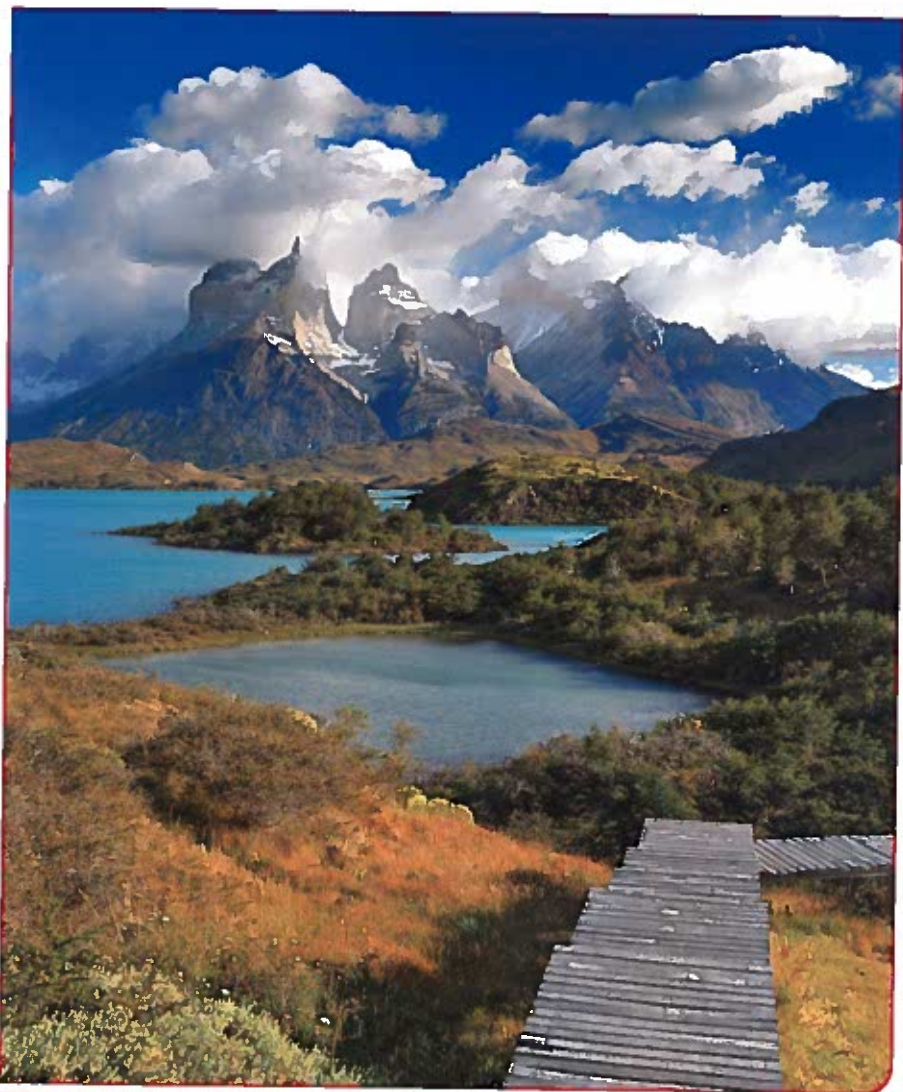


# CHILE & EASTER ISLAND

735  
photographs

65  
detailed maps

20  
illustrations



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**Picture Researcher** Shweta Andrews

**Contributors** Wayne Bernhardtson, Declan McGarvey, Kristina Schreck

**Photographers** Demetrio Carrasco, Nigel Hicks

**Illustrators** Chinglamba Chingtham, Surat Kumar Mantoo,  
Arun Pottiyail, T. Gautam Trivedi

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Front cover main image: Lake Pehoe and the peaks of Cuernos del Paine, Torres del Paine National Park

◀ Vineyards in Chile's Colchagua Valley



Sewell, a UNESCO World Heritage Site

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Casa Museo Isla Negra



## A PORTRAIT OF CHILE AND EASTER ISLAND

A narrow sliver of land on the western edge of South America, Chile is an area of diverse natural beauty, a model of economic prosperity, a politically stable nation, and an emerging paradise for wine connoisseurs. Isolated from the mainland by the Pacific, Easter Island enthalls with its iconic *moai* and Polynesian heritage.

Extending over 39 degrees of latitude, Chile embraces a stunning variety of terrain, from the world's driest desert to the ice fields of Patagonia and Antarctica. However, most of this area is unsettled, with the majority of Chile's 16.3 million inhabitants living in the sprawling capital of Santiago and in a handful of other urban centers. A part of Chilean territory, Easter Island is the most remote place on the globe to be populated; its few thousand inhabitants live in the small capital town of Hanga Roa.

Evidence of human presence in Chile dates from as far back as 13,000 BC, and until the 15th century numerous indigenous groups flourished here. The following centuries saw the Spanish conquest of Chile and an influx of

immigrants from Europe. The Mapuche, who number about 1.5 million, are the largest indigenous group; there are also far smaller and more isolated groups of Aymara, Rapa Nui, and other peoples.

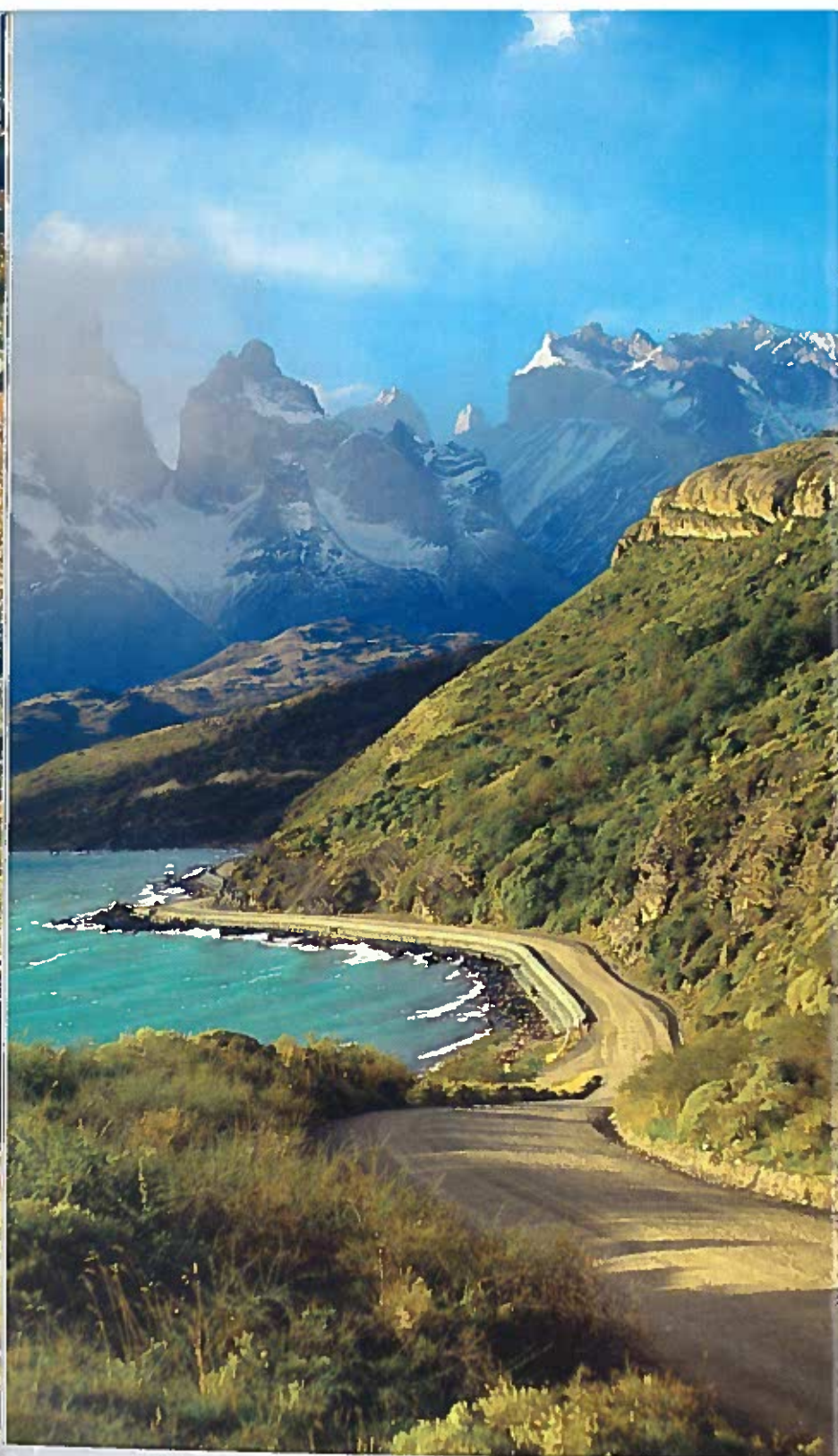
Modern-day Chile has emerged as Latin America's safest country and has excellent tourist facilities. It offers an incredible range of activities, from skiing down volcano slopes and hiking through rain forest to surfing and wildlife-watching. Chile's many vibrant festivals offer an insight into the nation's rich cultural heritage.

Chile's southern hemisphere location makes it, at comparable latitudes, a near mirror image of the North American West Coast, with activities such as hiking and surfing taking place here in the northern hemisphere's winter.



Moai atop the Ahu Tautira platform near Hanga Roa's pier, Easter Island

◀ Lago Pehoe with the Los Cuernos peaks in the background, Torres del Paine National Park







Llamas in the vicinity of Volcán Pomerape and Volcán Parímacota, at Parque Nacional Lauca

### Land and Nature

Chile's natural spaces are extensive given the lack of dense human population. The northern third of the country is the arid Atacama desert, known for its otherworldly landscapes. It is bordered on the south by the Mediterranean Central Valley, Chile's agricultural belt, and the rain forests, lakes, and snowcapped volcanoes of the Lake District. Farther south, the land breaks to form the many fjords, granite peaks, and awe-inspiring glaciers of Patagonia.

The natural wealth of this land supports the bulk of Chile's economy, with the result that industries such as mining, agriculture, and fishing have, till recently, taken precedence over conservation. On Easter Island, centuries of human intervention have destroyed the island's



Fishing boats docked at Hanga Roa, Easter Island

native forests and palm stands. Growing concern about threats to the ecology has spawned initiatives across Chile. Patagonia Sin Represas, for instance, opposes plans for hydroelectric plants in southern Chile. The Conservation Land Trust, founded by environmentalist Douglas Tompkins, promotes ecotourism and sustainable farming.

### Economy

Chile's economy stands out among its South American neighbors for its stability, minimal corruption, and overall health. Its foundations, interestingly, were laid during the Pinochet regime which replaced socialist economic policies with plans based on privatization, free market, and stable inflation. By the 1990s, Chile had experienced an economic boom

with a seven percent average annual growth. The country faced the 2008 economic slowdown with over US\$20 billion in a sovereign wealth fund, averting a major crisis.

A major exporter of minerals, Chile has emerged as the world's top copper producer, and the state-run Codelco is the largest copper mining agency on the globe. Thriving tourism, along with fishing and subsistence farming, is the backbone of Easter Island's economy.

Economic prosperity has brought about rapid development, reducing poverty. Chile's vast pay inequality, however, is still a problem, along with *pituto*, or nepotism, common even in the most modern corporations.

### Politics and Government

After years of military dictatorship, Chile has emerged as a strong democratic republic which operates under a constitution. The government comprises the executive, judiciary, and legislative branches, and is led by the president, who is both the head of state and head of government. The country itself consists of 15 administrative regions and the capital.

Annexed by the Chilean navy in 1888, Easter Island is a province of the Valparaíso region (Región V). Its residents were granted Chilean citizenship only in 1966, and in 2007, the island was recognized as a special territory of Chile.

### Sports and Arts

As in all Latin American countries, *fútbol* (soccer) is a national craze in Chile. Since the last few decades, the country has also made news in the field of tennis with international medal winners such as Nicolás Massú and Fernando González. Golf, skiing, and surfing are popular sports among Chileans. The rodeo remains a much-loved sport in the countryside.

Chile has produced a number of composers and musicians of international renown. While pianist Claudio Arrau remains unparalleled in the arena of classical music, acts such as Congreso and Los Jaivas have brought Chilean folklore into the limelight. Santiago's Teatro Municipal (see p73) is the country's foremost cultural institution and hosts world-class opera, symphony, and ballet performances. Chile boasts a rich and long-standing tradition of theater, which

is best reflected in the vibrant Festival Internacional Teatro a Mil.

Chile's key contribution, however, is in the field of literature. Chilean writers and poets have enjoyed worldwide acclaim, most notably the Nobel laureates Pablo Neruda and Gabriela Mistral.

### People and Society

There is a staggering contrast between urban and rural lifestyles in Chile. Santiago is known for its cosmopolitan finesse and

great cultural and culinary scene. While the new-age residents of this metropolis are fashionable and tech-savvy, many people in the countryside still cook over wood-burning stoves and plough their fields with oxen. Spanish is the official language, but some indigenous people speak their own languages. Christianity is the predominant religion, though folk religion remains important for many ethnic and rural groups. On Easter Island, religious practices reflect the syncretization of Christian and Polynesian beliefs. Overall, Chilean society is both tolerant and friendly.



The late Chilean pianist Claudio Arrau (1903–91)



Flags flutter over Plaza de la Constitución, Santiago



## Landscape and Wildlife

Hemmed in by the towering Andes mountain range in the east, the Pacific Ocean in the west, a vast desert in the north, and thousands of islands and glaciers in the south, Chile incorporates a range of landscapes, from farmlands and forests to immense lakes and ice fields. A part of the geothermally active Pacific Ring of Fire, Chile is also home to a total of 36 live volcanoes and an abundance of thermal hot springs. Owing to its near isolation from the rest of the continent, much of the country's flora and fauna is endemic and is protected in numerous national (as well as some private) parks, reserves, and monuments.



Sparkling waters off the white sands of Playa Anakena, on Easter Island



### Plateau and Coastal Desert

Chile's desert is the driest in the world. It is composed largely of sand, salt basins, mineral-rich peaks, and volcanoes, interspersed with oases that are fed by aquifers. Near the coast, a Pacific fog known as *camanchaca* provides enough moisture for cacti, shrubs, and lichen.



**Chilean flamingoes** can be seen on the saline altiplano lakes searching for tiny crustaceans, whose carotenoids give the birds their pink color.

**Vicúñas**, the smallest of the camelids, graze in groups at high altitudes.



**The vizcacha** is a long-tailed, yellow and brown rodent, part of the chinchilla family. It feeds on vegetation and can frequently be seen at twilight, when it is most active.



### Central Valley

The flat, green valleys of central Chile are divided by the Andes and coastal mountains, and watered by rivers that descend from the Andes. The Mediterranean-like climate here is conducive to agriculture – mostly fruits and vegetables – and to wine production.



**The quisco** dominates the lower Andes and is one of the few cacti that can withstand cold and snow.



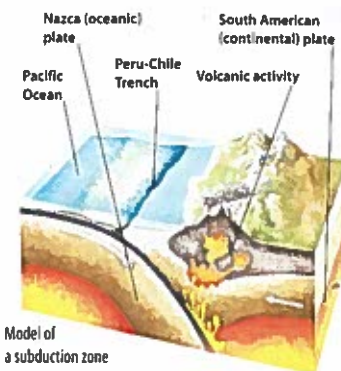
**The Chilean palm** has a smooth, gray trunk that is rotund in the middle or upper reaches.



**The Andean condor**, Chile's national bird, is one of the world's largest fowls, with a wingspan of over 9 ft (3 m).

## Tectonic Activity

The towering Andes mountain range and the hundreds of volcanoes that make up the spine of Chile are the result of plate tectonics: the movement of interlocking plates of the earth's crust that ride on molten material (magma) in the mantle. Along the Chilean coast, the Nazca plate and the South American plate collide and create a subduction zone, whereby the Nazca plate is forced under the South American plate, creating the Peru-Chile Trench. As one of the fastest-moving plates, the Nazca is capable of triggering spectacular earthquakes, such as the 8.8-magnitude quake that struck central Chile in February 2010, and the 9.5-magnitude earthquake in Valdivia in 1960, the strongest recorded in the world.



### Lake District and Chiloé

The lush Lake District is characterized by snowcapped volcanoes, crystalline lakes and rivers, emerald farmland, and dense Valdivian rain forest. It is home to the alerce, the second-oldest tree on the planet, and the nalca, whose leaves can reach 7 ft (2 m) in diameter.

**Copihue**, or the Chilean bell flower, is a waxy red flower which grows in twisted vines around trees and plants. It is Chile's national flower.



**The pudú** is the world's smallest deer, reaching just 33 inches (85 cm) in length. It lives in the dense underbrush of temperate rain forests.

**Monkey-puzzle** or *araucaria*, is an evergreen conifer whose branches and razor-sharp leaves take on an umbrella shape.



### Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego

The windswept pampa grassland of Patagonia forms part of a region packed with granite peaks, glacier fields, fjords, and sheep ranches known as *estancias*. Adventure-seekers come here for trekking, fly-fishing, and mountain climbing in dramatic, untamed wilderness.

**The guanaco**, a camelid, exists in robust populations in the wild and can be spotted throughout Patagonia.



**Pumas** are agile animals with an exceptional leaping ability. These elusive cats can usually only be seen when feeding on a fresh kill.

**The huemul**, or South Andean deer, is an endangered species that is shy, solitary, and stocky, with large ears and short legs.





## The Biodiversity of Chile

A paradise for nature lovers, Chile has a varied landscape which supports a wealth of flora and fauna. The country's rich natural heritage is protected through 36 national parks, 49 national reserves, and 16 national monuments – about 20 percent of the total national territory. Chile is considered a “continental island” because it is isolated from neighboring countries by the Andes mountains, the Pacific Ocean, and the arid Atacama desert. As a result, more than half of its flora is endemic. This is especially true of southern Chile's Valdivian forest, South America's only temperate rain forest, which extends into parts of Argentina. In regrettable contrast, most of Easter Island's native forests and fauna have disappeared as a result of many centuries of human activity.



**Robinson Crusoe Island** (see pp268–9), through geological isolation, has produced a hothouse of endemic flora that represents two-thirds of the island's vegetation and the highest density of endemic plants in the world. The island has been a UNESCO-designated World Biosphere Reserve since 1997. However, botanists fear that the introduction of alien plant species now threatens the island's ecosystem.

### Unsurpassed Delights

Chile's microclimates, geographical isolation, and varying topography offer visitors a chance to experience contrasting landscapes and myriad flora within short distances. Rare phenomena, such as the coastal *camanchaca*, a fog that feeds vegetation in the otherwise barren northern desert, are examples of the country's unique biodiversity. In addition, Chile's growing interest in nature conservation has boosted animal populations throughout the country, and several private foundations have established reserves to encourage the expansion of Chile's protected areas and preserve its unique flora and fauna.



The arid Atacama explodes with wildflowers after a (rare) period of rain. This phenomenon is known as the Desierto Florido (see p185).



The firecrown hummingbird, an endemic and dimorphic species of Robinson Crusoe Island, is one of the rarest birds in the world.

#### Key

- Fertile lowland
- Scrubland
- Evergreen forest
- Grassland, with some scrub
- Barren warm or cold desert



0 km 300  
0 miles 300

## Valdivian Forest



**Parque Nacional Lauca** (see pp168–9) is northern Chile's hot spot for viewing fauna. It has large representations of the country's four camelid species – alpaca, guanaco, llama, and vicuña – over 140 species of birds, and unusual fauna such as the vizcacha, a relative of the chinchilla.

**Parque Nacional La Campana** (see p139) is home to the magnificent *Nothofagus obliqua*. This tree is the northernmost representation of the 10 *Nothofagus*, or southern beech, species of Chile.

**Parque Nacional Alerce Andino** (see p217) harbors large stands of the coniferous alerce, which date to over 3,500 years. This area is part of the Valdivian rain forest belt, where one-third of the plant species are remnants of the Gondwana supercontinent.



### Whale Conservation

The waters off Chile's shores are home to over half the world's whale species. Indeed, Herman Melville's masterpiece *Moby Dick* was based on a giant albino sperm whale, Mocha Dick, that harassed ships near Chile's Isla Mocha in the 19th century. Fresh sightings of the humpback, blue, and southern right whales in recent times signal the comeback of a mammal once nearly hunted into extinction. Several non-profit associations have formed to study whale behavior, and in 2008, the Chilean government designated all national waters a whale sanctuary. Chile is poised to become one of the world's greatest whale-watching destinations, and growing interest has spawned new opportunities to see these magnificent creatures.



**Isla Magdalena** (see p251) hosts nesting colonies of Magellanic penguins from November to March each year. The largest temperate-climate penguin, members of this species share parental responsibilities equally and can be seen marching comically in single file from their nesting burrows to the sea in the morning and afternoon.



A breaching humpback whale



## Peoples of Chile and Easter Island

According to studies at the archaeological site of Monte Verde in southern Chile, the first inhabitants of this country arrived around 13,000 years ago. Over the following centuries, these nomadic tribes populated the length of Chile, either as land hunters or fisherfolk, and they eventually became settled farmers and herders. From the 16th century onward, Chile experienced sporadic immigration at intervals – first the Spaniards and later German, Swiss, English, Croatian, and Italian arrivals. Today, the majority of the 16.3 million Chileans are mestizo – people of mixed ethnic and European ancestry. Indigenous people are a minority, with a total population of roughly 1.75 million.



Mapuche silver jewelry includes a pectoral pendant known as a *trapelocucha*.

A *makuñ* is a colorful, finely woven poncho worn by Mapuche men and boys.

Many Mapuche live in the Lake District, often on *reducciones*, or reservations, where they are engaged in a battle to repatriate land taken by settlers or the government over the last centuries.

The Aymara is Chile's second-largest ethnic group, with around 100,000 members. They live in Chile's northern desert and depend on the llama and alpaca for meat, wool, and cargo transportation. Their native language is also known as Aymara.

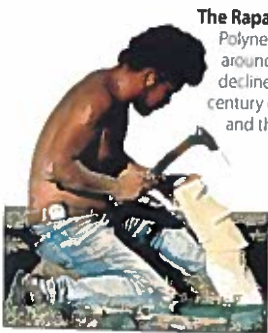


Aymara dancers in bright fiesta clothing in Arica

### Indigenous Chileans

Chile was the last country to be conquered by the Spanish, yet what remains of Chile's indigenous groups today represents about 11 percent of the population. The principal indigenous group is the Mapudungun-speaking Mapuche, with about 1.5 million members, or 84 percent of the total indigenous population. Just nine of Chile's original 14 indigenous groups remain, and several have only very few members.

The Rapa Nui are descendants of the Polynesians who arrived on Easter Island around AD 1200. Their population declined greatly during the 19th century due to war, famine, and sickness, and they number about 6,000 today.



Fueglians encompass the indigenous groups that existed in Tierra del Fuego and Patagonia. A few, such as the Selk'nam, are now nearly extinct, while others, such as the Yaghan, have been reduced to a handful.



### Immigrants

While Chile did not witness mass immigration, European settlers did play a major role in shaping the culture, architecture, and cuisine of regions such as the Lake District and Patagonia. Valparaíso, during its heyday in the 1800s, was a cosmopolitan center, with settlers from England, Italy, Ireland, and Germany each stamping their unique identity in the distinct neighborhoods they created.



German and Swiss immigrants arrived in the mid-19th century as part of the Law of Selective Immigration. The law, introduced in 1845, sought to populate the Lake District with people whom the Chilean government considered to be of a high social and cultural status. A sculpture in Puerto Montt commemorates the immigration.



Croatians came to Chile for economic opportunity in the latter part of the 19th century and settled in Patagonia, specifically in modern-day Parvenir and Punta Arenas. Today, one in four residents in the region is of Croatian descent.

### Mestizos and Non-Indigenous Chileans

Although the majority of Chileans are mestizo, each region in Chile displays well-defined cultural styles. These distinct traditions have been heavily influenced by the various immigrant communities that settled throughout the country.



The Roma community in Chile lives in the Central Valley. This semi-nomadic group, originally from Europe, is recognized by their long, colorful skirts and their tent settlements on the outskirts of towns.



A *bolina* is a knitted beret that often features a pompon tassel.

Comfortable baggy pants are well-suited for rough outdoor chores.

Tough working boots are sometimes topped with homemade leather gaiters.

Baqueanos are Patagonian ranch hands who are entrusted to herd sheep and cattle. They are identified by their distinct attire.

Chilotes, people of the Chiloé archipelago, consider themselves distinct from their mainland compatriots, and speak with a clear regional accent. Most Chilotes have a mix of Spanish, Chono and Huilliche ancestry.



### Huascos

Residing mainly in the Central Valley, huascos are Chilean cowboys who roam the countryside on their horses. The earliest huascos lived and worked on large Colonial ranches. Today, members of this community are identifiable by their straw hats and ponchos, and many are adept horsemen. Over the years, huascos have become central to Chilean folkloric culture and they play an integral role in most parades and celebrations, particularly Fiestas Patrias, where they perform the cueca (see p28). They also sing the tonada (see p29), a folk song that is accompanied by a guitar.



A huasco on horseback rounding up sheep



## Music and Dance

Chile's lively music and dance scene mirrors the diversity of its cultural traditions. International contemporary music appeals to the majority of the urban population, while rural citizens favor folkloric music derived from the Nueva Canción Chilena (New Chilean Song) era, as well as Latin music from Argentina and Mexico. In northern Chile, folk styles such as the *sajuriana* and *cachimbo* are popular. Chile's national dance is the *cueca*, which appeared in the early 1800s. It originated in Spain and is thought to be the evolution of a creole fusion of Spanish, Arab, and African influences.

### Dance

Chilean dance is conventionally associated with the folkloric *cueca*, which mimics the courtship of the rooster and hen. The dance is generally performed during the *Fiestas Patrias* celebrations (see pp36-7), when participants turn out in ceremonial dress.



Traditionally attired men appear in striped ponchos, flat-brimmed *sombreros*, and boots with spurs.

Women in ceremonial dress wear long, brightly colored skirts with sashes and jackets.

Waving a handkerchief, female dancers respond coyly to their suitors.

The traditional *cueca*, danced primarily at *Fiestas Patrias*, is much loved in rural areas. The *cueca chora* or *brava* is the urban equivalent, with lyrics that are more associated with city life. The *cueca* in *Chiloé* (see pp218-25) is distinct in that the vocalist has a more important role than the musicians.

### Traditional Music

Chilean music owes much to its indigenous traditions and folklore. Among this diversity, Andean music is characterized by lyrics that allude to spirits of the earth, nature, and mountains. Also founded on harmony with nature, Mapuche music follows melodic patterns and ancestral rhythms that are transmitted orally. The Rapa Nui people of Easter Island base their music on Polynesian rhythms that have been influenced by Latin sounds and cadences. Chile is also rich in folkloric music, which is derived from indigenous forms that have been heavily influenced by European music.

The *trutruka* is a trumpet used in Mapuche music.



The *kultrun* is designed with symbols representing the cosmic structure.

The Mapuche define rhythms as *kantun* (instrumental) or *öl* (ceremonial). Their instruments include the *kultrun*, a drum made of wood and leather, and the *trutruka*, a trumpet made of bamboo and a cow horn. Rich and melodious, the sound reflects close contact with nature.



Rapa Nui music comprises chanting and singing to instruments such as the *kauaha* (made from the jaw bone of a horse), drums, and accordions. Often, families form a choir and compete in annual contests.

### Contemporary Sounds

In the 1980s, urban music was associated with politics. *Los Prisioneros* was Chile's most popular band, along with *Fiskales*, *Ad Hok* and *Electrodomésticos*. Today, rock, pop, classical, jazz, and hip hop can be heard in all major urban centers.



Classical and jazz music both have ample audience in Chile, which has produced important composers and conductors. Claudia Acuña is Chile's best-known jazz performer, while Claudio Arrau was one of the 20th century's foremost pianists.

Chilean rock band *La Ley* have achieved international stardom, as have the rock group *Los Tres*. Other modern pop and rock bands include *Los Bunkers*, *Lucybell*, *Chancho en Piedra*, and *Javiera y Los Imposibles*.



### Nueva Canción Chilena

The nation's most influential contribution to Latin American music is the Nueva Canción Chilena. The genre arose in the early 1960s and is based on Andean rhythms. Its original artists wrote lyrics that focused on social justice for native cultures and those persecuted under the Pinochet dictatorship. Musicians Victor Jara and Violeta Parra were pioneers who disseminated the genre throughout Latin America, and influenced popular Chilean bands such as *Inti-Illimani* and *Los Jaivas*.



Musician Victor Jara (1932-73)



Cumbia, a music genre that originated in Colombia, has been very popular among the working classes across Latin America. The lyrics often tackle issues such as life, love, and troubles, and its tinny rhythm is popular for dancing at weddings and parties. The best-known local band is *La Sonora Palacios*.



Andean music originated in the high plateau areas of the Andes and is instantly recognizable by the sound of *quena* flutes, pan pipes, and *charango* lutes.



Bombo legüero, an Andean skin drum



Zampoña, a pan pipe made of bamboo

The melodic *tonada* is similar to the *cueca* except that it is not danced. It arose in Spain and shows Arab and Andalusian influences. Popular Chilean groups include the *Huastos Quincheros*.



A 10-string *charango* lute

Folklore instruments such as the pan flute and *quena* (a traditional six-hole bamboo flute) are the essentials of Andean music, and are often combined with the *charango* lute and violin.



## Literature, Theater, and Cinema

Chile is called a nation of poets, and has been the home of literary giants throughout its history. Among the early writers are such names as Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga (1533–94) and Francisco Núñez de Pineda y Bascuñán (1607–82). In the last few centuries, Chile has produced two Nobel laureates and many novelists and playwrights of international renown. Since the end of Pinochet's dictatorship era, artists in literature, theater, and cinema have delved into subjects that address modern themes and come to terms with the turmoil of Chile's past.



Spanish cover of Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits*

### Literature

Chile's earliest literary works, dating from the 16th century, mostly relate tales of conquest and colonialism. Prominent in this genre are the Spanish nobleman Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga's poem *La Araucana*, describing the Spanish conquest of Chile, and Francisco Núñez de Pineda's *Cautiverio Feliz*, a chronicle of his capture by Mapuches. Such early works tended to romanticize the events they described.

Literature in the 19th and 20th centuries witnessed a turn toward more realistic works. Santiago-born Alberto Blest Gana (1830–1920) is considered the father of the Chilean novel for his authentic portrayal of Chilean history and life in his *Martín Rivas* (1862). In

the 20th century, Chile became a major player in the Latin American literary boom, producing influential poets such as Vicente Huidobro (1893–1948), a leading figure in the emergence of avant-garde poetry in the Hispanic world. Huidobro created an experimental verse called Creationism, which sought to bring to life experiences and themes through word play. His 1931 poem "Altazor" was written while he was in Europe, and it became a part of that continent's avant-garde movement. Other prominent 20th-century poets include Nobel laureates Gabriela Mistral and Pablo Neruda (see p91), whose works centered on themes of love and politics respectively. During the second half of the 20th

### Gabriela Mistral

Latin America's first Nobel Prize winner, Gabriela Mistral (1889–1957) was a teacher and feminist turned poet, with a unique and lyrical voice that spoke of love and betrayal, life and death, and the



Gabriela Mistral receiving the Nobel Prize in 1954

Latin American experience. In poetical works such as *Ternura* and *Desolación*, Mistral, born Lucila Godoy Alcayaga, spent much of her adult life outside Chile, as a consul in Spain, France, Italy, and the US, and as a professor in Mexico, and in Vassar College and Barnard University in New York. Mistral was of mixed Amerindian and Basque origin, and celebrated the mestizo race in *Tala*, her second collection of poems that contemplated the blend of Latin American and European culture.



Antonio Skármeta, a Chilean writer exiled during the dictatorship years

century, the forerunners of Chile's burgeoning literature scene included Nicanor Parra (b.1914), a self-described "anti-poet," who shunned traditional poetic styles and was a major influence on the 1950s' American Beat writers.

The Pinochet dictatorship spawned several major works by exiled writers such as Luis Sepúlveda (b.1949), Antonio Skármeta (b.1940), José Donoso (1924–96), and Isabel Allende (b.1943), many of them writing on themes of exile and loss. A prominent writer of novels such as *The House of the Spirits*, Allende was an exponent of Latin America's Magical Realism movement that blended seemingly normal situations with an element of fantasy.

Magic Realism lost favor in the 1990s with the rise of the Nueva Narrativa Chilena (New Chilean Narrative). The term, coined by writer Jaime Collyer (b.1955), defined the post-dictatorship era and Chile's introduction to consumerism

and globalization. This movement produced writers including Gonzalo Contreras and Alberto Fuguet, whose stories such as "Mas Estrellas Que en el Cielo" dispel the notions of Magic Realism. The literary rebel Roberto Bolaño (1953–2003) was the posthumous winner of 2009's National Book Critics Circle Award for his epic novel *2666*.

### Theater

Theater appeared in the late 19th century as mostly amateur productions of European plays, and comedies and dramas based on daily Chilean life. However, the founding of the Teatro Experimental in the late 1930s by the Universidad de Chile established theater as a powerful and socially relevant art form. The subsequent sprouting of theater houses across Chile spawned a boom in productions ranging from folkloric themes to the popular European-origin drama form, the Theater of the Absurd.

By the 1960s and 1970s, political radicalization propelled dramatists to bring theater to the masses. A complete censorship of media during the 1970s and 1980s led to the emergence of the dramatic arts as society's way of discussing grievances. The Actus Theater Group, one of the longest-running companies in Chile, played a prominent role in pushing theater's boundaries with plays such as *Andrés of La Victoria* (1985), the plot of which centered around a priest killed by military police. In the late 1980s, the Gran Circo Teatro produced *La Negra Ester*, by Andrés Pérez, that became the most artistically and commercially successful play in Chilean history. The masked performance was based on a popular love tragedy, and signaled a departure from most contemporary drama based on social criticism.

Today, Santiago has dozens of independent and state-sponsored theater houses, including the venerable Teatro Municipal (see p73), the Teatro Nacional, San Ginés, and Universidad Católica, all of which host performances from classical to cutting-edge. Theater takes center stage with the annual Festival Internacional Teatro a Mil (see p39), which features myriad theatrical performances in cultural centers, theaters, and city streets.



Poster of *La Negra Ester* playing at Teatro Oriente, Santiago, in 2009

### Cinema

The Chilean film industry dates from the early 20th century; its first black-and-white movie, *The Development of a People*, dates from 1920. Cinema flourished in the 1940s with the founding of the studio Chile Films, but declined until a short revival in the 1960s. During this decade filmmakers combined shades

of experimental European cinema and Chilean culture to create art house and national classics. Films of this genre included Patricio Kaulén's *Long Journey* (1967) and Miguel Littín's *The Jackal of Nahueltoro* (1969). Littín later became the subject of Gabriel García Márquez's book *Clandestine in Chile* (1986). In 1968, the unconventional director Raúl Ruiz (1941–2011) produced the cult classic *Tres Tristes Tigres*, based on Chilean society.

The dictatorship stifled creative filmmaking and exiled cinematic artists, as a result of which just seven films were made in over a decade. The return to democracy led to cinema's comeback with a new wave of Chilean filmmaking.

Today, Chile produces a dozen films a year and receives nominations at international film festivals. In 2005, *Mi Mejor Enemigo* (My Best Enemy) by Alex Bowen entered the competition at the Cannes Film Festival after winning the best Spanish-language film at Spain's Goya awards. Other films to have garnered international publicity include *Tony Manero* (2008) by Pablo Larraín, a bleak portrayal of marginality during the 1970s; *The Maid* (2008) by Sebastián Silva, which won the Sundance Festival's World Cinema Jury Prize; and *No* (2012), starring Gael García Bernal, which deals with the transition to democracy in 1989.



Still from the classic art house film *The Jackal of Nahueltoro* (1969)



## Chilean Art and Architecture

Pre-Colonial art in Chile chiefly comprised rock art, of which northern Chile has fine examples. In the Colonial era, both art and architecture were initially influenced by Spanish cultural and ecclesiastical elements. With the influx of immigrants from other European countries in the 19th century, techniques and designs diversified and each region showed trademark styles of the groups that settled there. Today, Chile is among the world's most architecturally prolific countries and has a thriving art scene.



The massive Gigante de Atacama geoglyph in northern Chile



Mapuche textiles woven in traditional geometric patterns

### Art

While pre-Hispanic art in Chile reached a level of sophistication, Colonial-era art was limited to portraits and landscapes of criollo life. Today, however, with the integration of immigrant groups into society and the freedom of post-dictatorship Chile, the art world is giving rise to international stars, and Santiago alone is home to dozens of cultural centers and galleries.

### Indigenous and Colonial Art

Chile's northern desert and altiplano region has some of the world's largest collections of petroglyphs and geoglyphs, including the 400-ft (121-m) high Gigante de Atacama. Colonial art in Chile did not exhibit complexity, other than the Rococo-style sculptures, paintings, and silverwork produced in the Jesuit workshops of Calera de Tango in the early 1700s. Mapuche silverwork is also remarkable in its intricacy.



Vessel shaped to resemble a bird

Ornate silver croziers and monstrances were among the popular ecclesiastical artifacts crafted by skilled Jesuits in the 16th century.



Ceramic pottery in animistic and geometric designs, metalwork, and textile weaving were among the traditional crafts of the Diaguita culture (300 BC–AD 1500) in northern Chile.

### Contemporary Art

The nation's artistic scene blossomed with the inauguration of Santiago's Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (see p75) in 1880. Renowned artists of that time were Fernando Alvarez de Sotomayor and Arturo Gordon, whose works depicted Chilean life. Among contemporary Chilean artists are Surrealist painter Roberto Matta and Hyperrealist Claudio Bravo.



*Absent Feet* by Eugenio Dittborn (b.1943) is part of his "Airmail Paintings" series, which could be folded up and sent via post to the location of the exhibition.



*Paisaje Lo Contador* is a well-known canvas by Arturo Gordon, a member of the Generación del Trece group of artists who depicted the lives of the common man, a rare subject in the early 1900s.

### Architecture

Chilean architecture is a potpourri of a number of influences. In the early decades of colonization, Chilean towns were modeled after Spanish towns, with a central square surrounded by a cathedral and government buildings with large patios, bare walls, and wrought-iron gates. In the 20th century, Santiago's nouveau riche built their houses to resemble European Neo-Classical mansions. Modern Chileans have adapted North American bungalows, skyscrapers, and malls that reflect the country's economic boom over the past 20 years.



Colonnaded passageway bordering the yard at Convento de San Francisco (see p72), Santiago

### Colonial

Much of the country's Colonial architecture has succumbed to earthquakes, with the exception of a few 17th-century churches in the desert north and a handful of haciendas in the Central Valley.



The Iglesia San Francisco de Chiu-Chiu (see p174) is Chile's oldest church. Its twin bell towers, chañar-wood ceilings, and whitewashed walls are characteristic of 17th-century adobe churches in the Atacama.



The Casa Colorada (see p63), named for its rose-tinted walls, is built of brick and stone around a central patio.

### Neo-Classical

Triangular pediments, hefty columns, and domed roofs are quintessential elements of government buildings in Santiago, and are evidence of the city's preference for Neo-Classical architecture during the 19th century.



Palacio de La Moneda (see p68) is the best example of 19th-century Neo-Classical structures found in the capital. Opened as the mint in 1805, the building became the presidential palace in 1845.

### Vernacular

Over the centuries, Chileans have constructed their buildings with local resources and according to climatic needs. In some cases, the influence of European immigrants is also visible – Valparaíso, for example, is noted for its Victorian-style buildings.



*Estancias* in Patagonia are low-slung ranches encircled with cypresses or pines, which provide protection against the region's howling winds.

### Wooden shingles

dominate the German-styled homes in the Lake District and prevent the rain from seeping in.



Chiloé's *palafitos* (see p221), built during a wave of strong commercial expansion in the 19th century, enabled fishermen to live closer to the sea.



## Sports in Chile

Conventional sports such as soccer, tennis, and rodeo are Chile's favorite pastimes. However, extreme sports are quickly gaining popularity given the country's wealth of destinations suited to such activities. Chile's numerous rivers are formidable challenges for white-water rafting and kayaking, while well-designed trails and challenging peaks draw trekkers to national parks, and the desert regions attract a growing number of mountain-bikers. Hang gliding and helicopter skiing are other adrenaline-fueled activities on offer.



### Soccer

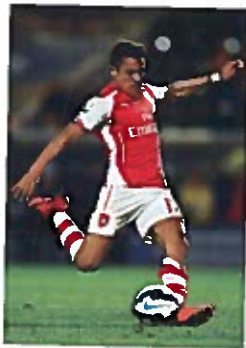
The nation's most popular sport, soccer is played by Chileans of all ages and social classes. The sport was introduced in Valparaíso by British immigrants who established the Federación de Fútbol de Chile in 1895.

The FIFA World Cup returned to South America after a 12 year interval, when it was held in Chile in 1962. The Chilean team, in official red, blue, and white, finished in third place.



Getting up close to glaciers using crampons and ropes

**Colo-Colo** is the only Chilean soccer team to have won the prestigious South American competition Copa Libertadores de América (in 1991). The team is named for a fierce Mapuche chief who fought against Spanish conquistadors.



**Alexis Sánchez** was one of the key players in Chile's squad as the country hosted, and won, the 2015 Copa América. He scored the winning penalty in the final against Argentina.

### Tennis

Generally an upper-class sport, tennis is most common at private clubs. Nicolás Massú and Fernando González, both now retired, won the gold medal at the 2004 Olympics in the doubles competition; however, no Chilean player ranks in the world's top 100 at present.



**Marcelo Ríos** was the first Latin American tennis player to rank number 1 in the world, in 1998.



**Fernando González's** impressive career includes the semifinals at the 2009 French Open, where he was pitted against the Swedish player Robin Söderling.



### Rodeo

Chile's national sport, the rodeo arose in the 16th century when cattle from haciendas were gathered together and branded as a means of identification. The stars of the rodeo are the huasos (cowboys), who skillfully steer their horses around a medialuna, or half-moon arena, and attempt to corral and pin a cow against the wall. The occasion calls for formal garb, which includes a poncho, wide-brimmed hat, leather leg protectors and pinwheel-sized spurs. Huasos compete in a number of annual rodeo events, the largest being the Campeonato Nacional de Rodeo, or National Championship of Chilean Rodeo, held in Rancagua (see p146).

Huasos use a number of deft maneuvers in their efforts to win the rodeo. This includes such moves as the sliding stop, which involves galloping sideways.

A **collera**, or two-man team, work to nudge a calf against a padded arena wall. The **collera** gains top points for pinning the rear of the calf.



US champion **Tyler Fox** was one of many big names to attend the 2008 Chile World Tow-In at Punta de Lobos surf break in Pichilemu. This week-long surf festival was one of the most extreme events ever held in the country.

### Skiing and Snowboarding

From mid-June to early October, skiers and snowboarders head to the Andes for world-class terrain, a relaxed ambience, and relatively short lift lines. The principal resorts are found in Chile's Central Valley (see pp118–59).



**Nevados de Chillán** (see p156), Valle Nevado, and Ski Portillo, Chile's top ski resorts, host many North American and European ski teams who come to train in summer.



The slopes of **Volcán Villarrica** (see p202), an active, smoking volcano, are popular with numerous professional snowboarders, notably Markku Koski from Finland.



## Fiestas Patrias

The most important holidays of the year, Fiestas Patrias (Patriotic Festivals) celebrate Chile's Independence Day, informally called the Dieciocho, on September 18, and Armed Forces Day on September 19. Chile's true independence came on February 12, 1818, but the formally recognized date honors the nation's first attempt at secession from Spain, on September 18, 1810. In the weeks leading up to the festival, the country comes together to celebrate all things Chilean, including regional culture, traditional food, and dance. Armed Forces Day is marked by a grand military parade in Santiago. Chileans decorate their town streets and fasten flags on vehicles in a show of nationalist pride, and it is common to see children dressed in traditional dresses and *huaso* suits.



The **fonda or ramada** is a temporary structure, erected as a party hall, which is made of either wooden poles and a thatched roof, or a circus-like tent. Nearly every town in Chile has its own fonda, featuring a stage for live bands, a dance area with just a dirt or sawdust floor, and beverage and food stands surrounded by tables and chairs.

### Traditional Food and Drink

The barbecue reigns during the patriotic holidays, often carrying on for days and shared among friends and family. Other emblematic foods define the holidays, most having arisen from the countryside.



**Chicha** is an alcoholic drink made from fermented fruit, most commonly apples or grapes, and produced toward the end of the summer. However, chicha is not commonly drunk outside of the Fiestas Patrias. Mapuches make a regional chicha using corn, called *muday*.



**Empanada** is a kind of turnover made with pastry dough and stuffed with *pino*, a mixture of beef, onions, half a boiled egg, raisins, and olives. The dish is then baked in a clay oven.



Chilean troops participating in a military parade



### Military Parade

The Armed Forces Day, also known as the *Día de las Glorias del Ejército* (Day of the Glories of the Military) was designated a holiday in 1915 to celebrate freedoms gained and victories won by Chile's military since the country's inception.



Over half a million spectators attend the parade, which is often accompanied by displays of the military's latest acquisitions in planes, war vehicles, and technological gadgetry.

The parade, held in Parque Bernardo O'Higgins (see p85) in Santiago, includes the army, navy, air force, and the police marching Prussian-style along a gigantic cement esplanade in the middle of the park. More than 7,000 troops participate.

The **cueca** (see p28), Chile's national dance, is a common sight during Fiestas Patrias. Women dress in flouncy, floral cotton dresses and men in black pants, spurs and boots, a wide-brimmed *huaso* hat, and a white jacket or poncho.



Rodeo contests take place throughout rural villages up and down the country during Fiestas Patrias. Chile's national sport, the rodeo attracts hordes of enthusiastic spectators to the *medialuna*, where such events are held.



Kite-flying is a hugely popular activity, especially as spring breezes rise over the festive weeks.



Anticucho, a dish of marinated and skewered meat

**Asados, or barbecues**, are synonymous with Fiestas Patrias. Popular items include the *anticucho*, a type of shish kabob, which dates back to the Incan empire. The barbecue usually starts off with a *charipán*, a sausage sandwiched in a piece of crusty bread and topped with *pebre*, a tomato and cilantro salsa.



**Piscola**, along with the *pisco sour*, is the popular cocktail of the day. A simple concoction of pisco, cola, and ice, it is a major party starter during Fiestas Patrias.



# THE HISTORY OF CHILE AND EASTER ISLAND

Despite Chile's isolation, its history is an epic one involving ancient settlements and empires. The country also played a role in the European age of exploration and colonization and created its own rich independence period. Equally complex is the history of Easter Island, which, owing largely to its seclusion in the remote South Pacific, is subject of much debate in modern times.

The first humans to reach the Americas were hunter-gatherers who crossed the Bering Strait via a land bridge. Although pinpointing the date of arrival is difficult, the immigration of these groups took place in waves over many thousands of years, the last one occurring some 10,000 years ago.

Evidence from excavations at Monte Verde, just north of Puerto Montt in the Lake District, show that the earliest human settlement in Chile may date from more than 13,000 years ago.

By 6000 BC, crops such as potatoes, squash, and beans had become the livelihood of the settled communities of Atacameño, Aymara, and Diaguita in the Atacama and foothills of the Andes. The Aymara also herded llamas and alpacas for meat and wool, bartering their goods with groups such as the Chango fisherfolk for products from the valleys and the coast. Farther south, the land was peopled by the Mapuche and the closely related Pewenche, Huilliche, and Puelche, all semi-sedentary agriculturalists who subsisted autonomously. In what is now Patagonia, the Chonos, Kawéskar, and Yámana –

collectively known as Canoe Indians – lived off fish and shellfish from the fjords and channels along the Pacific coast and the Strait of Magellan. The Tehuelche hunted game on the Patagonian steppe, while the Selk'nam (Ona) were land-based hunters on the big island of the Tierra del Fuego archipelago.

Isolated from mainland Chile, Easter Island followed a separate trajectory of events, and its history is today a controversial subject. The first settlers arrived about 1,000 years ago from eastern Polynesia to what was then a densely forested island. Their descendants forged a complex society, best remembered by the iconic statues known as *moai* found at various locations around the island. However, the construction of the *moai*, coupled with a fast-growing population that reached unsustainable levels, deforested the island and led to clan warfare and the eventual collapse of this society. The arrival of the Europeans and, later, the island's annexation by Chile suppressed (but failed to dislodge) a culture that is now beginning to reclaim its status.

13,000 BC Establishment of Monte Verde, Chile's first-known settlement



Depiction of the settlement at Monte Verde

1000 Polynesian settlers arrive on Easter Island

14,000 BC

AD 1

400

800

AD 1200

6000 BC Cultivation of crops such as potatoes, beans, and squash in the central Andes

Moai on Ahu Akivi, Easter Island, dating from c. 1000–1600



◀ José de San Martín and Bernardo O'Higgins at the end of Chile's struggle for independence, April 5, 1818





La Fundación de Santiago, Pedro Lira's painting of Valdivia founding the city

## The Incan Empire

During the 15th century, the Incas, the best known of the central Andean empires, extended their power southward up to the latitude of present-day Santiago, reaching a maximum extent around AD 1438. However, their control over peripheral areas, including modern-day Chile, was precarious, depending upon cooperation and tribute from various peoples. Intrigues within the empire, following the death of the emperor Huayna Capac (c.1527), led to a civil war that paved the way for the invading Spaniards.

## Exploration and Colonization

The voyages of Christopher Columbus (1451–1506) began an epoch of exploration and acquisition that brought most of what is now Latin America under Spanish control by the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas. In 1520, Ferdinand Magellan (1480–1521) became the first European to reach Tierra del Fuego and navigate the passage now



Spanish explorer Francisco Pizarro (c.1471–1541)

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known as the Strait of Magellan. In the 1530s, the Spaniard Francisco Pizarro and his brothers divided and conquered the Inca empire. Pizarro's partner and rival Diego de Almagro was the first to explore and try to take what is now Chile, in an overland expedition in 1535, but poor planning and logistics stopped him from advancing beyond the Aconcagua valley in central Chile, and many of his men and animals died crossing the

high Andes. Pedro de Valdivia's 1541 expedition was more successful, establishing the capital of Santiago, as well as the coastal cities of La Serena, Valparaíso, and Concepción, the interior town of Villarrica, and the riverside city of Valdivia. He also sent forces south to explore the Strait of Magellan from the western side, helping establish Chile's claim to the continent's southernmost areas.

Initial good relations between the Mapuche and the Spanish soon deteriorated, leading to the Araucanian wars which lasted over three centuries. Valdivia himself died in the 1553 Battle of Tucapel against the Mapuche, but his exploits and organizational skills laid the foundation for the country that would become Chile.

The main goal of the conquistadores was to get rich and, when the gold they hoped for proved an illusion, they and their successors had to find alternatives. The Spanish Crown, with a vested interest in the new colonies, offered them wealth in the form of *encomiendas*, where power over large areas of land and its indigenous inhabitants were "entrusted" (*encamendado*)

to Spanish settlers. At the same time, the Catholic Church saw in this system an opportunity for evangelizing millions of possible converts. Both these factors became the basis of economic and social reorganization in the absence of Incan authority.

The *encomienda* lost its value as the indigenous population declined under the impact of smallpox (brought by the Spanish) and other diseases. In some cases, population numbers fell by more than 90 percent, and there were no more Indians to pay tribute. Mortality rates were highest in the coastal lowlands, where the climate favored the propagation of disease.

With no one to pay tribute, the Spaniards adapted by creating large rural estates, commonly known as haciendas, although their profitability was limited as there was no labor to work them. This changed as lower-class Spaniards cohabited with indigenous women, creating the mestizo population. However, this brought new social problems: the *latifundistas* (landowners) monopolized

the best agricultural lands, while the mestizos became resident laborers, and neighboring *minifundistas* (peasants) struggled to put enough on the table.

## Collapse of Colonialism

The issue of access to land divided Chileans well into the 20th century, but in the short term, it was less significant than their increasing alienation from Spain. Although there was a governor in Santiago, Chile was an administrative subdivision of the Lima-based Viceroyalty of Peru, which in turn depended on Spain for authority. Local *criollos* (South American-born Spaniards) grew restive with

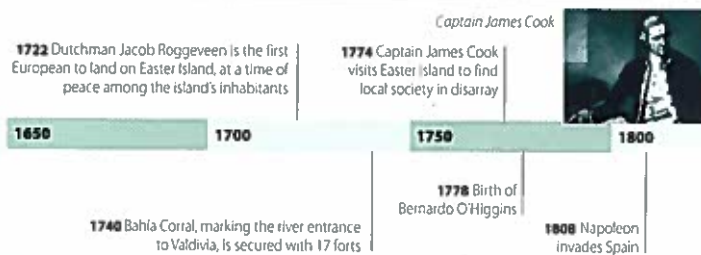
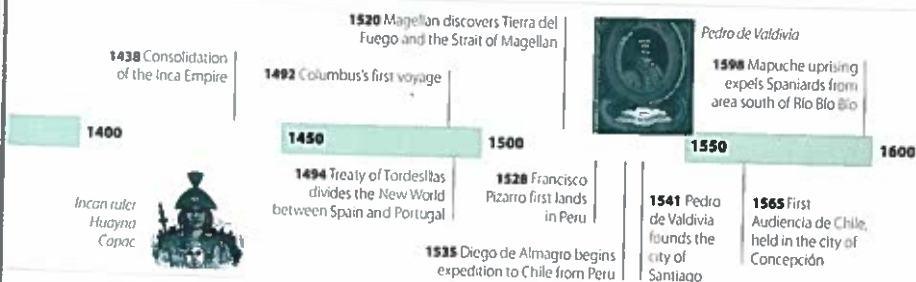
Madrid's rule, as their interests began to diverge from those of the Europeans. Events came to a head when Napoleon's invasion of Spain undercut the empire's control over its distant colonies. Figures on the empire's periphery, such as Chile's Bernardo O'Higgins, son of the Viceroy of Lima, and Argentina's José de San Martín, represented the aspirations of the *criollo* population, and led the campaign for independence.



Chilean leader Bernardo O'Higgins (1778–1842)



A 19th-century lithograph depicting life on a Chilean hacienda







The declaration of independence in 1818, painted by Chilean artist Pedro Subercaseaux in 1945

## Independence and Republic

As the tensions between Spain and the *criollos* exacerbated, and Spain's European relations grew problematic, Chilean patriots plotted to overthrow the Spaniards. Led by O'Higgins, they declared a governing junta in 1810. The declaration unleashed a Royalist reaction that culminated in the 1814 Battle of Rancagua, with many high-profile rebels imprisoned on the Juan Fernández archipelago as a result. O'Higgins fled across the Andes to Mendoza, where he joined forces with Argentine liberator José de San Martín. Three years later, San Martín's Ejército de los Andes (Army of the Andes) defeated the Spaniards at Chacabuco and entered Santiago with an invitation for him to become Chile's Supreme Director. San Martín declined in favor of O'Higgins and proceeded north to liberate Peru.

After overseeing Chile's declaration of independence in 1818, O'Higgins spent five tumultuous years as head of state, consolidating the country but angering conservatives who objected to his secularism and social activism.

Over the following years, the influence of pro-business politicians and landowners grew until, after a brief civil war that ended in 1830, Santiago-born entrepreneur Diego Portales emerged as the power behind a new conservative regime. Portales was responsible for the Constitution of 1833, which created a centralized government and installed Roman Catholicism as the official religion. Portales's constitution lasted until 1925.

On the economic front, the country enjoyed a boom during this period, thanks to a silver strike at Chañarcillo, in the Atacama region, that enriched the national treasury. Additionally, the mid-19th century California Gold Rush made

Valparaíso a major stopover for ships rounding Cape Horn, and San Francisco became a huge market for Chilean wheat. The key beneficiaries of this boom were the landowners; resident laborers and the peasantry formed a permanent underclass of have-nots that would become one of Chile's great social dilemmas in the 20th century.

## Territorial Expansion

At the time of independence, Chile's territory stretched only from Copiapó in the Atacama to Concepción in the Central Valley, plus a few precarious outliers such as Valdivia and Chiloé.

Beyond Copiapó, Bolivia and Peru held the Atacama's nitrate-rich lands. In Bolivia, these were controlled by Chilean investors, who balked at paying export taxes at the port-city of Antofagasta. In a move to negate this, Chilean military occupied the city in 1879. When Bolivia invoked Peruvian assistance, it unleashed the 4-year War of the Pacific, which ended in an overwhelming Chilean victory. Not only did Chile gain Antofagasta, it also occupied Peru's southern provinces of Tacna, Arica, and Tarapacá, and even the capital, Lima. It eventually returned Lima and Tacna to Peru, but kept Arica and Tarapacá to form its present northern border.



The 1879 Battle of Tarapacá, War of the Pacific



Nitrate extraction plant in the Atacama desert

While consolidating its northern frontier, Chile also looked south, where just beyond Rio Bio Bio, the Mapuche-controlled lands of Arauco were a dangerous frontier for settlers. Only the Patagonian territories, in and around Punta Arenas and in the vicinity of present-day Aisén, were under definitive Chilean control.

In 1881, the government concluded a series of treaties with the Mapuche that finally ended the Araucanian wars. In the process, it opened the area south of the Bio Bio to European immigration, mainly German, that left a visible impact on the landscape, with its shingled houses and dairy farms. At the same time, the country's growing navy solidified its presence from the desert north to Patagonia and beyond.

A wool boom that started in the mid-1870s made the Magallanes region especially prosperous. In 1888, Chile also annexed Easter Island.

Around this time President José Manuel Balmaceda faced a brief civil war for attempting to distribute the nation's new-found riches more evenly through the population. This ended with his suicide in 1891, and the consolidation of conservative power.

1810 Creation of Primera Junta de Gobierno (First Governing Body)

1818 Chile declares independence

1810

1814 Battle of Rancagua

1817 Battle of Chacabuco

1823 Bernardo O'Higgins exiled to Lima

Statue of Juan Godoy at Copiapó

1825



Statue of Juan Godoy at Copiapó

1833 Constitution of 1833

1837 Diego Portales executed in a brief uprising



Diego Portales (1793-1837)

1840

1849 California Gold Rush

1850 Discovery of silver deposits at Chañarcillo by muleteer Juan Godoy

Naval combat between Chile and Peru, War of the Pacific



1855

1870 Patagonian wool boom

1879 War of the Pacific begins as Chileans occupy the port-city of Antofagasta

José Manuel Balmaceda (1840-91)

1881 Treaty with the Mapuche ends Araucanian wars

1883 War of the Pacific ends with victory for Chile



1885

1888 Annexation of Easter Island

1891 Civil war and suicide of President Balmaceda





Escuela Santa María de Iquique, site of the 1907 massacre

### Economic Decline

With revenues booming from the profits of the mining and shipping industries, Chile had reason for optimism at the start of the 20th century. Yet there were clouds on the horizon. In 1907, one of the most notorious incidents in Chilean labor history occurred when the police and military slaughtered hundreds of striking workers and their family members, who had occupied a school in the mining town of Iquique to protest against low salaries and poor working conditions. At the same time, synthetic nitrates began to replace the low-yield ores of the Atacama mines. As a result,

many mining *oficinas* (company towns) and ports withered from lack of traffic. Meanwhile, the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914 reduced commerce around Cape Horn, so the thriving port of Valparaíso went into sudden decline. Almost simultaneously, World War I nearly eliminated trade with traditional partners such as the UK and Germany. Chile was, in effect, on its own.

As the nitrate mines closed, many miners moved to Santiago and other cities, where they became part of an increasingly militant working class. The rural population found limited opportunities in the countryside, especially as large rural estates still monopolized the best land; smallholders, whose marginal properties often lacked basic amenities such as irrigation water, were unable to support growing families.

### The New Constitutionalism

Despite the depressing social and economic conditions, the 1920s began auspiciously in Chile with the election of reformer Arturo Alessandri as president. Alessandri realized the



Ships at Valparaíso harbor, depicted by Edward Willmann in 1840

1907 Massacre of striking miners at Escuela Santa María de Iquique

1914 Inauguration of Panama Canal

1910

1910 Chile Exploration Company begins mining copper at Chuquibambilla



1923 Chuquibambilla sold to Anaconda Copper Company  
Copper at Chuquibambilla

1920

1920 Arturo Alessandri elected president\*

1925 Constitution of 1925; Alessandri resigns under pressure from Carlos Ibáñez del Campo

1931 Ibáñez del Campo resigns and goes into exile

1930

1929 Great Depression begins in the US

1927 Ibáñez del Campo becomes president and de facto dictator



Arturo Alessandri (1868–1950)

1940

1950

1952 Salvador Allende runs for presidency for the first time; Ibáñez del Campo elected



Eduardo Frei Montalva (1911–82)

1970 Salvador Allende elected as president

1960

1964 Eduardo Frei Montalva elected to presidency

1971 Chilean Congress nationalizes copper mines

\* Augusto Pinochet Ugarte



seriousness of the situation, but could not overcome a conservative congress. This soon provoked a military coup, which resulted in Alessandri's resignation and exile, as well as the new Constitution of 1925, which created a more powerful executive and separated church and state. However, the Great Depression of the 1930s combined with the authoritarian tendencies of the new president, army general Carlos Ibáñez del Campo, paved the way for Alessandri's return. The following decades brought political fragmentation with an electorate evenly divided among a radical left, a bourgeois center, and an authoritarian right.

During this period, copper became Chile's prime revenue earner, and the US-owned Anaconda Copper Company exerted an enormous influence in the country, even as urban and rural discontent festered. Elected in 1964, President Eduardo Frei Montalva tried to deal with these issues through land reform and by promoting the participation of Chilean investors in the mining sector. However, Frei's well-intentioned measures could not satisfy either side. The far left would accept nothing less than confiscation of the large estates and nationalization of the copper industry, while the landowners and mining magnates resisted any change to the status quo. In 1970, the election of the socialist Salvador Allende Gossens changed everything.

### The Allende Presidency

Allende, who first ran for president in 1952, was a true radical who envisioned a total transformation of Chilean society. In 1970, in a close election, he finished first, though his

leftist Unidad Popular coalition candidacy won 36.6 percent of the vote, while his opponents Jorge Alessandri Rodríguez and Radomiro Tomic took 34.9 percent and 27.8 percent respectively. In the absence of a clear majority, the election passed to the

Congress who, by custom, chose the leading candidate as president. Once in office, Allende nationalized the copper industry, but also confiscated some 7,700 sq miles (20,000 sq km) of agricultural land for redistribution, encouraging informal occupation of private landholdings that resulted in rural violence. At the

same time, Allende tried to satisfy the urban working class with large wage increases and spending deficits that contributed to runaway inflation.

However, these measures failed to satisfy groups such as the rightist Patria y Libertad and leftist Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria, who helped make the country ungovernable, with the result that political assassinations became commonplace. In the midst of this chaos, Allende appointed General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte as commander-in-chief of the army.



Salvador Allende, elected president on October 24, 1970

1973 Allende appoints Augusto Pinochet Ugarte as commander-in-chief of the armed forces





General Augusto Pinochet on a visit to Los Andes, July 1987

### The Pinochet Regime

A little-known careerist, Augusto Pinochet surprised almost everyone when, barely three weeks after his appointment as commander-in-chief, he led a sudden brutal coup that overthrew Salvador Allende, who committed suicide as the air force attacked Santiago's presidential palace on September 11, 1973. The following months were even more brutal, as the armed forces locked down the country with a curfew, banned political parties, imprisoned political dissidents, and executed many in campaigns such as General Sergio Arellano Stark's so-called Caravan of Death. At least 3,000 died or "disappeared," and many more were tortured. Pinochet also sent agents beyond Chile's borders to kill exiled Carlos Prats, his predecessor as commander-in-chief, and Allende's former foreign minister, Orlando Letelier.

Pinochet had no compunction about increasing his personal power, or accumulating personal wealth despite cultivating an image of incorruptibility. However, he also tried to remake Chilean

society. Implementing his beliefs in free-market capitalism, he oversaw a wholesale transformation of the economy, eliminating government regulations, privatizing health and pension plans, encouraging foreign investment, and selling off most state enterprises. An economic recovery gave him sufficient confidence to hold a plebiscite in 1980, to extend his "presidency" until 1989 and ratify a new constitution. Despite some dubious

rules, he won the plebiscite by a wide margin and, even more confidently, permitted political parties to operate openly in 1987. The Constitution of 1980, written by conservative lawyer Jaime Guzmán, stipulated another plebiscite, in 1988, that could extend his mandate until 1997. This time, however, a coalition of centrist and center-left parties rallied against him and, galvanized by a bold televised appearance from socialist politician Ricardo Lagos, the vote was emphatically against Pinochet.

### Restoring Democracy

In 1989, the center-left aligned Concertación coalition's candidate Patricio Aylwin won the presidency, but Guzmán's constitution limited political change to a snail's pace. Among other provisions, it created the lifetime position of Institutional Senator that allowed former presidents, such as Pinochet himself, to assume a congressional role that also stipulated legislative immunity. Four years later, the Concertación's Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle won the presidency and, as the economy grew steadily, with only minor



Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, president 1994–2000

tinkering, there was neither demand nor support for investigating the Pinochet dictatorship's human rights abuses. Convinced of his immunity, Pinochet traveled freely both at home and abroad, until, on a medical visit to London in October 1998, he found himself under house arrest on the order of Spanish judge Baltazar Garzón, who requested his extradition in an investigation into deaths and disappearances of Spanish citizens in the 1973 coup.

Garzón never achieved Pinochet's extradition to Spain, but the London detention broke the spell. Soon thereafter, Chilean judge Juan Guzmán successfully challenged Pinochet's immunity and opened investigations into the Caravan of Death and other cases, as well as questionable overseas bank accounts that destroyed whatever credibility remained. While never convicted before his death in late 2006, Pinochet was effectively exorcised from public life.

### Post-Pinochet Chile

The election of Ricardo Lagos in 2000 marked the consolidation of Chilean democracy. Before his 6-year term ended, the third consecutive Concertación president managed to amend some of the constitution's most anti-democratic provisions, eliminating non-elected senators and restoring the president's authority to remove the commander-in-chief of the

armed forces. It also reduced the presidential term to four years, but allowed ex-presidents to run for non-consecutive re-election. Chile's Concertación governments have largely continued the economic course set by their predecessors. While these policies have led to Latin America's most stable economy, the gap between rich and poor has grown rather than diminished and unemployment remains higher than desirable.

In 2006, Chileans made history by choosing the Concertación's Michelle Bachelet, a former defense minister, as the country's first female president. After initial ups and downs, Bachelet drew praise for her handling of the Chilean economy during the global crisis of 2009. In March 2010, her term expired and Sebastián Piñera, the opposition Alianza party's candidate, became president. Bachelet then succeeded Piñera in 2014, to become president for a second term.



Michelle Bachelet and former president Ricardo Lagos

1974 Assassination of General Carlos Prats in Buenos Aires, Argentina

1975

1976 Assassination of Orlando Letelier in Washington DC

1973 Military coup deposes Salvador Allende



1980

1980 Plebiscite approves Constitution of 1980 and eight more years of Pinochet's rule

1985

1987 Political parties once again operate openly

Celebrations following the plebiscite against Pinochet

1988 Pinochet loses plebiscite

1989 Patricio Aylwin elected as president

1990

1991 Lawyer Jaime Guzmán assassinated in San Diego

1994 Eduardo Frei Ruiz Tagle elected president

1995

1998 Pinochet placed under house arrest in London

2000

2000 Ricardo Lagos elected president, Pinochet freed to return to Chile

2005 Riggs Bank case uncovers secret Pinochet bank accounts

2005

2006 Michelle Bachelet elected president, Pinochet dies in December

2010 Sebastián Piñera elected president; central Chile struck by a major earthquake followed by several aftershocks

2010



2015

2015 Volcán Villarica and Volcán Calbuco erupt; floods in Atacama Desert

2014 Michelle Bachelet elected president again

Pinochet's coffin on a gun carriage

Sebastián Piñera at a rally



2020