Chile Essay, Research Paper

The country of Chile is located in western South America. It is a long country that just about half of its border is coastline. I chose this Spanish-speaking country because I thought it would be interesting.

The climate is one condition that may vary within different regions. The country extends a long distance from north to south. There is a lack of rainfall to the north. There the air is able to hold much of the moisture. Middle Chile has hot, dry summers and cool, moist winters. The temperatures aren’t often extreme. The warmest month, January, averages 63.7 degrees Fahrenheit. The coolest months, June and July, Average 53.3 F. More to the south the rain increases, and the length of the summer dry season shortens. Rainfall totals more than 200 inches per year in some places.

Chile has the longest seacoast in the world. It stretches more than 2,600 miles from north to south. The country is about nine times longer than it is wide. It is only about 227 miles east to west at its widest point. Chile has a small piece of Antarctica and some Pacific islands including Easter Island. The total area of Chile is 292,258 square miles. About 70% of the land is mountainous because of the mountain chain, the Andes, that runs through it. The countries that border Chile are Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina. The capital and largest city in Chile is Santiago, with a population of 4,421,900 people. The highest elevation is Mount Ojos del Sabado. The lowest is at sea level.

The vegetation also varies with region. In the far north along the coast there is seasonal desert plant life. In the desert interior there is almost no growth though. To the east a bit, on the Andean slopes are scatterings of cacti and desert shrubs. In central Chile the plant life varies with latitude and altitude. In the lowlands blackberry thickets and scrub vegetation are most common. Along the coast grow species of palm trees. The vegetation gets heavier toward the south. The south was originally covered by tree growth, but much has been cleared. The remaining includes myrtle, beeches, and a variety of evergreens. If you would go south even more all-deciduous trees become evergreens. These evergreens stretch from the islands to the tree line on the west Andean slopes. The forest thins toward the farthest south and becomes a grassy area for grazing sheep.

Wildlife is another group that will differ with region. In the north Andes exist guanaco, llama, alpaca, vicuna, Andean wolf, puma, and wildcat. The southern forests are homes for the Darwin fox, the pudu, which is a small deer, and several kinds of marsupials. Some birds here include the dove, duck, and perdiz, which looks like a partridge. The giant condor, Chile’s national bird, is sometimes seen in the Andes, while the vulture of Tierra del Fuego preys upon the sheep of the far southern region of Chile. There aren’t many freshwater fishes native to Chile, but lake trout, introduced from North America, can reach up to 30 inches or more. There are many saltwater fishes off the coast though.

The major language of Chile is Spanish. The major religion is Roman Catholicism. The population (1992 estimate) is 13,582,945 people. The population density is 463 people per square mile. Only 5 percent of Chile’s people are pure Indians. Pure Spanish decent totals close to 25%. 66 percent are mestizo, a mixture of Spanish and Indian. By 1980 about 80% of Chile’s population lived in cities.

Chile contains many rapidly growing cities. Some of those cities are Santiago, Valparaiso, Antofagasta, Valdivia, and Puerto Montt. Valparaiso is located near the mouth of the Aconcagua River. Santiago is located southeast of Valparaiso. Antofagasta is located in northern Chile. Valdivia is located in southern Chile with Puerto Montt just south of that.

Chile has a lot of iron, coal, iron ore, gold, silver, manganese, sulfur, petroleum, nitrates, and copper. Chile possesses the world’s largest copper reserves. Next to copper, iron ore is Chile’s most valuable resource and employs about 5,000 workers. The Atacama Desert contains the largest nitrate areas in the world. Most of the country’s coal production isolated in middle Chile. In 1945 oil and gas were discovered in southern Chile-Tierra del Fuego.

More than 90 percent of Chile’s people can read and write. Chile’s university system has long been known as one of the best in Latin America. More than 100,000 students are registered, and there are about 15,000 faculty members in 15 universities.

Chile’s government form is republic. The president is Eduardo Frei Ruiz Tangle. To vote you have to be at least 18 years of age. The flag is divided horizontally. The upper half is white with a white five-pointed star on a blue square in the upper left hand corner. The lower half of the flag is red.

Chile has one of the richest cultural traditions in Latin America. Literature, especially poetry is Important. Folk music and dance are very popular in Chile. The best known dance is the cuenca. Religious festivals are held to commemorate pieces of Chile’s history. Rodeos have huasos, or cowboys in colorful costumes. Soccer is Chile’s main sport. Thousands of Chileans watch professional teams compete in large stadiums. Another thing the people of Chile love is the sea.

The chief agricultural products are: crops- sugar beets, potatoes, wheat, and corn. The livestock are sheep, cattle, goats, and pigs. The chief mined products are copper, iron ore, iodine, molybdenum, natural nitrates, silver, gold, vanadium, lithium, manganese, and lead. The chief manufactured products are food products, nonferrous metals, chemical products, beverages, textiles, paper and paper products. The chief exports are copper, molybdenum, iron ore, fishmeal, paper and paper products, metal manufactures, and fruits. The chief imports are mineral fuels and lubricants, industrial raw materials, trucks, passenger vehicles, and animals.

In 1541 Pedro de Valdivia founded the first white settlement in the central Chile region. It was named Santiago. In 1810 Chile broke free from Spain. Independence was official in 1818. In the 19th century Chile made great social and economic progress. Immigration doubled the population. The mining boom began in 1860 when use was found for sodium nitrate. During World War I exports at times got up to 3,000,000 tons per year. When Germany was cut off from nitrate shipments export tons decreased quickly. In 1960 and 1965 destructive earthquakes struck Chile. In 1973 there was a bloody military takeover of the government.

The sea is the easiest way of transportation in Chile. There are more than 30 ports along the coast. Trade ships visit each. There is only about 6,415 miles of paved road in Chile. There’s about 42,745 miles of other, unpaved roads. There’s more than 4,280 miles of railways. There are seven major airfields in Chile. With the total value of foreign trade, Chile is one of the leading nations of Latin America. About 90% of all exports are minerals. The second leading group is made up of wood, sheepskins, and fresh and frozen meats. The leading imports are machinery, transportation equipment, and iron and steel products.