



Norte Chico

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Chaski (p208)
- ➔ Coral de Bahía (p220)
- ➔ Nativo (p214)
- ➔ Kardamomo (p201)
- ➔ Cafe Museo (p219)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Hotel La Casona (p216)
- ➔ Ckamur (p219)
- ➔ Hacienda Los Andes (p204)
- ➔ El Tesoro de Elqui (p210)
- ➔ Coral de Bahía (p220)

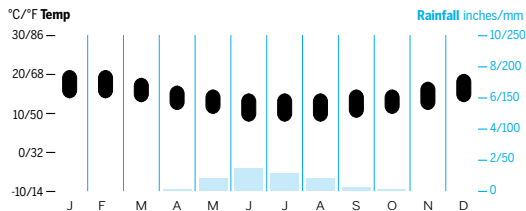
Why Go?

For such a small sliver of land, Chile's Norte Chico (Little North) offers up fantastic diversity. La Serena, a coastal colonial capital and the region's largest city, is a must-see for anybody visiting. From there, move on to the mystical Elqui Valley: the verdant home to Chile's pisco producers, new-age communes and cutting-edge observatories. Further north are some amazing national parks, a trendy little beach hideaway, and kilometers of uncharted coastline just waiting for you to set up camp or charge out for an afternoon surf.

Wildlife lovers won't want to miss the playful penguins of Reserva Nacional Pingüino de Humboldt and Parque Nacional Pan de Azúcar. And high in the Andes, the seldom-visited Parque Nacional Nevado Tres Cruces is a great place to spot vicuña and flamingos. Despite its diminutive moniker, the Little North is actually quite a bit bigger than most people expect.

When to Go

La Serena



Jan–Feb Chileans on vacation storm the beaches, making hotel options scarcer and sights crowded.

Jul–Aug Temperatures drop dramatically at night but days are hot and blissfully free of crowds.

Sep–Nov Catch the storied sight of the flowering desert, best in Parque Nacional Llanos de Challe.

Norte Chico Highlights

- 1 Lounge around Norte Chico's coolest little beach town, the pretty **Bahía Inglesa** (p219).
- 2 Learn just how potent the little pisco grape can be as you hop through villages of the groovy **Elqui Valley** (p205).
- 3 Take in starry southern skies at one of many **observatories** (p206) dotting Norte Chico.
- 4 Get lost on your way to the high-Andean lagoons of **Parque Nacional Nevado Tres Cruces** (p217).
- 5 Hop on a boat to the penguin colonies at **Reserva Nacional Pingüino de Humboldt** (p211).
- 6 Bop through the colonial center of **La Serena** (p197), then head to the beach for surf, sun and sand.
- 7 Find your own way as you pioneer campsites and surf spots in the beachfront **Parque Nacional Pan de Azúcar** (p220).

