



## Explore the largest forest in the world

Written by Colby Maxwell

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Spanning nearly 2.2 million square miles, this vast expanse of forest is one of the most mysterious and fascinating places on Earth. Home to an incredible diversity of plants and animals, it is also home to some of the planet's last remaining uncontacted indigenous tribes. Today, we will take a closer look at the largest forest in the world and see all that it has to offer. Let's get started!

The Largest Forest in the World – Amazon Rainforest



The largest forest in the world is the Amazon Rainforest.

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The **Amazon Rainforest** is an incredible natural wonder, spanning an area of 5.5 million square kilometers (2.1 million square miles). That **sheer amount** of land adds up to be larger than the entire European Union and more than half of the United States. Currently, nine countries share the Amazon, although most of the forest is found within Brazil (over 58%). The other countries include Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, French Guyana, and Ecuador. As incredible as the land mass of the Amazon is, it is only the start of how large and important of a forest it truly is.

The Amazon River, the world's largest river, runs through the forest and provides a vital source of water to the region. For reference, the Amazon River discharges 7.381 million ft<sup>3</sup>(cubic feet) of water per second or the equivalent of over 80 Olympic-sized swimming pools every single second of every single day.

Outside of land mass, the Amazon Rainforest is also home to an incredible diversity of life. It is estimated that there are over 3 million species of plants and animals living in the Amazon, including more than 2,500 different tree species. Altogether, the region represents one-third of all tropical trees that exist on earth. The Amazon is also home to an estimated 400 different indigenous tribes, many of which have been living in the region for thousands of years.

In quite literally every way, the Amazon is the largest forest in the whole world, without much competition!



### When Did the Amazon Rainforest Develop?

The Amazon Rainforest has been around for quite a long time, with most estimates placing its beginning between 56 million years to 33.9 million years ago during the Eocene era. The forces that caused the Amazon to form were essentially a global reduction in tropical temperatures when the Atlantic Ocean widened, creating a specialized climate with warm and wet conditions across most of South America.

As time has gone on, these conditions have changed slightly, converting some of the region into a savanna-type biome. This savanna biome is common throughout the southern portion of South America, although historically, these regions used to be covered in something similar to the rainforests that we see in the north and central parts of the continent today.

The Importance of the Amazon Rainforest in Climate Change and Biodiversity



Amazon rainforests help in offsetting 4% of global emissions.

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The Amazon's sheer size has made it one of the most important elements in the overall climate health and biological diversity across the world today. In fact, the forest is often described as the "lungs of the earth" because of how much carbon dioxide the trees in the forest take in and convert to oxygen each year. The plants of the Amazon absorb roughly 1.5bn tonnes of carbon dioxide a year, offsetting the equivalent of **4%** of the global emissions alone. Unfortunately, the deforestation of the Amazon for cattle grazing and lumber is causing these numbers to change.

Regarding **biodiversity**, the Amazon is absolutely unmatched. As mentioned, the rainforest is home to over 3 million unique species, over 2,500 tree species, and an abundance of plants and animals that have yet to even be discovered. With our current estimation, the Amazon is home to 1 in 10 known species on earth and is the last surviving place for some of the most reclusive and mysterious animals on the planet. Some of the most well-known species include poison dart frogs, **jaguars**, **sloths**, freshwater dolphins, piranhas, **capibaras**, and so many more. Each of these animals plays an important role in the overall ecosystem, and current human activities are continuing to upset this delicate balance.

#### Other Large Forests in the World

Although the Amazon is the largest forest overall, there are some other contenders that aren't anything to sneeze at!

Here are some quick descriptions of the other large and interesting forests of the world:

#### Tropical Congo

The **tropical rainforests of Congo** are some of the most amazing and diverse in the world. Located in central Africa and shared by Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon. Some of the largest forest-dwelling animals live in

the Congo, including gorillas, hippos, elephants, and more. Overall, this region is the second largest rainforest in the world and sits at 1,106,040 sq miles.

#### The Taiga

The Taiga forest is technically the second largest forest on the earth, although it is broken up across three different continents, North America (Canada), northern Europe, and finally ending in the far east of Siberia. This region used to be united as a single forest body, but slow continental changes have spread the forest out between continents, although the forest itself is relatively unchanged. The Taiga is very different from rainforests in that it isn't tropical at all. Fir trees dominate the landscape, and the winters are bitterly cold. Still, some extremely large animals live in the Taiga, including bears, wolves, big cats, and more.

#### New Guinea

The forests of New Guinea are extremely diverse, even if it isn't as large as some of the other rainforests on the list. A majority of this forest hasn't even been explored, making it a hotspot for scientists looking to discover and study rare species. Some estimate that 10% of all species are found in the New Guinea forests, along with over 1,000 indigenous tribes, some of which are almost totally isolated.

Source: [Explore the Largest Forest In The World - AZ Animals \(a-z-animals.com\)](https://a-z-animals.com/blog/2018/07/20/the-largest-forests-in-the-world/)