

CENTRAL VALLEY

The country's agricultural heartland, the Central Valley is carpeted by lush vineyards and rich arable lands that grow large amounts of fruit for local use and export. From the east, the arid Andes sweep down to the flat valley, which is dotted with wineries and old estates. The terrain yields in the west to coastal mountains and the Pacific littoral, where fishing villages alternate with luxury resorts.

Inhabited since pre-Columbian times, Central Valley is considered Chile's oldest region and a bastion of its traditions. Its original settlers were the Mapuche, who resisted assimilation into the Incan Empire (see p16). The Spanish arrived in 1541, founding Santiago at the foot of the Andes, Valparaíso on the coast, and, later, towns across the valley floor. Central Valley became the center of Colonial Chile: the womb from which the country's north and south grew, its wealthiest area, and the political hub. The hacienda system, by which old families controlled vast tracts of land, evolved here, spawning Chile's legendary *huaso*. Mining of silver, nitrates, and copper brought later wealth.

In modern times, agriculture, in particular viticulture, remains the greatest source of income here. The dry

temperate climate and long summers make the region ideal for the production of fine wines. The valley's world class wineries, open for tours and tastings, are part of a tourism sector that offers an array of other activities for locals and visitors alike. These include skiing and snowboarding at mountain resorts, surfing along big wave beaches, and white-water rafting and horse riding in national parks. Forested spa retreats pepper the Andean foothills and beach resorts and idyllic fishing villages line the coast. The cities boast some of Chile's best fine arts and decorative arts museums, complemented by ornate parks, lush plazas, and fine seafood restaurants. Easily accessible from these cities are well-preserved haciendas and mines, and towns full of Colonial charm.



Colorful street art, characteristic of the historic city of Valparaíso, a UNESCO World Heritage Site

◀ View of the beach from Casa Museo Isla Negra, the home and final resting place of Pablo Neruda



Exploring Central Valley

Most of the region's attractions are clustered around the northern part of the valley, and to a lesser extent in the south, with renowned vineyards in areas such as Casablanca and Colchagua valleys in the central lowlands. The region's main cities are the historic port of Valparaíso and Viña del Mar, which is characterized by French palaces and ornate museums. Easily accessed from both these urban centers are Pablo Neruda's house at Isla Negra and the surfers' haven Pichilemu. Away from the coast, in the eastern mountains, resorts such as Portillo promise some of Chile's best skiing runs, while Termas de Jahuel and Termas de Cauquenes are renowned for their thermal pools. In the south, national parks including Reserva Nacional Altos de Lircay and Parque Nacional Laguna del Laja offer a gamut of activities.



People relaxing on a stretch of sandy beach in Tomé

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Getting Around

Comfortable buses connect Central Valley and Santiago. The Pan-American Highway, or Ruta 5, runs through the region, linking its main urban centers. The majority of wine routes and the more remote sights in the Andes mountains can only be visited by car or via organized tours. Mountain spa and ski resorts usually arrange transfers to and from Santiago.



Artifacts and paintings at Casa Museo Isla Negra

For hotels and restaurants in this region see pp277–8 and pp292–4



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Valparaíso

Founded in 1543, the hillside city of Valparaíso emerged as the South Pacific's greatest port in the late 19th century. During this time, European immigrants flocked to the city, creating a cultural melting pot of raffish sailor bars and solemn Protestant churches. Valparaíso rises abruptly from a narrow strip of coast to cover over 45 steep hills, each a dense jumble of winding streets lined with colorful houses, post-Colonial edifices, and 19th-century museums. The city is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and much of its rich architecture is beautifully preserved, even as it bursts with trendy restaurants, bars, and boutique hotels.

Sights at a Glance

Historic Buildings and Streets

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- ④ Bar Inglés and Bar La Playa
- ⑦ Muelle Prat
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Valparaíso's harbor and urbanized hillsides

Getting Around

Valparaíso consists of numerous hillside districts and a lower coastal section called El Plan. This coastal stretch can be explored on foot or by local buses and trolebuses (see p129). However, most of Valparaíso's attractions are concentrated on the hillsides, which can be accessed from the lower section via funiculars (see pp130–31) and steep stairways. Cerro Concepción and Cerro Alegre are Valparaíso's main restaurant and hotel zones. An efficient metro system skirts Bahía de Valparaíso and links the city to neighboring Viña del Mar (see pp132–3).

Bahía de Valparaíso



VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Practical Information

Road Map B6, 75 miles (120 km)

NW of Santiago. ☎ 284.500.

☎ Blanco 997; (032) 2846601;

9am–8pm Mon–Sat (from 10am Sat), 10am–2pm Sun. 📺 Glorias Navales (May 21); Carnaval Cultural de Valparaíso (end Dec).

🌐 ciudaddevalparaiso.cl

Transport

🚗 🚌 🚇



Bust of naval officer Arturo Prat at the Museo Marítimo Nacional

① Museo Marítimo Nacional

Paseo 21 de Mayo 45, Cerro Artillería.
City Map B2. Tel (032) 2437651.
Open 10am–5:30pm Tue–Sun.
[museonaval.cl](#)

Chile's excellent Museo Marítimo Nacional is housed in a building dating from 1893. It has 17 exhibition rooms, including salons dedicated to Chile's foremost naval heroes – Lord Thomas Cochrane, Arturo Prat, and Bernardo O'Higgins – and to Chile's key 19th-century naval battles. Exhibits include antique sabres and swords, pocket revolvers, bayonets, battle plans, and models of battleships. Items salvaged from Prat's schooner, *Esmeralda*, such as the clock which stopped at the precise time the ship sank during the Battle of Iquique (1879), are also displayed.

② Edificio de la Aduana

Plaza Wheelwright 144. **City Map B2.** Tel (032) 2134712.
Open hours vary

Built in 1855, the pink-painted Edificio de la Aduana (Customs Building) is a rare example of post-Colonial architecture. The institution's most famous employee was the Nicaraguan Modernist poet Rubén Darío, who worked here in the 1880s while writing his seminal work, *Azul* (1888). Guided tours visit a small museum, which displays

objects from the building's history. Edificio de la Aduana overlooks **Plaza Wheelwright**, named for American industrialist William Wheelwright, who played a major role in building Chile's railroads and steamship fleet. His statue, raised in 1877, adorns the plaza.

③ Plaza Echaurren

Calle Cochrane, esq. Calle Serrano.
City Map B3.

The birthplace and historic heart of Valparaíso, Plaza Echaurren marks the spot where Spanish explorer Juan de Saavedra first made landfall in 1543. Today, it is fronted by crumbling yet elegant mid-19th-century structures such as the beautiful old market building of Mercado Puerto.

Overlooking the plaza is the **Iglesia de la Matriz**, notable for its octagonal steeple. This adobe edifice was constructed in 1837 on the site of the city's first church.

④ Bar Inglés and Bar La Playa

City Map B3. Bar Inglés: Cochrane 851. Tel (032) 2214625.
Open 10am–1am Mon–Sat.
 Bar La Playa: Serrano 567. Tel (032) 2252838. **Open** 10–3am Mon–Wed, 10–5am Thu–Sun.

Two popular public bars, **Bar Inglés** and **Bar La Playa** evoke Valparaíso's halcyon days as the greatest port-city in the South Pacific. Bar Inglés was founded by English immigrants in 1926.



Well-stocked shelves of liquor behind the counter at Bar La Playa



Historic buildings overlooking the palm-lined Plaza Echaurren

Polished wood and brass embellish its appealing interior, which is hung with colossal wall mirrors, whirling ceiling fans, and forlorn portraits of Britain's royal family.

Located in the city's old port area, Bar La Playa was opened in 1934 as a raffish meeting spot for local working girls, sailors, and ship-workers, who would pass their time here between shifts. Today a bohemian drinking den, it hosts poetry readings on Wednesdays.

⑤ Museo del Mar Lord Thomas Cochrane

Calle Merlet 195, Cerro Cordillera.
City Map B3. Tel (032) 2293 9486.
 Ascensor Cordillera. **Open** Dec–Mar: 10am–7pm Tue–Sun; Apr–Nov: 10am–6pm Tue–Sun.

Located on a hilltop, Casa de Lord Cochrane was built in 1842 for Lord Thomas Cochrane, although the British naval officer never actually lived here. Open to visits, this house is a fine example of post-Colonial architecture with thick adobe walls and heavy oak doors that open inward on to a Spanish patio, adorned by a cast-iron drinking well. The sweeping front terrace, lined with cannon rows, offers glorious views of Valparaíso's bay. Occasional art exhibitions are hosted in the museum. At the back are sloping gardens with eucalyptus trees and shaded reading benches.

⑥ Plaza Sotomayor

Calle Cochrane, esq. Avenida Tomás Ramos. **City Map B3.**

Valparaíso's main square is the stately Plaza Sotomayor, a large open space that holds parades on *Glorias Navales* or Navy Day (see p41). The plaza is centered around the **Monumento a los Héroes de Iquique**, raised in memory of the crew of the *Esmeralda* who were killed in the 1879 Battle of Iquique. The battle saw *Esmeralda*, the Chilean navy's oldest ship, fight the Peruvian fleet's most powerful vessel, *Huascar*, for 4 hours. Although the former was sunk, and her captain, Arturo Prat, killed, the battle was a turning point in the War of the Pacific (see p49). Prat's bronze effigy crowns the monument and his body lies buried in a crypt here.

Towering over the southern end of Plaza Sotomayor is the elaborate façade of the Neo-Gothic **Comandancia Jefe de la Armada**. Built in 1910, its design was inspired by the Hôtel de Ville in Paris, and its interiors were multi-functional, serving both as a summer residence for Chile's presidents and as an office for the city's mayors and regional governors. Expropriated by the Chilean navy in the mid-1970s, the palace has since functioned as Chile's naval headquarters.

The Ministry of Culture, a Modernist building dating from 1936, is open daily to the public and hosts art exhibitions. Adjacent to this edifice, the *Compañía de Bomberos*,



The imposing Neo-Gothic façade of the Comandancia Jefe de la Armada



Monumento a los Héroes de Iquique, dominating the Plaza Sotomayor

built in 1851, is the site of the oldest volunteer fire service in Latin America.

At the plaza's center, a staircase descends to the subterranean **Museo de Sitio Plaza Sotomayor**. This small archaeological museum displays remains of the pier that once stood where Plaza Sotomayor (built on land reclaimed from the sea) now stands.

⑦ Museo de Sitio Plaza Sotomayor

Plaza Sotomayor. **Open** 10am–2pm & 3:30–7pm daily.

⑧ Muelle Prat

Avenida Errázuriz, in front of Plaza Sotomayor. **City Map C3.**

A busy pier, Muelle Prat is the departure point for half-hour tours of Valparaíso's bay by water-taxi. Boats wend a sinuous trail between gigantic cruise ships docked in the bay and the Chilean navy's

battleships stationed offshore, before hitting open water. The tour offers tremendous views of the city's hillsides, densely built-up with rows of brightly colored houses.



Cruise ships and boats lining the waterfront at Muelle Prat

⑨ Palacio de la Justicia

Plaza Justicia. **City Map B3.**
 Tel (032) 2225 8577. **Open** 8am–2pm Mon–Fri.

Built in 1939, the Palacio de la Justicia is Valparaíso's appeals court. The edifice has a sober, rectangular façade, with a 10-ft (3-m) high statue of *Justitia* (Lady Justice) at its entrance. The figure is curiously anomalous in that she wears no blindfold, her customary symbol of objectivity, and her scales of truth dangle forlornly at her side, rather than at the end of her outstretched arm. According to legend, an angry merchant had the statue placed here to protest against a perceived injustice.



Plaza Anibal Pinto, dominated by the yellow-and-green Librería Ivens building

⑩ Calle Prat

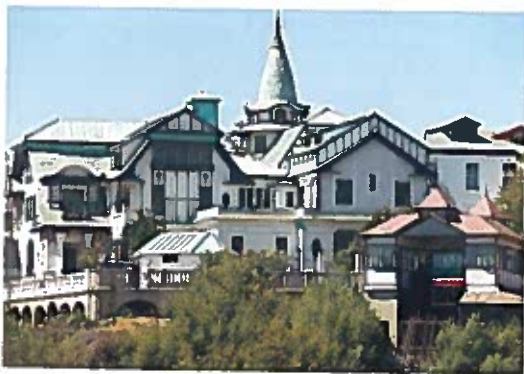
City Map B3.

A narrow thoroughfare through the city's financial district, Calle Prat links Plaza Sotomayor and the monumental 1929 **Reloj Turri** (Turri Clock Tower), the city's Big Ben. Looming over both sides of the road are grand buildings of stone and black marble, constructed at the turn of the 20th century. Among these is the old Bank of London building, today the Banco de Chile (No. 698), which houses a monument built to commemorate British soldiers killed in World War I. Another evocative edifice here is Valparaíso's stock exchange, **La Bolsa de Valores**, the oldest stock exchange in South America. The old bidding wheel still stands inside the building's cavernous, domed interior.

⑩ Calle Esmeralda

City Map C3.

An extension of Calle Prat, Calle Esmeralda starts at the Turri Clock Tower, close to Ascensor Concepción (see pp 130–31) and ends at Plaza Anibal Pinto. The street's most beautiful construction is the **El Mercurio** building, home to the popular *El Mercurio de Valparaíso* newspaper. The ornate exterior of the edifice is crowned by a bronze statue of Mercury pointing skyward.



The sprawling Art Nouveau Palacio Baburizza

⑩ Plaza Anibal Pinto

End of Calle Esmeralda. City Map C4.

Uniting Valparaíso's financial district and the commercial downtown area, Plaza Anibal Pinto is a small, chaotic square fronted by beautiful buildings and the old **Cinzano** café (see p 293). A sepia-tinted bar, the café was founded in 1896 and features live tango shows.

On one side of the plaza is the striking **Librería Ivens** building. Founded in 1891, it is one of the city's oldest bookshops. At the entrance to this building is the plaza's attractive public artwork – a

street fountain sculpted as Neptune in 1892.

⑩ Palacio Baburizza

Paseo Yugoslavo s/n, Cerro Alegre. City Map B3. Tel (032) 2252332. Ascensor El Peral. Open 10:30am–7pm Tue–Sun.

An elegant Art Nouveau mansion, the Palacio Baburizza was constructed in 1916 for Italian saltpeter tycoon Ottorino Zanelli. It was subsequently purchased by Pascual Baburizza, a Croatian immigrant and nitrates magnate, in 1925. Today, the structure houses Valparaíso's fine arts museum, whose displays include the Baburizza family's collection of 19th- and 20th-century European art.

The palace is situated on the summit of Cerro Alegre, from where it overlooks the lovely Paseo Yugoslavo. A leafy promenade and viewing point, the street offers breathtaking vistas of neighboring hillsides, the city's port, financial districts, and the blue Bahía de Valparaíso.

Now reopened after having been restored to something that perhaps even exceeds its original elegance, the museum features a new wing that showcases Chilean landscapes as depicted by expatriate painters. It also boasts original furnishings and an extraordinary Art Deco bathroom. The garden annex includes a café and a well-stocked museum shop.

⑩ Paseo Gervasoni

Cerro Concepción. Ascensor Concepción. City Map C3.

Ascensor Concepción spills out on to Paseo Gervasoni at the top of Cerro Concepción. A romantic cobbled promenade and vantage point edged with wildflowers, the *paseo* affords splendid views across the Bahía de Valparaíso to Viña del Mar in the north. Along the street are the elegant Café Turri (see p 293), the old Danish consulate building dating from 1848, and **Casa Mirador de Lukas**. The last is a 1900 house that holds a lovely museum dedicated to the life and works of Chile's best-loved cartoonist, Renzo Antonio Pecchenino Raggi (1934–88), popularly known as Lukas.

⑩ Casa Mirador de Lukas

Paseo Gervasoni 448, Cerro Concepción. Tel (032) 2221344. Open 11am–6pm Tue–Sun. lukas.cl



Entrance to Casa Mirador de Lukas, Paseo Gervasoni

⑩ Iglesia Luterana

Abtao 689, Cerro Concepción. City Map C4. Tel (032) 2975476. Open 10am–1pm Mon–Fri.

Built by the city's German community in 1898, the Iglesia Luterana was South America's first Protestant church to be allowed a steeple and bell tower. Its beautifully austere façade tapers upward toward a slender, 115-ft (35-m) high steeple, which crowns Cerro Concepción and is visible from the city's lower sections. Inside, the nave fills with natural light and a sculpture



Soaring bell tower of the Protestant Iglesia Luterana

of Christ on the cross, which is carved from a single pine trunk, hangs above the altar. A grand organ, brought from England in 1884, stands opposite the altar.

⑩ Iglesia Anglicana San Pablo

Pilcomayo 566, Cerro Concepción. City Map B4. Tel (032) 2213296. Open 10:30am–1pm Tue–Fri. saintpaulchile

The Neo-Gothic Iglesia Anglicana San Pablo was built in 1858 by British engineer William Lloyd. This church was established by Valparaíso's English community, but only after the city's Catholic archbishop imposed many conditions on what he considered a temple to a rival faith. Among the most curious was that this church's doors be smaller than those of the city's Catholic churches – and to this day visitors enter not via a grand portal, but by one of the two small side doors. The church's

simple stone and wood interior houses a pipe organ donated in memory of Britain's Queen Victoria in 1903.

⑩ Cementerios Católico and Disidentes

Dinamarca s/n, Cerro Panteón. City Map C4. Cementerio Católica: Open 8:30am–5pm daily. Cementerio Disidentes: Open 9am–1pm & 3–5pm Mon–Sat, 9am–1pm Sun.

Spectacularly located high up on an overhanging hillside, the **Cementerio Católico** and **Cementerio Disidentes** are poignant evocations of this port-city's halcyon days in the 1800s as a melting pot of different cultures and creeds. The Cementerio Disidentes is the site of the simple, sometimes austere, graves of the city's non-Catholic communities, including American Mormons, English Anglicans, and German Lutherans. Many of the gravestones are engraved with tales of war and shipwreck. Opposite the Cementerio Disidentes, a grand portal enters the Cementerio Católico, otherwise known as Cementerio N°1. Valparaíso's most illustrious sons and daughters lie here in grand, marbled mausoleums. Among the luminaries buried are members of the Edwards-Ross family, owners of the *El Mercurio de Valparaíso* newspaper, José Francisco Vergara, founder of the town Viña del Mar, and Renzo Pecchenino, a popular Chilean cartoonist.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso

The oldest newspaper in continuous circulation in the entire Spanish-speaking world, *El Mercurio de Valparaíso* was founded in 1827 by Chilean journalist Pedro Félix Vicuña and the American typographer Thomas Well. Since the 1880s, it has been under the uninterrupted stewardship of Chile's eminent Edwards-Ross family, who continue to aspire to the newspaper's founding ideal that it be "adequate enough to moderate the extreme passions that divide men."



Façade of the El Mercurio building



La Sebastiana, former residence of Chilean poet Pablo Neruda

⑩ La Sebastiana

Ferrari 692, Cerro Florida. **City Map** C5. **Tel** (032) 2256606. Ascensor Espíritu Santo. **Open** Mar–Dec: 10:10am–6pm Tue–Sun; Jan & Feb: 10:30am–6:50pm Tue–Sun. fundacionneruda.org

A must see for devotees of Pablo Neruda (see p91), La Sebastiana is the last of three houses bought by the poet in Chile. Neruda and two of his friends acquired the shell of the house in 1961 and named it for its architect and first owner, Sebastian Collado. They made extensive renovations to the structure, which resulted in an anarchic architecture that mirrored the city itself – the house became a jumble of narrow, twisting stairways and myriad nooks and crannies, painted in a range of colors.

In 1991, the structure was restored and converted into a museum that preserves the house as it was when Neruda lived there. It contains strange and wonderful objects bought by the poet, such as a Parisian carousel pony in the living room and an unfitted wash-basin from England in the study. Pablo Neruda's rich imagination is also evident in the American oakwood stairway rescued from a demolition site, and a floor mosaic of uncut pebbles shaped into an antique map of Patagonia and Antarctica.

Like Neruda's other houses in Santiago and Isla Negra, La Sebastiana is open for audio-guided tours on a first-come, first-served basis.

⑩ Palacio Lyon

City Map C4. Museo de Historia Natural de Valparaíso: Condell 1546. **Tel** (032) 254-840. **Open** 10am–6pm Tue–Sat, 10am–2pm Sun. mhnv.cl Galería Municipal de Arte Valparaíso: Condell 1550. **Tel** (032) 2293 9567. **Open** 10am–7pm Tue–Sun.

Built in 1887, Palacio Lyon houses the **Museo de Historia Natural de Valparaíso**, the city's natural history museum and Chile's second-oldest state museum. A construction of stone, cast iron, and glass, this edifice evokes the 19th century as a golden age of exploration, scientific discovery, and public education. Displays include exhibits from the early 1900s that feature Chile's marine flora and fauna, stuffed animals from around the world, and rows of curiosities including bovine conjoined twins conserved in tanks of formaldehyde.



Detailed murals painted on walls along Calle Ferrari, part of the Museo a Cielo Abierto

⑩ Museo a Cielo Abierto

Cerro Bellavista. **City Map** C4. **Tel** (032) 2593156. Ascensor Espíritu Santo.

A fascinating outdoor museum on Cerro Bellavista, the Museo a Cielo Abierto comprises a maze of winding streets and passageways painted with giant, colorful street murals by some of Chile's best-known contemporary artists. There are about 20 murals, ranging from highly abstract works to humorous depictions of daily life in the city, and a self-guided tour takes about an hour. There are many steps along the way, as well as steep inclines, so be sure to wear comfortable shoes. It is also wise to bring a bottle of water. The greatest concentration of murals can be found on Calle Ferrari and on Pasaje Santa Lucía. The latter is a steeply stepped passageway and a whirl of kaleidoscopically vibrant motifs and figures.

The museum features works by well-known Chilean artists, including the surrealist Roberto Matta, Gracia Barrios, of the Grupo Signo, and Nemesio Antúnez, who in 1956 founded the famous Taller 99, an artists' collective.

Unfortunately, both weather and vandalism have damaged many of the works, but the murals are currently undergoing restoration.

⑩ Iglesia de los Sagrados Corazones

Avenida Independencia 2050–2084. **City Map** D5. **Tel** (032) 2746728. **Open** daily.

Dating from 1874, the Iglesia de los Sagrados Corazones was the first church built in the Americas for the French Order of the Sacred Hearts. Most of its striking architectural elements, including the elegant clock tower, the wooden altar, pulpit, and confessional boxes, were brought from France. There is a stunning pipe organ made by Aristide de Cavalle-Coll, the most famous French organ maker of the time. Stained glass, a replica of the glass in the Church of Santa Gúdula in Belgium, adorns the church's upper reaches and thousands of tiny gold-painted stars decorate its vaulted ceiling.

Adjacent to the church, the **Colegio de los Sagrados Corazones** dates from 1837 and is Chile's oldest private high school. Several former presidents were educated here.



Manicured lawns fronting the entrance to the Congreso Nacional

⑩ Congreso Nacional

Avenida Pedro Montt s/n. **City Map** E4. **Tel** (032) 2250-5000. **Open** 9:30am–12:30pm & 3–5pm Mon–Fri. camara.cl

In 1988, General Pinochet was obliged to return the country to democracy after 14 years of dictatorship (see p52). In doing

so, he chose Valparaíso, rather than Santiago, as the seat of the country's new National Congress. Two years later, the starkly modern Congreso Nacional building was inaugurated. The structure has met with divided opinion since its construction – some see it as a powerful symbol of democracy and of decentralized political power, while others question its aesthetic appeal. Tours of its halls and salons guide visitors through the rich allegory and symbolism of this building's architecture. The tours, in Spanish and English, cover the National Senate, the Deputy chambers, and the Salón de Honor – the ceremonial hall where international statesmen including Mikhail Gorbachev and Bill Clinton, former Russian and US presidents respectively, have addressed dignitaries.

⑩ Iglesia y Convento de San Francisco

Blanco Viel s/n, Cerro Barón. **City Map** F3. **Tel** (032) 2225-8735. **Open** 9am–1pm & 4–8:30pm Tue, Wed, Fri & Sat; 7am–10pm Thu, 9am–2pm Sun.

Established in 1846, the Iglesia San Francisco is one of Chile's most impressive examples of redbrick architecture. The

The Trolebuses

Valparaíso's fleet of electric *trolebuses* was imported from the US between 1946 and 1952, and includes the world's oldest trolleybuses still in service. Under the Pinochet regime, trolleybus systems deteriorated as funds for government-run transportation were cut. In 1982, some of the city's businessmen acquired the assets for the *trolebuses*, and then completely renovated them. Today, these vehicles ply between Avenida Argentina and Edificio de la Aduana (see p124). Extremely low on noise and air pollution, they offer an easy and charming way to see the city.



Green trolebuses waiting for passengers on Avenida Argentina



Towering steeple crowning the Iglesia y Convento de San Francisco

church, designated a national monument in 1983, features an ornate façade topped with a distinct, rising bell tower, which used to be illuminated at night to guide ships to Valparaíso's port. The interior of the church is a study in beautiful simplicity, comprising modest whitewashed walls and a Spanish-tiled floor beneath an arched, dark-wood ceiling.

Entered from the side of the church, the Convento de San Francisco was established as a boarding house for visiting priests. In 2013, as both church and convent were undergoing a restoration, a fire struck the site, setting the work back for several years. Bids for reconstruction are still being considered.

Funiculars of Valparaíso

Valparaíso's funiculars are the cheapest, easiest, and most fun way of traveling between the city's residential hillsides and the port and financial districts of its El Plan (Lower Town). An antique form of transport, the funiculars were introduced between 1883 and 1912. Fifteen of the original 20 still survive, though only nine are currently in service. They rattle up and down Valparaíso's steep hills past dense rows of houses and spill out on to dramatic promenades with beautiful city and ocean vistas. Many also access historic sights and tourist attractions, and together the funiculars themselves constitute a national historical monument.



Steep staircases accompanying the track of Ascensor Cordillera



Ascensor Concepción was Valparaíso's first funicular. Very popular with visitors, its wooden cars connect the financial district with Cerro Concepción, a hillside of historical buildings, narrow alleyways, and hotels and restaurants. The funicular spills out on to the romantic Paseo Gervasoni promenade and its gorgeous vistas.



Ascensor Polanco is a wonderful curiosity. It is one of three urban elevators in the world whose ascent is totally vertical. It is accessed via a 500-ft (150-m) long tunnel, and rises 262 ft (80 m) through a yellow wooden tower to an upper station that is connected by a footbridge to Cerro Polanco.

Ascensor Espiritu Santo

Connects the city center with colorful Cerro Bellavista. Like all of Valparaíso's funiculars, it was once powered by steam and coal and now runs on electricity. Its upper station opens on to the Museo a Cielo Abierto and also provides easy access to the La Sebastiana museum.



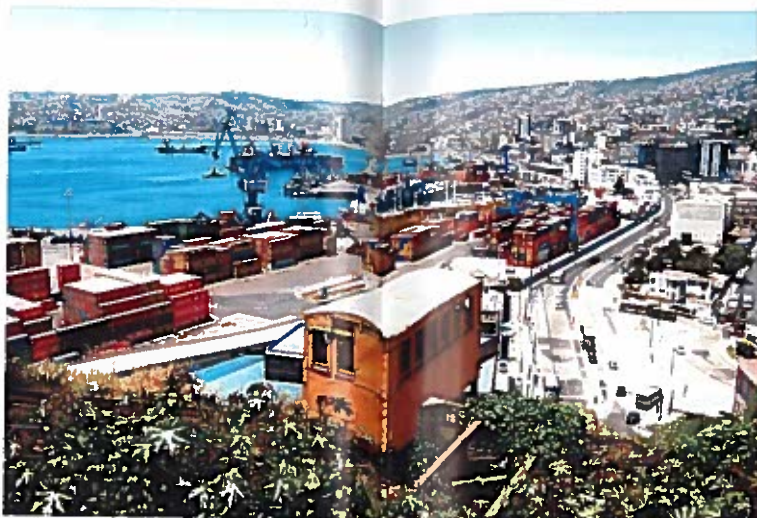
Ascensor Barón climbs Cerro Barón on the eastern side of Valparaíso. It has the city's largest wooden cars and its first electric motors. Its upper station house is home to a small museum.



Ascensor El Peral is one of the busiest funiculars, linking Plaza Sotomayor with the hotels and restaurants of Cerro Alegre. The funicular spills out on to the picturesque Paseo Yugoslavo promenade.

Ascensor Artillería

This funicular's wooden cars climb and descend parallel tracks between the port area near Edificio de la Aduana and Cerro Artillería. At the hilltop, a Victorian promenade offers fantastic port views, and the former machinist's house contains a museum and the *Café Arte Mirador*. From a window table in the café, it is possible to watch the giant wheels of the funicular turning.



Ascensor Reina Victoria is one of the city's steepest funiculars and an access point to the colorful Cerro Concepción and Cerro Alegre.



The Funiculars

- ① Ascensor Villaseca
- ② Ascensor Artillería
- ③ Ascensor Cordillera
- ④ Ascensor San Agustín
- ⑤ Ascensor El Peral
- ⑥ Ascensor Concepción
- ⑦ Ascensor Reina Victoria
- ⑧ Ascensor Espiritu Santo
- ⑨ Ascensor Florida
- ⑩ Ascensor Mariposas
- ⑪ Ascensor Monjas
- ⑫ Ascensor Polanco
- ⑬ Ascensor Larrain
- ⑭ Ascensor Lecheros
- ⑮ Ascensor Barón