



## *Barón Elevator to Portales Wharf*

**Summary:** Highlights include the Church of San Francisco National Monument, and the incredibly beautiful Santa Maria University, one of the most beautiful campuses in all of Chile.

**Estimated Walking Time:** Approximately 90 minutes.

**How to Get Here:** The Baron Elevator has an obscure entry way accessed via the market place across from the Baron Overpass. Next year you will find a Jumbo supermarket next door.

**Degree of Difficulty:** Moderate

**Tourist Infrastructure:** There are a number of restaurants for all demographic levels at the end of the route, in the Portales Wharf. At this point, if you are willing to make another climb, you can make to the Portofino Restaurant, one of Valparaiso's finest, in neighboring Esperanza Hill. It is worth the effort.

### *San Francisco Church*

Walking along Diego Portales Street, we pass the Diego Portales Vantage Point, the attractive hospital

for ex- employees of the old railroad foundry, and quickly arrive at our first major stop by turning up Blanco Viel Street: the Church of San Francisco.

One of the most outstanding examples of red brick architecture in Chile, this national monument is fused with symbolic value. For more than a century, the illuminated church tower served as a beacon welcoming sailors to the port of Valparaiso, sort of a natural light



house. Many believe that this is the principal reason that international sailors used to call Valparaiso, “Pancho,” which in Spanish implies “Little San Francisco.”

The first brick was laid in 1846. Supervised by the Italian architect Provasoli, the church took several years and the austere interior architecture is almost as stunning as the structure itself. Next door there is an attractive convent with charming balconies. The church is often used for concerts and if you are lucky, you may stroll by in time to hear the memorable bell tower.

### *Castro Street*

The trail doubles back to follow along Castro Street, where we find an attractive housing development of two—story homes with marked German influences. We then turn onto Vega Street where there are more wooden homes and an interesting passageway called Barros Borgoño. This passage way is another example of the European influenced communal developments that abounded in Valparaiso in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The homes are painted evocative colors of green, rose, violet, blue, etc.

### *Yolanda*

Our route merges back towards Diego Portales Street on our way to Pleasures Hill, or Cerro Placeres. The no man’s land between the two hills is called Yolanda, in honor of the first daughter of Italian King Victor Manuel the 2nd. The hillside of Pleasures Hill facing us at this point has some attractive old homes adorning

the steep cobblestone street fittingly named Placeres Street. You can also see the old station house of an abandoned funicular elevator, now adapted into a private residence.

### *Pleasures Street*

We will walk up the serpentine Pleasures Street against traffic, which flows one way down the hill, so be careful. The name of the neighborhood comes from some minor gold reserves that were discovered in the 19th century. The finer houses on this street have an Italian flair to them, and were probably a natural expansion of the Italian population that originated around Polanco Hill.

### *Juan Elkins Street*

As you get to the top of Placeres Street you can access a small street called Juan Elkins, which was where the old funicular let off its passengers. There are some lovely small cottages in this area. There is also a small plaza dedicated in honor of Doctor Ernesto Quiroz, a renowned physician who dedicated his life to the needy of Pleasures Hill.

### *Santa Maria University*

We then double back to Pleasures Street, surrounded by noble old homes and small family owned businesses, until the gorgeous campus of the Universidad Técnica Federico Santa María will begin to appear at your left. We will enter through an official gate a few blocks up the street.

Widely considered to be the most stunning campus in Chile, the creation of this university was included in the testament of Frederick Santa María (1845-1925) who made his fortune speculating the international sugar exchanges in Paris. His will left significant philanthropical gifts for Valparaiso, where he had other investments in the shipping repair business.

The will indicated that money had been left to create a School for Arts and Trades as well as a College of Engineering. Architect Joshua Smith Solar won the contract. His resume included significant buildings in Santiago such the Carrera Hotel and the Hippidrome Race Track. Smith Solar traveled around Europe, studying universities, before settling on this design to create a Neo-gothic little city on the slopes of Pleasures Hill. The original buildings, surrounded by spectacular greenery and landscaping, was selected as one of 5 finalists for the “work of the century” award, given away in 2000, for significant merit in architecture.

The will stipulated the university hire only European teachers for the first 10 years. This set the standard for an educational institution that, today, is considered to be among Chile's finest.

The university arches gracefully along the flank of Pleasures Hill, and the most spectacular buildings are those closest to the water.

After zigzagging through this spectacular oasis, you will arrive at a steep stairway that links the university to busy Avenida España. There is a significant stairway and a bust of Federico Santa Maria that includes a section of his will and testament. At this point you can cross the elevated crosswalk, arriving at the Portales Wharf, where we can sit down at appreciate the view. This is the end of stage 10.

