



# Sacred Earth Travel

Sustainable Nature and Adventure Travel

## Self-Drive Adventure: The Magic of Chile on Wheels

This whirlwind itinerary is a very succinct introduction to some of Chile's most beautiful regions. Getting a glimpse of the Atacama Desert, the Lake District, as well as Southern Patagonia and Torres del Paine, really makes for a journey of contrasts that will be unforgettable. Each region has its own magic as if a world unto itself. No doubt, on this trip, Chile will cast its enchanting spell on you...

### DAY 1: SANTIAGO

Upon your arrival in Santiago, a driver will be waiting to escort you (private service) to your hotel, where you will receive your welcome package. In the afternoon, you will have the opportunity to get to know the highlights of Chile's capital city during a city tour.

Overnight in Santiago.



## DAY 2: SANTIAGO – CALAMA – SAN PEDRO DE ATACAMA (101 KM / 63 MI) + MOON VALLEY

After breakfast, a private transfer will take you to Arturo Merino Benitez Airport for your flight to Calama. After arrival in Calama, pick up your rental vehicle at the airport and your adventure can begin! To start with, head for San Pedro de Atacama. Once at the centre of a pre-historic culture this oasis town is now the centre of Atacama explorers!



Impressive rock fortresses set on steep mountains encircle the green valley, making it truly a unique and stunning site to visit. There are many options for excursions in this remote outpost. One of the best is a visit to the otherworldly Moon Valley – especially in the late afternoon when the colors really come to light. The stone and sand formations look like petrified visitors from other worlds but are the result of erosion. Not to be missed!

Overnight in San Pedro de Atacama. (B)

### DAY 3: SAN PEDRO DE ATACAMA AND SURROUNDINGS

Today, you have a full day to explore the magic of the Atacama and the bustling oasis town of San Pedro. The area is rich in archaeological sites. A short drive from San Pedro lies the pre-Columbian village of Tular. The archaeological remains that can be viewed there are the oldest evidence of a human settlement in the valley and date back about 3000 years. Afterwards, you could continue to Pukara de Quitor, a fortress that has seen many battles. In the afternoon, we recommend a visit to Toconao, a village where the locals specialize in making sculptures from white volcanic stone. Absolutely not to be missed is the Atacama Salt Flat; an inland sea that formed millions of years ago and over the millennia has evaporated leaving an impressive sight dominated by rock formations and crystallized salt.

Overnight in San Pedro de Atacama. (B)



#### DAY4: ALTIPLANO LAGOONS / EL TATIO GEYSERS

Today, we suggest a visit to the enigmatic twin blue-black lagoons, Meñiques and Miscanti located in the highlands at an altitude of 4,200 m.a.s.l. Encrusted by a rim of white salt against a backdrop of imposing volcanoes they are a spectacular sight to be seen. Despite the remote and seemingly hostile environment, the area is teeming with wildlife: elegant vicuñas and numerous species of birds, including flamingos.

Alternatively, you could visit the geothermal field of El Tatio Geysers situated at 4,300 m.a.s.l – but it is highly recommended to join a guided tour for this excursion. Powerful spurts of steam that shoot out from various geyser blowholes and steaming ponds are a spectacular sight to behold. This is the highest geothermal field in the world set amidst breathtaking scenery.

Overnight in San Pedro de Atacama. (B)





DAY 5: CALAMA – PUERTO MONTT – PUERTO VARAS (20 KM / 12 MI)

Your time in the magical Atacama Desert is coming to an end. It is time to leave San Pedro and head to a completely different environment, a lush, green world of mountains and volcanoes in the Chilean Lake District.

Return your vehicle to the car rental office at Calama airport and catch your flight to Puerto Montt. Upon arrival, pick up your car at the airport – and your next adventure can begin. A scenic 30-minute drive takes you to Puerto Varas, also known as the City of Roses. A picturesque town set on the shores of Chile's second-largest lake, Lake Llanquihue, with the volcanoes Osorno and Calbuco, reflected in the crystal clear waters.

Overnight in Puerto Varas. (B)



## DAY 6: PUERTO VARAS AND SURROUNDINGS

Explore Puerto Varas or visit one of the nearby National Parks: Alerce Andino and/or Vicente Pérez Rosales, both with fabulous hiking trails. There are many activities and sights in the area, like crossing the Todos Los Santos Lake to Peulla, or visiting the waterfalls of the Petrohué River. Alternatively, take a drive around Lake Llanquihue and visit the charming villages of Frutillar and Puerto Octay. Overnight in Puerto Varas. (B)



## DAY 7: PUERTO VARAS – CHILOÉ ISLAND – PUERTO VARAS (434 KM / 270 MI)

Depart for Parga and cross the Chacao Channel by ferry to reach the island of Chiloé. You can visit the town of Ancud, famous for its museum, the San Antonio Fortress, and the local market which features a wide range of seafood and handmade crafts.

Afterwards, visit the penguin islands (only from November to March) to see the world's only nesting grounds where Humboldt and Magellan's penguins breed side by side. You may also want to visit one of the 16 UNESCO World Heritage churches that Chiloé is famous for or explore the island on a drive to its capital town of Castro. Here, you can visit the San Francisco wood church, also a world

heritage site and see Castro's emblematic stilt homes known as "palafito".  
Overnight in Puerto Varas. (B)



**DAY 8: PUERTO MONTT – PUNTA ARENAS – PUERTO NATALES (249 KM / 155 MI)**

It is time to leave the gorgeous Lake District behind and head further south, into the fabled pampas of Southern Patagonia and the famous Torres del Paine National Park.

In the morning, drop off your rental car at Puerto Montt Airport and board your flight to Punta Arenas, the largest and most important town of Chilean Patagonia. Located on the western side of the Strait of Magellan it is the gateway to Tierra del Fuego, as well as to Torres del Paine. The inhabitants are a colourful mixture from different cultural backgrounds including English sheep



ranchers and Portuguese sailors. Before heading out of town and starting on your adventure, you might like to take a stroll along the shore and visit the historic town centre. Punta Arenas is a good place to stock up on any supplies you might need – once you get to Torres del Paine there are practically no shops and at the convenience store everything costs twice the price. The drive to Puerto Natales takes about 3 hours

Overnight in Puerto Natales. (B)



DAY 9: PUERTO NATALES– TORRES DEL PAINE (60 KM / 37 MI)

Chile is full of highlights, but Torres del Paine is doubtless one of its most impressive gems. After driving through the flat wastelands of the Patagonian Pampas, all of a sudden the characteristic mountain massive of Los Torres with its dramatic scenery of glaciers, lakes, and rivers appears like a mirage. The National Park protects a fascinating eco-system with many unique species of plants and animals.



But the main attractions of the park are the dramatic Los Torres peaks of the Cerro Paine mountain range. They reach 3,050 meters above sea level, which is all the more impressive because lower regions of the park are close to sea level. Las Torres and the Cuernos del Paine peaks make for dramatic and breathtaking scenery. Torres del Paine National Park is a hiker's paradise with many trails of varying length and difficulty throughout the park.

Overnight in Torres del Paine National Park. (B,D)



DAY 10: TORRES DEL PAINE – PUNTA ARENAS (305 KM / 190 MI)

In the morning, enjoy the peace and quiet of this privileged location, or take a boat trip to Glacier Grey, weather permitting. (Boat journeys are cancelled if the winds are too high.)



Two days are not really enough to fully appreciate the magic of Torres del Paine, and the time to leave this amazing place will come all too soon. But unless you add extra days to the itinerary, you must now return to Punta Arenas. The drive from Torres del Paine takes about 5 hours. On the way back to Punta Arenas, you can visit the Mylodon Cave, where archaeologists have found the 12,000-year-old remnants of a giant sloth.

Overnight in Punta Arenas. (B)

## DAY 11: PUNTA ARENAS – SANTIAGO

After dropping off your car at Punta Arenas Airport, board your flight to Santiago.

This metropolis shows great contrasts between modern skyscrapers and old adobe buildings dating back from the early 18th century; the perfect backdrop

for your final night in Chile. Depending on the time of your flight back to your home town, you can spend the last night in the city, or, more conveniently for early flights, at the airport hotel.

Overnight in Santiago. (B)

DAY 12: BYE BYE, CHILE

Your magical Chilean adventure is coming to an end. It has been a whirlwind of a tour but no doubt you will go home full of deeply memorable experiences and happy memories that will last a lifetime.

**Notes**

Prices are based on double occupancy. Single supplement applies.

**Hotels we use in this program:**

<b>Standard:</b>	<b>Superior</b>
Hotel Orly (Queen Room),	Hotel Torremayor Lyon (Superior Room)
Casa Don Tomas (Standard Room),	Altiplanico San Pedro (Superior Room)
Casa Kalfu (Standard Room),	Puelche (Executive Room)
IF Patagonia (Standard Room),	Costaustralis (Standard City Room)
Hotel del Paine (Standard Room) and	Pampa Lodge (Standard Room)
Hotel Isla Rey Jorge (Standard Room)	Cabo de Hornos (Standard Room)

**Included:**

- 10 overnights with breakfast
- 1 overnight with half board
- In Santiago: private transfers without guide (first transfers IN and City Tour with English speaking guide)
- 12 day car rental including unlimited free mileage, local tax, full CDW coverage with deductible (for details see rental contract).
- Roadmap and descriptions.

**Not included:**

Chile car rental companies charge an additional airport service fee when vehicle will be picked up from airport. This service charge is not included in the published rates. This extra fee has to be paid upon returning the car.