



Understand Chile

CHILE TODAY 418

The 2010 earthquake shook things up, but student protests and the victorious rescue of 33 miners have kept life interesting.

HISTORY 420

Though yet to tick off two centuries as a country, Chile's astounding past is only starting to be understood.

LIFE IN CHILE 433

Economically sound and highly traditional, Chile's staid and stable culture has recently awakened to a new global norm.

CHILEAN WINE 435

Winemaker Grant Phelps looks at how Chile started cultivating great wines, what to look for and the 2010 earthquake's impact.

LITERATURE & CINEMA 438

The home of literary greats, Chile also features a growing arts scene and movies that garner international acclaim.

THE NATURAL WORLD 441

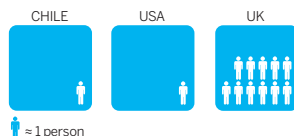
Chile's landscapes range from the driest desert of the world to the ice-capped south.

NATIONAL PARKS 447

Torres del Paine may be the country's flagship attraction, but plenty of other private and national parks are well worth exploring.



population per sq km



Chile Today

- » Population: 17 million
- » Median age: 32
- » Internet users: 7 million
- » Adult literacy: 96%
- » Unemployment: 6.9%
- » Life expectancy: 78.8 years
- » Inflation rate: 3.3%
- » GDP: \$281 billion

Too bad there is no award for the most dogged country, because Chile would be a serious candidate. After an 8.8 earthquake hit off the central coast in February 2010, Chile dug in. The earthquake carried the power of 10,000 Hiroshima bombs: with the ensuing tsunami it was responsible for hundreds of deaths and US\$30 billion dollars in damage. Yet two months later, students returned to school, and the affected roads, ports and airports were up. In large part the recovery depended on citizens who helped each other with no formal emergency response in place.

Chile is no stranger to natural disaster (it was witness to the 2011 eruptions of Cordon Caulle, which also buried parts of Argentina under ash), but it is a survivor. In recent times, the country has also had to deal with another kind of aftershock – the consequence of prosperity.

Mind the Gap

In 2010 Chile became the first South American country to earn membership in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Chile is now ranked as the world's 40th most developed country; healthcare has improved and life expectancy is up.

Yet there is room for improvement. Of all OECD members, Chile has the greatest levels of inequality. The number of millionaires in Chile doubled in the early 2000s, but the number of those living in extreme poverty is over 600,000. Although poverty has declined in the past decade by nearly a third, critics argue that the national poverty line is just too low for an accurate picture.

Behind the problem, many say, is education. There is little assistance for middle- or lower-class children to attend college. Tired of this, students in 2011 took to the streets. When the Piñera government turned a deaf ear, protesters broke out into Michael Jackson's *Thriller* and pa-

Top Films

The Maid (2009) A maid questions her lifelong loyalty
Violeta Went to Heaven (2012) Emotional, unflinching biopic of rebel icon Violeta Parra
Mi Mejor Enemigo (2005) Lost Argentine and Chilean soldiers cobble out a truce

Top Travelogues

Voyage of the Beagle (Charles Darwin) Observes native fauna and volcanoes
Motorcycle Diaries (Che Guevara) The road trip that made a revolutionary
In Patagonia (Bruce Chatwin) Iconic work on Patagonian ethos

Say What?

Chilean Spanish is rife with local lingo. Brush up with:
Chilenismos: A Dictionary and Phrasebook for Chilean Spanish (Daniel Joelson)
How to Survive in the Chilean Jungle (John Brennan & Alvaro Taboada)