

Araucanía Region

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The **Araucanía**,^[2] **Araucanía Region**^[3] or **IX La Araucanía Region**^{[4][5][6]} (Spanish: *IX Región de La Araucanía*)^[7] is one of Chile's 15 first order administrative divisions and comprises two provinces: Malleco in the north and Cautín in the south. Its capital and largest city is Temuco, other important cities include Angol and Villarrica.

The lands of Araucanía Region were incorporated into Chile only in the 1880s during the occupation of Araucanía when indigenous Mapuche resistance was ended by military and political means. This opened up the area for Chilean and European immigration. In the 1900-1930 period the population of Araucanía grew considerably as did also the economy despite ressesions striking the rest of Chile.^[8] Araucanía became one of the principal agricultural districts of Chile, gaining the nickname of "granary of Chile". Araucanía Region was established in 1974 in the core of the larger historic region of Araucanía.

Currently Araucanía is Chile's poorest region in terms of GDP per capita.^[9] About a third of the regions population is Mapuche, the highest rate for any Chilean region.^[10] Araucanía Region have also been the main location of the confrontations of the ongoing Mapuche conflict.

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Araucanía Region IX Región de La Araucanía

— Region of Chile —



Flag



Coat of arms



Map of Araucanía Region

Country	Chile
Capital	Temuco
Provinces	Malleco Cautín

Government

Geography

Virgin forests, featuring coigüe, raulí, and tepa, as well as bay and cypress trees, criss-cross the region in all directions. The majestic araucaria, or monkey puzzle tree, also known locally as pehuén, towers above the other trees; its fruit—the piñón, a type of pine nut—is still a staple food for the indigenous Pehuenches.

A large part of this natural wealth is protected in various National Parks (Nahuelbuta, Tolhuaca, Conguillío, Villarrica, and Huerquehue), or National Reserves (Malalcahuello, Las Nalcas, and Alto Biobío).

History

Early Mapuche resistance

The Araucanía is the heartland of the indigenous Mapuche people who resisted both Inca and Spanish conquest attempts. Since 1885 the territory has been part of Chile after the occupation of the Araucanía. The Spaniards shed so much blood in their attempt to conquer the Mapuche people who inhabited this area, that they were forced to establish their southern "frontier" on the banks of the Biobío River.

Chilean conquest

Main article: Occupation of Araucanía

Following independence, the Chilean government opted for peaceful relations and did not begin effective territorial occupation until 1862, when new towns were founded and the railroad, telegraph, and highroads advanced. Araucanía was fully incorporated into Chile in 1882. Many cities and towns in Araucanía first appeared as army outposts during and after the Occupation of Araucanía. The last portions of the region to be reached by the army were Alto Biobío and Tolten River's lowlands. It has also been in these regions where Mapuche communities have thrived best after the Chilean conquest. With the construction of the Malleco viaduct in the 1890s, the region became more accessible and settlements in southern Chile became more consolidated.

"The Granary of Chile"

See also: agriculture in Chile

Until the mid-20th century the large agricultural estates that were established in Araucanía got the region to be called the "Granary of Chile". With naturally fertile soil and the implementation of modern technology like tractors, wheat harvests were extraordinarily high. With no crop rotation

• Intendant	Andrés Molina (Ind.)
Area ^[1]	
• Total	31,842.3 km ² (12,294.4 sq mi)
Area rank	9
Lowest elevation	0 m (0 ft)
Population (2002) ^[1]	
• Total	869,535
• Rank	5
• Density	27/km ² (71/sq mi)
ISO 3166 code	CL-AR
Website	Official website (http://www.gorearaucania.cl/) (Spanish)

taking place and indiscriminate logging and burning of woodlands, soils were prone to extensive erosion and lost the qualities that made them extremely fertile.

Beginning in the 1930s Villarrica Lake began to profile as a tourism area.

Economic expansion and renewed Mapuche conflict

See also: Forestry in Chile

With the return of democracy in Chile in 1990 Mapuche organizations renewed their claims on certain territories leading to what is now called the Mapuche conflict. Mapuche revindication organizations like Coordinadora Arauco-Malleco have sometimes used arson-attacks and death threats to back up their claims, other organizations like Consejo de Todas Las Tierras have sought and enjoyed international support from ONGs and their indigenous organizations.

Demography

Spanish settlers first arrived in *Araucunia* (one of two regional names) in the 1550s but are unable to subdue the indigenous Mapuches. The Chilean government endorsed a large-scale settlement program in the 19th century. It was common practice at the time for Chile to endorse land allotment advertisement to Europeans, notably in Germany, Austria and Switzerland where most of the new arrivals came from, often fleeing political upheaval and seeking a new place to live in Chile. There are also Basques from northern Spain or southwest France contributed to the region's development; and some Argentines from across the Andes.

The current population mostly originates from national immigration from the Central Zone of Chile and to a lesser extent consists of descendants of European settlers who arrived during and after the "pacification of Araucanía". The Indian presence is significant, being the region with the highest Indigenous proportion of Chile (approximately 25%) of which a majority are Mapuche people. About 25% of the population are white or castizo (another form of Mestizo (50%) of partial European-Amerindian descent), a large proportion of whites are descendants of culturally Spanish origins.

Smaller numbers of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Lebanese, Arab and Turkish immigrants, and people of (North) American and Australian descent settled in Araucania in the early 20th century. Towns like Angol had a punchline for having a "large number" of "Anglos", while Temuco has a thriving Chinese, Taiwanese (another group of "Chinese") and Syrian presence; and Villarrica was where several thousand Afrikaners or Dutch South Africans settled after their evacuation from South Africa following the Boer War (1899–1903). These towns also have a Dutch imprint, but about four centuries ago the region was nicknamed New Flanders when the Netherlands claimed the land but was returned to Spanish colonial rule. ^[11] ^[12]

During the past three decades, the city of Temuco has seen the most explosive population growth nationwide. According to the census of 1970, approximately 88,000 inhabitants lived in Temuco. In the census of 2000, 30 years later, the population had tripled to 250,000. The resort town of Villarrica on the Lago Villarrica has also become a demographic phenomenon. It is in turn located next to the fast-growing resort of Pucon, now one of the four biggest tourist destinations of Chile. According to the 2002 census, the most populated cities are: Temuco (260 783 hab. Includes Padre

Las Casas); Villarrica (45 531 hab.) Angol (43 801 hab.) Victoria (23 977 hab.) Lautaro (18 808 hab.) New Imperial (14 980 hab.) Collipulli (14 240 hab.) Loncoche (14 191 hab.) and Traiguén (14 140 hab.).

Economy

Until recently, Araucanía was dependent on cereal farming and was known as "Chile's granary." However, agriculture is now highly diversified, wheat is still the main crop, but production of oats, grape, and lupine has increased significantly and fruit and flower growing are also emerging.

The significant urban and commercial development, together with vast possibilities for tourism, contribute other openings for progress. Amenities range from a casino at Pucón to hot springs, adventure trails, and a Half- Ironman Triathlon (1.9- kilometer swim, 90-kilometer bike ride, and a 21-kilometer race).

The main tourism centre in the region is the Villarrica Lake and Pucón.

Municipalities

The region consists of 38 municipalities:

- Angol
- Carahue
- Cholchol
- Collipulli
- Cunco
- Curacautín
- Curarrehue
- Ercilla
- Freire
- Galvarino
- Gorbea
- Lautaro
- Loncoche
- Lonquimay
- Los Sauces
- Lumaco
- Melipeuco
- Nueva Imperial
- Padre Las Casas
- Perquenco
- Pitrufoquén
- Pucón
- Purén
- Renaico
- Saavedra
- Temuco
- Teodoro Schmidt
- Toltén
- Traiguén
- Victoria
- Vilcún
- Villarrica

See also

- Araucanization
- Arauco War
- Occupation of the Araucanía
- Kingdom of Araucania and Patagonia

- Mapuche

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External links

- Gobierno Regional de la Araucanía (<http://www.gorearaucaania.cl/>) Official website (Spanish)
- Website of the Kingdom of Araucania and Patagonia (<http://www.araucania.org/>)

38°54′S 72°40′W

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