



Sur Chico

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Best Places to Stay

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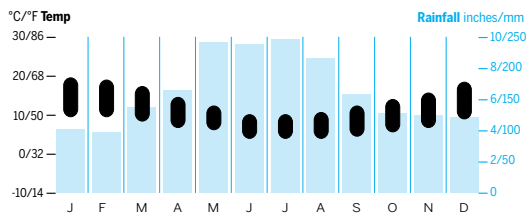
Why Go?

Hence begins the Chilean south. The regions of La Araucanía, Los Ríos and the Lakes District jar travelers with menacing ice-topped volcanoes, glacial lakes overflowing with what looks like melted jade, roaring rivers running through old growth forests and coastal enclaves inhabited by the indomitable Mapuche people. Sur Chico is home to eight spectacular national parks, many harboring exquisitely conical volcanoes, and is a magnetic draw for outdoor adventure enthusiasts and devil-may-care thrillseekers.

Peppered about sprawling workhorse travel hubs, you'll find well-developed lakeside hamlets, most notably Pucón and Puerto Varas, dripping in charm and draped by stunning national parks and nature reserves, each one like an Ansel Adams photograph leaping from the frame. But the region – call it Patagonia Lite – isn't all so perfectly packaged. Off-the-beaten-path destinations like the Cochamó Valley and Caleta Condor reward the intrepid spectacularly, their isolation fodder for that ever-elusive travel nirvana.

When to Go

Puerto Montt



Jan–Feb Summer in this weathered region brings less rain, but you'll still need a raincoat.

Nov–Mar Navimag ferry high season: spectacular Patagonian sunsets and glaciers.

Jan One of the most crowded months for visiting Volcán Villarrica but also the sunniest skies.

Sur Chico Highlights

1 Visit one of the most beautiful places in the world you've probably never heard of on an *etnoturismo* jaunt to **Caleta Condor** (p256).

2 Trek the otherworldly landscapes of La Araucanía's volcanically altered national parks:

Reserva Nacional

Malalcahuello-

Nalcas (p232) and

Parque Nacional

Conguillío (p230).

3 Shred powder driving your own dogsled on a majestic seven-day Andean crossing with **Aurora**

Austral Patagonia

Husky (p235) near

Villarrica.

4 Push your adrenaline to the limit every day of the week in **Pucón** (p237)

