



COMISION PARA EL INTERCAMBIO EDUCATIVO
ENTRE CHILE Y LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS
DE AMERICA

U.S. Grantees Orientation Manual FULBRIGHT COMMISSION IN CHILE

1. PREPARING TO GO TO CHILE

PASSPORTS

The Department of State web site contains a wealth of information regarding applying for or renewing a passport and the associated fees. Additionally, the required forms can be found here, as well, and downloaded to your computer. The site can be found at:

http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html

You may apply to one of the passport agencies located in various major cities nationwide, at any county courthouse or any designated post office.

While you are abroad, it is wise to keep your passport number, date of issue, and expiration date in a safe place separate from your passport. We recommend leaving a photocopy of the information page of your passport and other important information, such as credit card numbers, with a family member or close friend in the U.S. in case of an emergency. If your passport is lost or stolen while abroad, contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate immediately. It is also vital to keep a photocopy of your passport with you at all times as your primary form of identification. Finally, make sure that your passport contains your current legal name, which is the name that appears on your other important legal documents.

- a. a letter of support from Fulbright
- b. four current passport photos
- c. a visa application form, which can be found at:
<http://www.chile-usa.org/visas.htm>

*With the exception of the passport, all documents should be current and obtained no more than 90 days previous to the interview at the consulate.

OTHER IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

For identification purposes, you may need to obtain certified copies of the following documents. You should check with your host institution about any other documentation that may be necessary.

- Birth certificate(s): This document is necessary for identification purposes in case your passport is lost or stolen.
- Marriage certificate (if applicable): This document is especially important if the husband and wife have different last names.



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- University transcript(s): If you decide to register for any academic courses during the exchange year you will need these documents.
- A photocopy of your university diploma
- Medical and dental records for you and your dependents travelling with you. These include certificates of vaccinations, as well as information regarding medical treatments, pre-existing conditions, and current prescriptions.
- For spouses seeking employment, their resume, credentials, portfolio, or other pertinent records will be helpful.

Begin the process of obtaining these documents early!

2. TRAVEL TO CHILE

SHIPPING PERSONAL ITEMS TO CHILE

Should you wish to ship books or other personal items directly to your host institution in Chile the United States Postal Service offers a variety of options. You can find more information at the following link: <http://www.usps.com/international/>

INSURANCE OF BAGGAGE AND VALUABLES

You are strongly advised to take the added precaution of insuring your baggage and valuables during the period that you will be traveling and for the full duration of your stay abroad. We also recommend that you check with your airline carrier about weight and size requirements for luggage before your departure.

ITEMS TO BRING / NOT BRING FROM THE U.S.

Based on previous grantee comments, the following are recommended items to bring or not bring to Chile from the U.S.

On average, electronics and electronic equipment is more expensive in Chile. You should purchase digital camera memory cards or MP3 players in the U.S. before your arrival.

Books are also expensive and difficult to find. Books are taxed 19% in Chile, and bookstores are uncommon, especially outside of Santiago. Ordering books online from sites like Amazon.com can also carry a hefty shipping fee and tax.

Basic toiletries, like toothpaste or deodorant, are not necessary to bring from the U.S. and can easily be found in Chilean grocery stores and pharmacies. Unless you are specifically attached to a certain



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brand or product that may not be in wide distribution abroad, we recommend purchasing all simple toiletries upon arrival in Chile to save luggage space and weight.

U.S. CUSTOMS REGULATIONS

Lists of up-to-date references and materials on U.S. customs information are available free of charge from the U.S. Customs Service. To obtain more information on customs regulations, visit the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection website at <www.cbp.gov> or call the U.S. Customs Service information line at (877)CBP-5511. The following is a link to some publications by the Bureau that you might find useful:

- *Know Before You Go* <http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id visa/>

The U.S. Customs Service web site also provides a variety of current information on policies.

SOURCES OF TRAVEL INFORMATION

Listed below are guidebooks that you might find helpful in obtaining information about traveling in Chile, as well as places to visit during your stay. All of these are sold on <www.amazon.com>.

- Chile and Easter Island - Lonely Planet
- The South American Handbook – Lonely Planet
- Frommer's Argentina & Chile, 3rd Edition
- Fodor's South America, 8th Edition

- Amazon.com also has a list of general books about Chile, as well as excellent travel books on the country. For a list, visit the following link:
<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/external-search/002-1281606-1716813?keyword=+Chile+and+travel&tag=chrisallensworld>

3. LIVING AND WORKING IN CHILE

HOUSING ARRANGEMENTS IN CHILE

Factors to Consider When Arranging Housing:

- Local newspapers, internet sites, and often your university contacts will help you find housing during your grant period. You are responsible for finding your own housing, and if needed, a co-signer if you wish to rent a house or apartment that requires one. Unfortunately, Fulbright can not co-sign a lease on your behalf. Fulbright can write a letter confirming your status as a grantee and the amount of your monthly stipend, which can often help in the rental process. If you need such documentation, please contact the office and we will be sure to help in any way we can.



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- If you are planning on renting, be sure to budget for at least two weeks of hotel stay while looking for a permanent place to live.
- “Unfurnished” homes in Chile are rented without major appliances (stove, refrigerator, washer, dryer)
- Check the plumbing, heating, and electrical systems and ask for directions on how to use this equipment before signing the lease.
- Some tenants of homes in Chile are responsible for all repairs and the replacement of worn out items (e.g., an old pipe that springs a leak might be replaced by the tenant). Therefore, before moving into a rental, check carefully that lights, faucets, toilets, water heaters and other potential problem appliances work properly. If they do not function, ask the landlord to repair them before you move in.
- If you rent a furnished apartment, take an inventory of all furniture, appliances, and decorations, and make a written note of the condition of the walls, ceilings, floors, and windows. You will want to have your landlord review this document and sign it to avoid discrepancies at the end of your rent contract.
- Central heating is not universal in homes or schools in Chile. Chilean homes are generally kept cooler than those in the United States. It is therefore advisable that you bring warm clothes, especially warm pajamas and sleepwear.
- Some buildings will turn the central heating on for all the departments during the winter time. The cost of central heating may increase the substantially the expenses during the winter time. Before renting a place, please check with the landlord the specifications of the heating system and the final cost of this or other provided services.
- For security reasons, if you rent an apartment or a house, we suggest to change the locks of the front or all the access doors as soon as you move to the place.

CLOTHING

Chile’s seasons are the opposite from those of North America’s. Chile’s north is dry and arid, and the weather gets colder the farther south you travel. Winter is during the months of June to August and summer from December to March. Spring and autumn are generally cool, while winters are cold, overcast, and often rainy, especially in the South. The weather experienced each season varies dramatically depending upon the region of the country. On some occasions in fall and winter one can experience up to 20 degrees of difference between morning, afternoon, and evening temperatures.

NOTE: Running and training tennis shoes are notably more expensive in Chile than in the U.S. If you are a runner, jogger, or practice a sport, we recommend bringing tennis shoes from the U.S. Also to keep in mind, it is difficult in Chile to find men’s shoes in any size above 10.

ELECTRICITY AND ELECTRICAL APPLICANCES

Electrical current in Chile is A.C. 220 volts, 50 hertz. U.S. appliances (hairdryers, alarm clocks, etc.) require adapters to convert 110 volts to 220. Make sure the adapter’s capacity is sufficient to power the appliances, and ask specific questions when purchasing one. The plugs in Chile have two or three round prongs, so it is important that the adapters you purchase also serve as plug adapters.

COMPUTERS

Internet speed and overall computer access might be less than what you are accustomed to in the United States. Be prepared to allocate your time accordingly in utilizing computer resources. If you choose to bring your laptop, be aware that you should carry a receipt or other documentation for customs purposes. You may want to contact your laptop manufacturer to ask about insurance options. We recommend purchasing a laptop lock, which allows you to lock your laptop to a fixed object like a desk or bedpost. Also consider you may need electrical adapters, although some laptops automatically adapt. If you plan to purchase internet service in your residence, be aware that it is typically more expensive than in the U.S. Internet cafes are frequent throughout Chile.

DVDs

Not all DVDs are compatible in both Chile and the U.S. Every DVD manufactured has a region code (zones 0-6). Any DVD with a zone 0 code means it is zone free and can be played in any DVD player. The U.S. uses zone 1, while Chile uses zone 4. Keep in mind that not all DVD players or computers in Chile will be equipped to play zone 1 DVDs.

TELEPHONES AND CELLPHONES

The national telephone system in Chile is based on a cost per minute for all calls, local as well as long distance. For this reason, it is not commonplace to chat for hours on the phone in Chile.

To call to the U.S., there are a number of options:

- A U.S. based calling card (such as AT&T or USA Direct) is the most expensive. If you use this option, make sure you have the in-country code necessary to dial out of Chile.
- In your home or residence, you can pay for a long distance or "multicarrier" calling plan which allows you to punch in a four-digit code before each call. These calls will appear on your monthly phone bill.
- Chilean pre-paid calling cards are available in various amounts (US\$5, US\$10, US\$15) and can be used in both pay phones and home phones.
- In some towns there are international calling centers, where you can go and pay per minute for an international call.
- The use of SKYPE is also recommended <http://www.skype.com> Once you have registered an account with this Internet program, you can talk free of charge to other registered users on the computer. Through this program you can also inexpensively make calls to land lines or cell phones using a credit card to buy minutes. The program also offers the option of call forwarding to a land line or cellular phone and the purchase of a local number to make international calls at an additional cost. To use this program it will be necessary to have a computer headset with microphone. It is recommended that you purchase one in the U.S. before your arrival.

The major cell phone companies in Chile are Entel, Movistar and Claro. You can purchase a cell phone in most malls and some grocery stores, and minutes work on a pre-paid plan instead of monthly contracts. You can buy phone cards and more minutes as needed and incoming calls are free.



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Typically, using your cell phone to call the U.S. is expensive, therefore, we recommend using one of the above fixed-line options.

SCHOOLS

If you are travelling with children you will want to plan ahead to enroll them in a school. There are three types of schools in Chile, public school “municipales”, private schools “particulares” and charter schools “subvencionados”. Typically the level of English at public schools and charter schools makes for a difficult transition for children who are learning Spanish for the first time or who have little experience with this language. Among the private schools are more options for a bilingual educational experience, which can help students ease into studying in Spanish. Here are links that can provide lists of some schools in Chile:

http://www.ibo.org/school/search/index.cfm?programmes=&country=CL®ion=&find_schools=Find
http://dsrd.uc.cl/images/stories/pdf/Orientadores/ranking_colegios2012.pdf
<http://www.zonacolegios.cl/>

4. FINANCES

CURRENCY

The official currency in Chile is the Chilean Peso. Before leaving for Chile or upon your arrival at Santiago’s airport, you may wish to convert some U.S. dollars into pesos. Traveller’s checks, particularly American Express, can be exchanged in larger banks and hotels within Santiago and other major cities, but the use of debit cards at ATMs will probably give you the best exchange rates. ATMs are common in large cities and generally available in smaller towns, as well.

BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

- Bring a sufficient amount of cash and/or traveller’s checks to cover expenses for the first several weeks in Chile and to provide for incidental travel expenses. We recommend that you budget sufficient funds for two weeks of hotel lodging while securing housing in Chile. Be aware that traveller’s checks may not be easily cashed in small towns, and should be cashed before leaving Santiago.
- Make withdrawals with a debit card. Before travelling to Chile, make sure that your debit card system in the United States and Chile are compatible. Systems such as MOST, CIRRUS and PLUS are commonly used systems in most Chilean banks.
- Most ATMs are available 24 hours a day and typical bank hours are 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday. In rural areas, ATM machines may not be available. Therefore, when you travel to a rural area, plan to bring sufficient cash for the duration of your journey.
 - International fees for getting money from ATM machines in Chile are high. As suggestion, a former Visiting Scholar mentioned that she, got a Charles Schwab account (and card) in the USA and she was not charged for any ATM fees in Chile.*



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*(The Fulbright Commission has not confirmed this information, and does not have responsibility on the services or charges of this type of service. Mentioning this is just a suggestion in case you would like to explore the possibility of obtaining this kind of account to avoid paying fees when withdrawing money from ATM machines)

BANKING SAFETY

As in any large American city, use common sense in handling your money. Do not carry more cash than you will need for any given day and make all monetary transactions inside banks or authorized institutions. Also, when possible, do not handle money in the street and use under arm purses or carry your money in your front pockets.

CREDIT CARDS

Credit cards such as VISA, American Express, and MasterCard may be used throughout Chile. You should advise your credit card company of your travel plans prior to your departure. You should also check to see if your credit card can be used overseas and if you need to obtain an international pin number for cash advances. It is important to keep a copy of your credit and debit cards and the telephone numbers of each company separate from your cards. When making a purchase with your credit card or debit card, you will be asked to provide your passport number underneath your signature for identification purposes. Therefore, it is recommended that you memorize this number so that you do not have to frequently refer to your passport.

5. TRANSPORTATION IN CHILE

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation is reliable and inexpensive throughout Chile. However, rural areas may not enjoy the luxury of consistent timetables for public bus services. If this is the case in your host community, we suggested that during peak hours in rural areas you use *colectivos*, which are special taxi services with a specific route listed on top of the vehicle. They pick up as many as four passengers along the route for approximately U.S. \$1.00-2.00 per person. Regular taxicabs have no specific route and can take you to destinations not normally serviced by other forms of transportation.

- Getting around (in Santiago)

For public transport in Santiago you will need a BIP card. www.transantiago.cl/TARJETABIP/

Transantiago is the public transport System in Chile. Maps available in the Quinta Normal metro station, or you can access maps on line at www.transantiago.cl

Metro de Santiago information: www.metroantiago.cl

Information about cycling in Chile: www.bicicultura.cl/bicimapa

Mapcity guidebook (available at kiosks around Santiago) or on line at: www.mapcity.cl/#t01



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INTERNATIONAL DRIVER'S LICENSE

If you intend to drive inside or outside of Chile, you should obtain an International Driver's License (IDL) before leaving the United States. You can obtain an IDL from your local AAA (American Automobile Association) office, whether or not you are a member. In order to qualify for an IDL, you must be at least 18 years old and possess a valid U.S. driver's license. The cost of an IDL is approximately U.S. \$30.00. The IDL may be issued within six weeks of your departure date. If your U.S. driver's license will expire during your time in Chile, it is advisable to renew it before your departure in order to maintain it as a valid form of identification.

6. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INFORMATION

ABOUT CHILE AND IT'S PEOPLE

Geographically speaking, Chile is the longest and narrowest country in the world. It spans nearly 5,000 kilometres from north to south. Its terrain includes everything; desert, ice, valleys, canyons, lakes, forests, islands, glaciers, and rivers. To the east is the Andes mountain range, with some peaks higher than 6,000 meters, and to the west the Pacific Ocean, reaching up to 8,000 meters deep in some parts.

Chile was the last country in America to be occupied by the Spanish. By the first half of the 15th century, the Incans had conquered the northern part of what is currently Chilean territory. However, their presence lasted for less than 70 years and they did little to modify the already existing civilizations and languages.

Chile's climatic and geographic diversity have not significantly impeded the development of a homogenous and integrated population. There are only slight differences in the Spanish spoken in the north and in the south. There are, however, differences in culture and folklore. Dances, songs, typical dress, customs, and food can vary drastically from north to south.

The population of Chile is approximately 16.8 million with 88% living in urban areas and 12% living in rural areas as of 2008. The population has an annual growth rate of 1.1% and life expectancy averages 79 years. Chile has a high literacy rate, about 97%, making it stand out among the majority of countries in Latin America. Approximately 2% of the population lives below the international poverty line.*

*UNICEF statistics http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/chile_statistics.html

FOOD AND MEALS

Mealtimes in Chile vary. Breakfast is usually light, sometimes only bread and tea or coffee. Lunchtime is considered the main meal of the day, and is usually the largest meal. Instead of the typical dinner that Americans are used to, Chileans prefer a lighter evening tea called "once", which usually includes bread with deli meat, cheese, avocado, or jams and tea or coffee.

COMMUNICATION

Nonverbal communication is an important aspect of Chilean society, and there is more touching and less personal space in conversations than you are used to in the U.S. The typical greeting is a kiss on the cheek to say hello between women and women and men. Men will usually greet with a handshake and if they are good friends or family members a hug or a kiss on the cheek.

7. EDUCATION

THE CHILEAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Children in Chile attend primary school for eight years, from the ages of six to fourteen. These eight years of schooling are compulsory for all Chilean children.

Secondary school includes grades nine through twelve. Students may either attend the general academic program which prepares them for university studies or they may attend a vocational school. *Liceos*, or general secondary schools, are made up of three years of basic studies in the sciences and humanities, and one year of university preparation studies. Upon completion of the twelfth year, students receive the *licencia secundaria*, the Chilean equivalent of the high school diploma.

Vocational schools include industrial schools, commercial schools, agricultural schools, and technical schools. Like secondary schools, the vocational school curriculum extends over four years. The first two years are comprised of general studies and the final two years allow students to choose traditional university preparatory studies, studies preparing them for work in the service sector or technical education studies.

There are three types of higher education institutes in Chile: universities, professional institutes, and technical institutes. Admission to the university is based on secondary school grades and the PSU, *Prueba de Seleccion Universitaria*, the Chilean equivalent of the SAT or ACT. For more information regarding the Chilean education system, please visit the website of the Ministry of Education at <http://www.mineduc.cl>

8. SPECIAL MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS

ACCESS TO AMERICAN EMBASSY HEALTH UNIT

U.S. Embassy/Consulate health unit facilities are not available for use by Fulbright grantees or other persons who are not U.S. government officials because of limitations of space and medical staff. You should expect to make your own arrangements to obtain any needed medical treatment from local, public, or private medical facilities.

MEDICAL FACILITIES IN CHILE

During your exchange in Chile both private “*clinicas*” and public hospitals will be available. *Clinicas* are private sector hospitals which tend to have well-equipped medical facilities. Public hospitals are more



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affordable, but there are often long waits to see doctors. It is therefore advisable to not seek treatment at public hospitals for acute symptoms. We also advise that if you are uncertain about which doctor to see, ask several colleagues at the university where you are teaching for references. This tends to ensure the professional capabilities of the doctor.

If you have special medical needs, or take a specific prescription medication, we recommend bringing a sufficient supply of medication with you and clearly labelled it with your name.

For more information on medical facilities and options in your region of Chile, please contact your university host.

9. SAFETY AND SECURITY

In terms of safety, you should always keep a close eye on your belongings. Chile does not have a high rate of violence, but petty theft is frequent. Be aware of your environment and use common sense.

Here are some useful tips for staying safe:

- Use your inside pockets for valuable items. NEVER keep them in the outer pockets of your jacket or in your backpack.
- Always keep your purse or backpack zippered shut and clutched to your chest or worn across your body. Be especially careful on public transportation.
- Try to use ATM machines inside banks or other monitored areas. Try not to take money out when in the street.
- Never carry more cash than what you need for one day.
- Never carry valuables, like laptops, with you whenever possible. Keep them locked in your apartment or residence.
- Never carry your original passport unless you are travelling. Always carry a photocopy of your passport with you.
- Do not leave valuables in a car even if the car is locked.

Emergency Telephone Numbers

- 133 – Emergencies “*Carabineros*” (Chilean police)
- 139 – Police Information
- 131 – Ambulance
- 103 – Information

You should register your stay in Chile with the U.S. Consulate so that you can be contacted in case of an emergency. Registration instructions can be found at:

http://chile.usembassy.gov/information_for_travelers.html



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Report immediately any threat or crime against you to the “*Carabineros*” at any police station. If you are apprehended by the police, do not under any circumstances attempt to bribe the “*Carabineros*” or “*Policia de Investigaciones.*”