



THREE **PERFECT** DAYS

Santiago

By Tiffany Amy-Ashley Woods / On a crisp morning in

the winter or spring, the sight is simply stunning. The majestic,

snowcapped Andes tower over the basin where Santiago sits,

and the Mapocho River appears to run straight out of the

peaks as it whooshes by full of melted snow. On days like this,

it is easy to understand why a Spanish conqueror surveying

this site more than 450 years ago decided to break ground

on what is today the bustling, cosmopolitan capital of Chile.

SANTIAGO IS A FAITHFUL TESTAMENT TO CHILE'S status as an emerging world economic market. A 17-year military government that ended in 1990 introduced free-market policies that have given the economy stellar growth rates and transformed the capital into a city abuzz with new cars, mega-supermarkets, high-rise apartments, and a large middle class eager to spend its new income on televisions and cellular phones.

This city of 5.4 million people lies between the royal blue of the seafood-rich South Pacific and the otherworldly, snow-capped Andes. Santiaguinos, as they call themselves, live in their own world, where neighborhoods, last names, and appearances matter and where international investors and a group of prominent local families control the dials to the economy.

Santiago is a city in transition. A shiny, glass skyscraper towers over an 18th-century cathedral in the main square—a symbol of the fact that Santiago has had some difficulty embracing the future while preserving the past. There can be glaring contrasts. Santiago is a metropolis looking for an identity.

The best time to visit is during the summer, between December and February, when the city's residents flock to the coast for vacation. Start your perfect visit on a Thursday so you finish before Sunday, when the city shuts down.

DAY ONE / You will spend your first day in Chile's capital exploring the historical city center, the convenient location of your accommodations, the 307-room, five-star **1** Hotel Carrera. Previous guests such

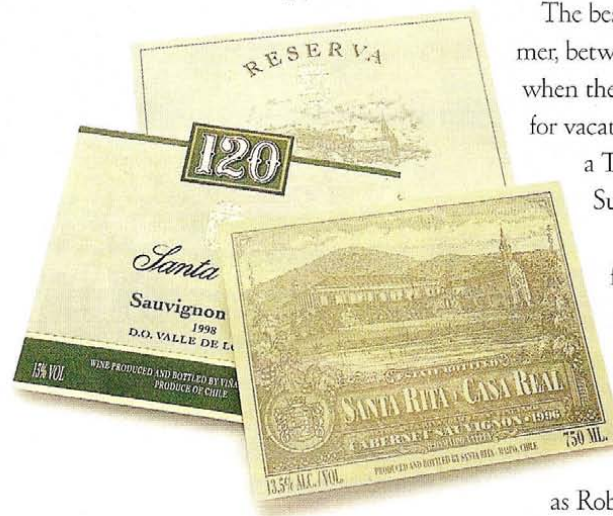
as Robert Kennedy and Queen

Elizabeth II might have slept in your room. The 17-story hotel overlooks the Plaza de la Constitución and the fortress-like La Moneda Presidential Palace (Palacio de la Moneda).

Glide down the red-carpeted stairway onto the street and come face to face with the presidential headquarters, targeted during a military coup led by Augusto Pinochet on September 11, 1973. Behind La Moneda stand the tomb of founding father Bernardo O'Higgins and the Flame of Liberty.

Breakfast is calling, so walk two blocks up Bandera to the popular **2** Bar Nacional at the intersection with Huérfanos. The place has been a family-run institution for nearly 40 years and is visited by everyone from taxi drivers to white-collar workers.

MARK WAGONER



Sample the nearby Pacific Ocean's bounty with a leisurely lunch at Squadritto. Then drink in the scenery en route to the vineyards of Santa Rita—a key player in Chile's growing global reputation for fine wine.

For breakfast, you'll probably want something light, so rest your elbows on the counter and ask for a *tostada con marmelada* (toast and jam) and one of the fresh *ensaladas de frut* (fruit salads), a colorful assortment of the fruit that has made Chile famous as an exporter. Top it off with a *jugo de tuna*, a green juice made from the fruit of cactus.

Walk half a block up Bandera to the 3 Pre-Columbian Museum (Museo de Arte Precolombino), housed in what was the Royal Customs House in the early 1800s. It displays pottery and textiles and explains the expansion of the Incan empire, which reached as far south as central Chile. Of note is the large Incan quipu—a device made of knotted cords that took the place of a written language and was used to register data such as deaths, births, and quantities of stored food.

Catty-cornered is the peaceful courtyard of the Foreign Ministry, which was the seat of congress until Pinochet

building in the city, dating back to the 16th century. Be sure to visit the adjoining museum, which among other items displays 54 paintings narrating the life of Saint Francis of Assisi and a replica of the Nobel Prize medal won by Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral in 1945. Exit the church and walk among the nostalgic 1920s architecture on the cobblestone streets of París and Londres.

It's 5 p.m., which in Santiago means it's time for *once*, or afternoon tea. Take a taxi to the 6 Hyatt Regency Hotel, melt into the sofas in the high-ceilinged atrium, and select from a buffet of dainty desserts. Then head back to the Carrera for a rest.

Dinner starts after 8 p.m. in Chile, so make a late reservation at 7 Aquí Está Coco, the city's premier find for seafood. Be sure to try the trout stuffed with rich king crab, and make a selection from the extensive Chilean wine list.



transferred it 75 miles west to his birthplace, the port city of Valparaiso. A group of legislators has lobbied to bring congress back to the capital.

Stroll the pedestrian corridors of Huérfanos and Ahumada; if you're looking for shoes, Gacel on the Estado walkway offers the best quality and smartest styles, as well as sophisticated handbags to match.

When you reach the end of Huérfanos, cross Santa Lucía and walk half a block down Rosal to the 4 Squadritto Italian restaurant, where a table and salmon-filled ravioli topped with baby shrimp are waiting for you (thanks to your 1:30 p.m. reservation). After a leisurely lunch, take the elevator or climb the steps up the Santa Lucía hill where naturalist Charles Darwin once stood and looked out upon the growing metropolis.

Descend, cross Santiago's main traffic artery known as Alameda, and enter the 5 San Francisco Church, the oldest

Left to right:
the streets of Santiago,
Santiaguinas, the
Foreign Ministry,
Central Market

You are now in a neighborhood called Providencia, so after dinner take a short taxi ride to the street called Succia where bars and dance clubs abound. Drop into 8 Brannigan's for a nightcap. Try the namesake whisky-based specialty drink, and wind down listening to live jazz.

DAY TWO / After a breakfast buffet in the hotel's Copper Room, taxi to the 1 Cousiño Palace for a 9:30 a.m. tour of the mansion that was built in the 1870s for Chile's wealthy Cousiño Goyenechea family. Decorated with French furniture and boasting the country's first elevator, the estate is an example of how wealthy families lived during Chile's formative years.

Next, the taxi takes you to the bohemian district of Bellavista, the meeting place for the city's writers, actors, musicians, and intellectuals. Get dropped off at Arzobispo Casanova and peek into the dozens of jewelry stores that sell lapis lazuli, an



MAP / OXFORD CARTOGRAPHERS



SANTIAGO

DAY ONE / ① **HOTEL CARRERA** Teatinos 180; Tel: 698-

2011; Fax: 672-1083 (Note: Santiago's country/city code is 56-2.) ② **BAR NACIONAL** Bandera 317; Tel: 695-3368

③ **PRE-COLUMBIAN MUSEUM** Bandera 361; Tel: 688-7348 ④ **SQUADRITTO** Rosal 332; Tel: 632-2121 ⑤ **SAN FRANCISCO**

CHURCH Alameda 834; Tel: 638-3238 ⑥ **HYATT REGENCY HOTEL** Avenida Kennedy 4601, Las Condes; Tel: 218-1234;

Fax: 218-2279 ⑦ **AQUÍ ESTÁ COCO** La Concepción 236, Providencia; Tel: 235-8649; Fax: 236-2636 ⑧ **BRANNIGAN'S**

Avenida Suecia 035, Providencia; Tel/Fax: 232-5172 | **DAY TWO** / ① **COUSIÑO PALACE** Dieciocho 438; Tel/Fax: 698-5063

② **LA CHASCONA** Fernando Márquez de la Plata 0192, Providencia; Tel: 777-8741; Fax: 737-8712 ③ **CERRO SAN**

CRISTÓBAL ④ **DONDE AGUSTO** Central Market, locales 66 and 166; Tel: 672-2829; Fax: 696-8069 ⑤ **LOS DOMINICOS**

Avenida Apoquino 9085, Las Condes; Tel: 245-4152; Fax: 366-9394 ⑥ **EL OTRO SITIO** Antonia López de Bello 53, Recoleta;

Tel: 777-3059 ⑦ **HABANA SALSA** Dominica 142, Recoleta; Tel: 737-1737; Fax: 777-5739 | **DAY THREE** / ① **VALLE NEVADO**

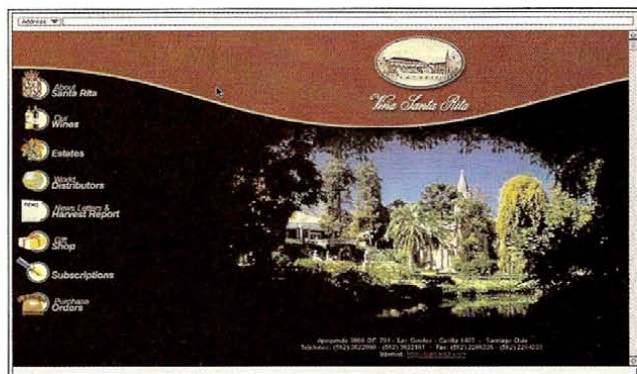
Gertrudis Echeñique 441, Las Condes; Tel: 206-0027; Fax: 208-0695 ② **SANTA RITA** Camino Padre Hurtado 0695, Alto

Jabuel, Buin; Tel: 362-2520; Fax: 821-4163. Limousine to winery: Ambassador Limousine, Adonay 3112, Maipú; Tel/Fax:

531-3404 ③ **FINE ARTS MUSEUM** Jose Miguel de la Barra, Parque Forestal; Tel: 633-0655; Fax: 639-3297 ④ **PARQUE**

FORESTAL ⑤ **MUNICIPAL THEATER** Agustinas 794; Tel: 633-2549; Fax: 633-2942 ⑥ **LOS FAISANES** Avenida Américo

Vespucio Norte No. 4010, Sector La Pirámide, Vitacura; Tel: 242-7575; Fax: 242-7581



SANTIAGO ON THE WEB

For an introduction to Chile, check out www.gocbile.cl, featuring information (in English and Spanish) on restaurants, attractions, transportation, and shopping. Explore the church, monastery, and museum of San Francisco at www.inter-media.cl/museosnfc/index.htm. Then peek inside the Cousiño Palace at www.palaciocousino.co.cl. To prepare for your visit to Pablo Neruda's La Chascona, read up on the poet's life and works at www.ascusc.org/virtualgroup/nicole/regine/index.html. If you'll be visiting the vineyards of Santa Rita, check out www.santarita.com. And don't miss the online gallery of the Fine Arts Museum at santiago-info.virtualave.net/mnba.

GETTING GROUNDED

A taxi can take you the approximately 15 miles into downtown Santiago from the Arturo Merino Benítez Airport for about US\$15. If you don't mind sharing a ride, climb aboard the Delfos or Transfer minivans (about US\$5), which will drop you wherever you want.

GETTING ORIENTED

Set between the Andes and the Pacific Ocean, Santiago hugs the Mapocho River. Much of the urban growth is concentrated in the eastern section, which is gradually tiptoeing into the foothills. Prominent hills like San Cristóbal and Santa Lúcia add texture to the landscape. The main traffic artery, Alameda (formally called Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins Avenue), turns into the linear Providencia Avenue, which runs parallel to the river and turns into

Apoquindo Avenue. Two main pedestrian walkways (Abumada and Huérfanos) intersect in the city center, where most of the museums and historical buildings are located. Uptown, the neighborhood of Providencia offers a variety of restaurants and bars. The bohemian barrio of Bellavista sits on the northern side of the river.

GETTING AROUND

Taxis, painted black and yellow, are abundant and operate with a meter. For a wilder ride, hop aboard one of the yellow buses and hold onto your seat as the driver tries to outpace bus-driving rivals. Three subway lines cross Santiago, with the red Line 1 being the most useful, as it runs from the historical center to the upscale Las Condes neighborhood.

SANTIAGO

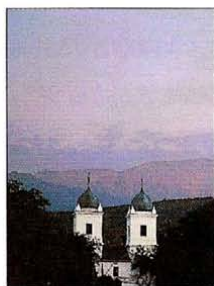
AVERAGE HIGH TEMP	F°	71	85	84	80	72	64	58	57	61	65	71	77	82
	C°	21	29	28	26	22	17	14	13	16	18	21	25	27
AVERAGE LOW TEMP	F°	45	54	53	49	45	41	38	37	39	42	45	48	51
	C°	7	12	11	9	7	5	3	2	3	5	7	8	10
		YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC

SANTIAGO'S WEATHER

Santiago's climate is much like that of Los Angeles. They are roughly the same distance from the equator. Of course, the seasons are reversed. In Santiago, spring kicks in around October, and summer lasts from December through March, when it is dry and hot in the capital, making perfect days for outdoor activities.

Santiago averages just 13 inches of rain a year, and summer is the heart of the dry season. The monthly average for February is just 0.1 inches. That can change in an El Niño year, when the odds of precipitation can increase significantly. This year, with El Niño absent, there's little to worry about.

Situated at about 1,500 feet,



Santiago in summer can be cooler than you might expect. Average highs are 84 degrees in February. But don't be fooled—record highs are near the century mark. Regardless of daytime highs, nighttime conditions are usually comfortable.


Fog or low clouds are not unusual in Chile. But, despite occasional clouds in Santiago, relative humidities in midday during summer average below 40 percent. Because mountains restrict the flow of air, Santiago can also have episodes of pollution and haze.

Fall begins around April and subtly folds into winter. Winter storms can be intense, but the sun often shines as soon as the rain has ceased.

THE WEATHER CHANNEL

 Weather information is provided by The Weather Channel. For more Santiago climatological details, visit www.weather.com.

CONNECTIONS

 Watch Three Perfect Days in Santiago on select international flights. See pages 130 and 131 for video programming.



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electric-blue, semiprecious stone found only in Chile and Afghanistan. You'll find chess sets, picture frames, silverware, and much more. Miriam Parra Joyas, FAL, and Three Times Lady offer some of the best selections.

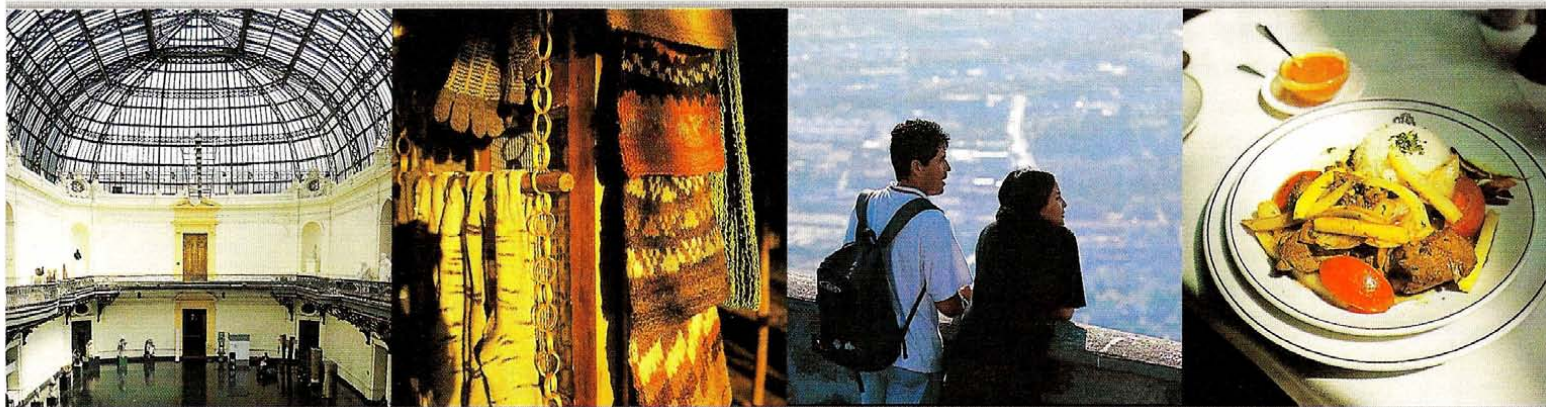
Explore the side streets. Amid the morning calm, you can imagine writers laboring over their manuscripts and painters splashing their canvases with colors as bright as the façades of these two-story houses they inhabit.

When you reach the street Constitución, turn right and walk three blocks to catch a tour of ② La Chascona, the former home of Nobel Prize-winning poet Pablo Neruda, before it closes at 1 p.m. Built between 1953 and 1955 to hide his lover and eventual third wife, Matilde, the house fell into ruin during the military regime. It is now restored and offers a look into the mind of the man who surrounded himself with bric-a-brac from around the world. Neruda immortalized Chile in

With a full stomach, it's time to hop in a taxi and head for some leisurely shopping for traditional handicrafts at the ⑤ Los Dominicos outdoor market in the uptown Las Condes residential district. You'll find high-quality sweaters, copper plates, spurs, jewelry, ceramics, and carved wooden stirrups.

Another taxi will return you to the hotel for happy hour and jazz in the Copper Bar. Ask for a *vaina*, a traditional drink made from port, cacao, a touch of cognac, powdered sugar, and egg yolk.

You will be dining at ⑥ El Otro Sitio, Santiago's most famous Peruvian restaurant. Although you are in Chile, you cannot miss this rare opportunity to try the *lomo saltado*, sliced steak mixed with french fries, sautéed onions and tomatoes, and spicy seasonings that Peruvians love. Order a pisco sour, a drink made from white-grape brandy, lime juice, powdered sugar, and egg white. Chile and northern neighbor



his verses, with such powerful words that you feel as though you can touch the images.

Just around the corner is the funicular and aerial cable car that will transport you up ③ Cerro San Cristóbal, or San Cristóbal hill, the setting for Chile's largest urban park; if skies are clear, you will enjoy a sweeping view of the city from the landmark statue of the Virgin Mary. Ride the entire aerial loop, then return to the base of the hill and grab a taxi for an informal lunch at the animated Central Market (Mercado Central), prefabricated in 19th-century Britain and assembled in Santiago.

Walk around and observe the exotic seafood and fish on beds of ice and the colorful fruits and vegetables. When a waiter at ④ Donde Augusto signals you to a table, savor an appetizer of Parmesan-covered razor clams and a clay bowl of steaming *paila marina*, a typical seafood soup that will revive any tired body.

Left to right: Fine Arts Museum, traditional handicrafts, San Cristóbal Hill, Lomo saltado at El Otro Sitio

Peru still wrangle over who is the authentic originator of pisco.

Be sure you are wearing your dancing shoes—tonight it's time for the exciting rhythms of salsa. A taxi drops you off at ⑦ Habana Salsa in Bellavista at 10:30 p.m., just in time for you to catch the spicy opening dance act before you take to the floor.

DAY THREE / It was a very late night, so make it a late morning. Have breakfast in bed before working your way up to the rooftop pool for lazing in the morning sun with a view of the city. Or work out and have a massage.

When you're ready to get busy, it's difficult to decide if you would rather ski or sip wine. If you're here in the winter and you opt for the slopes, start early and head for ① Valle Nevado, one of the Southern Hemisphere's major ski resorts. The hotel will arrange transportation.

But it's summer in January, so vineyards are more your style. ② Santa Rita, founded in 1880 and one of Chile's largest wine-makers, is expecting you for a tour (in English) at 12:30 p.m. Hail a late-morning limousine from the hotel for an hour-and-a-half ride through the Maipo valley, flanked by the stunning Andes. In the summer at the winery, vines stretch for miles, their wooden arms overflowing with plump, purple pearls storing up sweetness for the February-through-April harvest.

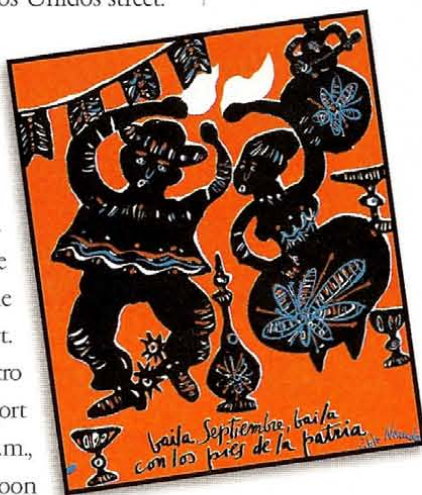
A red, colonial house hides stainless-steel vats—some holding 60,000 liters. Underground, a cellar built by French architects in the late 19th century out of bricks, egg whites, limestone, and tiny pebbles holds wooden barrels of slumbering wine.

Lunch awaits you in a stone-walled cellar, where in 1814 Dona Paula, then owner of the estate, hid 120 soldiers who were fighting for Chile's independence from Spain. The daring feat gave rise to Santa Rita's line of wines known as "120." In this stirring setting, try the grilled *congriso*, an eel-like fish, and a Medalla Real chardonnay.

Back in Santiago, if you managed to leave Santa Rita by 2:30 p.m., have the car drop you off at Estados Unidos street. Head in the direction of the ③ Fine Arts Museum (Museo de Bellas Artes) and meander through the 100-year-old, tree-lined ④ Parque Forestal (Forest Park), where kissing couples fill the benches and puppet shows draw laughter from children. When you get to the museum, step inside and see how the arched, glass ceiling illuminates one of the world's finest collections of Chilean art.

Next stop is the ⑤ Municipal Theater (Teatro Municipal), inaugurated in 1857 and just a short cab ride away. Shows usually start at 7 p.m., depending on the day, so pace your afternoon accordingly. Perhaps you'll see ballet or opera. Per your request, the concierge reserved your ticket when you arrived.

Dinner on your last night is at ⑥ Los Faisanes, a restaurant in the hilly outskirts of Santiago that enjoys a grand view. It's a favorite night spot for the city's affluent, over-40 crowd. Try the au gratin artichoke hearts filled with crab for an appetizer and the rabbit prepared in a unique sauce of pickles and carrots for the main dish. Between courses, dance under the overhanging plants to contemporary salsa played by a live band and bid farewell to the twinkling city below—one of South America's most distinguished capitals. **END/** **Tiffany Amy-Ashley Woods** is a Santiago reporter inspired by her city's proximity to the mountains and the beach.



Tour the opulent Cousiño

Palace to see how wealthy

families lived during

Chile's formative years.

Then peek inside the mind

of Nobel Prize-winning

poet Pablo Neruda as

you explore his former

home, La Chascona.

