

## **Santiago**

Santiago, the capital of Chile, was founded in 1541. It has about five million people, making it one of the five largest cities in South America. Situated on a wide plain on the Mapocho River, about 100 kilometres from the Pacific port of Valparaiso, the city is backed by the Andes mountain range.

Santiago became the capital of an independent Chile in 1818. It is the political centre of Chile and its cultural and economic hub. Santiago accounts for more than half the nation's industrial workforce and plants. Major industries in and near Santiago include food processing, textiles, chemicals, glassware, machinery and furniture.

Over the centuries, the city has been hit by serious earthquakes, including one in 1617 that virtually destroyed it. Many older buildings still remain, some dating back to the 17th century. Santiago began to reflect more modern architectural styles during the 1930s.

Santiago has a moderate climate, with average temperatures ranging from about 7 C in winter to about 21 C in summer. Residents can reach ski hills and beaches on the same day.

The city is home to several universities, including the University of Chile, which succeeded the Royal University of San Felipe, founded in 1738.