

Amazing Amazon

Interesting Facts

The Amazon is the world's largest **tropical rainforest**. Covering over **5.5 million square kilometres**, it's so big that the UK and Ireland would fit into it 17 times!

The Amazon is found in South America, spanning across Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana.

Running through the north of the rainforest is the **Amazon river**. Flowing a length of around **6,400km**, it is the second longest river in the world. The longest is the river Nile, stretching an even longer 6,650km!

Sometimes referred to as '**the lungs of the Earth**'. This is because the rich vegetation takes carbon dioxide out of the air, and releases oxygen back in.

More than **20%** of the world's oxygen is produced by the Amazon.

Around 400-500 indigenous **Amerindian** tribes call the Amazon rainforest home. It's believed that about fifty of these tribes have never had contact with the outside world!

Due to the thickness of the canopy (the top branches and leaves of the trees), the Amazon floor is in permanent darkness. In fact, it's so thick that when it rains, it takes around ten minutes for the water to reach the ground!

Scientists believe there may be millions of species in rainforests that haven't been discovered yet.

Significant Individuals/ Groups

Juliane Koepcke— was flying over the Peruvian rainforest with her mother when her plane was hit by lightning. She survived a two-mile fall and found herself alone in the jungle, just 17.

Yanomami Tribe— the largest relatively isolated tribe in South America. They live in the rainforests and mountains of northern Brazil and southern Venezuela.

Plants and Animals

The Amazon has an incredibly rich ecosystem - there are around:

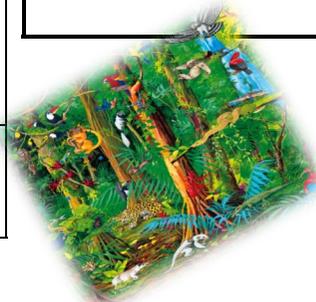
40,000 plant species

1,300 bird species

3,000 types of fish

430 mammals

2.5 million different insects



Vocabulary

Definition

Amazon

A river in South America, flowing through the Amazon rainforest.
The largest river in the world in volume of water carried.

Climate

The weather conditions throughout the year, such as: temperature, rainfall, humidity, sunshine.

Canopy

The primary layer of the forest, forming a roof over the understory and the forest floor.

Deforestation

To destroy or clear parts of the forest. Often through logging or forest fires.

Emergent

The tallest layer of trees in the rainforest.

Endangered

Threatened with danger, such as through logging, poaching or threatened with extinction.

Equator

The imaginary line that separates the earth into two hemispheres.

Forest floor

The bottom layer (ground level) of the forest.

Indigenous

Originating in a region/area e.g. the native tribes are from the Amazon rainforest.

Rainforest

A rainforest is a dense, damp forest with a huge number of different kinds of plants and animals.

Tropics

The two parallels north and south of the Equator.

Tribe

A group of people united by common culture, way of life or live together as a community.

South America

A continent located in the southern hemisphere, south of the USA.

Understory

The cool, dark environment that is between the canopy and the forest floor.

