**Chile Facts and Culture**

* [Food and Recipes:](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/recipes.htm) Hands are kept above the table at all times. It is impolite to ask for second helpings. Even if they... [More](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/recipes.htm)
* [Family:](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/family.htm) The family is important in Chile, including the extended family. While men have tended to dominate private and public life... [More](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/family.htm)
* [Fashion:](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/fashion.htm) Fashions follow European styles. Appearance is quite important to individuals; even in rural areas, it is important to be neatly... [More](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/fashion.htm)
* [Visiting:](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/visiting.htm) Contrary to some areas in South America, guests wait outside the door of a home until invited inside by the... [More](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/visiting.htm)

**Chile Facts**

Chile stats

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Capital | Santiago |
| Government Type | republic |
| Currency | Chilean peso (CLP) |
| Population | 17,216,945 |
| Total Area | 291,931 Square Miles 756,102 Square Kilometers |
| Location | Southern South America, bordering the South Pacific Ocean, between Argentina and Peru |
| Language | Spanish (official), Mapudungun, German, English |

Map of Chile



**Geography**

**Terrain and geography**

Chile is a narrow ribbon of land stretching almost 2,700 miles along the southwest coast of South America. Although it is one of the world’s longest countries, its average width is only 110 miles. It is only 250 miles at its widest point. Larger than any European country except Russia, Chile covers an area of 292,257 square miles. If you stretched Chile east to west across the United States, it would reach from Maine to California.

Geographically, Chile offers diversity unmatched by most other countries. It is bordered on the west by the Pacific Ocean; to the east it is separated from Bolivia and Argentina by the towering Andes range (La Cordillera de los Andes), with peaks in Chile that rise to 22,600 feet. Peru shares a short border to the north. Within its borders, Chile has four distinct geographic zones: the dry northern desert, the fertile Central Valley, the forests and lakes of south-central Chile, and the archipelagos, fiords and channels of the far south.

The great northern desert or "Norte Grande," which covers one-fourth of the country, is one of the earth’s driest, most barren areas. Some parts have never recorded rainfall. Nonetheless, this desolate, inhospitable area produces the rich mineral deposits of copper and nitrates that are vital to Chile’s economy.

The Central Valley, where most Chileans live, begins with the Aconcagua River Basin north of Santiago and ends with the Bio-Bio River at Concepcion. The nation’s major industrial and agricultural production is located in this region. South of the Bio-Bio the landscape becomes increasingly forested. Especially striking is the area from southeast of Temuco south to Puerto Montt. Here the mountains are dotted with picturesque lakes, hot springs, and snow-capped volcanoes. This area, known as the Chilean Lake District (Región de los Lagos), is a favorite destination for Chilean and foreign tourists.

South of Puerto Montt is an archipelago characterized by high rainfall, with forested fiords, glaciers and sea channels. Still farther south are the windy steppes and sheep country of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. Chile also claims a wedge-shaped piece of Antarctica.

Several Pacific islands are Chilean territory as well. The Juan Fernandez Islands are 360 miles southwest of Valparaiso. The marooned sailor, Alexander Selkirk, lived on one of these islands for 5 years; his adventures inspired Daniel Defoe’s novel, Robinson Crusoe. About 2,300 miles west of Chile is Easter Island, locally referred to as "Rapa-Nui," which is inhabited by ethnic Polynesians whose ancestors carved the gigantic stone monuments (Moai) for which the island is famous.

**Geography - note**

the longest north-south trending country in the world, extending across 38 degrees of latitude; strategic location relative to sea lanes between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans (Strait of Magellan, Beagle Channel, Drake Passage); Atacama Desert - the driest desert in the world - spreads across the northern part of the country; the crater lake of Ojos del Salado is the world's highest lake (at 6,390 m)

**Chile Geography**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Geographic Location | South America |
| Total Area | 291,931 Square Miles 756,102 Square Kilometers |
| Land Area | 287,186 Square Miles 743,812 Square Kilometers |
| Water Area | 4,745 Square Miles 12,290 Square Kilometers |
| Land Boundaries | 3,939 Miles 6,339 Kilometers |
| Irrigated Land | 4,629 Square Miles 11,990 Square Kilometers |
| Border Countries | Argentina 5,308 km, Bolivia 860 km, Peru 171 km |
| Coastline | 3,999 Miles 6,435 Kilometers |
| Geographic Coordinates | 30 00 S, 71 00 W |
| Terrain | low coastal mountains; fertile central valley; rugged Andes in east |
| Highest Point | 6,880 Meters |
| Highest Point Location | Nevado Ojos del Salado 6,880 m |
| Lowest Point Location | Pacific Ocean 0 m |
| Natural Resources | copper, timber, iron ore, nitrates, precious metals, molybdenum, hydropower |
| Time Zone | UTC-4 (1 hour ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time) |
| Daylight saving time | +1hr, under a new pilot program begins second Sunday in September; ends fourth Sunday in April |

**Chile Weather and Climate**

**Climate and Weather**

Chile's climate is as varied as its geography. Despite lying in the tropics, northern Chile is characterized by warm summers and mild winters, due to the moderating influence of the cool Humboldt Current. In the central region, where Santiago is located, summers (December to March) are dry, with warm days reaching into the high 80s or low 90s, but cooler nights. Winter (June to September) is generally cold, foggy and rainy (rainfall averages 14 inches a year); temperatures climb into the 50s and 60s during the day and usually drop to the 40s at night, with occasional frost. The southern Lake District has cooler average temperatures and is wetter than the central region, with annual rainfall reaching 100 inches. In the far south, the climate is colder still, with gale force winds much of the year. Rainfall in this region also averages 100 inches annually, except in the Patagonian steppes, where it drops to an average of 20 inches a year.

**Chile Environmental Issues**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Climate | Chile's climate is as varied as its geography. Despite lying in the tropics, northern Chile is characterized by warm summers and mild winters, due to the moderating influence of the cool Humboldt Current. In the central region, where Santiago is located, summers (December to March) are dry, with warm days reaching into the high 80s or low 90s, but cooler nights. Winter (June to September) is generally cold, foggy and rainy (rainfall averages 14 inches a year); temperatures climb into the 50s and 60s during the day and usually drop to the 40s at night, with occasional frost. The southern Lake District has cooler average temperatures and is wetter than the central region, with annual rainfall reaching 100 inches. In the far south, the climate is colder still, with gale force winds much of the year. Rainfall in this region also averages 100 inches annually, except in the Patagonian steppes, where it drops to an average of 20 inches a year. |
| Terrain | low coastal mountains; fertile central valley; rugged Andes in east |
| Natural Resources | copper, timber, iron ore, nitrates, precious metals, molybdenum, hydropower |
| Natural Hazards | severe earthquakes; active volcanism; tsunamis  volcanism: significant volcanic activity due to more than three-dozen active volcanoes along the Andes Mountains; Lascar (elev. 5,592 m), which last erupted in 2007, is the most active volcano in the northern Chilean Andes; Llaima (elev. 3,125 m) in central Chile, which last erupted in 2009, is another of the country's most active; Chaiten's 2008 eruption forced major evacuations; other notable historically active volcanoes include Cerro Hudson, Copahue, Guallatiri, Llullaillaco, Nevados de Chillan, Puyehue, San Pedro, and Villarrica |
| Irrigated Land | 4,629 Square Miles 11,990 Square Kilometers |
| Environmental Issues | widespread deforestation and mining threaten natural resources; air pollution from industrial and vehicle emissions; water pollution from raw sewage |
| Environment - International Agreements | party to: Antarctic-Environmental Protocol, Antarctic-Marine Living Resources, Antarctic Seals, Antarctic Treaty, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands, Whaling   signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements |

**Chile Population Details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Population | 17,216,945 |
| Population Growth Rate | 0.86% |
| Urban Population | 89.2% |
| Population in Major Urban Areas | SANTIAGO (capital) 6.034 million; Valparaiso 883,000; Concepcion 770,000 |
| Nationality Noun | Chilean(s) |
| Nationality Adjective | Chilean |
| Ethnic Groups | white and white-Amerindian 95.4%, Mapuche 4%, other indigenous groups 0.6% |
| Languages | Spanish (official), Mapudungun, German, English |
| Rate of Urbanization- annual rate of change | 1.09% |

**Chile Medical Information**

Santiago has two main private hospitals that are accredited by The American Hospital Association and meet U.S. standards: Clinica Alemana and Clinica Las Condes. Both have international patient departments and experience with some international insurance companies. Medical care in Chile is generally good, though it may not meet U.S. standards in remote areas. Major hospitals accept credit cards, but many doctors and hospitals in Chile expect immediate payment in cash. Prescriptions written by local doctors and over-the-counter medicines are widely available.  
  
Air pollution is a major health concern in Santiago, resulting in severe bronchial ailments affecting infants, small children, and the elderly. The most severe air pollution occurs during the winter (May through August).  
  
The ozone layer is especially thin over parts of Chile. Take precautions to protect yourself from ultraviolet radiation.

**Chile Health Information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Health Expenditures (% of GDP) | 7.5% |
| Death Rate/1,000 population | 5.86 |
| Obesity- adult prevalence rate | 29.4% |
| Hospital Bed Density/1,000 population | 2 |
| Physicians Density/1,000 population | 1.03 |
| Infant Mortality Rate/1,000 population | 7.19 |
| Infant Mortality Rate- Female/1,000 population | 6.68 |
| Infant Mortality Rate- Male/1,000 population | 7.67 |
| Underweight - percent of children under five years | 0.5% |
| Total Fertility Rate | 1.85 |
| Age of Mother's First Birth | 23.7 |
| Contraceptive prevalance rate (female 15-49) | 64.2% |
| Contraceptive Prevalence - note | note: percent of women aged 15-44 |
| Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births | 25 |
| HIV Adult Prevalence Rate | 0.4% |
| HIV Aids People Living With | 40,000 |
| Drinking Water Source: unimproved | 1.2% |
| Drinking Water Source - percent of rural population improved | 91.3% |
| Drinking Water Source - percent of urban population improved | 99.6% |
| Sanitation Facility Access: unimproved | 1.1% |
| Sanitation Facility Access - percent of urban population improved | 100% |
| Sanitation Facitlity Access - percent of rural population improved | 89.3% |

**Chile Crime**

**Crime Information**

Most foreigners visit Chile without incident. Nevertheless, street crime is a problem, especially in Santiago and Valparaiso. As in any large city, be cautious and aware of your surroundings. Be alert for pick-pocketing, purse and camera snatching, and thefts from backpacks and rental cars. Petty crime is common in major tourist destinations, in hotel lobbies and restaurants, internet cafes, at bus and subway stations, and in cruise ship ports. Exercise caution when touring Cerro Santa Lucia, Cerro San Cristobal and Mercado Central as pick-pocketing and muggings occur frequently in these areas. Criminals usually work in groups and employ a variety of ruses to distract and victimize unsuspecting visitors. A few taxi drivers engage in currency switching and overcharge with altered taxi meters. Incidents of individuals smashing car windows of occupied vehicles stopped in traffic and taking items of value on seats have occurred. Drivers should keep car doors locked at all times and valuables out of sight while driving and while the vehicle is parked. Your passport is a valuable document. Report the loss or theft of a U.S. passport to the police and to the U.S. Embassy immediately. Secure your passport and other valuables in a hotel safe, and carry a photocopy of your passport for identification purposes. Leave copies of your passport and important documents with family members in case of emergency.   
Counterfeit and pirated goods may sometimes be available in Chile, and transactions involving such products are generally illegal under local law. In addition, bringing such goods back to the United States may result in forfeitures and/or fines.   
  
The local equivalents to the “911” emergency lines in Chile follow an ABC-123 plan:  
131 - Ambulancia / Ambulance  
132 - Bomberos / Fire Department  
133 - Carabineros / Police Department

**Chile Penalties for Crime**

**Criminal Penalties**

While in Chile, you are subject to Chile's laws and regulations. Chilean laws may differ significantly from those in the United States. You may not have the same protections available to you as under U.S. law, and penalties for breaking the law can also be more severe than in the United States for similar offenses. Persons violating Chile's laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested, or imprisoned. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in Chile are strict, and convicted offenders can expect lengthy jail sentences and fines. Persons engaging in sexual conduct with children and using or disseminating child pornography in a foreign country may be prosecuted in the United States.   
  
Based on the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, bilateral agreements with certain countries, and customary international law, if you are arrested in Chile, you have the option to request that the police, prison officials, or other authorities alert the U.S. Embassy in Santiago of your arrest, and to have communications from you forwarded to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

**Chile Life Expectancy**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Life Expectancy At Birth | 78 Years |
| Life Expectancy At Birth- Female | 81 Years |
| Life Expectancy At Birth- Male | 75 Years |
| Median Age (female) | 34 Years |
| Median Age (male) | 31 Years |
| Median Age | 33 Years |

**Chile Language**

Castellano, a Spanish dialect is the official language. English is taught in schools. A small minority in southern Chile speak German, Italian and Mapuche, an Indian language.

**Chile Literacy**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Predominant Language | Spanish (official), Mapudungun, German, English |
| Literacy Definition | age 15 and over can read and write |
| Literacy Female | 95.6% |
| Literacy Male | 95.8% |
| Literacy Total | 95.7% |

**Chile Education**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Education Expenditures - percent of GDP | 4.5% |
| Literacy - female | 95.6% |
| Literacy - male | 95.8% |
| Literacy - total population | 95.7% |
| Literacy Definition | age 15 and over can read and write |
| School Life Expectancy - female | 16 Years |
| School Life Expectancy - male | 15 Years |
| Total School Life Expectancy - (primary to tertiary) | 15 Years |

**Chile Age of Population**

Age 0-14: 21.0 %Age 15-24: 16.6 %Age 25-54: 43.2 %Age 55-64: 9.6 %Over 64: 9.7 %Highcharts.com

**Classroom**

Children wear uniforms that have a badge to school. The badge identifies which school the student attends. High school students wear black and white uniforms and are sometimes known by the nickname “penguins.”  
It is not unusual for a school to be an open air building (especially in northern Chile), which means that classes can be quite chilly in the winter. However, because it rarely rains in such areas, there is no need to provide protection against bad weather. Open schools usually have a large open courtyard that serves as a theater, playground, and assembly hall. Around the courtyard are hallways that lead to classrooms, offices, and bathrooms. Like students in many Asian schools, students stay in the same classroom all day—except when they have a class that requires different classroom equipment, such as computer class.

Until the mid-1990s, school was conducted in two shifts, morning and afternoon. This has now changed to a longer school day. The previous two-shift schedule was used in part to keep a low student-teacher ratio. Since the change, the national Ministry of Education has set a maximum ratio of no more than 45 students for every teacher. Most classes have about 40 students.

**Education Culture**

Although Chile, as in most Latin American countries, has only in recent years encouraged girls to gain as much education as boys, the country also has a tradition of providing education to women who wanted higher levels of education. For example, Chile was the first country in Latin America to graduate female lawyers and physicians—in the 1880s from the University of Chile! As women have access to more and more education, the number of women in the workforce, including the professional workforce, is increasing. This means that extended family members often help to raise little children while their mothers are working during the day.   
Chile is similar to many Latin American countries in that most children (approximately 90%) attend elementary school. However, only slightly over half will attend preschool, and slightly less than half will remain in high school. Impressively, nearly 20% of the national government budget goes to education. Despite this, many Chileans feel that the educational system has some serious problems and does not do a very good job of educating their children.

The school year begins in late February or early March and finishes in December so that the children do not attend during the hottest months. There are two major breaks of two weeks each in the school year—one in June or July and another in September.

Approximately 70 percent of the schools in Chile are privately owned.

Many students do not attend school after they finish elementary school. They are often required to begin working to support their family. Most high school students come from upper middle class or upper class families.

**Learning**

Children study between 10 and 13 subjects during each school week, and they stay with the same group of classmates all day long.

Children are required to attend elementary school for eight years (ages 6-13), with optional attendance in affect for four years of high school (ages 14-17). All classes are taught in Spanish, the national language. Subjects include math, science, history, geography, Spanish, English, music, belief systems, technology, and physical education. In some areas with high populations of native peoples, their local language is also taught in school. These tend to be in rural areas removed from cities and larger towns.

General basic education (EGB) is compulsory and lasts for eight years, divided into two cycles of four years each. Secondary education (Educación media) lasts for four years. Students choose to specialize either in humanistic-scientific education (EMHC) or technical-professional education (EMTP). The humanistic-scientific branch, offered in liceos, is a preparation for higher education. Students are awarded the Licencia de Educación Media at the end.Technical-professional education offers a two-year common course and two years of specialization divided into five branches: industrial, technical, agricultural, commercial and maritime. Students who successfully complete their secondary education obtain the Licencia de Educación Media or the title of Técnico de Nivel Medio.

**To School**

School generally begins at 8:00 in the morning and is done at around 4:00 in the afternoon. Kids will usually walk or ride a public transportation bus to school, depending on how far from the school they live. The public buses offer reduced fares to students, who wear badges that identify with school they attend.  
Some schools provide lunch for the students, while others (in rural areas or certain private schools) allow students to go home for lunch.

**Chile Government**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Capital Name | Santiago |
| Country Name | Chile |
| Local - Long | Republica de Chile |
| Full Country Name | Republic of Chile |
| Local - Short | Chile |
| Government Type | republic |
| Capital - geographic coordinate | 33 27 S, 70 40 W |
| Daylight Savings Time | +1hr, under a new pilot program begins second Sunday in September; ends fourth Sunday in April |
| Capital Time Difference | UTC-4 (1 hour ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time) |
| National Holiday | Independence Day, 18 September (1810) |
| Constitution | 11 September 1980, effective 11 March 1981; amended several times |
| Legal System | civil law system influenced by several West European civil legal systems; judicial review of legislative acts by the Constitutional Tribunal |
| Suffrage | 18 years of age; universal and voluntary |

**Chile Government and Politics**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Government Executive Branch | chief of state: President Michelle BACHELET Jeria (since 11 March 2014); note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government   head of government: President Michelle BACHELET Jeria (since 11 March 2014)   cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the president   elections: president elected by popular vote for a single four-year term; election last held on 17 November 2013 with a runoff election held on 15 December 2013 (next to be held on 19 November 2017)   election results: Michelle BACHELET Jeria elected president; percent of vote - Michelle BACHELET Jeria 62.2%; Evelyn Rose MATTHEI Fornet 37.8% |
| Legislative Branch | bicameral National Congress or Congreso Nacional consists of the Senate or Senado (38 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve eight-year terms; one-half elected every four years) and the Chamber of Deputies or Camara de Diputados (120 seats; members are elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms)  elections: Senate - last held on 13 December 2009 (next to be held in November 2013); Chamber of Deputies - last held on 13 December 2009 (next to be held in November 2013)  election results: Senate - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - CPD 9 (PDC 4, PPD 3, PS 2), APC 9 (RN 6, UDI 3); Chamber of Deputies - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - APC 58 (UDI 37, RN 18, other 3), CPD 57 (PDC 19, PPD 18, PS 11, PRSD 5, PC 3, other 1), PRI 3, independent 2; note - as of 19 February 2013, the composition of the entire legislature is as follows: Senate - seats by party - CPD 19 (PDC 9, PPD 4, PS 5, PRSD 1), Coalition for Change (former APC) 16 (RN 8, UDI 8), independent 2, MAS 1; Chamber of Deputies - seats by party - Coalition for Change (former APC) 56 (UDI 39, RN 17), CPD 53 (PDC 19, PPD 18, PS 11, PRSD 5), independent 5, PC 3, PRI 2, IC 1 |
| Judicial Branch | Supreme Court or Corte Suprema (judges are appointed by the president and ratified by the Senate from lists of candidates provided by the court itself; the president of the Supreme Court is elected every two years by the 21-member court); Constitutional Tribunal (ten-members - three appointed by the President, three by the Supreme Court via secret ballot, two by the Senate, and two by the Senate from a list proposed by the Chamber of Deputies - review the constitutionality of laws approved by Congress); Constitutional Tribunal (eight-members - two each from the Senate, Chamber of Deputies, Supreme Court, and National Security Council - review the constitutionality of laws approved by Congress) |
| Regions or States | 15 regions (regiones, singular - region); Aisen del General Carlos Ibanez del Campo, Antofagasta, Araucania, Arica y Parinacota, Atacama, Biobio, Coquimbo, Libertador General Bernardo O'Higgins, Los Lagos, Los Rios, Magallanes y de la Antartica Chilena, Maule, Region Metropolitana (Santiago), Tarapaca, Valparaiso  note: the US does not recognize claims to Antarctica |
| Political Parties and Leaders | Broad Social Movement or MAS [Alejandro NAVARRO Brain]; Citizen Left or IC; Equality Party [Lautaro GUANCA Vallejos]; Coalition for Change or CC (also known as the Alliance for Chile (Alianza) or APC) (including National Renewal or RN [Carlos LARRAIN Pena], and Independent Democratic Union or UDI [Patricio MELERO]; Coalition of Parties for Democracy (Concertacion) or CPD (including Christian Democratic Party or PDC [Ignacio WALKER Prieto], Party for Democracy or PPD [Jaime Daniel QUINTANA Leal], Radical Social Democratic Party or PRSD [Jose Antonio GOMEZ Urrutia], and Socialist Party or PS [Osvaldo ANDRADE Lara]); Communist Party of Chile (Partido Comunista de Chile) or PC [Guillermo TEILLIER del Valle]; Ecological Green Party [Cristian VILLAROEL Novoa]; Humanist Party or PH [Danilo MONTEVERDE Reyes]; Independent Regionalist Party or PRI [Carlos OLIVARES Zepeda]; Progressive Party or PRO [Marco ENRIQUEZ-OMINAMI Gumucio] |
| International Law Organization Participation | has not submitted an ICJ jurisdiction declaration; accepts ICCt jurisdiction |

**Chile Economy Data**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| GDP - Gross Domestic Product | $335,400,000,000 (USD) |
| GDP - official exchange rate | $281,700,000,000 (USD) |
| GDP - real growth rate | 4.4% |
| GDP Per Capita | $19,100.00 (USD) |
| GDP by Sector- agriculture | 3.6% |
| GDP by Sector- Industry | 35.4% |
| GDP by Sector- services | 61% |
| Population Below Poverty Line | 15.1% |
| Inflation Rate | 2.8% |
| Labor Force | 8,231,000 |
| Labor Force By Occupation- agriculture | 13.2% |
| Labor Force By Occupation- industry | 23% |
| Labor Force By Occupation- services | 63.9% |
| Unemployment Rate | 6.4% |
| Fiscal Year | calendar year |
| Annual Budget | $59,490,000,000 (USD) |
| Budget Surplus or Deficit - percent of GDP | -1% |
| Public Debt (% of GDP) | 10.1% |
| Taxes and other revenues - percent of GDP | 20.8% |
| Major Industries | copper, lithium, other minerals, foodstuffs, fish processing, iron and steel, wood and wood products, transport equipment, cement, textiles |
| Industrial Growth Rate | 6.3% |
| Agriculture Products | grapes, apples, pears, onions, wheat, corn, oats, peaches, garlic, asparagus, beans; beef, poultry, wool; fish; timber |
| Currency Code | Chilean peso (CLP) |
| Child Labor - % of children ages 5-14 | 3% |
| Child Labor - # of children ages 5-14 | 82,882 |
| Commercial Bank Prime Lending Rate | 9.5% |

**Chile Economy**

**Economic Overview**

Chile has a market-oriented economy characterized by a high level of foreign trade and a reputation for strong financial institutions and sound policy that have given it the strongest sovereign bond rating in South America. Exports account for approximately one-third of GDP, with commodities making up some three-quarters of total exports. Copper alone provides 19% of government revenue. From 2003 through 2012, real growth averaged almost 5% per year, despite the slight contraction in 2009 that resulted from the global financial crisis. Chile deepened its longstanding commitment to trade liberalization with the signing of a free trade agreement with the US, which took effect on 1 January 2004. Chile has 22 trade agreements covering 60 countries including agreements with the European Union, Mercosur, China, India, South Korea, and Mexico. Chile has joined the United States and nine other countries in negotiating the Trans-Pacific-Partnership trade agreement. In 2012, foreign direct investment inflows reached $28.2 billion, an increase of 63% over the previous record set in 2011. The Chilean Government has generally followed a countercyclical fiscal policy, accumulating surpluses in sovereign wealth funds during periods of high copper prices and economic growth, and generally allowing deficit spending only during periods of low copper prices and growth. As of 31 December 2012, those sovereign wealth funds - kept mostly outside the country and separate from Central Bank reserves - amounted to more than $20.9 billion. Chile used these funds to finance fiscal stimulus packages during the 2009 economic downturn. In May 2010 Chile signed the OECD Convention, becoming the first South American country to join the OECD.

**Chile Exports**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Exports | $83,660,000,000 (USD) |
| Major Exports | copper, fruit, fish products, paper and pulp, chemicals, wine |
| Top Export Partners | China 22.8%, US 11.1%, Japan 11.1%, Brazil 5.5%, South Korea 5.5%, Netherlands 4.7% |

**Chile Imports**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Imports | $70,200,000,000 (USD) |
| Major Imports | petroleum and petroleum products, chemicals, electrical and telecommunications equipment, industrial machinery, vehicles, natural gas |
| Top Import Partners | US 20.1%, China 16.9%, Brazil 8.3%, Argentina 6.3%, Germany 4.2% |

**Chile Flag**

The flag was designed by American, Charles Wood, who fought for the Chilean independence as an officer in the army of General Jose de San Martin. The design is clearly influenced by the Stars and Stripes. The white star is the guiding star on the path of progress and honor. The blue symbolizes the sky. The white symbolizes the snow of the Andes. The red stands for all the blood shed in the struggle for independence.

**Chile Flag Description**

two equal horizontal bands of white (top) and red; there is a blue square the same height as the white band at the hoist-side end of the white band; the square bears a white five-pointed star in the center representing a guide to progress and honor; blue symbolizes the sky, white is for the snow-covered Andes, and red stands for the blood spilled to achieve independence; design was influenced by the US flag

Chile flag



**Chile Interesting Facts**

* The driest place on earth is the Atacama Desert, where no rain has fallen in the last 400 years.
* Well-known Chilean-Canadian writers include Jorge Etcheverry, Naín Noméz, and José Leandro Urbina.
* Chilean territory, Easter Island is a Polynesian island 2300 miles west of Chile. Easter Island is known for 887 giant figures called "moai" carved from volcanic stone. Thdse figure
* The Machi possess a sacred kultrun, a drum that is believed to complement their supernatural power. They play the drum during prayers and religious activities. The kultrun is a powerful symbol in the Mapuche religious tradition.
* One of the best tennis players in the world is a Chilean, Marcelo Rios. He has competed in major international tennis competitions, such as Wimbledon and the Australian Open.
* There are various beliefs associated with New Year's such as eating lentils at midnight for good luck or walking around with a suitcase in order to increase your chances to travel in the upcoming year.
* On rainy days, Chileans like to eat Sapaipillas, a fried tortilla made with pumpkin and flour.
* Chileans often use the word chao for goodbye instead of the Spanish adíos.
* Copper provides 60% of exports and 20% of Chile's GDP. Demand for copper has been high and this has been good for the Chilean economy.
* The cueca, Chile's national dance, mimics a rooster stalking a hen. Men dress as huasos and women wear full skirts. The dancers wave handkerchiefs as they dance around each other.
* Diseases of the circulatory system, such as heart disease, are the leading cause of death in Chile. They account for approximately 58% of all deaths.
* Chile is a country of extremes. Though 2653 miles long, it averages only 109 miles wide from the Pacific Ocean on the west to the volcanic Andes Mountain range on the east.  
    
  In the north the land rises and becomes arid, resulting in the Atacama Desert which can go twenty years without a drop of rain. The southern tip of Chile is composed of countless cold and stormy channels, fjords and islands, ending with the treacherous Cape Horne.
* The name Chile may come from a Peruvian Indian word that means "snow,” or from an Inca word that means “land's end.” Some people believe it comes from the call of a local bird, “cheele-cheele.”
* Initially, free primary and secondary schools in Chile were open only to boys. The first all-female high school was founded by Antonia Tarragó in 1864.
* Adult friends of the family are often called tio or tia (uncle or aunt) as a mark of respect and affection.
* When a child loses a tooth they often give their tooth to their mother. Some will make it made into a charm, set in gold or silver, so the child can wear it as a necklace or an earring.
* In 1990, the National Women's Service (Sernam) was created to ensure equal rights for women, bring them into the workforce, improve their quality of life and strengthen their family ties.

**Chile Lost Tooth Traditions**

They give their tooth to their mother. She will have it made into a charm, set in gold or silver, so the child can wear it as a necklace or an earring.

Their parents ask the child to put his/her lost teeth below the child's pillow when children go to sleep, then the adults hide the teeth and they put some money (usually coins), the next morning the parents tell the children that a little mice (mouse) has carried out the teeth and he has given that   
coins to the children.

**History of Chile**

*A textile figure depicting a tree (*temu, *meaning the tree* Temu divaricatum), *from a seventeenth-century Mapuche woman’s belt called* ñimintrarüwe

FROM ONE OF THE MOST neglected outposts of the Spanish Empire, Chile developed into one of the most prosperous and democratic nations in Latin America. Throughout its history, however, Chile has depended on great external powers for economic exchange and political influence: Spain in the colonial period, Britain in the nineteenth century, and the United States in the twentieth century.

Chile’s dependence is made most evident by the country’s heavy reliance on exports. These have included silver and gold in the colonial period, wheat in the mid-nineteenth century, nitrates up to World War I, copper after the 1930s, and a variety of commodities sold overseas in more recent years. The national economy’s orientation toward the extraction of primary products has gone hand in hand with severe exploitation of workers. Beginning with the coerced labor of native Americans during the Spanish conquest, the exploitation continued with chile/cl\_glos.asp#mestizo">mestizo (see Glossary) peonage on huge farms in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and brutal treatment of miners in the north in the first decade of the twentieth century. The most recent victimization of workers occurred during the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet Ugarte (1973-90), when unions were suppressed and wages were depressed, unemployment increased, and political parties were banned.

Another persistent feature of Chile’s economic history has been the conflict over land in the countryside, beginning when the Spaniards displaced the indigenous people during their sixteenthcentury conquest. Later chapters of this struggle have included the expansion of the great estates during the ensuing four centuries and the agrarian reform efforts of the 1960s and 1970s.

Politically, Chile has also conformed to several patterns. Since winning independence in 1818, the nation has had a history of civilian rule surpassed by that of few countries in the world. In the nineteenth century, Chile became the first country in Latin America to install a durable constitutional system of government, which encouraged the development of an array of political parties. Military intervention in politics has been rare in Chile, occurring only at times of extraordinary social crisis, as in 1891, 1924, 1925, 1932, and 1973. These interventions often brought about massive transformations; all the fundamental changes in the Chilean political system and its constitutions have occurred with the intervention of the armed forces, acting in concert with civilian politicians.

From 1932 to 1973, Chile built on its republican tradition by sustaining one of the most stable, reformist, and representative democracies in the world. Although elitist and conservative in some respects, the political system provided for the peaceful transfer of power and the gradual incorporation of new contenders. Undergirding that system were Chile’s strong political parties, which were often attracted to foreign ideologies and formulas. Having thoroughly permeated society, these parties were able to withstand crushing blows from the Pinochet regime of 1973-90.

Republican political institutions were able to take root in Chile in the nineteenth century before new social groups demanded participation. Contenders from the middle and lower classes gradually were assimilated into an accommodating political system in which most disputes were settled peacefully, although disruptions related to the demands of workers often met a harsh, violent response. The system expanded to incorporate more and more competing regional, anticlerical, and economic elites in the nineteenth century. The middle classes gained political offices and welfare benefits in the opening decades of the twentieth century. From the 1920s to the 1940s, urban laborers obtained unionization rights and participated in reformist governments. In the 1950s, women finally exercised full suffrage and became a decisive electoral force. And by the 1960s, rural workers achieved influence with reformist parties, widespread unionization, and land reform.

As the political system evolved, groups divided on either side of six main issues. The first and most important in the nineteenth century was the role of the Roman Catholic Church in political, social, and economic affairs. Neither of the two major parties, the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party, opposed the practice of Catholicism. However, the Conservatives defended the church’s secular prerogatives; the Liberals (and later the Nationals, Radicals, Democrats, and Marxists) took anticlerical positions.

The second source of friction was regionalism, although less virulent than in some larger Latin American countries. In the north and south, reform groups became powerful, especially the Conservatives holding sway in Chile’s Central Valley (Valle Central), who advocated opposition to the establishment. Regional groups made a significant impact on political life in Chile: they mobilized repeated rebellions against the central government from the 1830s through the 1850s; helped replace a centralizing president with a political system dominated by the National Congress (hereafter, Congress) and local bosses in the 1890s; elected Arturo Alessandri Palma (1920-24, 1925, 1932-38) as the chief executive representing the north against the central oligarchy in 1920; and cast exceptional percentages of their ballots for reformist and leftist candidates (especially Radicals, Communists, and Socialists) from the 1920s to the 1970s. Throughout the twentieth century, leaders outside Santiago also pleaded for administrative decentralization until the Pinochet government devolved greater authority on provincial and municipal governments and even moved Congress from Santiago to Valparaíso.

The third issue dividing Chileans--social class--grew in importance from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century. Although both the Conservatives and the Liberals represented the upper stratum, in the nineteenth century the Radicals began to speak on behalf of many in the middle class, and the Democrats built a base among urban artisans and workers. In the twentieth century, the Socialists and Communists became the leaders of organized labor. Along with the Christian Democratic Party, these parties attracted adherents among impoverished people in the countryside and the urban slums.

In the twentieth century, three other issues became salient, although not as significant as divisions over social class, regionalism, or the role of the church. One was the cleavage between city and country, which was manifested politically by the leftist parties’ relative success in the urban areas and by the rightist groups in the countryside. Another source of strife was ideology; most Chilean parties after World War I sharply defined themselves in terms of programmatic and philosophical differences, often imported from abroad, including liberalism, Marxism, chile/cl\_glos.asp#corporatism">corporatism (see Glossary), and [communitarianism](http://www.countryreports.org/%22chile/cl_glos.asp#communitarianism%22) (see Glossary). Gender also became a political issue and divider. After women began voting for president in 1952, they were more likely than men to cast ballots for rightist or centrist candidates.

As Chile’s political parties grew, they attracted followers not only on the basis of ideology but also on the basis of patronclient relationships between candidates and voters. These ties were particularly important at the local level, where mediation with government agencies, provision of public employment, and delivery of public services were more crucial than ideological battles waged on the national stage. Over generations, these bonds became tightly woven, producing within the parties fervent and exclusive subcultures nurtured in the family, the community, and the workplace. As a result, by the mid-twentieth century the parties had politicized schools, unions, professional associations, the media, and virtually all other components of national life. The intense politicization of modern Chile has its roots in events of the nineteenth century.

During the colonial period and most of the twentieth century, the central state played an active role in the economy until many of its functions were curtailed by the military government of General Pinochet. State power was highly centralized from the 1830s to the 1970s, to the ire of the outlying provinces.

Although normally governed by civilians, Chile has been militaristic in its dealings with native people, workers, and neighboring states. In the twentieth century, it has been a supporter of arbitration in international disputes. In foreign policy, Chile has long sought to be the strongest power on the Pacific Coast of South America, and it has always shied away from diplomatic entanglements outside the Americas.

**Chile History Timeline**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Chile Year in History | Chile Timeline |
| 1520 | **Ferdinand Magellan is the first European to sight Chilean shores.** He does not actually identify the land as the American continent. |
| 1535 | **Diego de Almagro leads first Spanish expedition to explore Chile.** |
| 1541 | **Valdivia founds Santiago.** |
| 1553 | **Indigenous Araucanian uprising.** |
| 1557 | **Mapuche rebel chief Lautaro defeated.** |
| 1603 | **First militia established in Chile.** |
| 1609 | **Pope Paul V authorizes war against Araucanians.** |
| 1643 | **Spaniards repel the invasion of southern Chile.** The Brouwer expedition invades, Indians assist the Spanish in repelling them. |
| 1647 | **An earthquake destroys Santiago.** |
| 1730 | **Earthquake causes great destruction in central Chile.** Santiago is especially hard hit. |
| 1759 | **Bourbon reforms give Chile greater independence.** Chile gains more independence from the Viceroyalty of Peru. |
| 1791 | **Encomiendas and forced labor are outlawed.** Governor Ambrosio O'Higgins y Ballenary bans certain labor practices involving native workers. |
| 1810 | **Criollo leaders of Santiago declare independence from Spain.** |
| 1814 | **La Reconquista.** |
| 1817 | **Battle of Chacabuco.** Troops led by Bernardo O'Higgins Riquelme, father of Chile, and General José de San Martín defeat the Spanish. |
| 1817 | **O'Higgins becomes supreme director of Chile.** |
| 1818 | **Chile wins formal independence.** San Martín defeats the last large Spanish force in Battle of Maipú. |
| 1818 | **First provisional constitution approved in plebiscite.** |
| 1818 | **Period of civil wars.** |
| 1830 | **"Portalian State" is initiated.** Businessman Diego Portales Palazuelos dominates politics. |
| 1830 | **Battle of Lircay.** Liberals are defeat by conservatives. |
| 1830 | **Period of Conservative rule.** |
| 1833 | **New Portalian constitution implemented.** |
| 1836 | **Chile wages war against the Peru-Bolivia Confederation.** |
| 1839 | **Chile wins the war.** Chile defeats the Peruvian fleet at Casma on January 12th and the Bolivian Army at Yungay on January 20th. |
| 1861 | **Period of Liberal rule.** |
| 1879 | **War of the Pacific.** Chile wages war against Bolivia and Peru. |
| 1883 | **Chile seals victory with Treaty of Ancón.** |
| 1891 | **Civil war.** supporters of President José Manuel Balmaceda Fernández fight against supporters of Congress. The congressional cupporters win. |
| 1891 | **Period of Parliamentary Republic.** |
| 1970 | **Popular Unity's Salvador Allende Gossens wins presidential election.** |
| 1971 | **Pablo Neruda wins Nobel Prize for Literature.** |
| 1973 | **Military led by General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte overthrows the Allende government.** |
| 1973 | **Period of military rule under General Pinochet.** |
| 1980 | **New military-designed constitution is approved in a plebiscite.** |
| 1988 | **Plebiscite holds on to Pinochet rule.** |
| 1990 | **Patricio Aylwin Azócar becomes president.** Marks the transition to democracy. |
| 1994 | **Aylwin is succeeded by Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle.** |
| 1998 | **General Pinochet retires** General Pinochet retires from the army and is made senator for life but is arrested in the United Kingdom at the request of Spain on murder charges. |
| 2004 | **Right to divorce** President Lagos signs a law giving Chileans the right to divorce, despite opposition from the Roman Catholic Church. |
| 2006 | **First woman president** Michelle Bachelet wins the second round of presidential elections to become Chile's first woman president and the fourth consecutive head of state from the center-left Concertacion coalition. |
| 2008 | **Chaiten volcano erupts** Unexpected eruption of Chaiten volcano which has been dormant for 9,000 years. Authorities order complete evacuation of two towns in Patagonian region. |
| 2008 | **Peru files a lawsuit** Peru files a lawsuit at the International Court of Justice in a bid to settle a long-standing dispute over maritime territory with neighboring Chile. |
| 2010 | **Earthquake strikes** Hundreds die and widespread damage is caused as massive earthquake strikes central Chile. The 8.8 magnitude quake is the biggest to hit the country in 50 years. |
| 2012 | **Anti-discrimination law** Congress passes anti-discrimination law, which names discrimination because of sexual orientation an offense. |

**Chile Holidays and Events**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Display Date | Title |
| September 18th | **Independence Day** |
| December 25th | **Christmas**  The principle gift bearer in Chile is *Viejo Pascuero* (Christmas Old Man), who closely resembles Santa Claus and even rides in a reindeer sleigh, despite the summer weather.  Children place their shoes in window sills or in the corridors on Christmas Eve for Christmas Old Man to fill with treats.  Christmas dinner is usually on Christmas Eve when families congregate for gift exchanges, have dinner, and to enjoy each others company. The dinner may consists of turkey, seafood, *azuela de ave* (chicken soup with potatoes and onions), *pan de pasqua* (Christmas bread filled with candied fruit), fruits, cakes, and *rompon* (eggnog with liquor). The Christmas day dinner consists of leftovers plus *choclo* (corn cake) and *chirimoya alegre* (a sweet fruit dish). |

**Chile Meals and Food**

Recipes from Chile

* [Charquicán (Mashed Vegetables with Hamburger Meat) - Main Dish](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/recipe/charquican-mashed-vegetables-with-hamburger-meat.htm)
* [Chilean Potato Empanadas - Side Dish](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/recipe/chilean-potato-empanadas.htm)
* [Chuletas de Cordero Lechon de la Pampa Magallanica con Salteado de Papas (Pampa Lamb Cutlets with sa - Main Dish](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/recipe/chuletas-de-cordero-lechon-de-la-pampa-magallanica-con-salteado-de-papas-pampa-lamb-cutlets-with-sa.htm)
* [Consome (Chicken Soup) - Side Dish](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/recipe/consome-chicken-soup.htm)
* [Delicias de lucuma y manjar ( Lucuma Fruit and Caramelized Milk) - Dessert](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/recipe/delicias-de-lucuma-y-manjar-lucuma-fruit-and-caramelized-milk.htm)
* [Empanadas - Side Dish](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/recipe/empanadas.htm)
* [Ensalada Chilena (Chilean Salad) - Side Dish](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/recipe/ensalada-chilena-chilean-salad.htm)
* [Escabeche De Gallina (Marinated Chicken) - Main Dish](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/recipe/escabeche-de-gallina-marinated-chicken.htm)
* [Huesillos Con Mote (Dried Fruit Dessert) - Dessert](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/recipe/huesillos-con-mote-dried-fruit-dessert.htm)
* [Manjar Blanco (Chilean Sweetened Condensed Milk) - Dessert](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/recipe/manjar-blanco-chilean-sweetened-condensed-milk.htm)
* [Milk Asada - Dessert](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/recipe/milk-asada.htm)
* [Pan de Pascua (Christmas Bread) - Bread](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/recipe/pan-de-pascua-christmas-bread.htm)
* [Pastel de Choclo (Chilean Corn and Meat Pie) - Main Dish](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/recipe/pastel-de-choclo-chilean-corn-and-meat-pie.htm)
* [Porotos Con Riendos (Spaghetti with Beans) - Main Dish](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/recipe/porotos-con-riendos-spaghetti-with-beans.htm)
* [Terrina de Centolla y Ostiones del Cabo del Horno (Cape Horn King Crab and Scallop Terrine) - Main Dish](http://www.countryreports.org/country/Chile/recipe/terrina-de-centolla-y-ostiones-del-cabo-del-horno-cape-horn-king-crab-and-scallop-terrine.htm)

**Chile Recipes and Diet**

Chile food and meal customs

**Diet**

Many national dishes are prepared with fish, seafood, chicken, beef, beans, eggs and corn. A common meal is soup or cazuela made with meat, beans, corn, pumpkin and potato. The main meal is eaten at midday. A lighter meal is eaten between 8.00 and 10.00 pm. During the afternoon it is customary to have teatime.

**Meals**

Hands are kept above the table at all times. It is impolite to ask for second helpings. Even if they are offered, the guest is expected to decline. It used to be considered bad manners to eat food, except for ice cream, while walking in public. It is impolite to promptly leave after a meal is completed; guests should stay and visit for a length of time.

**Chile Languages**

**Languages**

Spanish (official), Mapudungun, German, English

Castellano, a Spanish dialect is the official language. English is taught in schools. A small minority in southern Chile speak German, Italian and Mapuche, an Indian language.

**Language Translations:**

**Greetings in Spanish**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Do you speak English? | Habla usted ingles? |
| Do you speak Spanish? | Habla usted espanol? |
| Excuse me | Dispenseme |
| Fine / Good | Bien |
| Good afternoon | Buenas tardes |
| Good evening | Buenas tardes |
| Good morning | Buenos diás |
| Good night | Buenas noches |
| Goodbye | Adios |
| Happy New Year! | ¡Felíz año nuevo! |
| Hello | ¡Hóla! |
| How are you? | Como esta usted? |
| I'm pleased to meet you | Encantado de conocerle |
| Merry Christmas | Feliz Navidad |
| Please | Por favor |
| See you later | Hasta luego |
| Thank you | Gracias |
| Welcome | Bienvenido |
| What is your name? | Como se llama? / Deme su nombre |
| Yes / No | Si / No |

**Days in Spanish**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sunday | Domingo |
| Monday | Lunes |
| Tuesday | Martes |
| Wednesday | Miercoles |
| Thursday | Jueves |
| Friday | Viernes |
| Saturday | Sabado |

**Months in Spanish**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| January | Enero |
| February | Febrero |
| March | marzo |
| April | Abril |
| May | Mayo |
| June | Junio |
| July | Julio |
| August | Agosto |
| September | Septiembre |
| October | Octubre |
| November | Noviembre |
| December | Diciembre |

**Colors in Spanish**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Black | Negro |
| Blue | Azul |
| Green | Verde |
| Orange | Anaranjado |
| Pink | Rosado |
| Red | Rojo |
| White | Blanco |
| Yellow | Amarillo |

**Numbers in Spanish**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| One | Uno |
| Two | Dos |
| Three | Tres |
| Four | Cuatro |
| Five | Cinco |
| Six | Seis |
| Seven | Siete |
| Eight | Ocho |
| Nine | Nueve |
| Ten | Diez |
| Fifty | Cincuenta |
| one Hundred | Cien |
| One Thousand | mil |

**Chile Clothing and Fashion**

Fashions follow European styles. Appearance is quite important to individuals; even in rural areas, it is important to be neatly and cleanly dressed. Sloppy or tattered clothing is considered in poor taste to many Chileans.

**Dating, Family and Children Chile**

**Dating and Marriage**

Young people begin dating by the time they are 16. Group dating is emphasized early on. Men marry from age 22 onward and women between 18 and 23. Couples often date from one to three years before getting engaged. Divorce is not recognized by the Catholic Church but legal means of canceling or nullifying a marriage are available.

**Family and Children**

The family is important in Chile, including the extended family. While men have tended to dominate private and public life in the past, recent years have seen a change in the attitudes to women in the home and professional world. Approximately 30 percent of the labor force is female. While the father takes the lead in the family, the mother has considerable influence in decisions. The relationship between the husband and wife is characterized by reciprocity, with the man performing courtesies for the woman and vice versa. It is customary for a child to bear two family names; the last name is the mother’s family name and the second last name is the father’s family name. People either use their full name or go by their father’s family name, which is the official surname.

**Chile Gestures and Greetings**

**Greetings**

The "abrazo" is commonly used when greeting friends and relatives. It consists of both a handshake and a hug. A handshake is appropriate when meeting someone for the first time. Eye contact is very important when greeting someone. Men stand to greet a woman entering the room. The Chilean people show significant outward affection to friends and relatives. The abrazo is repeated with each individual when one leaves a small social gathering of friends or family. Titles are important when addressing people.

**Gestures**

When conversing keeping eye contact is important. Excessive hand gestures should be avoided. When yawning it is polite to conceal it with ones hand. One does not beckon people with hand gestures. Items, including money, are handed, not tossed to other people. Respect and courtesy are important to the Chileans.

**Visiting**

Contrary to some areas in South America, guests wait outside the door of a home until invited inside by the host. Dinner guests often bring flowers, wine, or bread for the host. It is appropriate to greet the head of the family first.

**Cultural Attributes**

The Chilean people are friendly, both among themselves and with strangers. The people are known for having a witty sense of humor. Chileans take pride in their literacy, their nation and their heritage. Chileans respect the elderly.

**Chile Church and Religion**

Most Chileans profess a Christian faith. It is estimated that more than 80 percent of the population belongs to the Roman Catholic Church. Most other people belong to various Protestant groups or other Christian churches. The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and other laws and policies contributed to the generally free practice of religion. The law at all levels protects this right in full against abuse, either by governmental or private actors.  
Church and state are officially separate. The 1999 law on religion prohibits religious discrimination; however, the Catholic Church enjoysa privileged status and occasionally receives preferential treatment.  
Government officials attend Catholic events and also major Protestant and Jewish ceremonies.  
The Government observes Christmas, Good Friday, the Feast of the Virgin of Carmen, the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, the Feast of the Assumption, All Saints' Day, and the Feast of the Immaculate Conception as national holidays.   
The law allows any religious group to apply for legal public right status (comprehensive religious nonprofit status). The Ministry of Justice may not refuse to accept a registration petition, although it may object to the petition within 90 days on the grounds that all legal prerequisites for registration have not been satisfied. The petitioner then has 60 days to address objections raised by the Ministry or challenge the Ministry in court. Once a religious entity is registered, the state cannot dissolve it by decree. The Council for the Defense of the State may initiate a judicial review.   
In addition, the law allows religious entities to adopt a charter and by-laws suited to a religious organization rather than a private corporation. They may establish affiliates (schools, clubs, and sports organizations) without registering them as separate corporations. Publicly subsidized schools are required to offer religious education  
twice a week through high school; participation is optional (with parental waiver). Religious instruction in public schools is almost exclusively Catholic. Teaching the creed requested by parents is mandatory; however, enforcement is sometimes lax, and religious education in faiths other than Catholicism is often provided privately through Sunday schools and at other venues. Local school administrations decide how funds are spent on religious instruction.   
Although the Ministry of Education has approved curriculum's for 14 other denominations, 92 percent of public schools and 81 percent of private schools offered only Catholic instruction. Parents may their children or enroll them in private schools for religious reasons

**Students Life in Chile**

**Mornings**

Breakfast is light and often consists of bread topped with jelly or manjar, a yummy caramel-like topping. Parents will drink tea or coffee with their breakfast bread, which they buy daily from a local bakery.

**School**

School generally begins at 8:00 in the morning and is done at around 4:00 in the afternoon. Kids will usually walk or ride a public transportation bus to school, depending on how far from the school they live. The public buses offer reduced fares to students, who wear badges that identify with school they attend.  
Some schools provide lunch for the students, while others (in rural areas or certain private schools) allow students to go home for lunch.

**Classroom**

Children wear uniforms that have a badge to school. The badge identifies which school the student attends. High school students wear black and white uniforms and are sometimes known by the nickname “penguins.”  
It is not unusual for a school to be an open air building (especially in northern Chile), which means that classes can be quite chilly in the winter. However, because it rarely rains in such areas, there is no need to provide protection against bad weather. Open schools usually have a large open courtyard that serves as a theater, playground, and assembly hall. Around the courtyard are hallways that lead to classrooms, offices, and bathrooms. Like students in many Asian schools, students stay in the same classroom all day—except when they have a class that requires different classroom equipment, such as computer class.

Until the mid-1990s, school was conducted in two shifts, morning and afternoon. This has now changed to a longer school day. The previous two-shift schedule was used in part to keep a low student-teacher ratio. Since the change, the national Ministry of Education has set a maximum ratio of no more than 45 students for every teacher. Most classes have about 40 students.

**Student Learning**

Children study between 10 and 13 subjects during each school week, and they stay with the same group of classmates all day long.

Children are required to attend elementary school for eight years (ages 6-13), with optional attendance in affect for four years of high school (ages 14-17). All classes are taught in Spanish, the national language. Subjects include math, science, history, geography, Spanish, English, music, belief systems, technology, and physical education. In some areas with high populations of native peoples, their local language is also taught in school. These tend to be in rural areas removed from cities and larger towns.

General basic education (EGB) is compulsory and lasts for eight years, divided into two cycles of four years each. Secondary education (Educación media) lasts for four years. Students choose to specialize either in humanistic-scientific education (EMHC) or technical-professional education (EMTP). The humanistic-scientific branch, offered in liceos, is a preparation for higher education. Students are awarded the Licencia de Educación Media at the end.Technical-professional education offers a two-year common course and two years of specialization divided into five branches: industrial, technical, agricultural, commercial and maritime. Students who successfully complete their secondary education obtain the Licencia de Educación Media or the title of Técnico de Nivel Medio.

**After School Activities**

Sports in Chile are usually organized by leagues rather than schools, so schools offer very few sports or similar extracurricular activities. Private schools are more likely to provide clubs for the arts, media, or perhaps even sports.

**Student Free Time**

Because schools offer very few sports or social activities after school, most youth will simply gather at someone’s home to visit or have other social gatherings. They also often meet at recreational centers. Regardless of where they gather, young Chileans are friendly and outgoing. They enjoy social experiences. Because they have the same classmates all day, they become very good friends, especially when they hang out together after school too.

**Evenings**

Families are very important to the Chilean lifestyle. It is very common for extended families to stay close to each other and see each other often, so cousins know their grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins quite well. Adult friends of the parents are even called “aunt” or “uncle” as a sign of affection and respect. Sometimes children will live with a relative in order to attend a better school or for other reasons. Such extended families provide great support when any given family is struggling in some way, and they provide great fun at family gatherings and holidays!  
At about 5:00 in the afternoon, families have a sort of “second breakfast” called *Once* (pronounced own-say). The main fare is bread and sandwich toppings with tea and coffee. This meal helps everyone get through the hours until it is time for dinner, which comes in the late evening and is about the same size as a traditional lunch. Common foods served at this meal include stew, shepard’s pie, or a variety of bean dishes.

**Education Culture**

Although Chile, as in most Latin American countries, has only in recent years encouraged girls to gain as much education as boys, the country also has a tradition of providing education to women who wanted higher levels of education. For example, Chile was the first country in Latin America to graduate female lawyers and physicians—in the 1880s from the University of Chile! As women have access to more and more education, the number of women in the workforce, including the professional workforce, is increasing. This means that extended family members often help to raise little children while their mothers are working during the day.   
Chile is similar to many Latin American countries in that most children (approximately 90%) attend elementary school. However, only slightly over half will attend preschool, and slightly less than half will remain in high school. Impressively, nearly 20% of the national government budget goes to education. Despite this, many Chileans feel that the educational system has some serious problems and does not do a very good job of educating their children.

The school year begins in late February or early March and finishes in December so that the children do not attend during the hottest months. There are two major breaks of two weeks each in the school year—one in June or July and another in September.

Approximately 70 percent of the schools in Chile are privately owned.

Many students do not attend school after they finish elementary school. They are often required to begin working to support their family. Most high school students come from upper middle class or upper class families.

**Chile Sport and Recreation**

The most popular spectator sport in Chile is fútbol, or soccer. Many consider it Chile's national sport. Major soccer events attract as many as 80,000 people to Santiago's National Stadium. Some of the most popular soccer teams in Chile include Colo Colo, Universidad Católica, and Universidad de Chile.

Chileans love flying kites. Catholic monks brought the first kites to Chile in the 18th century. Today, people of all ages fly kites for sport and amusement in spring and summer. Every weekend, thousands of Santiago residents fly their kites in public parks. Kites have even been honored in Chilean literature as a national treasure.

Rayuela is a Chilean game enjoyed by people of all ages and particularly by men. It involves throwing heavy metal disks called tejos toward a string stretched across damp ground in an attempt to have them land on the string. Children play a similar game using coins rather than the heavy tejos.

The Chilean rodeo is known as the la fiesta huasa. Rodeo teams often travel from village to village and rodeo competitions take place in arenas called media lunas (half moons). Huasos, Chilean cowboys, dress in colorful ponchos, fringed leggings, flat-topped hats, high-heeled boots and large spurs. The object of the competition is for a two-man team to control a steer by making it stop in a certain place without using a lasso.

A traditional Indian team game is called chueca, which means curved stick. A hole marks the center of the field and a goal line is drawn across each end of the field. The game starts at the hole. Each team tries to knock a small rubber ball into it using a curved stick. The first player to succeed then drives the ball across the opposing team's goal line to score a point. Chueca was created by Indians long before the Spanish arrived in the area known today as Chile.

Chileans enjoy group activities and most people belong to a team, club or organization. Some take part in a variety of sports including tennis, fishing, golf, volleyball, polo, rugby, basketball, skiing, water-skiing, fishing, scuba diving, horseback riding and jogging.