

Natural Regions of the World

Natural Vegetation and Regions

Vegetation which grows in a natural region without any human interference is known as natural vegetation. A natural region is a basic geographic unit which is characterised by its common natural features of geography, geology and climate.

Climate is a basic factor upon which natural regions are divided. It influences flora, fauna and vegetation in the region. Climate is classified on factors such as temperature, winds, pressure, humidity, rainfall, landforms, types of soil, natural vegetation and wildlife. Based on these factors, the world is divided into various natural regions such as the equatorial region, tropical grasslands, tropical deserts, tropical monsoon type of climate, Mediterranean region, China type of climate, temperate grasslands, temperate deserts and taiga and tundra regions.

Names of climatic regions, their location, temperature and rainfall

Type of Region	Regions Experiencing the Climate	Temperature	Rainfall
Equatorial Region	Asia: Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia South America: Amazon Highlands, Brazilian Highlands, coastal Columbia Africa: Zaire Basin, the Guinea Coast in West Africa	25–30°C	The region receives convectional rainfall throughout the year. It ranges between 175 and 250 cm.
Tropical Grasslands	South America: Known as the Campos in the Brazilian Highlands and Llanos of the Orinoco Basin Africa: Sudan, Senegal, Cameroon, Niger, Zaire, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Kenya and Mali Australia: Northern territory and Queensland	The highest monthly temperature during the dry season lies between 22°C and 37°C. Temperature drops drastically during the nights. May reach well below 10°C.	Average rainfall is of about 75 cm, and it varies from region to region.
Tropical Deserts	Africa: Sahara Desert, Kalahari Desert and Namib Desert Asia: Arabian Desert and Thar Desert North America: Californian Desert and Mexican Desert South America: Atacama Desert Australia: Great Australian Desert	Temperatures during summers range from 30°C to 45°C. Temperatures during winters may drop to 20°C.	There is less than 25 cm of rainfall.
Tropical Monsoon Type of Climate	Asia: India, Pakistan, southern China, Vietnam, the islands of Hainan, Taiwan and the Philippines Australia: The northern part of	During summers, the temperature ranges between 27°C and 38°C.	The amount of rainfall varies from 75 cm to 200 cm at Mawsynram near Meghalaya.

	Australia South Africa: Eastern Brazil Australia: Parts of northeastern Australia		
Mediterranean Region	Europe: Bulgaria, France, Greece, Italy, Serbia, Montenegro, Spain and South Portugal Asia: Israel, Lebanon, Syria and parts of coastal Turkey North America: Coastal California around San Francisco Africa: Coastal areas of Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and the region around Cape Town in South Africa Australia: Southern Australia and Southwest area around Perth	Summer temperature ranges between 20°C and 28°C. In the hottest month, the temperature may reach up to 30°C. In January, mean temperature ranges from 6°C to 10°C. Coastal areas experience lower temperature.	The regions mainly receive rainfall during winters. The annual rainfall varies between 35 cm and 75 cm.
China Type	Asia: North and Central China, southern Korea and southern Japan Africa: East central coastal regions North America: Southeastern United States South America: Southern Brazil, Southern Paraguay and Northern Argentina Australia: Southern Queensland and New South Wales	The temperature ranges between 21°C and 27°C.	The rainfall varies from 63 cm to 152 cm.
The British Type	Europe: British Isles, Belgium, Denmark, western Germany and Southern Norway North America: Western United States and western Canada South America: Southern Chile Australia: Island of Tasmania, Victoria and Southern Island of New Zealand	The mean annual temperature ranges from 4°C to 15°C. The warmest month in London experiences 17°C, while the coldest month experiences 4°C.	Rainfall is well distributed throughout the year. It ranges from 50 cm to 120 cm. Places located on the windward side experience up to 250 cm of rainfall.
Temperate Grasslands	Europe: Small area in the Hungarian plains and a belt lying to the north of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea Asia: Manchurian Plains, Northwest China and Western Siberia North America: A part of USA and Canada located between the Great Lakes and the Rockies, known as Prairies South America: Parts of Argentina,	In summers, the temperature ranges between 15°C and 25°C. During winters, the temperature may drop below 0°C in the interiors.	Rainfall varies between 20 cm to 60 cm.

	known as Pampas South Africa: On the plateau on the leeward side, known as Velds Australia: Located in Murray Darling Basin, known as Downs		
Temperate Deserts	Asia: Gobi Desert America: Patagonian Desert	The region experiences extreme climate. While temperature may reach up to 32°C during summers, it drops to -40°C during winters.	Rainfall is below 20 cm.
The Taiga	Europe: Finland, northern Russia, Sweden and parts of Norway North America: Southern Canada and southern Alaska South America: Mountainous parts of southern Chile Australia: Tasmania and New Zealand Asia: Northern Siberia and Sakhalin Islands	Winters are severe. Temperature falls below -40°C during winters.	Rainfall varies from 25 cm to 100 cm.
The Tundra	Europe: Greenland, Iceland, Northern Scandinavia North America: Northern Canada, Alaska Asia: Siberia	During summers, the temperature may reach up to 10°C. Temperatures may drop to -37°C.	Rainfall is below 25 cm and is mostly in the form of snowfall.

Natural Vegetation, Climate and Human Adaptations in the Climatic Regions

Equatorial Regions

Natural Vegetation and Animals

- Equatorial regions have dense evergreen forests. Tropical forests in the Amazon forests are known as **Selvas**.
- The forests are multilayered. The trees form the canopy which does not allow sunshine to reach the ground. The bottom layer of the forest floor has shrubs, ferns and climbers.
- Ebony, cinchona, rosewood and rubber are some important species of trees.
- As the forests are dense, wide varieties of animals are found in the region. Apes, monkeys, reptiles, elephants, lions and rhinoceros are found in the region apart from varieties of birds, lizards, frogs and snakes.

Climate

- The climate is mainly characterised by heavy rainfall and high temperature. It rains almost every afternoon. The days and nights are of equal duration for most time of the year.
- There is no winter or dry season. The climate remains hot and wet throughout the year.

Human Adaptation

- While primitive people practice hunting and gathering, tribals practice shifting cultivation.
- Main crops grown in the Amazon basin are tapioca, groundnuts, mangoes, bananas and yam.
- Many plantations have been established in the equatorial regions, especially in Indonesia, Malaysia, Central America and West Africa. Cocoa, rubber, tea and coffee are grown in these regions. Some other crops which are grown include coconuts, cinchona, sugarcane, spices and pineapples.

Tropical Grasslands

Natural Vegetation

- Tropical grasslands, also known as Savannas, have tall grasses and short trees. The grass is coarse and grows up to 12 feet.
- Grasses have long roots which go down deep down into the soil in search of water.
- Trees are short and scattered because of lack of rainfall. They shed their leaves to prevent excessive loss of water.

Climate

- The climate is characterised by hot wet summers and cool dry winters.

Human Adaptation

- In the grasslands, many native people are pastoralists. Cattle are reared for meat and milk.
- Cattle ranching is an important economic activity in the Campos and Llanos grasslands of South America.
- Plantations of sugarcane, cotton and tobacco have been established in many regions.

Tropical Deserts

Natural Vegetation and Animals

- Because of scanty rainfall, thorny scrubs like cactus and prickly pear are found in the region.
- Mostly xerophytic plants grow in the region. Plants which adapt themselves to the dry climate are known as xerophytes.
- Trees of date palm are found near the oasis or near water courses.
- Burrowing animals (animals which dig holes in the ground to escape heat) such as lizards, squirrels, snakes, rats, foxes and mice are found.

Climate

- Deserts have hot summers and cool winters.
- It has a high daily range of temperature.

Human Adaptation

- Mostly nomadic hunters and food gatherers inhabit the tropical deserts. Some primitive tribes inhabiting the deserts are the Bushmen of Kalahari, the Bedouins in the Sahara and the Bindibu in Australia.
- Cultivation in small patches can be carried out only in oasis or along the bank of a river. The Egyptians grow barley, cotton, wheat, sugar, fruits and vegetables along River Nile.

Tropical Monsoon Climate

Natural Vegetation and Animals

- There is a variety of natural vegetation in the tropical monsoon type of climate. Regions which receive more than 200 cm of rainfall annually have tropical evergreen forests. The trees are dense and tall. Climbers, shrubs, ferns and bamboos grow on the forest floor. Western slopes of the Western Ghats, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and the islands in the Indian Ocean have this kind of forests.
- Areas which receive rainfall of about 100 cm have tropical monsoon deciduous forests. These trees shed their leaves to preserve water during the dry season.
- Elephants, lemurs, monkeys, foxes and rhinoceros are found in this type of climate.

Climate

- This type of climate has three distinct seasons—summers, winters and rainy. The region has hot summers with cool winters.

Human Adaptation

- Agriculture is the main occupation of the people. It however mostly depends on rainfall.
- Apart from food crops such as wheat, rice, barley and maize, cash crops such as cotton, tea, coffee and sugarcane are also planted.

Mediterranean Regions

Natural Vegetation

- The vegetation in the region is of the deciduous type. It is adapted to withstand long periods of summer drought.
- Main species of trees are oak, oleander, beech, ash and cork. Olive and eucalyptus are the most commonly found trees.
- In Europe, most of the natural vegetation has been replaced by cultivation of fruits such as oranges, lemon and grapes.

Climate

- Summers are hot, and the region experiences rainfall during winters.

Human Adaptation

- Many crops are grown in the region owing to warm summers and cool winters. Fruits such as oranges, lime, grapes and lemons are grown.
- Wheat, barley, rice, cotton and tobacco are generally cultivated.

China Type

Natural Vegetation

- The region experiences abundant rainfall and moderate temperature, and hence, dense evergreen forests are found in humid areas.
- Deciduous forests are found in areas of moderate rainfall. Trees are scattered with large patches of grass.

Climate

- The region experiences moderate type of climate with abundant rainfall.

Human Adaptation

- Various crops are cultivated in the region. Rice, millets and tea are commonly grown in China. Soya beans, potatoes and sugarcane are also grown.
- In USA, maize, tobacco and cotton are mainly grown.

British Type

Natural Vegetation

- Deciduous forests are mainly found in regions experiencing the British type of climate. The trees in the region have thick trunks and yield valuable timber.
- They shed their leaves in autumn and winter.
- Ash, birch, elm, oak and poplar are some important species of trees.

Climate

- The region remains under the influence of cold rain-bearing westerlies.
- There are four distinct seasons—winter, spring, summer and autumn.

Human Adaptation

- A large part of deciduous forests have been cleared for extracting timber and fuel and for cultivation.
- Wheat is grown extensively followed by barley. Potatoes are grown in abundance.
- Animals are reared for milk and meat. Sheep rearing is also an important economic activity.

Temperate Grasslands

Natural Vegetation and Animals

- Both kinds of grasses—tall and coarse and short and nutritious—are found in the region.
- Herbivores animals such as bison, wild asses, antelopes and horses are found in the region. Kangaroos are found in Australia.

Climate

- Climate is of semiarid type on account of low rainfall.
- In the interiors, the temperature drops considerably during the winters. Chinook, a local wind, brings about a sudden increase in the temperature leading to the melting of snow.

Human Adaptation

- The temperate grasslands are known as the 'granaries of the world'. The climate is ideal for wheat cultivation and hence is grown in large quantities.
- Cotton and maize are also grown.

Temperate Deserts

Natural Vegetation

- The drought-resistant scrub is the main vegetation of the region. This includes cacti, thorny bushes and grasses with long roots.
- Trees grow only at places where the water table is high.

Climate

- Climate remains hot during summers and cold during winters.

Human Adaptation

- Conditions in the temperate deserts are very harsh. These regions are sparsely populated.
- People rear animals for milk, meat and hide.
- Oases provide food and drinking water to herders and their livestock.
- Cucumber, watermelons, peppers and tomatoes are grown around an oasis.

The Taiga Region

Natural Vegetation

- The natural vegetation includes evergreen coniferous forests. They are an important source of softwood which is used for furniture making, construction activities and paper and pulp industries.
- Pine, fir, cedar, spruce and hemlock are some important varieties of trees.

Climate

- The region is characterised by long and severe winters and cool brief summers.

Human Adaptation

- The region is sparsely populated because the land mostly remains covered with snow.
- Barley, oats, potato and beetroot are grown in lands which border the Steppes.

The Tundra**Natural Vegetation**

- As the land mostly remains covered with snow, only few plants survive in the climate.
- Only mosses, lichens and sedges are found in the region. Trees are not found in this region.
- Grasses grow only in the coastal lowlands.

Climate

- The region is characterised by long and severe winters and cool brief summers.

Human Adaptation

- Crops cannot be cultivated in the region because these regions are permanently covered with snow throughout the year.
- Semi-nomadic people who live in the tundra regions of Greenland, northern Canada and Alaska are known as Eskimos.
- They get food from fish, seals and polar bears.
- They hunt reindeer which provide them with milk, meat, fat, skin and bones.