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FEATURED HOTELS

SANTIAGO

Santiago for any season

ROSS CLARKE / SEP 07, 2018

Chile, and its historical capital, is on trend, and not just because its creative industries have been scooping awards – Chilean drama, *A Fantastic Woman* won the 2018 Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film. In addition, 2018 is the bicentennial of Chilean Independence, it's *Lonely Planet's* Best Country to Visit in 2018 and its capital **Santiago** is arguably one of most exciting cities in South America right now. And with year-round mild temperatures, there's never a bad time to visit



March to May

Chile's wine scene has been growing in both popularity and prestige for a number of years, and some of the country's most prominent wineries can be found just outside the city limits, within easy reach of **Hotel Santiago**. This time of year sees vineyards harvesting their grapes, and *vendimia* festivals (pictured above) taking place. *Vendimias* are a chance for locals and visitors to celebrate a fruitful harvest. That means grape stomping in traditional wooden barrels, music and entertainment, the best of local produce, and plenty of wine tasting – from rich cabernets to crisp sauvignons, dark pinot noir

and other varieties. *Vendimias* aren't always publicised well in advance due to the nature of the harvest, so keep checking for dates. Keep an eye out for smaller vineyards and producers in attendance, who don't often offer regular tastings of their own. If you want some advice on the best vintages, wineries or bottles to take home, sommelier Sebastian Riquelme keeps the hotel's **Senso** restaurant cellar suitably stocked.



June to August

It might not be your first thought for winter sports, but Chile's pistes rival any of their snowy counterparts, and are less busy. The three valleys of the Andes (*pictured above*) have high-end ski resorts, all near to Santiago: Valle Nevado is the largest with around 45 kilometres of ski runs; neighbouring El Colorado is best for families; and La Parva is one for sightseeing skiers, with panoramic views of the capital 50 kilometres away.



September to November

The Fiestas Patrias – festivals of independence – celebrate not only Chile's independence from Spain, but also the ethos of Chilean culture. One of the best is known as Dieciocho (18th – as it's held on the days around 18 September), when Santiago buzzes with **food** and festivities. Gastronomes should head to one of the many *fondas* (streetfood stalls) selling typical *empanadas* (pasties – *pictured above*) filled with meat and onion, and *chicha*, an alcoholic drink made from grapes. To blend in with the locals, have a flag in hand and a handkerchief ready to dance the traditional *cueca*.



December to February

With the weather at its best, make the most of the outdoors. Head up the Cajón del Maipo and join local Santiaguinos taking a break from the city. Wind your way up the mountains following the course of the river until you reach the natural thermal pools of the Baños Colina or Baños Morales (*pictured above*). Take in a hike or horseride before retiring to the hot mineral-laced baths. Further down the valley and spread along the Rio Maipo, you'll find myriad pursuits for the active and adventurous, from kayaking to rafting – plus the river plains are also dotted with small vineyards for those who prefer more leisurely pastimes. For arrangements, speak to the hotel's knowledgeable concierge team.



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