



Sur Chico

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Best Places to Stay

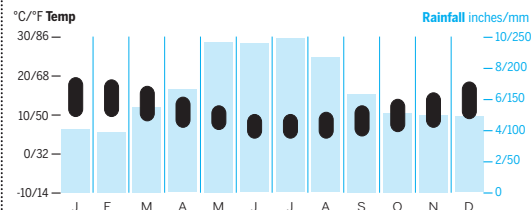
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Why Go?

The Chilean south begins here. The regions of La Araucanía, Los Ríos and the Lakes District jar travelers with their menacing ice-topped volcanoes; its glacial lakes that look like melted Chinese jade; and roaring rivers running through old growth forests and villages inhabited by the indomitable Mapuche people. Though not as rugged or as challenging as Patagonia – call it Patagonia Lite – it is home to seven spectacular national parks, many harboring perfectly conical volcanoes (like Volcán Osorno, which stands sentinel over the entire area) and has become a magnetic draw for both outdoor adventure enthusiasts and devil-may-care thrillseekers. Peppered about sprawling workhorse travel hubs like Temuco, Valdivia, Osorno and Puerto Montt, you'll find charming lake and mountain hamlets, rich in architecture, culture and, most obviously, stunning backdrops of national parks and nature reserves, each one like an Ansel Adams photograph brought to life in cinematic color.

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 sum-miting 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** (boxed text, p257)

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

Reserva Nacional

Malalcahuello-

Nalcais (p233) and

Parque Nacional

Conguillío (p231)

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

Patagonia Husky

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