

South America Facts

Population and Life Expectancy

- South America is the 4th biggest continent.
- The population of South America was recorded at over 387 million in 2010.
- The average life expectancy of a South American is 75 years.

South American Climate

South America is a huge continent and so the climate can vary depending on where you are.

Most of South America is warm for most of the year. The climate is generally tropical so it never gets too cold but there are higher areas where it does get cold and the temperature drops below freezing.

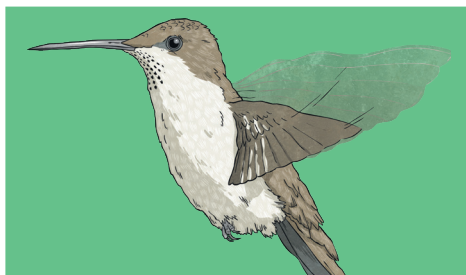
Most of South America receives plenty of rain. There are areas that receive downpours like the rainforest but there are also areas that receive little or no rain.

- Iquique, Chile - (5mm of rain per year)
- Ica, Peru - (2mm of rain per year)
- Arica, Chile - This is the driest city on the planet (less than 1mm of rain per year)

Did you know that some parts of South America are the driest areas on Earth?

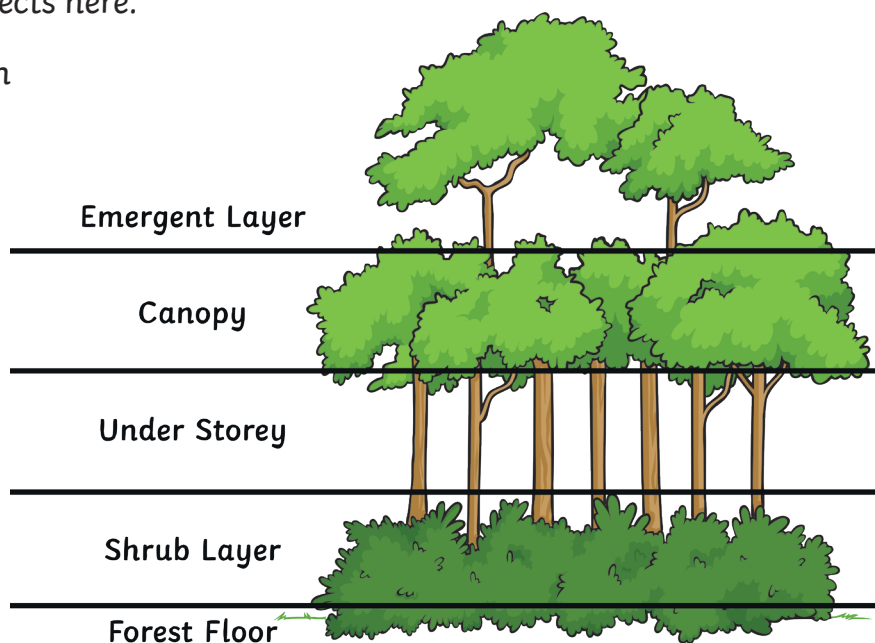
The Amazon Rainforest

- Rainforests are warm and wet areas.
- The Amazon Rainforest is the largest tropical rainforest in the world with more than half located in Brazil. It is full of wildlife.
- Tribes of people still live in some areas of the rainforest with no contact with the outside world.
- 20% of the world's bird species live here, such as toucans, hummingbirds and the hoatzin.



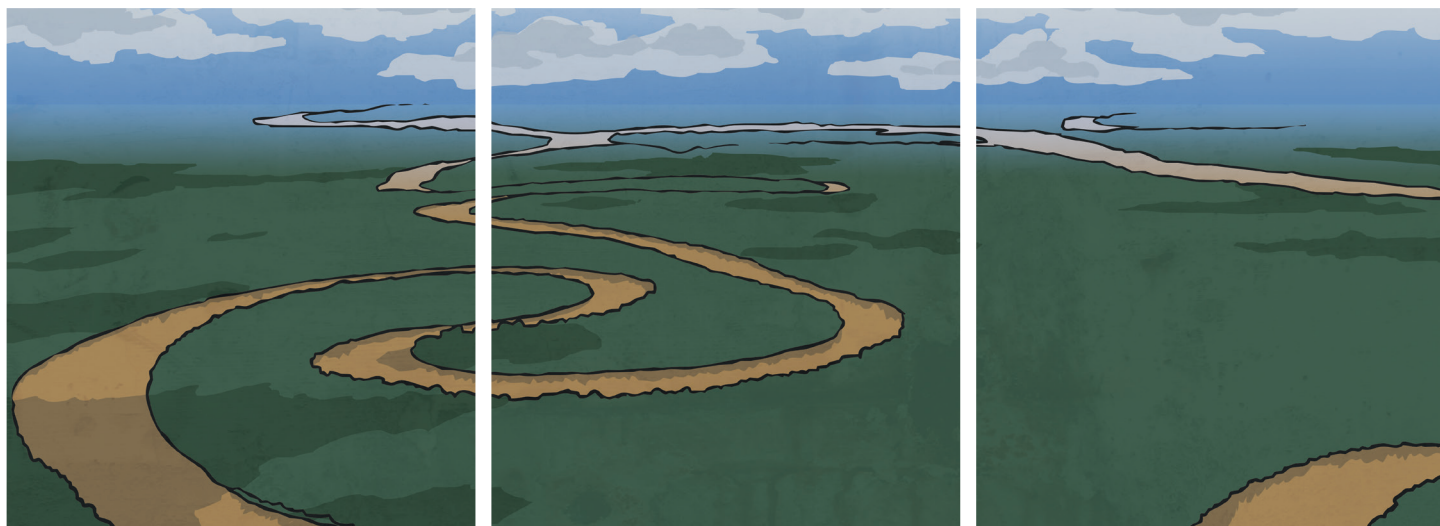
Layers of the Amazon Forest

- **Emergent Layer** - It's sunny here because it's the highest point. Only the tallest trees reach this level. You would find butterflies, bats, insects, monkeys and many birds here.
- **Canopy Layer** - Most trees of the forest grow to this height. Certain plants grow at this level but their roots don't reach the ground; these are called air plants. You would find toucans, snakes, orangutangs, sloths, parrots, lizards and many insects here.
- **Understory Layer** - Vegetation and vines can be found here and it's very dark. Here you would find bugs, jaguars, posion dart frogs and kinkajous.
- **Forest Floor** - A damp and dark part of the forest. Look out for tapirs and wild boar.
- **In the Water** - Beware of electric eels, anacondas and piranhas in the water here!



The Amazon River

- The River is approximately 4000 miles long, mostly flowing through rainforest.
- It has around 200 tributaries.
- It begins in the Andes Mountains and is the second longest river in the world.
- Piranhas, anacondas and thousands of species of fish can be found here.
- No bridges cross the river at any point.



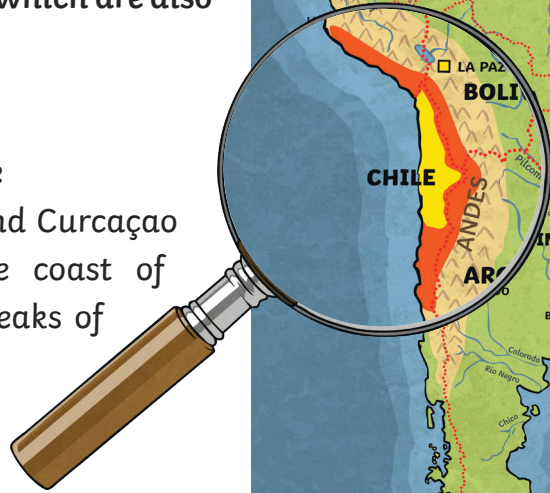
The Atacama Desert

- The Atacama Desert is 600 miles long.
- It is the driest desert in the world despite living right next door to the Pacific Ocean!
- On the map to the right, the Atacama is yellow. The orange areas are arid areas, which are also severely dry.

The Andes

The world's longest mountain range

- The islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao in the Caribbean Sea, off the coast of Venezuela, are the submerged peaks of the northern Andes Mountains.
- The highest peak of the mountain range is Aconcagua, which rises to a height of 6962m.
- The Andes stretch the following countries: Argentina, Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador.
- The Inca built their ancient city, Machu Picchu, in the Andes.



Cape Horn

- The most southern point of South America.
- The waters around Cape Horn are very dangerous, due to icebergs, strong winds and large waves.
- Penguins and seals live there.

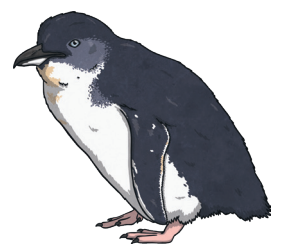


Photo courtesy of Doug Scortegagna (@flickr.com) - granted under creative commons licence - attribution