

Chile

Geography

Location: Southern South America, bordering the South Atlantic Ocean and South Pacific Ocean, between Argentina and Peru

Area:

total area: 756,950 sq km

land area: 748,800 sq km

Land boundaries: total 6,171 km, Argentina 5,150 km, Bolivia 861 km, Peru 160 km

Coastline: 6,435 km

Maritime claims:

contiguous zone: 24 nm

continental shelf: 200 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: temperate; desert in north; cool and damp in south

Terrain: low coastal mountains; fertile central valley; rugged Andes in east

Natural resources: copper, timber, iron ore, nitrates, precious metals, molybdenum

Land use:

arable land: 7%

permanent crops: 0%

meadows and pastures: 16%

forest and woodland: 21%

other: 56%

Irrigated land: 12,650 sq km (1989 est.)

Note: strategic location relative to sea lanes between Atlantic and Pacific Oceans (Strait of Magellan, Beagle Channel, Drake Passage); Atacama Desert one of world's driest regions

People

Population: 14,161,216 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 29% (female 2,014,877; male 2,099,450)

15-64 years: 64% (female 4,574,947; male 4,529,251)

65 years and over: 7% (female 549,385; male 393,306) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.49% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 20.29 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 5.42 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 14.3 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 74.88 years

male: 71.89 years

female: 78.01 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 2.49 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Chilean(s)

adjective: Chilean

Ethnic divisions: European and European-Indian 95%, Indian 3%, other 2%

Religions: Roman Catholic 89%, Protestant 11%, Jewish

Languages: Spanish

Literacy: age 15 and over can read and write (1992)

total population: 94%

male: 95%

female: 94%

Labor force: 4.728 million

by occupation: services 38.3% (includes government 12%), industry and commerce 33.8%, agriculture, forestry, and fishing 19.2%, mining 2.3%, construction 6.4% (1990)

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of Chile

conventional short form: Chile

local long form: Republica de Chile

local short form: Chile

Capital: Santiago

Independence: 18 September 1810 (from Spain)

National holiday: Independence Day, 18 September (1810)

Constitution: 11 September 1980, effective 11 March 1981;
amended 30 July 1989

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal and compulsory

Economy

Overview: Chile has a prosperous, essentially free market economy, with the degree of government intervention varying according to the philosophy of the different regimes. Under the center-left government of President AYLWIN, which took power in March 1990, spending on social welfare rose steadily. At the same time business investment, exports, and consumer spending also grew substantially.

Industries: copper, other minerals, foodstuffs, fish processing, iron and steel, wood and wood products, transport equipment, cement, textiles

Agriculture: accounts for about 7% of GDP (including fishing and forestry); major exporter of fruit, fish, and timber products; major crops - wheat, corn, grapes, beans, sugar beets, potatoes, deciduous fruit; livestock products - beef, poultry, wool; self-sufficient in most foods; 1991 fish catch of 6.6 million metric tons; net agricultural importer

Illicit drugs: a minor transshipment country for cocaine destined for the US and Europe; booming economy has made it more attractive to traffickers seeking to launder drug profits

Transportation

Railroads:

total: 7,766 km

Highways:

total: 79,599 km

Inland waterways: 725 km

Pipelines: crude oil 755 km; petroleum products 785 km; natural gas 320 km

Ports: Antofagasta, Arica, Chanarol, Coquimbo, Iquique, Puerto Montt, Punta Arenas, San Antonio, San Vicente, Talcahuano, Valparaiso

Airports:

total: 390

Defence Forces

Branches: Army of the Nation, National Navy (includes Naval Air, Coast Guard, and Marines), Air Force of the Nation, Carabineros of Chile (National Police), Investigations Police