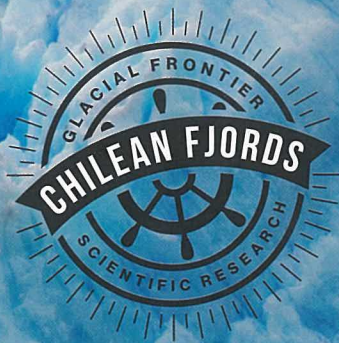


CRUISE SPECIAL 2019  
ONE OCEAN EXPEDITIONS



SOUTH AMERICA

# FEELING CHILE

*From the stunning setting of fjords and glaciers, to the fascinating history and unique way of life of the local inhabitants, there's so much to discover in Southern Chile.*

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOCELYN PRIDE

Chile is home to 80 per cent of the glaciers found in South America – and they're utterly mesmerising.





'calving'. His love for ice is infectious. "Ice stirs emotion. It's dynamic," he says. The rapid change in the Chilean ice fields also sparks global warming conversations.

"Glaciers are the canaries in the coalmine for us to understand climate change," Ian says.

The *RCGS Resolute* is the ideal ship for glacial exploration. Built for the polar regions, Captain Alex Dudov skilfully manoeuvres her into areas inaccessible to larger ships. Once anchored, a flotilla of Zodiacs and kayaks seemingly drops from the sky (via a nifty crane) ready for adventure. And between excursions there's time to soak in the hot tub or pool, work out in the gym, have a massage, read or play a game in the lounge, or hang out on the bridge.


## GLACIERS GALORE

Each glacier brings a different experience. Paddling by, hiking up or simply staring into the skyscraper chunks of ice is mesmerising. From the intense blue of Garibaldi Glacier sprawling in front of jagged mountains, to the new growth forest sprouting on Amalia Glacier or the sound of El Brujo Glacier moaning and cracking before calving shards of ice into puffs of whiteness, we just can't get enough.

Then there's nature's curve ball. The glacier that has even Ian as excited as a child waiting for Santa. Streaks of crimson and orange tinge the sky as we power towards the largest glacier in the Southern Hemisphere (outside Antarctica). As the sun climbs, bands of low cloud shroud the horizon and by the time we reach Pio XI Glacier, it's almost T-shirt weather. At about 66km in length and up to 6km wide (giving it a surface area as large as the country's capital, Santiago), the massive glacier is an enigma. "It's advancing rather than shrinking," explains Ian. "We're not sure why. Theories lead to something happening inside the glacier rather than external factors."

Aside from the glaciers, this sliver of topography is overflowing with other natural wonders – forests, hanging gardens, waterfalls, mountain ranges, hidden coves, beaches. And there's an abundance of wildlife. Without human intervention, curiosity has replaced fear. Dolphins play in our bow wave, fur seals poke their noses up in front of our kayaks, and sea lions pose on rocky outcrops. We even spot blows from blue whales, with the odd pectoral fin smacking the water. One afternoon as we drift through a tree-lined cove dripping with pink flowers suspended from vines, bubbles appear in front of the Zodiac. Our cameras poised, we follow the watery trail to large boulders, where a marine otter emerges, and simply sits and stares. At us. It's hard to tell who's more curious about whom.

Birds are also a highlight – hummingbirds flitting, albatrosses gliding, petrels diving, skuas hunting, fulmars dipping, gulls soaring and flightless steamer ducks thrashing through the water like paddle steamers. We keep a tally of the species and sub-species we see (total = 87).

After two weeks cocooned in nature and small villages, we reach our destination – Valparaíso, a port city on Chile's coast, where street art-filled alleyways replace the tapestry of channels and fjords. As I wander through what feels like a thriving metropolis, Gabriela's words echo in my mind. "I don't want my culture to be lost." There's a lot not to lose in this captivating part of the world. 

## VISIT MINDFOOD.COM

Expeditions are the new vacations. But despite this adventurous spirit, many travellers aren't ready to let go of their creature comforts. We share 11 trips that bring together active adventures and luxury accommodations. [mindfood.com/top-11-luxpeditions](http://mindfood.com/top-11-luxpeditions)

**Clockwise from far left:** Gabriela is the elder of the Kawéskar people of Puerto Edén – she makes her living weaving baskets from grasses and reeds; We marvelled at the stark beauty of the landscape from the moraine of El Brujo Glacier; The *RCGS Resolute* took us into areas that larger ships could not access.

## SAIL AWAY

One Ocean Expeditions is a small Canadian cruise company committed to sustainable tourism, supporting scientific research and contributing to community projects. The 'Chilean Fjords Adventure' is an all-inclusive 14-day expedition from Ushuaia, Argentina to Valparaíso, Chile. *RCGS Resolute* is a superbly appointed, ice-strengthened expedition vessel with oversized suites (all with ensembles). Costs include airport transfers, all meals (two restaurants to choose from), non-alcoholic drinks, excursions, onboard activities and facilities, and use of expedition gear (boots, jackets, walking poles etc). The next expedition starts on 28 March, 2020. [oneoceanexpeditions.com](http://oneoceanexpeditions.com)

I don't know my age," says Gabriela Paterito, speaking Spanish through an interpreter. "To my people, age doesn't matter." The softly spoken words hang in the air as we shelter against pelting rain in Puerto Edén – a tiny speck of an island village on Chile's Wellington Island, rising from the glacial waters. Beyond the dock where we stand, raindrops smudge a smattering of colourful seafaring cottages into a watercolour painting. With no roads and a population of around 175, it doesn't get more remote – even by Chilean standards. It's day nine of our 14-day cruise through the Chilean fjords with One Ocean Expeditions, and this moment encapsulates the before and after.

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

For around 8,000 years, the nomadic Kawéskar people paddled bark canoes, navigating the labyrinth of channels throughout southern Chile. Puerto Edén is home to the last few remaining full-blooded Kawéskar, and Gabriela is the elder – the only person who still speaks the Kawéskar dialect.

Gabriela's expression is contemplative as she reminisces. "We paddled everywhere – carrying fire in the base of the canoe, and sleeping in huts made of sticks covered with sea lion skins," she says. "I used to help my grandfather with the fish and mussels. He'd paint himself in sea lion grease and dive naked into the water." Through her art and stories, and the help of her children and grandchildren, Gabriela is trying to preserve her heritage.

Our comfortable passage through Southern Chile is a poignant juxtaposition to the adversities of an ethnicity facing extinction. Sailing from the town of Ushuaia, the *RCGS Resolute* – a boutique expedition-meets-luxury-type vessel accommodating up to 146 guests – transports us into landscapes sculptured by nature. "Westerly winds are the pacemaker of the climate here," says associate professor Ian Goodwin, a glaciologist and our specialist guide. "They're the cog in the flywheel."

The notorious Patagonian wind also shapes our itinerary. Plan A can become Plan B, C or D as if someone flicks a switch – mirrored water whisks into swirling currents, gusts snatch words from mouths, and bad hair days become the norm. But that's the lure of an untamed region that has long challenged indigenous peoples, explorers and travellers. Flexibility is key. 'This is an expedition rather than a cruise' is the mantra of One Ocean Expeditions.

In this environment, glaciers hold centre stage – indeed, Chile is home to 80 per cent of the glaciers found in South America. Ian guides us through ice speak with a vocabulary of words like 'growlers', 'bergy bits', 'slush', 'ice sheet' and