



Chilean Authorities confirm connectivity on the Southern Highway

More information is available at <http://www.chilestuyo.cl/especiales/carretera-austral/>.

Chile's tourism authorities have confirmed that visitors who wish to travel the country's Southern Highway will not face any untoward delays or difficulties, as alternative routes exist that bypass all areas of damaged roadway between Futaleufú and Palena.

The announcement came in the wake of a landslide in the town of Santa Lucía, located in Southern Chile, more than 1300 kilometers from the nation's capital, Santiago. The phenomenon blocked a section of the Southern Highway on December 16, cutting off the overland connection.

Under-Secretary of Tourism Javiera Montes reported that travelers heading between Puerto Montt and Aysén can reach Chaitén along the normal routes, and then proceed by ferry to the town of Raúl Marín Balmaceda. From there, the route southwards into the Aysén Region is completely open and fully operational.

She added that "anyone entering the country from Argentina over the land border crossings at Futaleufú and Río Encuentro in Palena will find the routes heading southwards through Chile completely open. The Puerto Montt – Chaitén route is similarly unaffected. This connection bypasses the 3.5-kilometer stretch of the Southern Highway that is currently blocked.

Under-Secretary Montes advised that "all travelers who want to take the Southern Highway and experience its unique attractions should plan their trip carefully and keep up to date on road connectivity in the area." She added that "our tourist attractions are fully operational and connected". Visitors to the area can find the latest information on which stretches of highway are open at <http://www.chilestuyo.cl/especiales/carretera-austral/>.

Indeed, Montes added that although the highway is blocked in one section, "the government has already opened sea and lake ferry connections to bypass the closed highway, allowing travelers to enjoy the unique destinations that Southern Chile has to offer."

It is also important to bear in mind that Arturo Merino Benítez Airport (in Santiago) and Tepual Airport (Puerto Montt) are operating normally, with regular flights to Balmaceda Airport (Coyhaique), another option for visiting the Aysén Region.

Flights between Puerto Montt and Futaleufú and Palena are also operating with no difficulties or inconveniences.

All popular destinations in the Chilean Lake District are open and operational, including Lake Yelcho, Pumalín Park, the Southern Highway, Futaleufú, Futaleufú National Reserve, Hornopirén, the Pichicolo Hot Springs, Lake Palena, and the Palena River. Similarly, all of the Aysén Region's attractions are also open and can be reached by road and ferry or by air, by flying into Balmaceda as the gateway to destinations that include Piti-Palena Añihue Protected Coastal Area in Puerto



Raúl Marín Balmaceda, the General Carrera Lake area, and the great Northern and Southern Ice Fields.

For more information visit: <http://www.chilestuyo.cl/especiales/carretera-austral/>