

Destination Chile & Easter Island

Meet a land of extremes. Preposterously thin and unreasonably long, Chile stretches 4300km from the belly of South America to its foot, from the driest desert on earth to vast glacial fields. On its way, it unfurls into an incredible landscape of polychrome diversity, with parched plains, fertile valleys, vineyards, volcanoes, ancient forests, lakes, fjords and those massive glaciers. Bookended by the Andes and the Pacific, it averages just 175km wide. Chile's close borders foster intimacy: no matter where you find yourself, it feels a little like a backyard. You start seeing the same faces. Stay one or two days too long and it may feel like home.

Those who come here would be foolish not to take advantage of the outdoors. When in Mother Nature's playground, play. The options are innumerable. You can seek out sweeping desert solitude, craggy Andean summits or the lush forests of the south. Surf, paddle or sail your way up or down the seemingly endless coast. But you don't have to sweat it. You can also explore Easter Island's mysteries, stargaze, soak in bubbling hot springs or watch glaciers calve. Or simply uncork a bottle of Carmenere to fuel some leisurely café conversation.

Chile is so laid-back that you might get the impression that not much is happening here. But it is. On the heels of whirlwind change, this is a country facing up to its violent past and blossoming into a respected regional force. Its economy has been thriving, cultural barriers are falling and Chileans have rediscovered their voice after a long period of inhibition. In 2006, the same year that Michelle Bachelet was elected the first female president, former dictator General Augusto Pinochet passed away and the nation made a collective push to move on.

Moving on, however, means entering a dialogue about Chile's complex issues. After widespread student protests, the quality of public education has come under serious scrutiny. Income gaps are widening and inflation is quickly rising. The elite have profited far more than the poor from the recent economic good times. Chile's wealth also comes at no small environmental cost, as the country forges ahead with environmentally damaging mining, salmon farming and hydroelectricity projects.

Yet, today's Chile as a whole is more self aware than ever and the younger generation is far more determined than previous ones to have its say in shaping the future. There is a lot at stake. Chile may not be rich in natural resources, but its extraordinary landscapes and vast wilderness amount to immeasurable wealth. And the word is out. Despite the global economic slump, 2008 has seen a 22% increase in tourism and the numbers just keep growing. So all in all it would be a good decision to make your trip now!

FAST FACTS

- Population: 16.6 million
- Percentage of population below poverty line: 18%
- Unemployment rate: 8%
- Population growth rate: 0.9%
- Adult literacy: 95.7%
- Inflation (2007): 2.9%
- Growth rate (2007): 5%
- GDP: \$163 billion
- Pisco consumed annually: 47 million liters
- Produces 35% of world copper (55% of national exports)

THE 2010 EARTHQUAKE

A devastating 8.8-magnitude earthquake hit central Chile on February 27, 2010, killing nearly 500 and causing up to \$30 billion US in damage. Concepción, 115 miles southwest of the epicenter, was hit hard. Curicó, Talca, Valparaíso and even Santiago sustained damage, while the ensuing tsunami wiped away parts of coastal villages like Constitución and Talcahuano and killed several on Isla Robinson Crusoe. Strong aftershocks continued to rock the country through March, including during the inauguration of new president Sebastian Pinera. Blackouts and disruptions to communications, infrastructure and transportation were an ongoing problem as of March 2010. But much of the country is unaffected. Travelers should check for updates before visiting. The British Foreign & Commonwealth Office website (www.fco.gov.uk) has up-to-date information; also see www.lonelyplanet.com/chile and our Thorn Tree bulletin board for advice from fellow travelers.

Getting Started

Fun, frugal destinations, a dizzying array of choices – Chile has everything a traveler could hope for. But take a minute to juggle a map of its absurd string-bean design and you'll realize that a trip here takes careful planning. Not only are traveling distances exaggerated by the country's length, but climate and seasonal differences are vast. After all, this is a country with one foot in the tropics and the other touching Antarctica.

Travel here can be as hard-core or as pampered as you please. There are accommodations and transport options to suit most budgets, and tourist infrastructure is fairly well developed, if narrowly focused on certain hot spots. Vast areas of wilderness still beckon to free spirits while luxurious resorts lay in wait for serious relaxation time.

WHEN TO GO

Chile always has a region ripe for exploration whatever the season. But if your heart is set on one part of the country, pick your dates carefully.

Chile's southern charms, including Torres del Paine and the Lakes District, are best visited in summer (December through March) as some are all but impenetrable in winter (June through September). The summer's long days boost outdoor fun, though the spring months of November and December and fall months of March and April can be nearly as good.

Meanwhile Chile in the winter can be a wonderland for skiers; the country's resorts attract hordes from July through September. Middle Chile is best in the verdant spring (September through November) or during the fall harvest (late February into April).

The Atacama Desert can be explored all year, but summer days sizzle and nights are bitterly cold at higher altitudes throughout the year. In the northern altiplano, summer is the rainy season, which usually means an afternoon downpour. Easter Island and the Juan Fernández archipelago are cooler and quieter outside summer; March is an ideal time to visit.

High season is December through March.

COSTS & MONEY

Chile is not cheap by South American standards, but is more economical than Europe or North America. Prices can double during the late-December to mid-March high season, but travel just before or after the official season and you'll most likely score bargain accommodations. Increased competition in internal flights means that there are good deals to be found (see p480).

Shoestring travelers should budget around CH\$20,000 per day for food and lodging, though with determination – camping or staying in hostels, eating in markets – you could cut that to below CH\$15,000. Surprisingly cheap and ridiculously filling set lunch menus are served by most restaurants and seafood is served at bargain prices.

From about CH\$50,000 per day you can wine and dine well and sleep in cozy accommodations. Families can enjoy excellent deals in fully equipped cabins wherever Chileans like to spend their summers. Spend more than CH\$50,000 per day and you can enjoy luxuries that would commonly cost you double that in North America or Europe.

TRAVELING RESPONSIBLY

At its best, travel is a form of altruism. Each decision we make on the road can have positive and negative impacts on the place we are visiting.

See Climate Charts (p464) for more information.

HOW MUCH?

Local call per minute
CH\$180

A 100km bus fare
CH\$3000

Bottle of red wine
CH\$3000

Set lunch CH\$3500

Internet per hour CH\$500

See also Lonely Planet Index, inside front cover

Choosing more sustainable forms of travel, using resources wisely and becoming informed about the options is important.

Government and nonprofit initiatives are giving remote communities a leg up by training locals as trekking and horseback guides and turning rural homes into B&Bs in Patagonia (p353) and around San Pedro de Atacama (p217). These encounters can provide excellent off-the-beaten-path experiences. Look for them in other regions – local tourist offices often have information on *turismo rural*.

Also, look for market restaurants run by women's collectives – who really do know how to simmer seafood – in Chaitén (p350) and other coastal areas.

In extremely popular destinations, such as San Pedro de Atacama, and Torres del Paine, keep in mind that attitudes make an impact too. Using Spanish and adjusting to local customs goes a long way toward maintaining paradise.

Chile's energy resource shortcomings mean that the country has few attractive alternatives (including coal and wood burning, using expensive imported gas and the prospect of widespread damming) to keep the heat on. While visiting, try to keep your energy use to a minimum. At present, recycling is still in its early stages but you can help by traveling with a water bottle that you can refill instead of purchasing bottled drinks.

Lastly, when purchasing souvenirs, choose locally made sustainable goods over valuable hardwoods or mass-made products. Santiago has a good selection of fair-trade crafts (p110).

For a list of sustainable businesses in Chile that we have checked out, consult p524.

TRAVEL LITERATURE

Charles Darwin's time-honored *Voyage of the Beagle* is a perfect companion for trips around Chile, with descriptions as fresh as if he'd just disembarked the Navimag ferry.

Ariel Dorfman's *Desert Memories* is an evocative trawl through Chile's thirsty north, touching on its most ancient and recent past, written by one of Chile's top literary figures. Fans of verse should grab a copy

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

- Warm waterproof gear – indispensable year-round in Patagonia
- Bomber sunblock, lip block and sun hat for high altitudes and the southerly ozone hole
- Polarized dark sunglasses for glaciers, desert and the altiplano
- Foldaway umbrella for Santiago and the south from May through September
- A cozy sleeping bag in winter, even if you're not camping
- Camping gear – it's available but expensive, so best bring it from home
- Essentials such as a Swiss Army knife
- Earplugs to combat onboard bus videos and noisy hotels
- Extra memory cards for digital snaps – they're hard to find outside cities
- Toilet paper, since public bathrooms may lack it
- Zoom lens or binoculars to capture Chile's more bashful wildlife
- Medical items – see p488

TOP 10

Santiago Argentina
CHILE

ADRENALINE RUSHES

In a country ringed by Andean steeps and Pacific breaks, you can pretty much pick your poison when it comes to adventure. Start with these picks and see the Outdoors chapter for more options.

- 1 Ski your choice of pristine Andean peaks (p72)
- 2 Burn bicycle rubber in La Araucanía (p280)
- 3 Hike the 'W' in Parque Nacional Torres del Paine (p395)
- 4 River-run with the pros on Patagonia's Futaleufú (p351), Petrohué (p309) or Río Trancura (p280)
- 5 Canter with *huasos* (Chilean cowboys) pretty much anywhere (p73)
- 6 Paraglide along Iquique's coastal cliffs (p197)
- 7 Surf Arica's towering breaks (p180)
- 8 Pack your crampons for Volcán Ojos del Salado (p240) or tackle the less technical Volcán Villarrica (p284)
- 9 Dive deep off Easter Island (p446) or Archipiélago Juan Fernández (p435)
- 10 Sand-board dunes near San Pedro de Atacama (p216)

NATIONAL PARKS

Seekers of spectacular scenery, nature and tranquility are positively spoiled for choice. See p65 for more information.

- 1 Parque Nacional Torres del Paine (p393)
- 2 Parque Nacional Rapa Nui (p454)
- 3 Parque Nacional Lauca (p189)
- 4 Parque Nacional Vicente Pérez Rosales (p308)
- 5 Parque Pumalín (p345)
- 6 Reserva Nacional Los Flamencos (p220)
- 7 Parque Nacional Nevado Tres Cruces (p240)
- 8 Parque Nacional Conguillío (p272)
- 9 Parque Nacional Chiloé (p337)
- 10 Parque Nacional Juan Fernández (p436)

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Book your digs in advance for these hot-ticket events. More information is at p467. The following will get your toes tapping:

- 1 New Year's Eve (p129), Valparaíso
- 2 Encuentro Folklórico de las Islas del Archipiélago (p331), first week in February, Chiloé
- 3 Campeonato Nacional de Rodeo (p145), late March, Rancagua
- 4 Semana Musical (p301), late January to February, Frutillar
- 5 Fiesta de Candelaria (p238), early February, Copiapó
- 6 Festival Internacional de la Canción (p135), February, Viña del Mar
- 7 Carnaval (p188), February, Putre
- 8 Fiesta de San Pedro y San Pablo (p216), June 29, San Pedro de Atacama
- 9 Festival de la Virgen del Carmen (p203), mid-July, La Tirana
- 10 Carnaval de Invierno (p379), late July, Punta Arenas

'The young Che Guevara's iconic *Motorcycle Diaries* charts his laddish romp through Chile and beyond in the 1950s'

of *The Essential Neruda: Selected Poems by Pablo Neruda* edited by Mark Eisner.

The most famous (some say infamous) Patagonian travelogue is Bruce Chatwin's classic *In Patagonia* (see p392), an inspirational and enigmatic Cubist synthesis of Patagonian characters and landscape.

Against the Wall by Simon Yates (of *Touching the Void* fame) is a ripping yarn for armchair mountaineers about a punishing expedition to climb the world's largest vertical rock face.

Sara Wheeler's *Travels in a Thin Country* is a fun meander through the country from tip to tail, without delving too deeply.

The young Che Guevara's iconic *Motorcycle Diaries* charts his laddish romp through Chile and beyond in the 1950s; to bring the story up to date, try Patrick Symmes' *Chasing Che*.

Part travelogue, part autobiography, *Full Circle: A South American Journey* is a provocative journey through Chile by Luis Sepúlveda, who was exiled for many years. His other works, including *Patagonia Express* are also well worth reading.

The Last Cowboys at the End of the World: The Story of the Gauchos of Patagonia, by Nick Reding, is a fascinating account of the oft-overlooked culture of Chile's southern gauchos.

For more Chilean literature, see p48.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Chile Information Project (www.chip.cl) Umbrella for English-language *Santiago Times*; discusses everything from human rights to souvenirs.

Chiloé (www.chiloeweb.com, in Spanish) Terrific information on the island of Chiloé.

Go Chile (www.gochile.cl) General tourist information.

Interpatagonia (www.interpatagonia.com) All things touristy in Patagonia.

Latin American Network Information Center (www.lanic.utexas.edu/la/chile) Links to Chilean government, politics, culture, environment and more.

Lonely Planet (www.lonelyplanet.com) Has travel news and tips, and you can interrogate fellow travelers on the Thorn Tree bulletin board.

Sernatur (www.visitchile.org or www.sernatur.cl) The national tourism organization in French, Spanish or English.

Itineraries

CLASSIC ROUTES

THE ULTIMATE TASTER

Four Weeks / Santiago to Easter Island

One month in Chile provides a full introduction to its boggling diversity. From **Santiago** (p76), launch into boho capital **Valparaíso** (p123), a great place to wander and feed your creative yen. In winter you can cash in on nearby powder stashes at Andean ski resorts such as **Portillo** (p143). Then turn up the dial with desert heat. Fly or bus to the tiny highland village of **San Pedro de Atacama** (p212). Altiplano ambiance needs several days to absorb; do so visiting the moonlike **Valle de la Luna** (p220), the steaming and strange **El Tatio geysers** (p221) and the stark **Reserva Nacional Los Flamencos** (p220). Back in the village, bonfires and star-stocked skies wind up busy days of hiking, horseback riding or volcano climbing.

Switch gears to rainforest retreat in **Pucón** (p278), where rafting, hiking and hot springs fill up your Lakes District dance card. From **Puerto Montt** (p313), detour to explore the old island culture of **Chiloé** (p321); or steam ahead on a four-day ferry ride through Patagonian fjords and ice fields to **Puerto Natales** (p386). By now you are probably in top shape for **Parque Nacional Torres del Paine** (p393). Give yourself up to a week to tread the trails of this world-famous hiking destination. Then barrel back to Santiago and hop on a plane to **Easter Island** (p439) to puzzle over its archaeological treasures for a week.



Even with four weeks you'll need your skates on to cover all this ground. Remember you'll lose whole days in traveling so it pays to be selective and to take advantage of speedy internal flights. If you have less than three weeks, concentrate on one or two regions to avoid frantic transfers.

HEAD TO TAIL**Two Months / Arica to Patagonia**

Shoot south through this string-bean-shaped country to experience one climatic extreme to another. Start in the Atacama, the driest desert in the world, at seaside **Arica** (p177) and venture into **Parque Nacional Lauca** (p189) to see llamas, snowcapped peaks and springy grasslands. Further south, the area around **Iquique** (p194) is famed for its forgotten ghost towns. You can even climb inside the gargantuan copper mine of **Chuquicamata** (p210) for perspective. Cool adobe **San Pedro de Atacama** (p212) awaits, with its weird and wonderful desert landscapes – including the steamy **El Tatio geysers** (p221). Sun, surf and sand make **La Serena** (p244) a place to linger. Stop at New Age haven **Elqui Valley** (p252) for a taste of pisco vineyards before joining the central valley.

The pace picks up in the central valley. Don't bypass the gorgeous tumbledown city of **Valparaíso** (p123) in your rush to wine and dine in pulsing **Santiago** (p76). You can dip into vineyards around **Talca** (p153) or ski the snow at **Chillán** (p158) on your way further south.

Volcano ascents, fat-tire descents and hot thermal baths define the rainforest resort of **Pucón** (p278); or groove to the student beat at waterfront university town **Valdivia** (p289). You can lake-hop across the Andes to Argentinean **Bariloche** (p308), or ferry to the fabled isle of **Chiloé** (p321) for rural relaxation.

Regional hub **Puerto Montt** (p313) can link you to the heart of Patagonia, where you can paddle the famed **Futaleufú** (p351) or trek under the towering canopy of **Parque Pumalín** (p345). Next stop, hike around turquoise lagoons with sawtooth spires exploring **Parque Nacional Torres del Paine** (p393), then detour to Argentina's awe-inspiring **Glaciar Perito Moreno** (p404). Plug even further south to **Tierra del Fuego** (p408) and Isla Navarino to soak up the end-of-the-world ambiance of **Puerto Williams** (p413).

Chile is 4300km from head to toe. This trip can be completed in six weeks, but it's more rewarding to linger along the way. Consider a long-term car rental, or a purchase, to give you more freedom to explore off the beaten track. Arriving in Chile from Peru can also be advantageous.



ROAD LESS TRAVELED

PIONEER PATAGONIA

Four Weeks / Carretera Austral Loop

If you wish to travel only back roads, if you desire getting dirty, almost lost and awe-inspired, look no further than this four-week plan. Following the **Carretera Austral**, this route criss-crosses its little-known offshoots and gives you plenty of time on the hoof. Leave **Puerto Montt** (p313) or Puerto Varas for the **Río Puelo Valley** (p312), where you can hike or horseback ride, staying at remote homesteads. From Puerto Montt, ferry to **Parque Pumalín** (p345), an ancient forest with boardwalk trails to booming waterfalls. Next stop, **La Junta** (p353), where a farmstay and river run will put you in the Huck Finn mode. Check out the hot springs options near **Puyuhuapi** (p354) or if you're not ready to come clean, camp under the hanging glacier at **Parque Nacional Queulat** (p355).

Coyhaique (p357) is the next major hub. After making connections to **Chile Chico** (p365) on the great Lago General Carrera, hop the border to Los Antiguos and travel Argentina's classic Ruta 40 to **El Chaltén** (p405) for hiking around the amazing Cerro Fitzroy or to **El Calafate** (p400), to see the great glacier **Perito Moreno** (p404) in the Parque Nacional Los Glaciares. From El Calafate it's an easy bus connection to **Parque Nacional Torres del Paine** (p393) via Punta Arenas and Puerto Natales. By now you're in prime hiking shape – enjoy passing the other hacks on the trail, then head back to Puerto Montt via the **Navimag ferry** (p319).

An alternative route would be to skip Chile Chico and follow the Carretera Austral to its southern terminus – **Villa O'Higgins** (p371). From here, a rugged boat-hike combination can get you across the border to El Chaltén, where you can rejoin the itinerary.



You can discover the wilds of Patagonia in just two weeks, but it's best to allow yourself more time to cover this nearly 3500km route in order to appreciate the remoteness and local pace, and to protect yourself against fickle weather and ferry schedules.

DESERT SOLITAIRE

Seven to 10 days / Iquique Loop North

How about a few weeks sleeping under star-crazy skies, following condor shadows through desert contours? You'll need a 4WD and plenty of food, water and extra gas. Start with a surfboard in **Iquique** (p194) to sample the swells of Playa Cavancha and Playa Huaiquique. The first stop is nitrate ghost town **Humberstone** (p201), where you can poke around and explore the crumbling grandeur. Head north, stopping in the isolated coastal village of **Pisagua** (p193) where algae gatherers work alongside the ruins of busted mansions. In **Arica** (p177) there's plenty of sun and surf as well as a wild crafts market on the edge of town. Your new *charango* (small lute) in hand, head inland to **Parque Nacional Lauca** (p189) via Hwy 11, passing geoglyphs, colonial chapels and mountain villages. Take in the perfect cone of Volcán Parinacota and awesome wildlife in this Unesco Biosphere Reserve. Further south, the remote **Reserva Nacional Las Vicuñas** (p192) shelters thousands of these flighty creatures and few interlopers to spook them, so go easy. Heading south on tough terrain, your reward is reaching the ultra-removed **Parque Nacional Volcán Isluga** (p202), looping back to Iquique.

After hitting northern Chile's coastal highlights, venture into the most raw and remote terrain you've ever seen. Take along extra water and filled gas jugs for this 10-day desert sojourn – probably not the best place to test that bare-bones rental car.



TAILORED TRIPS

SWIRL, SWIG & SMILE

Chile's wineries embrace independent travelers with open arms and flowing casks, so what could be a better excursion into the countryside? Big-bodied reds are crafted in Santiago's outskirts; sample from both a commercial heavy hitter, such as **Viña Concha y Toro** (p118) and a boutique winemaker – our fave is **Viña Aquitania** (p118). You can sip Chile's signature whites in the **Casablanca Valley** (p141), where aspiring grape pickers can join Casas del Bosque's March harvest tour.

Explore the de facto capital of Chilean wine on a **Colchagua Valley wine tour** (p148) at Santa Cruz. Highlights include a carriage ride through Viu Manent's vineyards, the organic, biodynamic wines at Emiliana and the haute hand-picked approach of Casa Apostolle Clos Apalta. Half the fun is getting there – the Santa Cruz steam engine **Tren del Vino** (p147) offers doorstep delivery (with shuttles) as well as on-board wine tasting for over-eager tasters.

Other acclaimed tours take in **Talca** (p157), where lovers of a fine vintage get a varied experience; at Viña Gillmore you can even get wine therapy at the spa. (And you thought you were already getting it!)



CHASING CHE

Follow in the tire tracks of revolutionary icon Ernesto 'Che' Guevara through the route laid out in the cult movie *Motorcycle Diaries*. The youthful Che – then a medical student bumming around South America with his buddy Alberto Granado – crossed into Chile by lake-hopping from Argentina through what is now **Parque Nacional Vicente Pérez Rosales** (p308). This route is now popular with tourists so you won't have to operate the bilge pumps like Che did. Arriving in **Petrohué** (p309), take the road skirting the enormous Lago Llanquihue and past the huge **Volcán Osorno** (p308) – a prime destination for mountain climbers and skiers. From there the adventurers revved their way to the lively, handsome port of **Valdivia** (p289), then courted press publicity and paid homage to Pablo Neruda in his native **Temuco** (p266). As their ancient motorbike sighed its last before reaching **Santiago** (p76), Che and Alberto rode a truck to the beautiful colonial city of **Valparaíso** (p123). You could also shoot up north to see the awesome copper mine of **Chuquicamata** (p210), and poke your nose into a few nitrate ghost towns around the laid-back city of **Iquique** (p194), some of which were still functioning when Che visited. Then round off the Chilean leg of the journey beachside at **Arica** (p177).



The Authors



CAROLYN MCCARTHY **Coordinating Author, Northern Patagonia, Southern Patagonia, Tierra del Fuego, Archipiélago Juan Fernández**

Author and journalist Carolyn McCarthy first met Chile as a tourist, returned seasonally as a trekking guide and moved there in 2003 on a Fulbright grant to document pioneer Patagonia. She now proudly calls Chile's magnificent south home. Her work has appeared in *National Geographic*, the *Boston Globe*, *Salt Lake Tribune* and other publications. For Lonely Planet, she has co-authored guides to Argentina, Central and South America, and Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. You can visit her blog at www.carolynswildblueyonder.blogspot.com. For this edition, Carolyn also wrote the front- and endmatter chapters.



GREG BENCHWICK **Norte Grande, Norte Chico**

A former commissioning editor at Lonely Planet, Greg turned down a life of high-walled cubicle insanity to get back to his writing and rambling roots. He's rumbled in the jungles of Peru and Costa Rica, walked across Spain on the Camino de Santiago and challenged the peaks of Alaska and his native Colorado. He specializes in Latin American travel, sustainable travel and new media, and has written more than a dozen guidebooks on travel in Latin America. This was his fourth time traveling through Norte Chico and Norte Grande. When he's not on the road, he develops his new-media company www.monjomed.com. Some day he dreams of visiting Chile's south, but for now, he'll always have Arica.



JEAN-BERNARD CARILLET **Easter Island (Rapa Nui)**

A Paris-based journalist and photographer, Jean-Bernard is a die-hard Polynesia lover, a diving instructor and a Polynesian dance aficionado. For this edition he made his trip coincide with the Tapati Rapa Nui, the island's big festival, and immersed himself in traditional Rapa Nui culture. Between the dance and sport contests, he dived off Motu Nui, hiked around Poike Peninsula, climbed Maunga Terevaka on horseback, discussed the wackiest theories about the history of the island with archaeologists and wandered amid more *moai* than he cares to remember. Jean-Bernard is also an expert on French Polynesia, Easter Island's western neighbor, about which he has written numerous articles and guides.

LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

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VICTORIA PATIENCE

Santiago, Middle Chile

Since her first chicken-bus ride from Lima to Buenos Aires in 1999, Latin American roadtripping has had Victoria Patience hooked. Two of Chile's most intoxicating products, literature and wine, proved equally addictive at university. Thankfully, her degree in Hispanic Studies was a good excuse to indulge. She settled in Argentina in 2000, and an impulsive bout of hitchhiking first took her over the Andes soon after. Victoria has spent the last few years in Buenos Aires weathering political turmoil and writing guidebooks, but traded in steak for seafood and Malbec for Carmenere for six weeks on the road researching Santiago and Middle Chile.



KEVIN RAUB

Sur Chico, Chiloé

Kevin Raub grew up in Atlanta and started his career as a music journalist in New York City, working for *Men's Journal* and *Rolling Stone* magazines. The rock-'n'-roll lifestyle took its toll, so he needed an extended vacation and took up travel writing. He has previously co-authored Lonely Planet guides to Mexico and Brazil (where he currently lives), and has been traveling extensively in Chile since climbing the 5604m El Toco volcano in the Atacama Desert in 2003. He pounds the world's pavements with one goal in mind: membership of the Travelers' Century Club before the age of 40. His country count currently stands at 60.

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

Dr David Goldberg MD wrote the Health chapter. Dr Goldberg completed his training in internal medicine and infectious diseases at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in New York City, where he has also served as voluntary faculty. At present he is an infectious diseases specialist in Scarsdale, NY, and the editor-in-chief of the website MDTravelHealth.com.

Grant Phelps wrote the special section on Chilean wine (p56). Born and raised in New Zealand, Grant completed a masters degree in enology before embarking on a 13-year career as an international 'flying winemaker,' working in such diverse climes as Australia, USA, France, Hungary, Chile and New Zealand. In between winemaking gigs he has dedicated his intellectual processes to the study of the Spanish language in Cuba, Colombia and Guatemala. For the past six years Grant has been Chief Winemaker of Viña Viu Manent, located in the picturesque Colchagua Valley of Chile.

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