

EARTH FRIENDLY PLANET

An inspiring journey around the world



*Never does nature say one thing, and wisdom another.
Juvenal, Satires*

Learn Who You Share This Beautiful Planet With!

This e-book gives simple profiles of earth's countries, focusing on environment and wildlife. Find out about neighbouring friends (human or otherwise) in:

- Africa
- Antarctica
- Asia
- Europe
- North America
- Oceania
- South America

Website

When you have read this e-book, you will be so in love with our planet that presumably you will want to help to save it! Visit www.earthfriendlyplanet.com to find a library of useful websites and recommended books.

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Africa

This contrasting land includes hot desert in the north, to swampy rainforest in the south. As it lies near the Equator, there are only two seasons – dry and wet! The proximity to the Equator also brings quicker sunrises and sunsets – often it goes straight from day to night.

North Africa

Algeria

Most of this large country is covered by the Sahara Desert – home to just a few creatures like monitor lizards and sand vipers. Also here live native tribes like Berbers and Tuaregs (called ‘indigo people’ due to their skin being stained from their dark blue robes). The national dish is couscous, always finished with sweet mint tea.

Djibouti

Like most eastern countries, this is set in The Horn of Africa (a peninsula that juts out into the Arabian sea). Again it’s mainly desert, but it also sits on the Red Sea (its name comes from the red-coloured plants near the surface), the most northern tropical sea on earth.



Egypt

Home to the Nile (the world's longest river) and the mysterious Giza pyramids (built on exact cardinal points), the chaotic capital city of Cairo (Um ad-Dunya – 'mother of the world') contains 20 million people. A land of friendly camels (they only spit if distressed), ancient cats and hungry crocodiles.

Eritrea

This green country has almost 700 miles of protected coastline along the Red Sea. If families have leftover Sowa (a fermented barley drink), they place a tin can on a long stick in front of their house, so others can share. If you take coffee, expect an hour's wait – and you are expected to drink three cups!

Libya

This country in the Sahara desert holds the record for the hottest ever temperature recorded, but it is cooler by the Mediterranean Sea. The town of Ghadames has been cleverly built with interconnected white buildings, to keep people cool. The Jebel Acacus mountains contain cave art dating back 12,000 years.

Mauritania

Not to be confused with Mauritius, this lies on the Atlantic Ocean. Like most northern countries, it is nearly all desert and also contains Ben Amera, the second biggest monolith (sandstone) after Australia's Uluru.

Western Sahara

Presently shared by Morocco and Algeria, this small country is mostly made up of Sahara desert, and borders the Atlantic Ocean. It is home to some of the most inhospitable land on earth.

Morocco

Just across the sea from Spain, this is a different world of hot desert, Berber tribes and the Atlas and Rif mountains. The urban areas are a heady mix of souk markets, carpet sellers, hot mint tea and the city of Casablanca. Morocco is known for its beautiful Moorish gardens, orange trees, flamingos, grey cranes, herons and storks.

Sudan

This is the largest country in Africa, divided by the Nile and bordered by the Red Sea. It has a sad history of civil war (Darfur), but now looks to peace. It contains the Nubian Desert, swamps and rainforests. Here once roamed northern white rhinos (now strictly protected, to save the species).

Tunisia

Like Morocco, this is a land of colour and spice. Ornate front doors are often painted bright blue to match the sky. This is the home of the ostrich – the world's largest bird who is second only to the cheetah in speed (he can use his wings as rudders to change direction mid-run).

East Africa

Ethiopia

This country is considered by many as the birth of civilisation. It is also home to the birthplace of Emperor Haile Selassie, the founder of the Rastafarian religion. Now the famine has gone, many parts are full of lush greenery, waterfalls and the villa-rich city of Addis Ababa. It's also the birthplace of Yirgacheffe coffee.

Kenya

Here you can find more wildlife than anywhere else in Africa, including the annual wildebeest migration: lion, leopard, rhino, elephant, buffalo, giraffe, topi, gazelle, monkey, hippo, crocodile, hyena, jackal, cheetah and zebra (they mingle together to confuse the colour-blind lion!) Masai semi-nomads also roam these lands.

Rwanda

This high altitude country is cooler, and home to the mountain 'gorillas in the mist' made known by researcher Dian Fossey. Now over its sad genocide history, Kigali recently became the first city in Africa to receive the Habitat Scroll of Honour for its urban conservation model. It's also the first majority women government.

Somalia

With the longest coastline in Africa, precious spices and exotic nomads, this is a fascinating place. Supermodel Waris Dirie (who fled to London from an arranged marriage and now lives in Austria) continues to highlight the issue of female circumcision in her former homeland.

Tanzania

Known for its annual wildebeest migration near the Kenyan border, this is where Dr Jane Goodall arrived 50 years ago to study wild chimpanzees. Based on Lake Tanganyika, Tanzania also lies on the Indian Ocean and is home to Mount Kilimanjaro – Africa's highest peak.

Uganda

Like Rwanda, its star attraction are the mountain gorillas, hidden in inaccessible bamboo forests. Other flora and fauna include African grey parrots and giant lobelia plants. Uganda (and what is now Democratic Republic of Congo) was the setting for the film African Queen.

Zanzibar

This tropical 'spice island' lies 25 miles off the coast, and grows nutmeg, cinnamon and pepper. It is an oasis of sandy beaches and coral reefs, and contains few of the wild animals found elsewhere in Africa. There are however several birds, butterflies and coral reefs. The north of the island is lined with palm, coconut and banana trees.



Central Africa

Central African Republic

Although desert, this land sits in the basin of the Ubangi River, which flows into the Congo (the largest river after the Nile). Textbook Africa, with lowland gorillas, chimps, forest elephants and bongos (large antelopes with red coats and spiralled horns). National Geographic Magazine voted it the country least affected by light pollution.

Chad

Again mainly desert, but Lake Chad is the second largest wetland in Africa. Marshes attract elephants, hippos, giraffes, wildebeest, lions, antelopes, chimps, birds, ducks and reptiles. Lake Chad also provides 20 million people with the only water supply near the surrounding Sahara desert.

Congo

Not to be confused with the Democratic Republic of Congo (next), this landlocked country next door is home to 80% of the world's wild chimpanzees, who live in dense inaccessible forest. Also find one of Africa's largest tropical ecosystems in Odzala National Park and eastern lowland gorillas in local swamps.

Democratic Republic of Congo

The third largest country in Africa, here you can find just a small section of coastline, and more thunderstorms than anywhere on earth. This country is so big, it is the same size as France, Germany, Spain, Sweden and Norway put together!

Equatorial Guinea

This small comparatively wealthy country (by African standards) has islands and native tribes, and is called 'the Amazon of Africa', due to its lush rainforests, mangroves and shrubs growing in salty coast waters. Home to pygmy tribes and the world's largest 'Goliath' frog (only found here and in Cameroon).

West Africa

Benin

This colourful country is known for its painters. Like most West African countries, it's home to elephants, lions, monkeys, antelopes and hippos ('river horses'). The African Baobab 'upside down' tree produces monkey bread fruit for animals and humans – mysteriously at the end of its life, it thumps to the ground -and mysteriously disappears!

Burkina Faso

Its name meaning "land of the upright people", the people here harvest local nere trees for their black seeds, to make into stock cubes. The savannah is home to giraffes, the tallest land animals who gain extra water through eating the tall shrubs that others cannot reach. They share these branches with smaller animals, to provide mutual look-out posts.

Burundi

This small landlocked country sits on Lake Tanganyika (the second largest freshwater lake in the world – and the world's deepest). Burundi is also the starting point for the Nile – the world's longest river. Burundi is known for its birds: Trumpeter Hornbill, African Lemon Dove, Handsome Francolin and the ShoeBill.

Cameroon

With beautiful coastline, rainforests, deserts and 200 languages, this country (a bit larger than California) is Africa in a nutshell. Waza and Benoue National Parks are home to hippos, lions, water buffalo, elephants and warthogs. The more remote Boubanjidda National Park is home to lowland gorillas – fiercely protected by local tribes now it is feared their black rhinos may have recently become extinct. In the Dja Reserve, you can find Bantus and pygmy people living together in harmony. The forests and coasts are also home to exotic fruits, including oranges, pineapples, coconuts, grapefruits, limes and bananas (herbs).

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