

## Willis's Walkabouts Chile and Argentina Checklist – Update Nov 2019

### Personal Papers

- 0 **Passport** (I suggest also a photocopy of the page with your photo, kept separate in case of loss.)
- 0 **YHA** membership card. If you belong to the YHA, bring it. It might save money somewhere along the way.
- 0 Re-entry visa for Australia (for non-Australians). Be prepared for airport taxes, domestic and international, up to about US\$25 at a time
- 0 Air tickets
- 0 US Dollars in cash. (I'd guess a minimum of \$200, more if you are going to go into Argentina.) Travellers Cheques are usually more hassle than they are worth. If you don't have an appropriate credit card, you should bring about US\$2000 to be safe. A card is a lot safer than cash.
- 0 A credit/debit card (Visa, Mastercard or both) which can be used in ATM's. Visa is somewhat more common than Mastercard. American Express is good also but not as flexible.) ATM's in Chile give Chilean pesos only.
- 0 There are lots of ATMs in Coyhaique. The only other ATMs are in Cochrane and in Chile Chico. You will need to carry lots of Chilean Pesos.
- 0 South of Cochrane, the only place that takes credit cards is the boat from Villa O'Higgins.
- 0 When you arrive in Chile, you will need to pay a reciprocity fee (we charge them when they visit Australia, they charge us when we visit Chile). You will need cash or a credit card for this. As of September 2017, this was US\$117. US and most European citizens didn't have to pay the fee.
- 0 To minimise fees, make fewer and larger withdrawals and put some money into your credit card account before you leave. Check with your bank as you may now be able to make direct withdrawals from your account.
- 0 Waist belts, neck straps, leg pouches are all good places to carry money and documents. Do not carry all your money and identification in one place. If you use travellers cheques, keep a list of the numbers of your travellers cheques somewhere separate from the cheques.
- 0 Your driver's license. We will all share the driving. International drivers license is optional.
- 0 Spare passport size photos are often useful.
- 0 Travel Insurance  
Your policy should cover costs incurred by the need to change airline reservations, medical expenses, lost baggage, lost passports, air tickets & personal papers, lost money (always limited). It should be possible to make a claim while in South America. It should cover you for things like medevacs while bushwalking. Not all policies will do this.
- 0 A small Spanish/English dictionary/phrasebook. Few locals speak English. A little knowledge of Spanish plus a dictionary will give you some independence and communicating with the locals will enhance your enjoyment of the trip.
- 0 A phone with global roaming or get a local sim card. If you get a local sim card, you will need someone to assist you to set it up. One client recently recommended <https://www.ekit.com>

### Photography

- 0 Bring spare batteries for any camera requiring them. You can recharge batteries between walks but you'll need an adapter. Car chargers also work.
- 0 Bring plenty of flash cards. They are available in some places but can be very expensive.
- 0 A battery charger and an adapter can be useful.
- 0 If you still use it, bring plenty of film. Slide film is often hard to obtain. All film may be more expensive.

## Personal Health

- Q Vaccinations: Tetanus (required) Typhoid, hepatitis & polio are recommended by some authorities.
- Q Personal medications: bring a copy of the prescription for any prescription item you carry.
- Q **Diamox** is a good preventative against altitude sickness but **we are unlikely to go above 3000 m at any point. Seldom as high as 2000 m.**
- Q Personal first aid items: sunscreen (**absolutely essential** when at high altitude; insect repellent, bandaids, blister kit or similar, etc. I will have a reasonable first aid kit for the walks but you might want your own antiseptic such as tea tree oil or betadiene plus any other items you are likely to need.)
- Q Vitamin tablets are recommended – surprisingly expensive in Chile.
- Q Toothbrush & Toothpaste
- Q Ear plugs for noisy nights are often useful
- Q Water purification tablets or giardia proof filter.
- Q Lip Eze, moisturiser

## Equipment

- Q Eating utensils (bowl, spoon, knife, cup; fork & plate are optional)
- Q Tent for yourself or shared (be prepared for strong winds and rain). Even where we are not doing long walks, we will have to camp near the car in some of the more locations.
- Q Sleeping mat
- Q Water bottles (two 1L bottles or a 1L bottle and a wine bladder)
- Q Sleeping bag - suitable for 0° C, preferably for -10° C depending on dates & final walks.
- Q Sleeping bag liner – keeps bag clean and provides extra warmth.
- Q A space blanket can be useful extra warmth. It can also be laid out on the floor of the tent to keep you dry even if the tent floor leaks.
- Q A groundsheet can be used to protect the bottom of your tent or to keep you dry as above. It will not be able to keep you warm.
- Q Torch - make sure it takes standard sized batteries. The rectangular batteries used in some torches are almost impossible to find.
- Q A small towel is useful. The commercial 'pack towels' are excellent.
- Q A backpack with a pack liner and/or cover. It is very important that everything in your pack stay dry in the heaviest possible rain.
- Q Bag for storing gear while you are on walks.
- Q Footwear for crossing icy cold creeks too deep for boots.

## Food

Some common items are not readily available in Chile, Argentina or most other South American countries.

- Q Muesli and cereals exist but there is not much variety and they are very expensive.
- Q Dry biscuits similar to Salada are readily available. Those like Ry Vita or Vita Weat are not.
- Q Peanut butter is expensive and not always available.
- Q Vegemite and similar are not available.

**Do not bring meat or meat products.** (This may have changed with respect to processed dried meats.)

**Do not bring fresh fruit or vegetables of any kind.**

- Q Dried fruit and nuts are reasonably available (but may be expensive). However, if you have a special type that you particularly like, you can bring some.

Be prepared for local customs in restaurants. In Chile and Argentina, most local people do not go out to dinner before 9 p.m. In some areas, restaurants do not even open until that time.

## Clothing

- Q Two sets of clothes for warm weather (Shorts are becoming more and more popular, but more with visitors than with locals.)
- Q Two sets of clothes for mild to cold weather  
If your walking clothes are not suitable for going to restaurants, etc, you will need another set which are. It is important to be able to be neatly and cleanly dressed at all times when you are not actually doing a walk. There will be some opportunities to do laundry – we can't be sure how many.
- Q These sets of clothing should include the following
  - Q Trousers. Lightweight, quick drying trousers are recommended. Jeans are **not** suitable.  
On the walk, you need something which will keep your legs warm in cold rainy weather.
  - Q Shirts. Light and heavy as above.
  - Q Sweater, fleece or something similar for warmth.
  - Q Socks (3-4 pair) Thermal socks might help. Plastic bags between layers of socks can keep your feet dry.)

Remember the layer principle. During the walks, you need to be able to put on and take off various layers of clothing so that you neither overheat nor get cold.

Both Argentinians and, to a slightly lesser extent, Chileans and other South Americans dress smartly, especially in the larger towns and cities. If you don't have something reasonably presentable to wear when you are in these places, you will look distinctly out of place.

In addition to the sets of clothing mentioned above, you need

- Q Hat. You need this both to keep the sun off and to keep your head warm.
- Q Gaiters
- Q Thermal top & pants
- Q Wind and waterproof parka
- Q Overpants or 'rain chaps' may be useful. While we will be in desert or near-desert conditions most of the time, we will be there at the time when they get most of their rain which can come in sharp downpours. But better to be safe than sorry.
- Q Gloves
- Q Footwear. Any boots should be well broken in before the start of the trip. A second pair of sturdy shoes or sandals is a good idea.)
- Q Sunglasses. On the Villarica volcano climb and other areas where there is snow, good sunglasses are essential as snowblindness can be a real danger.
- Q Bathing (optional) if you think you might swim anywhere. (The water will be cold.)
- Gore-tex socks/liners (optional). These will keep your feet warm and dry even if your boots get soaked through.

Argentina and Chile are probably the safest places you can travel in South America. The places you will be are safer than some neighbourhoods in major Australian cities. Nonetheless, you are relatively rich compared to most of the people you will meet. Please be careful and don't do anything to put unnecessary temptation in front of anyone.

**Topo maps online.** Worth investigating. Some can do full screen. Scroll around to get details of particular places. One site that may help is

- <https://www.mountain-forecast.com/peaks/>