Ali Yousseffi's Journey to Chile

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Ali Youssefi grew up in Chile. Now living in the US, he recently made a trip back to Chile where the highlight of his trip was a group hike up to the site where the Chilean Temple is to be built.

What led to you traveling through Chile?
Was this your first time in Chile?

Well, I actually grew up in Chile. My parents went there as pioneers when I was very young, and I lived there until the age of 17.

Where in Chile did you visit?

Well, like most people coming from foreign countries, I arrived in Santiago. But I was lucky enough to travel a good bit this time. I went to Talca, Panguipulli, Puerto Montt, and Pucon. All of these cities are to the south of Santiago.

What was it like being in Chile?

Well, since I grew up there, I can't help but feeling like I went back "home". But the truth is that I can tell the country is changing at a fast pace! It's easier to see when you've been out of the country for a while.

How easy is it to get around in Chile?
How well do you need to know Spanish?

Airplanes are not very popular for traveling within Chile. But the buses are spectacular! They have many companies, and each company has a variety of buses. So you can travel on a bus that would probably be like greyhound in the US for very little money, or you can pay just a little more and travel in what looks like an airplane's first class seats, with excellent service!

As far as the language, every day more and more people speak English, and there are many people who get by knowing little or no Spanish. But in order to take it all in, and have a richer experience, some Spanish would be helpful. Although Chileans always enjoy helping foreigners with their Spanish!

What was one of the most memorable things that happened on your trip?

Well, my trip was wonderful on so many levels, because I got to spend time with my relatives, attend a Bahá'í youth conference, and the summer school. So my trip is full of memorable moments. But I must say that one of the most memorable is no doubt the hike we did to the Temple site!

What was it like visiting the site where the Temple is going to be built?

I was very fortunate to get there right in time for one of the first visits that has been made to the temple site. About 40 people, mostly youth from Chile and other parts of the world, participated on this approximately 10 mile walk from the little town of Chacabuco to the top of the hill where the Temple is to be built.

It was a very hot day, with hardly any clouds in the sky, and most people ended up wishing they had taken more water!

Despite the heat, the walk was beautiful. And once you get to the top, it's such a peaceful feeling, surrounded by hills as far as you can see.

The architect and institutions involved definitely made a wonderful choice!

It's already a magical place, and the Temple is obviously just going to add to that magic and beauty.

Here are some more pictures from that day.

This is us making our way to the top.

These are some horses we encountered along the way.

The climate at this altitude is similar to what you might find in the American southwest.

We had to create our own shade at times.

Almost there...

Made it!