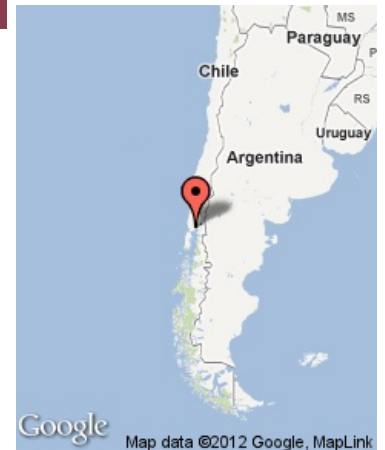


# Chile Lake District Cruise



## Highlights

Spend a relaxing 4 days aboard the Ona boat cruising around Chile's Lake District area – Chiloe. Catch fresh seafood and watch as your chef rustles it up Chilean style. Explore islands, museums, and enjoy dinner around a bonfire. Sleep the night away in your own private cabin.

Chiloe is an archipelago known as Chile's lake district. With weather that's not dissimilar to our own lake district - misty and rainy – it's not surprising why it got this moniker. The skyline here is pierced with over 150 wooden churches – a staggering 16 of which have been designated UNESCO World Heritage Sites. You'll also see stilt houses or 'palafitos' – rickety wooden houses that teeter above the water's edge. Although part of Chile, Chiloe has a very distinctive identity of its own.

On this 4 day Lake District cruise you'll be immersed in a life on the ocean wave. Try your hand at traditional Chilean fishing techniques taught by your captain, gather fresh oysters and, if you're lucky, watch shoals of sawfish dart past you in the water below. You'll spend time discovering some of the many wooden churches that dot the islands, and get a glimpse into the culture, people and history of this country as you visit museums and see traditional handicrafts being made.

## Is it for me?

This cruise is designed to be a relaxing four days. Expect to do approximately 2 hours of walking. You'll be sleeping onboard the boat and spending a fair amount of time sailing, so it's probably best if you're not prone to seasickness. You'll be based on a boat for 4 days so you won't have lots of space to yourself.

## Accommodation

Each cabin onboard has two comfy bunk-beds that measure 0.9 metres by two metres, basic wooden furniture and a little table lamp. Cabins also have their own private bathrooms with hand basin, shower, flushing toilet, big mirror and amenities like towels and soaps.

All food is provided apart from breakfast on Day 1 and dinner on Day 4. Expect tasty meals with a traditional Chilean flavour. You'll also get to eat fresh seafood that – with any luck - you caught yourself.

## Itinerary

**Day 1: Puerto Montt, Calen, San Juan and Tenaun**

Pick-up at Puerto Montt's airport or at the hotel. Drive for 40 minutes and then board the ferry to cross the Chacao Channel to get to Chacao, the northernmost village of Isla Grande, the biggest island of Chiloe's Archipelago. The journey then continues by land to Calen, a village where the Ona's dock-base is located. The captain and crew of the boat will be waiting.

After lunch onboard you head to San Juan, a small village that specialized for centuries in the construction of wooden ships. San Juan was one of the towns where boats from Europe and the Americas were once repaired. It's a small town full of history and friendly people anxious to share their culture.

In San Juan you'll meet your local guide who will take you to the shipyards and to a historic church, which was

Prices from  
**1,275** GBP (4 days) per person

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also built by the ship carpenters. On your way back you'll enjoy a walk over the hills of Calen and San Juan. Then it's back on the boat to sail to Tenaun village where your captain will show you some traditional fishing, setting traps for king crabs and fishing with equipment like "espineles". After dinner you can take an evening stroll. Stay overnight in the Ona in tranquil waters near the coast.

#### Day 2: Islas Chauques, Mechuque and Añihue

Collect the fish and shellfish from yesterday's fishing session and then start sailing towards the Chauques Archipelago, which is well known for its abundant amount of hidden inlets and numerous islands. Before noon you'll enjoy an easy hike crossing Mechuque Island to reach the picturesque village of Mechuque. The village is full of Palafito houses, which are known for their unique foundations constructed with poles. Visit the museum of Don Paulino.

After lunch, head to the local divers' fishing zone to gather fresh oysters straight from the sea. Afterwards you'll head to Añihue Island where your team awaits to take you to some superb saunas and hot tubs. There are also wooden boats for those who would like to go paddling for a while. Later on your crew invites you to an ancestral meal at a Huilliche bonfire. Your guide will give you an introduction to the islands you'll see the following day. You'll also learn about life on the islands and listen to traditional music. It's then time to go back to the Ona.

#### Day 3: Caguach, Llingua and Achao

If the tide permits, you'll leave early in the morning to gather shellfish. Afterwards, you'll continue the journey to Caguach, an island which is home to one of the most important religious celebrations in Chile. You'll cross the island and learn about the wooden image of Nazareno de Caguach, which was brought from Peru in 1778 and depicts one of the most important myths of the archipelago.

For lunch you'll dine on the fresh seafood collected earlier. Afterwards you'll visit Isla Llingua to learn about the tradition of basket weaving. Men and women of this island have preserved the old profession of making baskets out of natural fibres as they were made in pre-Columbian times.

In the afternoon you'll sail to Isla Quinchao to get to know the oldest of the famous wooden churches built by the Jesuits at the beginning of the 18th century. Sixteen of Chiloe's churches have been declared World Heritage Sites by UNESCO.

#### Day 4: Dalcahue, Castro and Ancud

In the morning, you'll sail towards Dalcahue. From here, you'll start a tour around Isla Grande – stopping off on short visits to see the main cities in this area. You'll stop in Castro and Ancud to visit a distillery, a textile workshop and to enjoy lunch. Later on you'll reach the ferry dock and after crossing the Chacao channel you'll continue the drive to Puerto Montt where the tour ends.

## Details

### Getting there

Flying to Chile or Argentina... Fly into Santiago de Chile or Buenos Aires Argentina. LAN is an excellent airline with departure gates in Miami, New York, Los Angeles, Madrid and Frankfurt. Air France, British Airways & Lufthansa are the big European airlines flying to Chile. You will need to fly on to El Tepual Airport (PMC) in Puerto Montt.

**Joining instructions** The trip starts on Mondays around 9.00am either at Puerto Montt Airport / hotel or Puerto Varas hotel. The tour finishes around 5.00pm on the fourth day with drop off at the same locations.

### Price includes

One English-speaking guide; all ground private transportation as indicated in the itinerary; double or single cabin in the Ona Boat for three nights with private bathroom; all entrance fees; all meals except breakfast on Day 1 and dinner on Day 4. All meals include drinks, reserve and grand reserve wines, and rack liquors.

Price quoted is per person based on 2 people sharing a cabin.

### When is best

The climate of the Chiloe Archipelago consists of moderate rainy weather following a temperate rainforest pattern. From September to March expect good weather, with temperatures varying from a minimum of 10°C to a maximum 26°C. Expect some rain showers each week.

### Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

### Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed

### Travellers should bring

Recommend items Small day pack; waterproof hiking shoes and socks; waterproof parka and pants; inner isolating layer (fleece or wool); sun hat; sun screen; sunglasses; bathing suit, and, of course, a good camera!