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CHAPTER 1: CONFERENCE IN SANTIAGO

Santiago, Valpairaso and Viña del Mar





Stray cat outside our apartment in Santiago

Day 1: In Santiago!

After 5 hours of delays and 15 hours in the air, we arrived safely in Santiago. We were greeted by Sebastian (the UCSF organizing student) and Pablo (the main Chilean professor). Pablo took us and three other students to an apartment that he owns in Santiago. We took some much needed showers and a quick nap to start to recover.

The apartment was great. Plenty of room, close to the subway, with beautiful views. We were lucky enough to have our own room with a private bathroom, with Brad and Joy in another, and Paul in the third. Emboldened by some good map advice from Pablo, we set out with Paul to check out downtown Santiago. The Metro subway is fantastic, and puts the Muni to shame. For about 80 cents US (we are still trying to figure out the conversion and exactly what type of ticket we bought), we were downtown in less than 10 minutes.



*Top: Terraza Neptuno, Cerro Santa Lucia
Bottom: Palacio de La Moneda*

We hiked to the top of Santa Lucia to an old castle (Castillo Hidalgo) overlooking the city. It was slightly overcast, but the view of the Andes in the distance was still pretty amazing. Santiago is huge. Pockets of high-rises stretched out for miles, er kilometers.

We then walked down the Alameda toward the presidential palace. Upon reaching the main gate, we ran into Terri, another familiar UCSF face. Soon, several other students arrived, and we happened into a nice afternoon strolling around (now with some Chileno hosts as well), before grabbing a nice cafe cortado (half coffee, half cream, plus sugar).



That evening, we joined the group for dinner at Liguria. No one eats dinner here before 9:00 apparently, and many of the restaurants are closed during what we would call dinnertime. Nonetheless, we enjoyed our late dinner, then went to a local bar, Vittamini.

Day 2:

Fighting the jetlag/pisco-induced urge to sleep in, we awoke to a beautiful sunny day. Opening the blinds, we were treated to a postcard-perfect view of the Andes. Very, very impressive. Not unlike the days when Mt. Rainier is visible over Seattle, the Andes towered over the eastern skyline of Santiago.

We again hopped on the Metro, taking advantage of its even-on-Sunday timeliness, and headed a few kilometers west. We walked through the Bellavista restaurantes, street craft vendors and cafes, to the base of Cerro San Cristobal. There, we conducted our most successful transaction en Español to date, buying roundtrip tickets up the Funicular (*pictured, top right*), including zoo admission at the midway point.

We got off halfway up the hill (hardly a hill, topping off at close to 900 meters), to visit the zoo. The zoo reminded us of what zoos were probably like 30-50 years ago, which was a bit sad, but still very entertaining. And there was the added educational bonus of reading the animal names and plaques and attempting to translate them from Spanish.

After a few hours of lobos marinos, jirafos and osos, we rode the funicular to the top of the hill. As luck would have it, we took the same car that propelled Pope John Paul II to the top on April 1st, 1987 (or so

the plaque said, we think). Atop the hill, there was a beautiful terrace overlooking the city (*pictured, middle right*). There, we had the opportunity to sample a few traditional Chilean treats: an empanada con carne (fried pastry with meat, olives, onions, and egg), and a mote con huesillo (apricot in tea, essentially), and to visit the Virgin Mary (*pictured, left*).

The rest of the day we milled about artisan booths, and later had a fantastic dinner at Sebastian's house.

Day 3-4: Science time

The conference started today. And while the seminars were excellent, and the presentations very informative, the most important lesson that we learned came during the breaks. And that is that Chilean coffee is not nearly as strong as its Norteamericano counterpart.

After the conference we head out for a guidebook-recommended dinner at one of Pablo Neruda (Nobel laureate poet de Chile)'s old haunts. Galindo was amazing, and any previous concerns about Chilean food were put to rest.

The next day, we both presented our posters (*pictured bottom, right*), answering questions for both UCSF and Chilean students and faculty. Following the afternoon session, we all went outside and had some cervezas and pizza.



Day 5: Valpairaso and Viña del Mar

We woke up after a good night sleep and met our private bus to head south to Valpairaso and Viña del Mar. To our surprise, the bus didn't start, and we had to get out and push the bus (*pictured, top*)! Apparently, this was not a strange occurrence.

We first went to Valpairaso, which is a very hilly city (not unlike San Francisco). We went on a private boat tour of the bay, where we were served Pisco sours and Vinas, and catered snacks (*pictured, bottom and right page*). As we pulled our cameras out to take pictures, we were told not to photograph the naval ships, or our cameras would be confiscated. We then headed out to a very nice seafood restaurant for lunch.









After lunch, we drove to Pablo Neruda's house (*left*), which had gorgeous city views (*right*), but oddly had



a non-functional sink in the study, a glass-enclosed bird in the dining room and many other peculiarities.

We then got back in the bus and drove down to Viña del Mar, a luxurious resort town with nice sandy beaches, parks with puppet shows, and artisan shops. The group was allowed to split up at this point to explore the town. We chose to wander along the boardwalk and peruse the small artisan shops.

About an hour later, we rejoined the group at a nice cafe (*right page, left picture*), and hopped back on the bus to return to Santiago. That evening, we just stayed in the apartment and relaxed.



Julie, enjoying Viña del Mar



Viña del Mar







2nd annual Norteamericano vs. Sudamericano futbol match

Day 6: Who wants to be a billionaire?

In the morning, desafortunadamente, el primero presentacion fue en español. After the talks, we hopped on the trusty bus (no pushing required!) and head out to Pablo's house for an afternoon bbq. Pablo is the owner of our Santiago apartment, the organizer of this conference, and the co-founder of Chiron (cha-ching!).



His house was ridiculous. Nine acres, with llamas, baby alpacas, fancy pheasants, peacocks, y mucho, mucho mas. After lunch, we played an intense soccer match. Julie, the only girl, boosted international relations by referring to members of the opposing team as 'la polla' (the classic american chicken taunt).

Pablo's daughter, a 'pop-jazz' pianist, rounded out the afternoon by playing some beautiful music.