



Polanco Elevator to Baron's Hill

Summary: Most people don't spend time walking this section. A shame, because those who do are in for a delight. These zigzagging cobblestone streets reveal some astonishing treasures.

Estimated Walking Time: Approximately 90 minutes.

How to Get Here: Via Simpson Street, which spurs off the Argentina Avenue very close to the end of Colon.

Degree of Difficulty: Moderate to Difficult

Tourist Infrastructure: You won't find a lot to offer gastronomically, nor will you find clean bathrooms. Just wonderful vistas and a few charming neighborhood groceries.

Recreo Hill

Walking around Bilbao and Fontecilla Streets we enter one of Valparaíso's least known and most interesting neighborhoods: Recreo Hill. This is actually an extension of the old Italian section of Valparaíso, though few people know it. The route starts up Recreo Street where you can appreciate the patios of the Colegio de Salesianos. Many wooden homes date from the 1880's



and there are some striking balconies. This is truly an area that time has forgotten. Recreo Street receives Ureta and twists and turns toward Mendiburu, where number 277, an old country estate, is bound to surprise you with its melancholy abandon. From here we seek out an alley called J. Cuvier, beginning our decent through streets such as Urrutia and Zenteno

towards Larrain Hill, and its funicular. Near the lower station house, you will see the lovely Jesuit Church, featuring fine stained glass and an excellent organ.

Lecheros Elevator/ Neruda's Hideout in Valparaíso



Although not frequently visited by international tourists, the Lecheros Funicular is one of the most picturesque and beloved by specialists and photographers. The detail that hypnotizes most photographers is the pedestrian walkway that winds beneath the funicular railway: a beautiful detail!

The elevator is also the only one to be owned by a single individual: Don Justo Maturana, who has struggled to maintain the lift for years as his personal project. Recently, he earned a government grant install some gallery space in the upper station house. Outside the upper station house, at number 14, a plaque commemorates the home where





Pablo Neruda hid in exile when he was declared a fugitive of justice in the 1940's. It was in this basement hideout where he wrote his famous poem "Valparaiso" that includes the lines:

I declare you my beloved, Valparaiso,
and I will return to your unusual crossroads
when both you and I are free again, you
in your throne of sea and foam,
and me in my moist philosophical soils.

Baron Funicular

The neighborhood at the base of the Lecheros lift is the easternmost edge of the Almendral, with decadent but charming barbers shops, haberdasheries, and butcher shops. We traverse Argentina Avenue, past the old Gas Company (soon to be a Jumbo Supermarket) to the entranceway for the Baron Funicular. This was the first funicular to use an electric motor and is another of the most photographed of the Valparaiso elevators. A small museum in the upper station house is worth the visit. This is the principal entry into Baron's Hill, named after an old castle that once stood here, the "Baron Fort of Ballenary," belonging to Don Ambrosio O'Higgins, donned by Carlos IV in 1796, in Ireland.



Portales Vantage Point

This tiny park, situated outside the funicular station house, offers an outstanding panorama of the entire city. At night, this is one of the most spectacular vantage points in all of Valparaíso. This is also an excellent place to watch the famous New Year's fireworks celebration. Relax, take a breather and enjoy the view. This is the end of section 9.



Iglesia San Francisco



Iglesia de los Jesuitas