Fact Sheet ELANBiz: Business Travel to Chile

General Information

Geographic Situation:

Chile is a long narrow strip of land, between the Andes to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west, occupying 764,000 km2; it borders Perú to the north, Bolivia to the northeast, Argentina to the east and the Antarctic Continent to the south. The country is divided into five different geographical regions: northern desert, central valley, lakes region, island region and southern archipelago.

Time Zone:
GMT – 3.

Language:

The official language is Spanish. Most hotel staff speaks English and sometimes also German or French but at a basic level.

Religion:

According to 2014 data, about 57% of the population is Catholic, Protestants make up 15%, while atheists or agnostics represent 24% and the rest is distributed in other religions.¹

Climate:

¹ Latinobarómetro Report, "Religions in the times of Pope Francisco" ("Las religiones en tiempos del Papa Francisco"), published by Chilean newspaper La Segunda in Santiago de Chile on 1 Septiembre 2015.
Chile has four marked seasons and ranges quite drastically throughout the country from a dry-desert climate in the north to Mediterranean climate in the centre and very rainy and cold in the southern lakes region.

National Holidays (2015):

- 01 January: New Year
- 03 April: Good Friday (date varies according to the Catholic calendar)
- 04 April: Holy Saturday (date varies according to the Catholic calendar)
- 05 April: Easter Sunday (date varies according to the Catholic calendar)
- 01 May: Labour Day
- 21 May: Day of the Naval Glorias
- 29 June: Feast of Saints Peter and Paul
- 16 July: Day of the Virgin of Carmen, Queen and Patroness of Chile
- 15 August: Assumption of the Virgin
- 18 September: Chile’s National Day
- 19 September: Day of the Glories of the Army
- 12 October: Day of the Discovery of America
- 31 October: Day of Evangelical and Protestant Churches
- 01 November: All Saints Day
- 08 December: Day of the Immaculate Conception
- 25 December: Christmas

Opening Hours:

- General business hours: 9 am to 6 pm, Monday to Friday
- Banks: 9 am to 2 pm, Monday to Friday
- Stores: large stores and shopping centers in Santiago and other cities are generally open between 9 am and 8 pm, Monday to Sunday. Smaller stores can close between 2 pm and 4 pm and are generally open Monday to Saturday.

Mainstream Media:

- El Mercurio: http://www.emol.com
- La Tercera: http://www.latercera.com
- El Diario Financiero (financial newspaper): http://www.df.cl
- Televisión Nacional de Chile: http://www.tvn.cl
- Megavisión: http://www.mega.cl
- Chilevisión: http://www.chilevision.cl
- Canal 13 Universidad Católica: http://www.13.cl
- CNN Chile: http://www.cnnchile.com
Prior to travelling

Holiday period in Chile:

In preparation for a business mission to Chile it is important to take into consideration the general holiday periods in the country. The holiday season begins in mid-December to end of February to coincide with the summer in the southern hemisphere. During this period there is low business activity particularly during the month of February when business trips to Chile should preferably be avoided. Another date that should be avoided are the weeks corresponding to Easter (varies depending on the Catholic calendar) and Independence Day (18 and 19 September).

Visas:

European Union Citizens do not need a tourist visa or business trips that are no longer than 90 consecutive days. A visa is required only if one is to reside in the country or engage in remunerated activities. At entry point, each visitor must fill out a baggage declaration form stating monetary amounts being entered along with any agricultural products. For more information: http://www.extranjeria.gob.cl/preguntas-frecuentes/. In particular, it is strictly forbidden to enter the country with undeclared agricultural products. Luggage is scanned and undeclared products will be subject to a fine. For more information: http://www.sag.cl/ambitos-de-accion/productos-de-origen-vegetal/

Entry of Trade Samples:

Temporary imports for exhibitions and sampling are permitted without payment of tariffs and value-added tax for a period of up to six months. The end user must obtain a certificate from the Chilean customs authority granting temporary admission. After the specified time, the product must exit the country or be subjected to a fee in line with corresponding customs and tax laws. For more information see the Chilean customs service official webpage: http://www.aduana.cl.

ATA² Carnet for the Temporary Admission of Goods (ATA Convention of the WCO) allows companies to temporarily ship goods to over 75 countries and territories. Chile acceded to the Convention in July 2005.

Internet and Telecommunications:

² Admission Temporaire/Temporary Admission
Internet (Wifi) is available free of charge in almost all hotels, restaurants and other public places. Because of competition between operators, mobile rates are quite low. With less than 20 euros you can buy a phone (voice and data internet included) but roaming is also common.

**Currency and payments:**

- The national currency is the Chilean peso (CLP).

- Exchange rate: 1 euro = approximately 750 Chilean pesos (November, 2015). This may fluctuate as the market sets the exchange rate.

- Currency exchange offices are open Monday through Friday from 9 am to 6 pm and Saturday until 2 pm.

- Foreign currencies: euros or dollars (or other) in cash or traveller checks can be exchanged at banks, currency exchange houses and most hotels. Most credit cards can be used to make payments or to withdraw cash at ATMs that are available across the country. In Chile it is not possible to pay in cash with another currency other than the Chilean peso.

**Hotels and accommodations:**

- Santiago offers an amleness of hotels that are varied and of good quality. Hotels in the rest of the country are also sufficiently equipped for business trips. Rates range from US$60 per night (apart-hotel, especially for longer stays) to over US$100 a night in international and national chains geared to business travellers.

- Hotels with rates above US$250 per night are also available.

- Although there is almost always availability, it is advisable to book in advance, particularly during times of high demand due to major international events and/or holiday periods.
Once in the country

Security:

Overall, Chile is quite secure and suitable for foreign visitors who can travel throughout the country without any major problems. However, there are certain hours and areas that generate greater risks to your safety and it is strongly recommended to consult your hotel or the police authorities (called carabineros, see http://www.carabineros.cl) before embarking on your journey in the country.

Health Service:

Overall, the quality of health services in Chile is good. Visitors are recommended establishments with more international ties such as the German Clinic (Clinica Alemana) and Clinica Las Condes. There is no need take greater food precautions than usual.

Transport:

• Taxi: Airport to downtown Santiago, around 20,000 pesos (28-30 euros). It is strongly advisable to book an official taxi at the airport and avoid taking a taxi from the street once exiting the baggage claim area.

• In Santiago, taxis have a base rate of 250/300 pesos (0.50 euros) and then 150/200 pesos for every 200 meters or every minute of waiting - in case of traffic, for example. All must have taximeter. Via the Internet, services such as Safer Taxi and Easy Taxi offer a very efficient and safe way to get a taxi and at the same rates as the official taxi ones in the streets.

• The public transport system in Santiago is Transantiago that combines Metro and Bus services and you pay with an electronic card called Bip! The average fare is 650 pesos (less than a euro). When taking the Metro it is possible to buy a ticket, whoever, this is not possible on the bus where only Bip! Cards are accepted.

• It is possible to rent cars without a driver with rates starting at $20,000 pesos / day (28-30 euros).

• Public transportation within the country is mainly done by air but there is also a network of intercity buses.

Business Lunch
There is a diverse selection of restaurants in Santiago ranging from fast food menus to more sophisticated ambiences that include typical local dishes and European, Asian, Peruvian and international cuisine. A reservation is usually not required, unless it is a big group. Regular hours are between 1 pm to 2:30 pm for lunch and from 8 pm on for dinner. Business breakfast is a common practice, especially in hotels.

Tip:

The standard tip is 10% of the amount consumed. Although voluntary, it is of common practice.

Business Protocols

• Usually, the dress code is formal, but this has turned to be flexible especially in regions where mining and agricultural activities predominate.

• While the language commonly spoken is Spanish, English is also used and on a more sporadic level other languages such as French, German and, more recently, Chinese.

• In Chile, personal relationships are formal, and thus, using the familiar form of address (tuteo) is not customary in business meetings.

• Working meetings are also formal in which there is a noticeable respect for hierarchy and due consideration is given to abide to punctuality and the duration of meetings.

• In general, Chile is a very open country in particular to external trade and foreign direct investments and thus, business and negotiations tend to be rather intense, rigorous and demanding for both parties.

Practical Advice

• Foreigners interested in establishing business in Chile first need to get the national identification number called RUT (Single Tax) for tax purposes. The RUT is the mechanism in Chile to identify all persons and companies carrying out economic activities in the country. It allows people to get credit, participate in public biddings, lease or buy property, etc. It is the most important control mechanism for Chile and well-established in national legislation. For more information see: http://www.sii.cl/preguntas_frecuentes/catastro/arbol_inicio_actividades_702.htm
• Personal relationships are key when doing business in Chile. Family and friends play a big role, and it is vital to establish a rapport of trust to achieve good business relations.

• Although many business people speak English, it is widely appreciated and valued if you speak Spanish.

• To create affinity between you and the Chilean counterpart, you should familiarize yourself with some historical and economic aspects of Chile. Chileans are very patriotic; therefore, they are most likely to get offended if a negative comment is made about their country.

• The business culture in Chile has a defined hierarchical order that you will need to learn how to identify. If you are not sure about the person in charge it is then the best way is to observe. Pay close attention to how they treat each other because Chilean society puts a lot of weight on status.

• Chilean entrepreneurs are often very serious and direct in their negotiations. However, using aggressive and pushy tactics will not give you positive results. It is strongly recommended to have clear priorities, terms, and conditions. A good strategy would be a non-traditional financial proposal.

**Telephone Numbers and Useful Links**

• Delegation of the European Union to Chile  
  Tel. +56 2 2335 2450, Fax +56 2 2335 1779  
  Address: Ricardo Lyon 222, Piso 3, Torre Paris, Providencia, Santiago de Chile  


• Chilean Police - Carabineros de Chile, Tel. 133 (Emergency),  
  [http://www.carabineros.cl/](http://www.carabineros.cl/)

• Easy Taxi, [http://www.easytaxi.com/cl](http://www.easytaxi.com/cl)

• Official Airport Taxi Service, Tel. +56 2 26019880, [http://www.taxioficial.cl/](http://www.taxioficial.cl/)

• Department for Immigration, Tel. 600 486 3000, [www.extranjeria.gob.cl/](http://www.extranjeria.gob.cl/)

• External Trade Portal, [http://www.portalcomercioexterior.cl/](http://www.portalcomercioexterior.cl/)

• Internal Tax Revenue Service, [http://home.sii.cl](http://home.sii.cl)
• Doing Business in Chile (World Bank Group), http://www.doingbusiness.org/data/explorer+economies/chile

• Clinic: Clínica Alemana, Tel. +56 2 2210 1111, http://www.alemana.cl

• Clinic: Clínica Las Condes, Tel. +56 2 2210 4000, http://www.clinicalascondes.cl

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