

## How big is the Amazon?

The Amazon represents over half of the planet's remaining rainforests and has an estimated 390 billion individual trees comprising of 16,000 species.

The Amazon River is the largest river by discharge of water in the world – greater than the next seven largest rivers combined.

It is the second longest river in the world after the Nile, and has the largest drainage basin in the world – about 7,050,000 square kilometres – which accounts for approximately one-fifth of the world's total river flow.

## Where is the Amazon?

The Amazon is a vast region that spans nine countries: Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana and Suriname, as well as French Guiana (an overseas territory of France).

The Amazon River Basin is home to the largest rainforest in the world and covers almost 40% of South America.

## Vocabulary

Amazon Basin:	the area drained by the River Amazon and all of its tributaries
Amazon River	the longest river in South America. It flows through Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Brazil
Biome	geographical area defined by its climate, plant and animal life and the activities of the people who live there
Climate	the general weather conditions usually found in a particular place.
Deforestation	the cutting down of trees in a large area, or the destruction of forests by people:
Equator	Equator: imaginary line/circle of latitude around the Earth, midway between North and South Poles, dividing the Earth into Northern and Southern Hemispheres.
Indigenous	naturally existing in a place or country rather than arriving from another place
Rainforest	a forest in a tropical area that receives a lot of rain:
River	natural watercourse, flowing downhill towards the sea, ocean or a lake
Southern Hemisphere	the half of the Earth south of the equator .

## What will I find inside the Amazon?

The region consists of a variety of ecosystems including rainforests, seasonal forests, deciduous forests, flooded forests and savannahs, however the region is most renowned for its rainforest, which covers most of the Amazon Basin.

The Amazon is home to an estimated 10% of all species found on Earth. Scientists estimate that there are at least 40,000 plant species, 427 types of mammal, 1,300 types of bird, 378 types of reptile, 400 types of amphibian, and around 3,000 types of freshwater fish.

The Amazon is also home to more than 30 million people, and about 9% of these are indigenous people – 350 different ethnic groups, more than 60 of which still remain largely isolated.

## South America: The Amazon

Critical thinking:  
Our big question  
Why should we protect the Amazon?