



Santiago.

ABOUT SANTIAGO

Founded in 1541 by Pedro de Valdivia, the Chilean capital is today a modern, sprawling, and vibrant metropolis with over 7 million inhabitants (40% of Chile's total population). Flanked on one side by the Andes mountain range, and the Coastal range on the other, the city has a unique natural backdrop. Today, Chile's capital is a dynamic, modern city where colonial mansions sit among soaring skyscrapers, folk art becomes fashion and Latin and European cultures intertwine. After living in the shadow of other great South American cities such as Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires, the real boom came a few years ago in celebration of Chile's bicentennial. Santiago invested a small fortune into the construction of cultural centers, museums, and parks, across the city. Vitacura and Las Condes bloomed with stylish new art galleries, and the somewhat run-down areas of Barrio Brasil, Barrio Italia, and Barrio Lastarria were given a thorough makeover and transformed into a vibrant public arts district, a laid-back and alternative nightlife hub, and a chic gastro area respectively. It is also a clean, safe and friendly city with excellent infrastructure and countless options for visitors, both within the city itself and nearby. Yes indeed. Santiago has finally arrived and established itself as a destination in its own right. With a world class hotel infrastructure of over 14,500 hotel rooms within the urban radius, its excellent transportation system, a vibrant restaurant scene, and irresistible pre and post travel options, the city is well and truly on the map.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Spanish conquistador Pedro de Valdivia founded 'Santiago del Nuevo Extremo' on February 12, 1541, at the bottom of what is now Santa Lucia Hill. Prior to that date, the area was one of nomadic tribes, crossing the Andes to the coast, and feuding indigenous groups. He implemented a regular street grid, typical of Spanish colonial cities, starting in the Plaza de Armas. Decades of wars and turmoil ensued, and it was not until around 1750 that Santiago started to grow into a true city. When colonial rule ended in 1817, Santiago was relatively undeveloped with around 30,000 residents, but grew to around 100,000 over the next 100 years. Iconic buildings began to appear, such as the Mapocho Station and the Municipal Theater. After WWII, rapid industrialization made Santiago Chile's most important and most populous city, overtaking Valparaiso. By the 1970s, more than 70% of all Chileans lived in cities, mostly in the heartland. Santiago was of course the center of the 1973 military coup and the overthrowing of the Socialist government, leading the country into 17 years of *de facto* rule. As the city began to grow towards the Andes mountains, its population grew at a startling rate. Today the city is home to around 7 million inhabitants, which is approximately 40% of the country. Since the return of democracy, Santiago has become a stable, safe, and progressive capital city, something of a shining example for the rest of Latin America.

KEY AREAS

Santiago is a city of contrasts where the traditional meets contemporary. The city can be divided into 'uptown' and 'downtown', with its historical downtown center the home to countless museums and monuments, quaint side streets, and colorful plazas. This is also the administrative center of the city, where **Palacio de la Moneda** (the Government Palace), ministries, public offices, and financial institutions are located in a classic grid formation. Nearby, the **Parque Forestal** provides some much-needed main green space, and an area known as **Lastarria**, where local designer stores, cafés, and boutique hotels are a sign of the area's resurgence over the past few years, and its status of one of the city's hottest places to be. Just over the river one finds the city's main markets, selling fruit, vegetables, and seafood. Moving east, uptown Santiago starts with the leafy and stylish **Providencia**, before creeping up the hills through **Las Condes** and **Vitacura** to **La Dehesa**, a testament to Santiago's constant growth over the past two decades. Avant-garde architecture abounds, home to residences, office blocks, luxury hotels, and corporate headquarters for some of Chile's (and indeed the World's) leading companies. Perhaps the greatest symbol of all is the **Costanera Center**, a mixed-use commercial complex that contains four towers, a six-level mall, two hotels, and office space. Its magnificent and defiant Cesar Pelli-designed 'Gran Torre', is a 65-storey masterpiece and Latin America's tallest building.

THE VENUE

The venue for IJCRS 2016 is on Av. República 779, located downtown near the Parque O'Higgins. It is easy to reach by taxi and by Metro.

TRANSPORT

Santiago is a very easy city to navigate. It has an integrated system of urban transportation, which was inaugurated in 2008, 120 miles of urban highways cross the city connecting the center with commercial areas and the surrounding neighborhoods, and taxis are cheap.

SHOPPING

Santiago offers many shopping options, from the huge American-style malls of Parque Arauco, Alto Las Condes, and Costanera Center, to small crafts markets such as Pueblito de los Dominicos or Patio Bellavista. Typical items from Chile include jewelry made with the lapislazuli stone, alpaca scarves, ceramics, art, and items made from copper, wool, or wood. Shops and malls are generally open from 10.00am to 9.00pm, while crafts markets tend to close an hour earlier. Unlike provincial Chile, shops and businesses in Santiago do not close for lunch.

NIGHTLIFE

Like most places in South America, the people of Santiago dine late (normally 9.00-10.00pm) and go clubbing until the early hours. The city offers many bars and restaurants, especially in the areas of Providencia, Ñuñoa, and Vitacura, while the Bellavista area also has a thriving theater scene. Live music is also popular, with Ñuñoa being the preferred venue for local bands, but international acts tend to play larger venues such as the Movistar Arena. In general terms, Ñuñoa is ideal for a more local experience, while Bellavista mixes locals and foreigners. Both areas are great for bar-hopping and dining, and therefore allow visitors to spend an evening in one place without having to travel great distances.

DINING

The culinary scene in Santiago is vibrant, with great food to be found in hole-in-the-wall 'picadas' (informal local restaurants) to more sophisticated dining experiences in swish venues in the uptown areas. The finest dining and most innovative chefs are found in affluent suburbs of Las Condes and Vitacura. Downtown, dine late at night like the locals on traditional Chilean meals with a modern flair.

