



### Location

South America is the fourth-largest continent in the world. It covers around 17.8 million km<sup>2</sup>. It is located in the western hemisphere. South America is the fifth most populous continent in the world; over half of those 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.



### Key Skills

- To identify the main countries of South America.
- To identify the main cities within South America.
- To identify lines of latitude and longitude and world time zones.
- To identify the position of the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn.
- To compare the climate of South American regions with that of our own area.
- To compare the human geography of South American regions with that of our own area.

### Longest rivers

- Amazon – 6400 km
- Parana – 4880 km
- Madeira – 3250 km
- Purus – 3211 km
- Sao Francisco - 2830 km
- Tocantis - 2640 km



**River Amazon**

## Key vocabulary

**Amazon Basin** – the area drained by the River Amazon and all its tributaries.

**Amazon River** – the longest river in South America. It flows through Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Brazil.

**Continent** – very large land mass  
very large land mass with no standard definition: Europe, Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Australasia, North America and South America are the continents.

**Equator** – an imaginary line around the middle of the earth at an equal distance from the North Pole and South Pole.

**Rainforest** – a forest which receives a large amount of rain all year round.

**Andes** – a mountain range located in South America.

## Tallest mountains

- Aconcagua – Argentina – 6,962 metres
- Ojos del Salado – Argentina and Chile – 6,891 metres
- Monte Pissis – Argentina – 6,792 metres
- Huascarán – Peru – 6,768 metres
- Bonete – Argentina – 6,759 metres



Aconcagua

## Countries of South America

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

### Largest countries in South America by area

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>

### Largest countries in South America by population

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. The main language is Portuguese and the largest city is Sao Paulo. Rio de Janeiro is the most well-known city. Brazilians are known to love samba dancing and football.

## Argentina

Argentina is located in the southern half of South America. Argentina is the largest country in the world by size. 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 varies greatly from north to south.

## Colombia

Colombia is located in the north-west of South America. It has been inhabited since at least 12,000 BC. However, the Spanish arrived in 1499 and conquered much of the region. As a result, the national language is Spanish. The majority of the population live in the highlands.

## Peru

Peru is located on the western side of South America. It has a very diverse landscape, ranging from arid plains to the Andes Mountains. Peru is known for being the centre of the Incan empire – the Incan ruins of Machu Picchu remain a major tourist attraction today. The national language is Spanish.