

TEMPERATE SOUTH AMERICA

ARGENTINA



AREA 2,780,400 sq km
POPULATION 41,770,000
MONEY Argentine peso

CHILE



AREA 756,626 sq km
POPULATION 16,889,000
MONEY Chilean peso

URUGUAY



AREA 175,016 sq km
POPULATION 3,309,000
MONEY Uruguayan peso

CHILE is 4300 kilometres long, but it is only about 200 kilometres wide, because it is sandwiched between the Andes and the Pacific.

In the north is the Atacama Desert, the driest in the world. In one place, there was no rain for 400 years! Fortunately, rivers from the Andes permit some irrigation. Chilean nitrates come from this area. Nitrates are salts in dried-up lakes; they are used to make fertilizers and explosives. Copper is mined high in the mountains.

In the centre, the climate is like the Mediterranean area and California, with hot dry summers and warm wet winters with westerly winds. This is a lovely climate, and most Chileans live in this area.

In the south, Chile is wet, windy and cool. Thick forests which include the Chilean pine (monkey-puzzle tree) cover the steep hills. The reason for these contrasts is the wind. It rains when westerly winds blow from the Pacific Ocean. These westerly winds blow all year in the south, but only in winter in the centre, and not at all in the north.

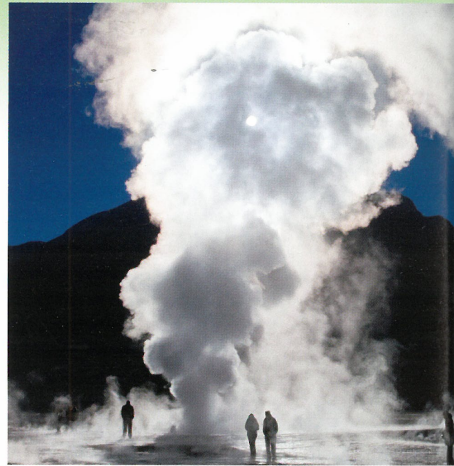
THE ANDES

The Andes are over 7000 kilometres long, so they are the longest mountain range in the world. They stretch from Venezuela (page 85) to southern Chile. The Andes are fold mountains, with a very steep western side, and a gentler eastern side. Mount Aconcagua (6962 metres) is the highest mountain in South America. Many of the highest peaks in the Andes, such as Mount Guallatiri in northern Chile, are active volcanoes.

The higher you climb, the cooler it is. And the further you travel from the Equator, the cooler it is. Therefore, the snowline in southern Chile is much lower than in northern Chile, and in the far south glaciers reach the sea.



▲ **Sheep farming in Patagonia, Argentina.** Southern Argentina has a cool, dry climate. Very few people live there – but lots of sheep roam the extensive grasslands. There are almost as many sheep in Argentina as there are people.



▲ **Geysers in the Andes, Chile.** Hot steam hisses into the cold air, 4000 metres above sea level in the Andes of northern Chile. It shows there is still plenty of volcanic activity in the Andes.

PARAGUAY



AREA 406,752 sq km
POPULATION 6,459,000
MONEY Guarani



The monkey-puzzle tree

comes from Chile. Its proper name is the Chilean pine. The branches are a spiral of very sharp pointed leaves. The cones have tasty seeds. It was called 'monkey-puzzle' tree because to climb it would even puzzle a monkey!