



Sustainability Guidelines: Chile

You are about to embark on a wonderful trip to the South American country of Chile, known for its stunning natural beauty and wildlife. Your trip will show you all that Chile has to offer, leaving you with a great appreciation for this country.

Environmental Issues:

Chile's natural beauty is, however, threatened by environmental issues. The main environmental struggles that Chile faces are:

- Widespread deforestation which results in soil erosion
- Air pollution from industrial and vehicle emissions, especially acute in urban centers
- Poor water quality due to inadequate water transport and purification systems; only 58% of rural dwellers have pure drinking water
- Endangered species in Chile include the South Andean huemul, tundra peregrine falcon, Chilean woodstar and the green sea turtle. 16 species of mammals are considered endangered and 18 species of bird are threatened with extinction.

Environmental Initiatives:

While it seems as though the environmental perils might be overwhelming the country, Chile has taken great measures to help mitigate these environmental issues.

Sustainable Chile is a program developed by environmental organizations, academics, public opinion leaders, and social leaders in order to stimulate the preparation of a proposal for Chile's social, political, and economic transformation - a change from the current development model to a new model based on sustainability. The program has obtained the support of the Instituto de Ecologica Politica (Political Ecology Institute), la Red Nacional de Accion Ecologica (National Network for Ecological Action), and the Bolivariana University. Currently, the Program has over 60 associated organizations and works on various projects throughout the country dealing with implementation plans of sustainable development and ecological conservation.

The ***World Wildlife Fund*** has several ongoing projects in the country of Chile. The *Fund* is focused on four initiatives that present the best opportunities for changing the global markets that challenge the future Southern Chile.

- **Creating a network of coastal and marine protected areas:**
The expansion of salmon farming in the Gulf of Corcovado represents a major threat to Southern Chile's marine ecosystem and habitats. Overfishing, pollution, maritime traffic, trawling and bycatch all negatively impact the marine environment. The *Fund* is working with local conservation groups, government

officials, communities and the private sector to create a marine protected area the size of Costa Rica in the Gulf of Corcovado.

- **Protecting native coastal forests and local communities:**
Unsustainable logging and conversion of habitats to pulp and paper plantations have dramatically reduced native forest cover throughout Southern Chile. The *Fund* is working with the forestry industry, indigenous groups and local communities to create a network of public and private protected areas and encourage sustainable use of native forests—especially in Chile’s Coastal Range and Central Valley, which are home to important remnants of native forest.
- **Transforming the forestry industry:**
As Chile is a leading exporter of paper pulp and wood chips, the Valdivian temperate forests’ natural resources are increasingly challenged by a low level of awareness about the forest’s ecological value and a lack of government capacity to enforce environmental laws. *WWF* is urging timber companies to establish conservation areas within forests that meet certification standards of the Forest Stewardship Council.
- **Reshaping the salmon industry:**
Chile is one of the world’s largest producers of farmed salmon, and intensive industry expansion is causing severe impacts on Southern Chile’s fragile freshwater lakes and coastal areas. *WWF* is collaborating with salmon farmers to put in place environmental and social standards that minimize the impacts of salmon farming and support economic growth opportunities for local people.

As a visitor to this beautiful country you can help support environmental improvements in Chile. Be mindful of your water usage, as pure water is a precious commodity. Take the time to properly recycle your trash and be sure to respect the national parks that you visit. You are very fortunate, as a traveler with Elevate Destinations, to have the opportunity to stay in eco-lodges that are committed to the nature environment. Educate yourself on the measures that your hotels are taking and see how you can participate while you enjoy your stay there.

Guide to Eco-Lodges in Chile

Casa Higueras is located on the sloping hillside of Valparaiso, Chile. The hotel has taken special measures to serve only local foods in the hotel restaurant and due to its close proximity to Valparaiso Bay, seafood is always served. The guest rooms are decorated with local products and handicrafts from the surrounding city and villages.

Awasi is located in San Pedro de Atacama, Chile. The hotel has a giving back program: Programa de Servicio Comunitario. The hotel is committed to sustainable tourism and motivated by the passion of the local culture and nature of the Atacama Desert. All the materials used while constructing Awasi were obtained locally and the techniques employed were the same as those used in the Altiplano highlands for thousands of years. The hotel was built with the assistance of local workers who contributed the knowledge that has been passed on for many generations. In 2007, the hotel set up the Junior Achievement



Foundation in partnership with the San Pedro de Atacama Department of Education. The foundation implemented an educational program that aims to develop the entrepreneurial spirit and study habits in underprivileged children of Atacama. In late 2008, Awasi employees organized a musical and dance group; its main purpose was to recover the aspects of Andean culture by rescuing the music and dance knowledge that the Atacamian members of the Awasi staff possess.

The Cliffs Preserve is located on 8,000 pristine acres of Valdivian Temperate Rainforest. Guests are able to see hundreds of species due to the location of the hotel. Since the hotel began operation in 2001, the hotel strives to operate with the lowest environmental impact possible. There are recycling efforts on the property as well as organic gardens that reduce commercial dependency. In addition, the heating is solar-aided which lessens fossil fuel consumption. The Cliffs Preserve employs local Chilean community members and the Cliffs also works towards social and economic growth of these local communities. The social responsibility of the Cliffs also includes the development of the community and educational initiatives such as local fishing village development and planning, social centers, and grassroots health assistance.

Lakutaia Lodge is located on Navarino Island, Chile which lies within the Cape Horn World Biosphere Reserve. The Lodge is established within an area which was listed by NGO Conservation International as one of the world's 37 most pristine wilderness areas. As a guest at Lakutaia you have the opportunity to journey into the Cape Horn Biosphere Reserve. Equipped with a hand lens and the assistance of a specialized guide, you will discover the forests of Cape Horn. In order to maintain and protect the World Biosphere Reserve, the Lodge works everyday in different projects on this area including a state-of-the-art water treatment technology facility which enables the Lodge to provide maximum comfort with minimal environmental impact.