical assistance (i.e. ambulances) dial 131.

## HEALTH

Ensure you have adequate travel medical insurance. No one ever plans to get sick, but it sometimes happens and having good coverage including the option of returning to your home country for continued treatment is comforting to say the least. Credit cards often offer some coverage, but often have low limits or only partial coverage for a limited number of days. Health care in urban centers is quite good, but is expensive, so come well covered.

Having a routine medical and dental check-up before travelling can also help to eliminate any unforeseen pain or problems that could take away from your trip.

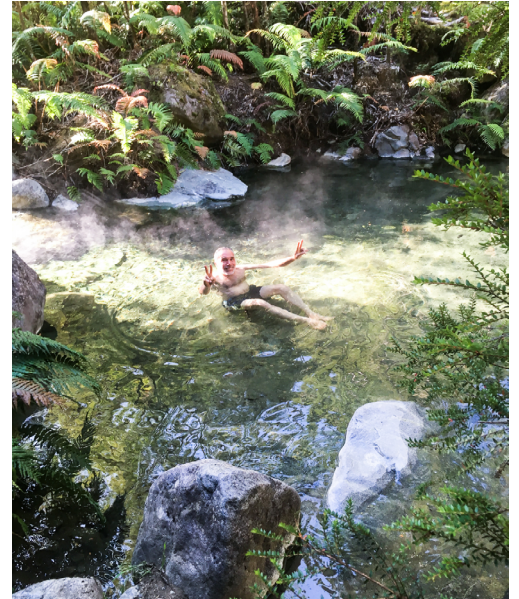
**Please carry all medication in your carry-on bag to avoid issues if your luggage is delayed or lost.**

Knowing your eyeglass prescription and carrying a back-up pair of glasses will also be helpful in case something happens to your glasses.

There are well-stocked pharmacies in most towns, but sometimes it is difficult to find the equivalent medication because of language barriers etc. We once tried to find Lactaid pills (supplements for lactose intolerance) in dozens of pharmacies to no avail - this is something that just does not exist in Chile. The moral of the story is to come prepared.

For women, it's a good idea to bring with you a supply of your preferred brand of feminine hygiene supplies. There are lots of pads in grocery stores, but it is more difficult to find tampons. Birth control can also be difficult to access.

Water is generally safe in the cities, but it is never a bad idea to treat tap water before drinking or to purchase bottled water. We like to take Pristine drops (or similar) with us. They are a quick and easy way to treat water and it cuts down on the waste of buying plastic bottles all the time.



## WAYS TO LEARN ABOUT AMAZING CHILE

Learning about the country and cultures that you will be travelling to is a sure way of enriching your experience. Below we have listed some books, wine, news sources and other online resources that will help you get acquainted with Chile and Patagonia. This list is only a brief introduction, but is a great starting point. If you find something of interest in your trip preparation, please let us know and we will add it to our list.

### BOOKS & AUTHORS

There are lots of great Chilean authors, stunning picture books and detailed guide books which will help you to understand a little more about Chile before you arrive. Possible suggestions include:

- The Lonely Planet Guide to Chile and Easter Island – There are many guidebooks out there, but Lonely Planet continues to be my favourite in terms of ease of use and scope of information.
- The Lonely Planet Phrasebook for Latin American Spanish – A super pocket size phrasebook and dictionary. The phrases are really handy!
- Culture Smart Series: Chile – A primer on Chilean customs and culture. Really handy for folks involved in business in this part of the world.
- Books by Isabel Allende – Has written many different genres; try Daughter of Fortune (features the Valparaiso area); Of Love and Shadows, set during the time of Pinochet; or Ines of my Soul, historical fiction about some of the early conquests in Chile.



- Works by Pablo Neruda – Poet, diplomat and politician. Won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1971. His home in Santiago is open to the public as a museum.
- In Patagonia by Bruce Chatwin – One of the classic early works of travel writing in Patagonia.
- What is Secret: Short Stories by Chilean Women – As the title suggests, this is a collection of stories that spans the years.
- Chile: A Traveler's Literary Companion by Katherine Silver. This is a collection of short stories from Chilean authors about Chile, organized by geographical region.
- Full Circle: A South American Journey by Luis Sepuveda is a travelogue through Chile and Patagonia by a Chilean author, full of insights and revelations.
- Cold Oceans – Jon Turk has written about many of his adventures by boat and kayak; included are a couple of chapters on his experiences kayaking towards Cape Horn.

Please note that Spirit of the West will also be bringing a small library of books with us, including field guides for local flora and fauna and travel guides.

## WINES

Why not try tasting a little bit of Chile before you go to warm up your taste buds? The sky is the limit here. There are so many great wines being produced in Chile you have some real work ahead of yourself to determine which wines are your favourites. Below are some of the most commonly available wines in Canada. Try any of them with a recipe cooked up from *Tasting Chile: A Celebration of Authentic Chilean Foods and Wines* by Daniel Joelson. Below are some vintages commonly found in export markets:

- Santa Carolina – A large producer, try bottles labelled Reserva as this is better quality wine. They use grapes from vineyards all over Chile.
- Cono Sur – Has both organic and traditional wines

- Casillero Del Diablo – Makes a classic Chilean Carmenera
- Emiliana Organic Vineyards – Their Adobe line or Sauvignon Blanc and Carmenera are excellent
- Frontera – Often has decent red blends ie. Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot
- Santa Rita – Another large producer, many varieties
- [winesofchile.org/the-wines/](http://winesofchile.org/the-wines/)

This website is fantastic for learning all about what Chile has to offer from its various wine regions Remember that the wine will only get better as we taste our way through Chile.



## INTERNET & RADIO

Why not listen to what some of the Santiaguinos are listening to? Try [ca.radio.net/city/santiago](http://ca.radio.net/city/santiago) to listen to local radio stations in Chile.

## NEWS

- [english.elpais.com/news/chile](http://english.elpais.com/news/chile)  
Check out the online version of this English language newspaper, to find out what is happening in Santiago and around the country.



## OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES

- [earth.google.com](http://earth.google.com)  
Google Earth can provide hours of fun, exploring the coast line and getting an idea of topography etc. There are also pictures posted by folks who have been to these areas.
- [travel.gc.ca](http://travel.gc.ca)  
This is the Canadian government travel advisory page. Learn about any areas of concern, recommended vaccinations etc (please note that Spirit of the West Adventures watches the information posted here carefully).
- [chile.travel/en](http://chile.travel/en)  
The official website of the Chilean department of tourism, offers a good introduction to the many travel opportunities in the country, complete with photos. (Click on the English link.)
- [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chile](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chile)  
A fairly comprehensive overview of history, politics and vital statistics. See also [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patagonia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patagonia)
- [conaf.cl](http://conaf.cl)  
The government organization responsible for Chile's protected areas and national parks (in Spanish).
- [ballenazul.org](http://ballenazul.org)  
Website of the Centro de Ballenas Azul, the research organization studying blue whales in the Gulf of Corcovado. Click on the link for the English version, or for more detailed info click on "Publications" in the Spanish version (articles in English).





## THE FINE PRINT

Please review the details below for a realistic picture of what to expect on our Chile tours and answer some questions you may have about travelling in Chile with Spirit of the West. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any other questions you may have.

- This is an awesome experience, but, as all travel in remote areas, it requires flexibility and the ability to smile at the unexpected and maintain a positive attitude.
- Approximately 50% of the time is spent in the kayaks and 50% of the time cruising through the stunning islands to get to safe and scenic paddling locations.
- Wine and beer is provided with meals while on tour (3-4 bottles per night)
- The 64' mothership is a fantastic way to explore Patagonia. The salon, covered back deck, open upper deck, and wheelhouse are comfortable spaces for relaxing. The staterooms are comfortable, but small, as you would expect on a boat.
- The guest cabins consist of two double rooms, two double twin rooms, and one room with a double bed that can be converted into two twin beds. The double rooms will be used for only 2 people unless otherwise arranged. All cabins have their own bathrooms.
- The shared twin cabins on the boat may be mixed gender depending on who is joining the tour.
- Accommodation is provided starting on day 1 of the tour. The tour ends on day 19 after breakfast. We will ensure you are all set for your airport transfer for your return flight.
- If you are arriving outside of day one or departing later than the last day of the tour, the airport shuttle will be at your own expense. These shuttles are easily arranged with the hotel or upon arrival into Santiago.
- Meals are hearty, healthy and typical Chilean fare. The meals are prepared in a small galley on the boat and are tasty and filling but not overly fancy. Typical meals include soups, stews, meat, veggies, and

salads. We provision the boat in advance of the tour and there is nowhere to resupply during the tour, so as we get into the later half of the tour, we move more into shelf stable and canned goods.

- During the tour, Spirit of the West will place orders at restaurants on your behalf. If you would like to add anything to the meal orders you are welcome to, but this would be at your own expense.
- Breakfasts while at the hotel in Santiago consist of coffee, tea, fresh juice, fresh bread, butter, jam cheese, fresh fruits and cereals.
- We are lucky to have found a great source for kayaking gear in this remote part of the world. We will be using plastic sea kayaks, all doubles with the exception of one or two single kayaks that guests can rotate through. We have limited space for storing the kayaks on the boat and more single kayaks are not an option.
- Spirit of the West will bring a paddling jacket and pants for you to use during the kayaking portion of the tour. We recommend also bringing a rain jacket for the remainder of your time in Chile.
- Spirit of the West will also provide a 5-litre and a 10-litre dry bag for you to use while kayaking. The smaller bag is handy for storing your camera and sunscreen, while the larger bag will be used to pack a set of spare clothes for emergencies.
- The hotel in which we stay in Santiago is clean, friendly and in a great location. We choose to stay in this small, intimate size hotel instead of larger well-known hotels to add to a more authentic experience.

Please review our full Terms and Conditions

[Terms and Conditions](#)