

# Ticket to the World

## Map and Overview



-South America is the fourth-largest continent in the world. It covers about 17.8 million km<sup>2</sup>. It lies completely in the western hemisphere.

-South America is the fifth-most populous continent in the world – it has a population of around 420 million people (although over half of these people live in Brazil).

-The Equator cuts through the continent. Most of South America is in the southern hemisphere.

-Most of the people live on the east and west coasts; the southern coast and centre of the continent are sparsely populated.

## Human Geography Features

<b>Deforestation</b>		The Amazon Rainforest has been rapidly destroyed over the past 50 years – since 1970, nearly 800,000 km <sup>2</sup> of rainforest has been lost. The main causes are agriculture, illegal logging, and human encroachment into the forest.	<b>What?</b> About 20% of the total rainforest has now been cleared.	<b>Key Fact:</b> 150 acres of rainforest are destroyed every minute of the day.
<b>Machu Picchu</b>		The Inca Empire was the largest empire in pre-colonial South America. Machu Picchu was a large Incan citadel (fortified central area of town). Incans abandoned it after the Spanish invaded. It remained unknown until 1911.	<b>Where?</b> On a 2,430 metre mountain ridge in southern Peru.	<b>Key Fact:</b> It was built in 1450 in classic Inca style with dry stone walls
<b>Colonisation/ Languages</b>		Throughout the 16 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> centuries, European settlers (mainly from Portugal and Spain, but also the French, Dutch and British) invaded and colonised South America. South Americans still speak European languages today.	<b>When?</b> Most countries gained independence in the 19 <sup>th</sup> C.	<b>Key Fact:</b> Portuguese and Spanish are the main languages on the continent.
<b>The Rio Carnival</b>		The Rio Carnival is a festival held every year before Lent. It is considered the largest carnival in the world, with over 2 million people attending daily. It is filled with parades of revelers, dancers, floats and displays.	<b>When?</b> Friday before Ash Wednesday to Ash Wednesday.	<b>Key Fact:</b> The Rio Carnival has taken place since 1723.
<b>Coffee Trade</b>		The coffee plant is grown in abundance in South America, and many countries from the continent are the biggest producers of coffee in the world. Coffee is a huge regional export.	<b>Where?</b> Mainly Brazil, Colombia and Peru.	<b>Key Fact:</b> Brazil produces 2.5 million tonnes per year.

## Countries of South America

### Largest S. American countries

1. Brazil – 8.5 million km<sup>2</sup>
2. Argentina – 2.8 million km<sup>2</sup>
3. Peru – 1.3 million km<sup>2</sup>
4. Colombia – 1.15 million km<sup>2</sup>
5. Bolivia – 1.1 million km<sup>2</sup>

There are 12 countries in South America, and a further 4 states that are listed as dependencies of other nations.

### Most populous S. American countries

1. Brazil – 210 million people
2. Colombia – 49 million people
3. Argentina – 44 million people
4. Peru – 32 million people
5. Venezuela – 32 million people

### Brazil



Brazil is by far the largest and most populous country in South America. It is also the 5<sup>th</sup> largest country in the world, by both area and population. The official language is Portuguese, and the most populous city is Sao Paulo. Rio de Janeiro harbour is its most famous landmark. Brazilians are known for samba dancing and a love of football.

### Colombia



Colombia is a country in the north-west of South America. Colombia has been inhabited by indigenous peoples since at least 12,000 BCE. However, the Spanish arrived in 1499 and conquered much of the region. As a result, the national language is Spanish. Much of the population live in the highlands.

### Argentina




Argentina is a country located in the southern half of South America. Argentina is the 8<sup>th</sup> largest country in the world by area, and the largest Spanish-speaking country. Argentina endured a long fight for independence with Spanish invaders in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, followed by a painful civil war. The climate in Argentina varies hugely from north to south.

### Peru



Peru is a country on the western side of South America. It has a diverse landscape, ranging from arid plains to the Andes mountains. Peru is known for being the centre of the Inca Empire – the Inca ruins of Machu Picchu remain a major tourist attraction today. The national language in Peru is Spanish.

## Physical Geography Features

<b>The Amazon River</b>		The Amazon River is the longest river in South America, and by some definitions, the world. It has a huge volume, discharging 20% of all river discharge into the ocean in the world!	<b>Where?</b> Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador, Venezuela	<b>Key Fact:</b> The Amazon is fed by hundreds of tributaries.
<b>The Amazon Rainforest</b>		The Amazon Rainforest is the largest rainforest in the world. The rainforest is about 5.5 million km <sup>2</sup> across nine different nations.	<b>What?</b> There are 16,000 tree species.	<b>Key Fact:</b> The Amazon contains around 390 billion trees!
<b>Animals</b>		The Amazon rainforest is so bio-diverse that it houses 1 in every 10 known species of animals. There are around 2.5 million insect species, 2,000 birds & mammals, 428 amphibians, and 378 reptile species. One in 5 of all fish species live in the Amazon River and its tributaries. Animals include the jaguar, caiman, and anaconda.	<b>What?</b> Many creatures are dangerous to humans, e.g. snakes, piranha fish, poison dart frogs and electric eels.	<b>Key Fact:</b> An unknown amount of Amazon animals have become extinct since the 1970s, because of deforestation.
<b>The Atacama Desert</b>		The Atacama Desert is one of the driest places in the world. There are some places where there has been no recorded rainfall!	<b>Where?</b> The Atacama Desert is in Chile.	<b>Key Fact:</b> The desert is so dry due to its position in a 'two-way' rain shadow.
<b>The Andes</b>		The Andes are the tallest mountains in South America (and in the world after the mountain ranges in Asia). The range is about 7,000km long, extending north to south. The world's highest volcanos are in the Andes.	<b>Where?</b> Through 7 different South American countries.	<b>Key Fact:</b> The peak of Mount Chimborazo is the furthest point from the centre of the earth.

# Ticket to the World

## Map and Overview



-North America is the world's third largest continent by area. It covers about 24.7 million km<sup>2</sup>, which is about 16.5% of the earth's total land area.

-North America is the fourth most populous continent, after Asia, Africa and Europe. Its population is about 580 million people.

-North America is in the western hemisphere (apart from Hawaii and parts of Alaska) and the northern hemisphere.

-The first people reached America over a frozen crossing from Siberia in the last Ice Age, between 40,000 and 15,000 years ago.

## Countries of North America

### Largest N. American countries

1. Canada – 9.98 million km<sup>2</sup>
2. USA – 9.83 million km<sup>2</sup>
3. Greenland (Den) – 2.16 million km<sup>2</sup>
4. Mexico – 1.96 million km<sup>2</sup>
5. Nicaragua – 130,375 km<sup>2</sup>

There are 23 countries in North America, and a further 9 states that are listed as dependencies of other nations.

### Most populous N. American countries

1. USA – 328 million people
2. Mexico – 132 million people
3. Canada – 37 million people
4. Guatemala – 18 million people
5. Cuba – 11 million people

### The United States



The United States is a large country made up of 50 states – including 48 on the US mainland, plus Alaska and Hawaii. It has the largest population of any country in North America, and the third largest population in the world. The USA is considered the richest and most powerful country in the world, at the forefront of world politics and economy.

### Central America



Central America is the region found on the southern tip of North America, and contains many smaller nations: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama. The countries have many cultural similarities, and Spanish is the main language in the region. The area is sometimes considered as its own microcontinent.

### Canada



Canada is the largest country by area in North America, and the second largest in the world (after Russia). As a whole, Canada is very sparsely populated – most of its population lives along the US border in the south, whilst very few people live in the central and northern areas of the country. Most of its land is dominated by forest and tundra.

### The Caribbean Islands



The Caribbean Islands are a number of tropical islands based in the Caribbean Sea off North America. The sea is considered as a part of the Atlantic Ocean. It is bordered by Mexico and Central America. Cuba is by far the largest Caribbean Island, with an area of 105,806 km<sup>2</sup>. The Caribbean Islands are sometimes referred to as the West Indies.

## Human Geography Features

<b>Population Densities</b>		The population density for North America is about 20 people per km <sup>2</sup> . However, due to big cities in some areas (e.g. New York City) and extreme weather in others (e.g. northern Canada) people are not spread evenly.	<b>Where?</b> Parts of Central America and the Caribbean are also densely populated.	<b>Key Fact:</b> The most densely populated country in North America is Bermuda.
<b>Manhattan, New York City</b>		Manhattan is the business and entertainment centre of New York City, the largest city in the US. Manhattan is mostly on an island, with many high rise buildings, e.g. the Empire State Building, surrounding Central Park.	<b>What?</b> One WTC is the tallest building in Manhattan and the USA, at 546 metres.	<b>Key Fact:</b> In 2001, the original World Trade Centre towers were destroyed by terrorists.
<b>Colonisation/ Languages</b>		Throughout the 16 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> centuries, European settlers (mainly from Britain, Spain and France) colonised different parts of North America. Many native North Americans became displaced by the colonisers.	<b>When?</b> The USA became independent from colonisers on July 4 <sup>th</sup> , 1776.	<b>Key Fact:</b> The languages spoken in North America are mainly as a result of colonisation.
<b>Sports/ Recreation</b>		North America is relatively unique in that sports that originated in the region (e.g. American football, baseball, basketball) are more popular than the global sports popular elsewhere (e.g. football/soccer, rugby, cricket).	<b>What?</b> American football is the most popular sport in the USA	<b>Key Fact:</b> Lacrosse is the fastest growing sport in North America.
<b>The Mexican Drug War</b>		This an ongoing conflict between the Mexican government and several of the large drug cartels. This has been in response to the excessive wealth, control, and violence of the cartels.	<b>What?</b> Mexican cartels control 90% of illegal drugs entering the USA.	<b>Key Fact:</b> The Mexican government declared the war in 2006.

## Physical Geography Features

<b>The Mississippi River</b>		The Mississippi River is the second-longest on the continent, with its basin including 32 states in the USA. North Americans have lived along the Mississippi River for thousands of years.	<b>What?</b> Along the river is amongst the most fertile places in the USA.	<b>Key Fact:</b> The Mississippi serves as a boundary between several states.
<b>The Great Lakes</b>		The Great Lakes are a series of interconnected lakes across the USA-Canada border. They include lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie and Ontario. By area, they are the largest lake system in the world, and 2 <sup>nd</sup> by volume.	<b>What?</b> Because of their great size and their waves, they are sometimes called inland seas.	<b>Key Fact:</b> Only Lake Baikal in Russia has a larger volume than the North American Great Lakes.
<b>Animals</b>		Due to the extreme latitudes of the continent, there are a wide variety of animals adapted to different climates in North America. The brown bear is one of the largest and most powerful carnivores, whilst the American alligator is a feared predator in South-Eastern USA.	<b>What?</b> North America has 457 mammals, 662 reptiles & 300 amphibians.	<b>Key Fact:</b> American Alligators can attain lengths of longer than 4m – they are a serious threat to people.
<b>Death Valley</b>		Death Valley, located in eastern California, is one of the hottest places in the world. Its Badwater Basin is 86m below sea level, the lowest point on the continent.	<b>What?</b> It has an area of 7,800 km <sup>2</sup>	<b>Key Fact:</b> In 1913, the heat reached 56.7°C, the hottest ever recorded.
<b>Hawaiian Islands</b>		The Hawaiian Islands consist of 8 major islands, and many other smaller islets in the North Pacific Ocean. They are spread out over 2400km. The islands are the exposed peaks of a massive underwater mountain chain.	<b>Where?</b> The islands are about 3,000km from the nearest continent.	<b>Key Fact:</b> Mount Keo is the 'tallest' mountain in the world – 10,000m from base to tip (6,000m is below the sea).