



Plaza Echaurren to Torpederas

Summary: This section can be combined with section 1 to make a wonderful 2 1/2 hour stroll.

Estimated Walking Time: Approximately 90 minutes.

How to Get Here: By car, park at the underground parking at Sotomayor Square and rewalk the three blocks back to the Plaza Echaurren. Or take any bus or trolley that says Aduana and ask to be advised at Echaurren Square.

Degree of Difficulty: Easy

Tourist Infrastructure: Barrio Puerto should not be walked alone at night, but by day is basically safe. Lots of cheap restaurants adorn the market place. The best restaurant on this route is probably the Castillo, at mid route, just up the hill across from the Membrillo wharf. The Castillo offers spectacular views. The Membrillo Wharf offers inexpensive food, folk singers, and an informal atmosphere.

Echaurren Square

One of Valparaíso's most exquisite urban historical sites, this was originally the beach where Spanish explorers landed when they discovered Valparaíso in the 1500's. Later, it became a bustling commercial center,

with many century-old family-owned businesses such as the Echaurren Emporium, the Sethmacher Sausage Factory, and the Knopf Pharmacy. Other impressive buildings include the Market Place and the Aztoresca Palace.

The Market Place

This dilapidated historical monument is worth visiting to imagine what it must have been like in its prime. The façade was recently restored, but the interior still requires massive investment. Architecturally, the central stairway is a wonder. From here we continue down Cochrane Street, flanked by sailor's bars, to the old Plaza Wheelwright, which features the Custom's House, the Artillery Elevator, and the institutional headquarters of the Port of Valparaiso.

The Custom's House

Considered Valparaiso's most valuable example of colonial architecture, the custom house's most famous functionary was the great Nicaraguan modernist poet, Rubén Darío. The architect was the American John Brown Duffin, who made a significant fortune in Valparaiso. At his death, he left a testament, administered by his wife Isabel Caces, which provided for the founding of what would become the Catholic University of Valparaiso. This noble building has survived many an earthquake.

Villaseca Elevator

We continue for a block alongside some notable old warehouses, until arriving at the Villaseca Elevator (1907). One of Valparaiso's most unique funiculars. Be sure to watch for



cars winding their way down the steep cobblestones of Antonio Varas Street amongst the funicular pillars. If you look closely you may glimpse the "banderero" (flagman), an elderly gentleman who waits on a blind curve, signaling with a green or red flag towards cars that are going up or coming down. His salary is usually a 100 peso tip. At the top of the funicular, we zig zag through the Playa Ancha neighborhood, particularly Argomedo and Negochea Streets, enjoying the



panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean and the traditional architecture of the hill. Some of these homes are quite stunning, featuring elegant towers in the “witches hat” style typical of Playa Ancha.

Calle Errázuriz Echaurren

Named after a former Chilean President who died in Valparaíso, this is one of several trademark streets in this section of Playa Ancha Hill. At the pentagon—shaped intersection you will head down Federico Echaurren Street, starting off with a steep slope that seems to slip straight off into the ocean. At the end you’ll find a fine restaurant, “El Castillo”, with an exceptional terrace and several dining environments. If you don’t want to visit the restaurant, you will access, via the public stairway, the Quince (Membrillo) Wharf, returning to ocean level once again.

Membrillo Fisherman’s Wharf

This fisherman’s wharf enables visitors to learn about the lifestyle of the artisan fisherman in Chile. These humble, dignified folks preserve centuries-old traditions of working the sea. The restaurant is not elegant, but the fish is fresh. This is also an excellent place to witness the colorful Procesoion of Saint Peter, the patron saint of fisherman, celebrated every year at the end of June.



Rubén Darío Park

Below the naval school, this tiny park adorns Altimirano Street, whose deteriorated condition doesn't do justice to its natural splendor. The park commemorates the great Nicaraguan poet, Rubén Darío, considered the father of Latin American modernism. Darío lived in Valparaiso, where he penned the book "Azul," considered by many to be his great masterpiece.



Altamirano Street

Valparaiso's longest current stretch of walkable coastline is named after a beloved regional governor who played a key role in the beautification of Valparaiso. In the old days, this was a very fashionable area frequented by elegant trolley buses and cable cars. Today, the promenade is not in good condition, but that is no reason not to visit. The landscape is outstanding and when the tide is high, the water crashes along the black rocks with impressive fury. As the road turns around Carvalho Beach, you can glimpse the Angels Point Lighthouse, which will serve as your backdrop all the way to Torpederas. This road is scheduled for renovation in 2005.

Torpederas Beach

The starting point of the bicentennial route, Torpederas Beach is located at the end of Altamirano Avenue. Currently a hotspot for every day folks, this was once Valparaiso's most fashionable hang-out for the hobnobbing elite in the 1930's. Kick back and take a dip! You have finished the bicentennial trail!



Caleta El Membrillo