

# 9. Tourist attractions in the Americas



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Předmět:

**The Tourist Attractions in  
the Czech Republic and in  
the World**

# Geography of North America

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- ❑ North America is the third largest continent, and is also a portion of the second largest supercontinent if North and South America are combined into the Americas and Africa, Europe, and Asia are considered to be part of one supercontinent called Afro-Eurasia.
  - ❑ The northernmost of the two continents of the Western Hemisphere is bounded by the Pacific Ocean on the west; the Atlantic Ocean on the east; the Caribbean Sea, Atlantic and Pacific oceans, and South America on the south; and the Arctic Ocean on the north.
  - ❑ The northern half of North America is sparsely populated and covered mostly by Canada, except for the northeastern portion, which is occupied by Greenland, and the northwestern portion, which is occupied by Alaska, the largest state of the U.S. The central and southern portions of the continent are represented by the United States, Mexico, and numerous smaller states primarily in Central America and in the Caribbean.
  - ❑ Natural features of North America include the northern portion of the American Cordillera, represented by the geologically new Rocky Mountains in the west; and the considerably older Appalachian Mountains to the east.
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# United States Of America Geography

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- ❑ The lower Appalachian Mountains and its assorted ranges front a broad coastal plain that stretches from the far-northeast to the southern Texas coastline on the Gulf of Mexico.
  - ❑ For specific landform details on Alaska and Hawaii, or other U.S. States.
  - ❑ Major rivers of the United States include the Colorado, Columbia, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio and the Rio Grande.
  - ❑ Largest lakes (outside of the Great Lakes) include the Great Salt Lake, Utah, and Lake Okeechobee, Florida.
  - ❑ The highest point in the Rockies is Mt. Elbert, located 10 miles southwest of Leadville, Colorado. It stands at (4,399 meters).
  - ❑ Sierra Nevada - This mountain range of eastern California is about 400 miles in length. The highest point is Mt. Whitney at. (4,418 meters).
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# The main tourist attractions in United States of America

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- ❑ **Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site** - Cahokia Mounds, some 13 km north-east of St Louis, Missouri, is the largest pre-Columbian settlement north of Mexico. It was occupied primarily during the Mississippian period (800–1400), when it covered nearly 1,600 ha and included some 120 mounds.
- ❑ **Chaco Culture** - For over 2,000 years, Pueblo peoples occupied a vast region of the south-western United States. Chaco Canyon, a major centre of ancestral Pueblo culture between 850 and 1250, was a focus for ceremonials, trade and political activity for the prehistoric Four Corners area.
- ❑ **Monticello and the University of Virginia in Charlottesville** - Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), author of the American Declaration of Independence and third president of the United States, was also a talented architect of neoclassical buildings.
- ❑ **Orlando, Walt Disney World** is Florida's most popular family attraction and has been for many years. Magic Kingdom, Animal Kingdom, Epcot Theme Park, and MGM Studios are just some of the highlights that have long entertained children and parents.

# The main tourist attractions in United States of America

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- ❑ **Orlando's SeaWorld**, with its huge aquariums, dolphin and whale shows, touch pools, and extensive list of rides, draws a large family crowd. It also allows opportunities for close up encounters with dolphins and other residents.
- ❑ The 2.5-mile-long central section of **Las Vegas Boulevard**, which runs through the city from northeast to southwest, known as **The Strip**, is lined with huge entertainment palaces, many built with a defining theme and home to performance venues, luxury hotel rooms, and fine dining. The Strip is particularly impressive at night, when the city is illuminated by an endless succession of glittering neon signs.
- ❑ **Venetian Hotel and Gondola Rides** - The Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas is located on "The Strip" across from Treasure Island. It is one of the city's finest resorts and has many interesting tourist attractions. Visitors can walk through the themed shopping arcade built to resemble the city of Venice, complete with blue skies, canals, and gondoliers.
- ❑ **The Statue of Liberty in New York City** was France's gift to America. Built in 1886, it remains a famous world symbol of freedom and one of the greatest American icons.

# The main tourist attractions in United States of America

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- ❑ **Rockefeller Center** is a vast entertainment and shopping complex in the middle of Manhattan, and home to NBC-TV and radio, and other media. The centerpiece of the complex is the 70-storey 30 Rockefeller Plaza, an Art Deco skyscraper that offers awesome views over Manhattan from the famous **Top of the Rock Observation Deck**.
  - ❑ **The Art Institute of Chicago** is a world class museum with hundreds of thousands of artworks. The diverse collection spans thousands of years and includes pieces from a variety of media including painting, prints, photography, sculpture, decorative arts, textiles, architectural drawings and more.
  - ❑ **Millennium Park** is located in downtown Chicago bordered by Michigan Avenue to the west, Columbus Drive to the east, Randolph Street to the North and Monroe Street to the South. The main features of Millennium Park include the Jay Pritzker Pavilion, an outdoor concert venue; the interactive Crown Fountain;
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- ❑ **The Golden Gate Bridge** is a California icon gracing San Francisco Bay. It is the most photographed site in the city, with the orange structure backed by blue water, or in many cases, peaking through low lying cloud. At night, the flood-lit structure is equally striking.
- ❑ The historic and notorious Alcatraz penitentiary, located on **Alcatraz Island** in San Francisco Bay, is one of America's most infamous prisons. It operated for almost thirty years, closing in 1963 and re-opening as a tourist attraction in 1973. Some of America's most well-known criminals were inmates here, including Al Capone and the "Birdman," who would later form the basis for the fictional movie The Birdman of Alcatraz.
- ❑ This incredible natural attractions is one of the most visited places in the United States. Carved out by the Colorado River, the **Grand Canyon** cuts deep into the landscape, creating dramatic cliff walls and ledges.
- ❑ Situated along the Canada-US border, **Niagara Falls** is one of the most famous waterfalls in the world. The water from Lake Erie flows into Lake Ontario over these massive waterfalls, known for the great quantity of water that is constantly tumbling over the vertical drop.

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- ❑ **The White House** is the official residence of the President of the United States, and on almost all tourists' list of things to see in Washington. This historic structure has been the home of every president except George Washington.
  - ❑ **Yellowstone National Park** is home to a huge ancient volcano which has resulted in a dramatic landscape and awesome natural phenomena. Geysers and hot springs, along with incredible waterfalls along the Yellowstone River are just some of the attractions drawing in huge numbers of tourists each year.
  - ❑ **Everglades National Park** - This site at the southern tip of Florida has been called 'a river of grass flowing imperceptibly from the hinterland into the sea'. The exceptional variety of its water habitats has made it a sanctuary for a large number of birds and reptiles, as well as for threatened species such as the manatee.
  - ❑ Home to the most popular beach in the Hawaiian Islands and possibly the most famous beach in the Pacific, **Waikiki** has been a tourist destination for over a century. Today this area is a cross between tropical paradise and modern city.
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# Geography of Canada

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- ❑ As the second largest country in the world, Canada includes a wide variety of land regions, vast maritime terrains, thousands of islands, more lakes and inland waters than any other country, and the longest coastline on the planet,
  - ❑ Significant landforms include the Appalachian Mountains; St. Lawrence River; Canadian Shield; Canadian Arctic Archipelago; Great Lakes; Hudson Bay; Great Plains; Lake Winnipeg; Columbia, Fraser, Mackenzie and Yukon Rivers; Great Bear Lake; Great Slave Lake; Rocky Mountains; Canadian Cordillera and the dozens of volcanoes along the Pacific Ring of Fire.
  - ❑ The Columbia River, (1,857 km) in length, is a wide, fast-flowing river rising in the Canadian Rockies of southeast British Columbia. It flows rapidly south through the State of Washington, then forming the natural border between Washington and Oregon.
  - ❑ The MacKenzie River is the longest river in Canada and dissects the Northwest Territories. It flows generally northwest into Mackenzie Bay and the Beaufort Sea.
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# The main tourist attractions in Canada

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- ❑ **Niagara Falls** is Canada's most famous natural attraction, bringing in millions of visitors each year. Located just over an hour's drive from Toronto, along the American border, these massive falls drop approximately 57 meters.
  - ❑ **Banff National Park** lies in the heart of the majestic Rocky Mountains in the province of Alberta and showcases some of Canada's most beautiful scenery. The jewel of the park is the **Lake Louise**, where green waters reflect the surrounding mountains and visitors can stroll easily around the shores. The **Icefields Parkway** that runs from Lake Louise to Jasper is an unforgettable drive and another must see in Banff.
  - ❑ **Toronto's CN Tower** - On the shores of Lake Ontario in Canada's biggest city is the iconic CN Tower, one of Canada's most famous landmarks. The tower is one of the tallest structures in the world standing 553 meters high. It offers fine dining in its revolving restaurant, **360**, where visitors can enjoy a meal while looking out over the city and lake. There is also the **LookOut** and the **Glass Floor**, offering beautiful views out over the city and beyond.
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# The main tourist attractions in Canada

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- ❑ **Old Quebec**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is spread across the Upper and Lower Town of Quebec and contains the city's most historic buildings. The Lower Town along the St. Lawrence River, is the site of the original settlement and home to the outstanding **Château Frontenac**, as well as numerous other treasures. The Upper Town rests on 100 meter-high cliffs and is home to the **Citadel**, **the Plains of Abraham**, **Place d'Armes**, and the **Parque Historique de l'Artillerie**.
  - ❑ Just a two hour drive from Vancouver is the famous ski resort and village of **Whistler**. While Whistler has always been an important winter sports area, it has also developed into a popular summer destination with golf, mountain biking, and a lively town atmosphere throughout the year.
  - ❑ **Ottawa's Parliament Hill** stands high above the Ottawa River and is graced by the Neo-Gothic style Parliament buildings built in the last half of the 19th century. The most prominent feature is the **Peace Tower** that divides the House of Commons and the Senate on either side.
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# The main tourist attractions in Canada

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- ❑ **Polar Bears of Churchill, Manitoba** -One of Canada's most unique attractions is the polar bear migration that sees these beautiful creatures make their way from land out onto the ice in Hudson Bay, near the town of Churchill in Northern Manitoba. This small community opens itself up to tourists each fall.
  - ❑ **Gros Morne National Park** - Newfoundland's Gros Morne National Park is more remote than many of Canada's most popular national parks, but worth the effort to discover this beautiful landscape of mountains and fjords. The park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site featuring steep cliff walls, waterfalls, and interesting rock formations carved by the glacier-fed waters.
  - ❑ **Vancouver's Stanley Park** - One of Vancouver's greatest treasures is the 405-hectare Stanley Park, conveniently located on the west side of the downtown area. Within the park are the **Vancouver Aquarium**, scenic **Beaver Lake**, and the **Stanley Park Pavilion and Rose Garden**.
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# Geography of Mexico

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- ❑ Mexico is bounded to the north by the United States (specifically, from west to east, by California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas), to the west and south by the Pacific Ocean, to the east by the Gulf of Mexico, and to the southeast by Belize, Guatemala, and the Caribbean Sea.
  - ❑ As well as numerous neighbouring islands, Mexican territory includes the more remote Isla Guadalupe and the Islas Revillagigedo in the Pacific. Mexico's total area covers 1,972,550 square kilometers, including approximately 6,000 square kilometers of islands in the Pacific Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea, and Gulf of California.
  - ❑ Mexico has nearly 150 rivers; most are small, unnavigable, and 70% drain into the Pacific Ocean.
  - ❑ The Rio Grande, rising in the San Juan Mountains of the U.S. State of Colorado, flows generally south to the Gulf of Mexico for (3,000 km) and forms much of Mexico's northern border with the United States. The two largest lakes in the country of Mexico are Lake Chapala and Lake Cuitzeo.
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# The main tourist attractions in Mexico

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- ❑ **Cancún and the Mayan Riviera** -Lying along a beautiful stretch of coastline on the Gulf of Mexico are the resort destinations of Cancún, Playa del Carmen, and the island of Cozumel, collectively known as the Mayan Riviera.
  - ❑ **Puerto Vallarta** - nother of Mexico's increasingly popular beach destinations is the Pacific coastal city of Puerto Vallarta. Often shortened to just Vallarta, the city - many parts of which remain untouched by modern development - first appeared on the vacation radar in the 1960s as a playground for North America's social elite and has since become extremely popular among foreigners looking for second homes in a warmer climate.
  - ❑ At the southern tip of the beautiful Baja Peninsula, Los Cabos - often referred to as simply Cabo - is one of Mexico's top beach destinations. Consisting of a large stretch of coastline that extends from the towns of **Cabo San Lucas** and **San José del Cabo** and known as the Los Cabos Corridor (Corredor Turístico), this 30-kilometer stretch of pristine beaches attracts visitors the world over for its clear waters, diving, snorkeling, and fishing (it also hosts the world's largest marlin contest).
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# The main tourist attractions in Mexico

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- ❑ **Copper Canyon: Mexico's Grand Canyon** -Chihuahua, one of Mexico's most northerly states - it shares the border with New Mexico in the US - is home to one of the country's most visited natural attractions, the stunning Copper Canyon (Barranca del Cobre). In a region known as the Sierra Madre Occidental and consisting of a spectacular group of deep canyons, Copper Canyon is in fact larger and deeper than its better known cousin, the Grand Canyon.
  - ❑ **Mexico City (Ciudad de México)** is not only the capital of the country and the seat of government, it is one of the country's most popular alternative travel destinations, thanks to its many world-class museums, art galleries, and attractions. historic city center (Centro Histórico de la Ciudad), a 15-square-kilometer UNESCO World Heritage Site boasting more than 1,400 important colonial buildings from the 16th to the 19th centuries.
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# The main tourist attractions in Mexico

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- ❑ **Chichén Itzá: The Mayan Metropolis** - A popular day trip for those visiting Cancún and Playa del Carmen or the Yucatán capital of Mérida, the magnificent Mayan city of Chichén Itzá is one of Mexico's most visited archaeological sites, as well as one of the biggest and best restored. Highlights of a visit to this UNESCO World Heritage Site are numerous, from the massive **El Castillo** - also known as the Pyramid of Kukulcán, and at 30 meters high, the site's tallest structure - to the magnificent **Caracol**, an almost 1,000-year-old observatory.
- ❑ **Guanajuato** - Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site thanks to its many old colonial buildings, winding lanes, and narrow alleys, Guanajuato is a city that just begs to be explored on foot. A particularly pleasurable experience is visiting its many plazas, including the delightful **Jardin de la Union**, the city's main square with its splendid old architecture. It's here, you'll find the beautiful old **San Diego Church** and the majestic **Juárez Theater**, along with fountains and flower beds, cafés, and restaurants.
- ❑ Second only to Mexico City in size, **Guadalajara**, capital of the state of Jalisco, has successfully conserved its unique mix of colonial and native Tapatíos influences.



# Geography of Caribbean islands

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- ❑ The Caribbean, is a region that consists of the Caribbean Sea, its islands (some surrounded by the Caribbean Sea and some bordering both the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean and the surrounding coasts.
- ❑ The region is southeast of the Gulf of Mexico and the North American mainland, east of Central America, and north of South America.
- ❑ Situated largely on the Caribbean Plate, the region comprises more than 700 islands, islets, reefs and cays.
- ❑ The geography and climate in the Caribbean region varies: Some islands in the region have relatively flat terrain of non-volcanic origin. These islands include Aruba (possessing only minor volcanic features), Curacao, Barbados, Bonaire, the Cayman Islands, Saint Croix, the Bahamas, and Antigua.
- ❑ Others possess rugged towering mountain-ranges like the islands of Cuba, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Dominica, Montserrat, Saba, Saint Eustatius, Saint Kitts, Saint Lucia, Saint Thomas, Saint John, Tortola, Grenada, Saint Vincent, Guadeloupe, Martinique.

# The main tourist attractions in Caribbean islands

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- ❑ **Bahamas, Atlantis Paradise Island** -Dominating the skyline on Paradise Island, this splashy, salmon-pink resort evocatively recreates the legend of Atlantis in a luxury hotel, entertainment complex, aquarium, and water park. Guests at the hotel score free entry into the popular 141-acre Aquaventure, a waterscape packed with high-speed slides, more than 20 swimming areas, and a long Lazy River Ride.
  - ❑ One of the most popular cruise ship ports in the Caribbean, **Nassau (Bahamas)** still manages to charm visitors despite the crowds of camera-toting tourists. Visitors come here to bask on the white sands of **Cable Beach**; explore the shops, restaurants, museums, and candy-colored colonial buildings of downtown and **Bay Street**; and shop for souvenirs at the **Nassau Straw Market**. A short catamaran ride away from Nassau, animal lovers can cavort with dolphins on a day trip to **Blue Lagoon Island**, while **Ardastra Gardens, Zoo, and Conservation Center** also offers a slower pace, with its endangered and threatened species amid four acres of tropical gardens.
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# The main tourist attractions in Caribbean islands

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- ❑ Pretty Harbour Island, northeast of its big sister, **Eleuthera**, is one of the oldest settlements in the Bahamas, as well as the site of the first Bahamian parliament; English Loyalists settled here in the 1700s. Famous for its **pink sand beaches** and chic resorts, the island, which is affectionately known by the locals as "Briland," has long been a hideaway for the rich and famous.
  - ❑ The northernmost of the Bahamian islands, Grand Bahama is a popular destination for package tourists and cruise ships. The capital, Freeport, is the second biggest city in the Bahamas, though Port Lucaya has now replaced it as the tourist hub for shopping, dining, and entertainment. **Port Lucaya Marketplace** sells jewelry and straw goods as well as other souvenirs, and the marina is a social hot spot for tourists and boaters.
  - ❑ **Andros**, the largest landmass in the Bahamas, has the third largest barrier reef in the world, as well as many freshwater blue holes and underwater caves. Fly fishing is big here, and Andros is often called "**the bonefishing capital of the world**."
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# The main tourist attractions in Caribbean islands

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- ❑ **Old Havana (Habana Vieja), Cuba** -A UNESCO world heritage site, Habana Vieja or Old Havana is a well-preserved slice of Cuban history. Strolling around the cobbled streets and gazing up at the grand Baroque and neoclassical buildings, it's easy to imagine what life in Cuba was like 200 years ago. Extensive renovations are now breathing new life into the historic buildings. Major attractions here include the **Plaza de la Catedral**, home to the Cuban Baroque **Catedral de San Cristobal**; the legendary restaurant and Hemingway hangout, **Bodeguita del Medio**; and the military fortress, **Castillo de la Real Fuerza**.
  - ❑ **Varadero** is one of Cuba's most famous beach destinations. It stretches along the Peninsula de Hicacos, which juts into the sea off the north coast where a drawbridge connects it to the mainland. More than 50 hotels line this popular palm-fringed strip, and its magnificent white-sand beaches draw visitors from around the world.
  - ❑ Exploring the town of **Trinidad**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is like stepping back in time. The beautifully restored buildings and cobblestone streets in the city center imbue a quaint colonial feel.
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# The main tourist attractions in Caribbean islands

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- ❑ Day trips from **Guardalavaca** include jungle adventures, sailing trips, and tours of **Santiago de Cuba**. West of Guardalavaca, **Bahia de Naranjo** encompasses a large slice of coast and three islands, including **Cayo Naranjo** with the popular **Dolphinarium** offering close-up encounters with these gregarious creatures.
  - ❑ In a country known for its beautiful beaches, Playa Paraíso (Paradise Beach), on the island of Cayo Largo del Sur, is one of Cuba's best. This sublime strand of powdery white sand and baby blue sea skirts the sheltered western edge of the island and merges with the equally ravishing **Playa Sirena**. The island of **Cayo Largo del Sur** is truly a sun seekers' destination with a typically dry, sunny climate and few tourist attractions besides beautiful beaches and many hotels and resorts.
  - ❑ When beach towns and resorts all start to seem the same, Santa Clara, in the province of Villa Clara, will add some depth to a Cuban itinerary. Rich in cultural attractions, Santa Clara is a vibrant university town and the famous site of the last guerrilla battle led by **Che Guevara** in 1958.
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# The main tourist attractions in Caribbean islands

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- ❑ A UNESCO World Heritage Site, **Castillo del Morro** is one of the best-preserved Spanish fortresses of the 17th century. It stands at the entrance to the Bay of Santiago, about 10 kilometers southwest of **Santiago de Cuba**, the country's second largest city.
  - ❑ A haven for birders and nature lovers, the Peninsula de Zapata is a remote, sparsely populated area of Cuba with diverse landscapes and one of the largest wetlands in the Caribbean. The Cienaga de Zapata, or the Zapata Swamp as it is affectionately known, is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, home to approximately 150 different species of birds, including rare bandicoots, waterhens, parrots, and heron. Crocodiles are also common. One part of the peninsula is a designated nature reserve, the **Gran Parque Natural de Montemar**, where visitors can see some of these creatures in their natural habitats.
  - ❑ The **Parque Histórico Militar** encompasses two of Havana's famous fortresses: the **Castillo de los Tres Reyes del Morro**, also known as El Morro, and **Fortaleza de San Carlos de la Cabana**.
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# The main tourist attractions in Caribbean islands

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- ❑ **Santo Domingo, in the Dominican Republic**, is the oldest city in the New World, lovingly preserves the jewels of its rich history and culture. Top on the list of the city's treasures is the historic Colonial City (Zona Colonial), a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with cobblestone streets, stunning Spanish Colonial architecture, and excellent restaurants.
- ❑ A UNESCO World Heritage Site, **Eastern National Park** (Parque Nacional del Este) is a prime habitat for hundreds of species of plants and animals, including 112 species of birds. The reserve also encompasses one of the Caribbean's largest marine parks with an immense coral reef system.
- ❑ **Punta Cana**, on the eastern tip of the Dominican Republic, is one of the most popular tourist areas on the island. Packed with resorts, this large town is known for its beautiful beaches (palm-lined Bavaro is a favorite) and world-class golf courses.
- ❑ Minutes from the center of Puerto Plata, **Playa Dorada** is one of the most popular beach destinations on the Dominican Republic's north coast. This massive resort complex lies on a picturesque stretch of replenished beach dotted with deck chairs and coconut palms.

# The main tourist attractions in Caribbean islands

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- ❑ **La Romana**, on the southeast coast of the Dominican Republic, is home to the charming Altos de Chavón, a replica of a 16th century artisans' village and one of the island's best spots to shop for crafts.
  - ❑ Also known as Seven Mile Beach, Negril Beach is one of Jamaica's most beautiful stretches of white sand and aqua sea and graces the list of the Caribbean's best beaches. The beach extends from **Bloody Bay** to **Long Bay** and the Negril Cliffs south of town.
  - ❑ **Old San Juan (San Juan Viejo) in Puerto Rico** - Walking the streets of Old San Juan, with its lovely colonial architecture and imposing forts, is like stepping back into another era but with a number of modern conveniences. The entire area is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with hundreds of restored 16th- and 17th-century Spanish colonial buildings.
  - ❑ **The Arecibo Radio Telescope** features a 20-acre dish set in a sinkhole. Here, astronomers have proved the "music of the stars" (pulsars and quasars), and examined the moon, the earth's ionosphere, and other planets. Scenes from the Jodie Foster film **Contact**, and others, have been filmed at the observatory.
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# Geography of South America

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- ❑ South America became attached to North America only recently (geologically speaking) with the formation of the Isthmus of Panama some 3 million years ago, which resulted in the Great American Interchange.
  - ❑ The Andes, likewise a comparatively young and seismically restless mountain range, runs down the western edge of the continent; the land to the east of the northern Andes is largely tropical rain forest, the vast Amazon River basin. The continent also contains drier regions such as eastern Patagonia and the extremely arid Atacama desert.
  - ❑ The South American continent also includes various islands, most of which belong to countries on the continent. The Caribbean territories are grouped with North America. The South American nations that border the Caribbean Sea—including Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana—are also known as Caribbean South America.
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# Geography of Argentina

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- ❑ The geography of Argentina include 5 major regions, starting with the rain forest areas of the far-northeast along its border with Brazil; the swampy and flat Chaco plain; the fertile (almost treeless) grasslands of the central Pampas; the lengthy plateau of Patagonia that stretches to Tierra del Fuego, and the Andes Mountains along its western border with Chile.
  - ❑ The Pampas, one of the largest fertile plains in the world, covers almost one third of Argentina's land area. Bordered by mountains and the Atlantic Ocean, the legendary landscape of Patagonia displays huge forests, sizeable mountains valleys, and many cold-water lakes.
  - ❑ The Andes in Argentina contain advancing glaciers including the Perito Moreno glacier, as well as Cerro Aconcagua, the tallest mountain in South America.
  - ❑ Argentina is also home to impressive Iguazu Falls, and over 250 additional waterfalls of size.
  - ❑ Major rivers include the Colorado, Negro, Paraguay, Parana, Salado and Uruguay. The Uruguay and Parana flow together before meeting the Atlantic Ocean, forming the basin of the Rio de la Plata.
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# The main tourist attractions in Argentina

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- ❑ **Iguazú Falls** -The stunning Iguazú Falls lie along Argentina's border with Brazil, with Iguazu National Park on the Argentinian side and Iguazu National Park on the Brazilian side. Protected as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, these huge waterfalls are undoubtedly one of the most spectacular sights in South America.
  - ❑ Perito Moreno Glacier - The main hub for tourists visiting the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Patagonia's **Los Glaciares National Park**, the small town of **El Calafate** offers numerous accommodation options and other amenities for visitors.
  - ❑ One of South America's most attractive cities (also one of the largest), **Buenos Aires** is often the first glimpse of Argentina most visitors will have before heading off to popular tourist destinations such as Patagonia. Of the must-see barrios, be sure to visit **La Boca**, Buenos Aires' most colorful neighborhood and home to the fun **Caminito Street Museum**, a splendid pedestrian zone and open-air museum popular for its brightly painted houses, amusing sculptures, and outdoor tango lessons.
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# The main tourist attractions in Argentina

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- ❑ **Ushuaia: The End of the World** -At the southern end of Argentina, **Patagonia** is famous for its spectacular landscapes: a dramatic mix of the Andes and long stretches of plains and plateaus. Most adventures here start in **Ushuaia**, the world's southernmost city. Established as a penal colony in the early 20th century and now a popular jumping-off point for trips to Antarctica or around Cape Horn, this town on **Beagle Channel** is surrounded by a unique landscape of mountains, sea, glaciers, and woods on the edge of the **Tierra del Fuego National Park**, with its spectacular scenery and diverse flora and fauna.
  - ❑ Some of the best beaches in South America are in the relatively modern city of **Mar del Plata**, on the Atlantic coast 400 kilometers from Buenos Aires. Here, the beautiful beaches sprawl for more than eight kilometers, with those nearest Mar del Plata's modern cruise ship port being the **Chica** and **Grande** beaches.
  - ❑ **Bariloche and Argentina's Lake District** - The town is probably best known for nearby **Cerro Cathedral**, the tallest of its peaks and a popular ski resort that draws visitors from far and wide.
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# Geography of Brazil

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- ❑ Brazil is divided into five primary geographic areas: the northern Guiana Highlands; Brazilian Highlands (or plateau) central and east; the massive Amazon River Basin; Pantanal wetland areas of the southwest, and the Southern Highlands - to the west and south of Curitiba.
  - ❑ The Brazilian Highlands are covered by low mountain ranges and forested river valleys. From Rio de Janeiro - north to Fortaleza, a series of higher mountain ranges form a natural barrier between the Atlantic Ocean and the country's interior.
  - ❑ The Pantanal is the world's largest freshwater wetland, a seasonally flooded plain fed by the tributaries of many rivers. For size comparison, it's almost 10 times the size of the Florida Everglades.
  - ❑ The Amazon is the world's largest tropical rain forest. It's drained by the huge Amazon River, and more than 200 of its tributaries - with more than a dozen of those tributaries being on (The Longest Rivers of the World) list. The Sao Francisco is the longest river completely within Brazil's borders.
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# The main tourist attractions in Brazil

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- ❑ **Sugar Loaf, Rio de Janeiro**-The easily recognized emblem of Rio de Janeiro, the rounded rock peak of Sugar Loaf juts out of a tree-covered promontory, rising 394 meters above the beaches and city.
  - ❑ With arms outstretched 28 meters, as if to encompass all of humanity, the colossal Art Deco statue of Christ, called **Cristo Redentor** (Christ the Redeemer), gazes out over Rio de Janeiro and the bay from the summit of Corcovado. The 709-meter height on which it stands is part of the **Tijuca National Park**, and a rack railway climbs 3.5 kilometers to its top, where a broad plaza surrounds the statue.
  - ❑ Few shows match Rio's pre-Lenten **Carnaval (Carnival)** extravaganza for color, sound, action, and exuberance. Make no mistake, this is not just another rowdy street party, but a carefully staged showpiece, where spectators can watch the parades of competing samba dancers from a purpose-built stadium designed by none other than Brazil's best-known architect, Oscar Niemeyer.
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# The main tourist attractions in Brazil

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- ❑ At the point where Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina meet, the **Iguaçu river** drops spectacularly in a semicircle of 247 **waterfalls** that thunder down into the gorge below. Just above the falls, the river is constricted to one-fourth of its usual width, making the force of the water even stronger. The falls are protected by the UNESCO-acclaimed **Iguaçu National Park**, where subtropical rain forests are the home to more than 1,000 species of birds and mammals, including deer, otters, ocelots, and capybaras.
  - ❑ Downtown Rio's most fashionable and famous section follows Avenida Nossa Senhora de **Copacabana** and is bordered all along one side by four kilometers of white sand and breaking surf. The beach is separated from the buildings and traffic by a broad promenade paved in black and white mosaic in an undulating pattern reminiscent of streets in Lisbon, Portugal.
  - ❑ **Amazon Rain Forests** - About 20 kilometers southeast of Manaus, the dark Rio Negro waters meet the light muddy water of the Rio Solimões, flowing side by side for about six kilometers before mixing as the Amazon.
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# The main tourist attractions in Brazil

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- ❑ **Brasília's Modernist Architecture** -Brazil's new city of Brasília was carved out of the wilderness and completed in less than three years to replace Rio de Janeiro as the country's capital in 1960. The ambitious plan by Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer became a showpiece of city planning and avant-garde architecture, and it remains today as one of the world's few cities that represent a completed plan and a single architectural concept.
- ❑ **Salvador's Pelourinho** - The Cidade Alta (Upper Town) of Brazil's former colonial capital has been named a UNESCO World Heritage site for its exceptional collection of 17th- and 18th-century colonial buildings, the finest such ensemble in South America. Called the Pelourinho, this old quarter is where you'll find Salvador's most beautiful churches and monasteries, built at a time when Brazil was the source of Portugal's riches, and the plentiful gold was lavished on the colony's religious buildings.
- ❑ The wealth of Brazil's state of Minas Gerais in its glory days of the colonial period is easy to imagine from the interiors of the churches in its old capital, **Ouro Preto**. The entire town is so rich in colonial architecture that Ouro Preto has been named a UNESCO.



# Geography of Peru

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- ❑ The rugged Andes Mountains cover almost 40% of Peru.
  - ❑ Fronting the Andes - from Ecuador to Chile - there's an arid and rocky narrow coastline; in essence, it's a sandy mountainous desert dissected by dozens of small rivers that flow into the Pacific.
  - ❑ In the east, the Andean Highlands slope gently down into the rivers and jungles of the Amazon; a heavily forested, relatively flat area, that stretches to its borders with Brazil and Chile.
  - ❑ The lowest part of Peru is in the far northeast; here the fertile land and jungles are irrigated by tributaries of the massive Amazon River.
  - ❑ And speaking of rivers, Peru is drained by many, including the Apurimac, Marañon, Napo and Ucayali - to name but a few.
  - ❑ Note that Peru shares control of Lake Titicaca with Bolivia, the world's highest navigable lake.
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# The main tourist attractions in Peru

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- ❑ Perched high upon a ridge, 300 meters above the Urubamba River, the majestic Inca City of **Machu Picchu** is one of the most dramatic settings of a ruined city anywhere in the world.
  - ❑ The famous **Inca Trail** is a four-day hike, which terminates at Machu Picchu, and is regarded by many as the highlight of their trip to Peru. This scenic trail is often more demanding than what many people are expecting, but also more rewarding. There are a couple of different starting points for the Inca Trail, but the traditional four-day hike begins at km 82 of the Cusco - Aguas Calientes rail line.
  - ❑ **Cusco's Architectural Treasures** - Walking through the streets of Cusco is like wandering through a museum, with history built upon history in this UNESCO World Heritage Site. Inca ruins have been used in the foundations of many of the lovely old colonial buildings lining the narrow roads, showcasing the city's long history. The main square, Plaza de Armas, in the city center is home to the Cathedral and La Compania, two equally impressive structures.
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# The main tourist attractions in Peru

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- ❑ The sparkling blue water of **Lake Titicaca** is surrounded by rolling hills and traditional small villages, offering a mix of beautiful scenery and culture that sets it apart from other regions of the country. Sitting at 3,820 meters above sea level, Lake Titicaca is known for being the highest navigable lake in the world, but it is also an extraordinarily scenic area where visitors can relax and enjoy some tranquility.
  - ❑ Although it was once thought to be the deepest canyon in the world, **Colca Canyon** (Cañon del Colca), twice as deep as the Grand Canyon, is the second deepest after nearby Cotahuasi Canyon. The canyon reaches a depth of 3,400 meters and is the result of a seismic fault between two volcanoes. At the base far below is a winding river.
  - ❑ The mysterious **Nazca lines** are an unusual sight that will leave visitors with a sense of awe. These huge images on the desert floor were relatively undiscovered until planes flying over the area in the 1920s saw the lines from the air and realized they formed distinct patterns and images.
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# Geography of Ecuador

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- ❑ Ecuador is divided into four regions: the coastal lowlands and mountains areas; the central Andes Mountains and its two major chains (Cordillera Occidental in the west) and the (Cordillera Oriental in the east); the lower mountains that fade into rolling hills and lowlands of the east, and the territory of the Galapagos Islands - officially called the Archipiélago de Colón - located about 1,000 km to the west.
  - ❑ The Andes includes over 20 peaks at least (4,200 m) in height with most located in the Cordillera Occidental. In addition, there are over 30 peaks that are volcanic in nature, including many active ones.
  - ❑ Most rivers in Ecuador rise in the upper elevations of the Andes, flowing east toward the Amazon River, or west into the Pacific Ocean. The most significant include the Babahoyo, Chira, Coca, Curaray, Daule, Esmeraldas.
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# The main tourist attractions in Ecuador

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- ❑ **The Galápagos Islands** -Since their "discovery" in the 16th century, the Galápagos Islands have intrigued and inspired visitors from around the globe. Named for the giant tortoises on the islands, this UNESCO World Heritage Site is home to a unique ecosystem that largely evolved without outside influences (mainland Ecuador lies some 1,000 kilometers to the east) and offers an exceptional opportunity for wildlife viewing.
  - ❑ **High in the Andes, Quito, the capital of Ecuador**, is filled with colonial architecture and is the largest historic center in South America. Preserved as a UNESCO World Heritage site with many old churches, beautiful public squares, and world-class museums, the city has long been a favorite with artisans and is a great place to shop for local art and crafts, from ceramics and wood carvings to colorful clothing.
  - ❑ The beautiful city **center of Cuenca**, officially known as Santa Ana de los cuatro ríos de Cuenca, is in southern Ecuador and is a delightful city to explore on foot. Designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the city brims with splendid colonial influences and architectural treasures spanning 400 years.
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# The main tourist attractions in Ecuador

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- ❑ **Cotopaxi and Cajas National Parks** - Two of Ecuador's most popular national parks, Cotopaxi and Cajas, are within easy driving distances from the cities of Cuenca and Quito and make wonderful day trips. Of the two, **Cotopaxi National Park** (Parque Nacional Cotopaxi), just 50 kilometers south of Quito, is perhaps the best known thanks to the massive (and still active) Cotopaxi volcano dominating the area, along with the smaller Rumiñawi and Sincholagua volcanoes. About 30 kilometers from Cuenca in Ecuador's stunning highlands, **Cajas National Park** (Parque Nacional Cajas) offers a different experience due to its numerous hills and valleys, making it a perfect place to hike and bike.
  - ❑ Ecuador's largest city in terms of population, the Pacific port of Guayaquil is well known as the gateway to the **Galápagos Islands**. In addition to its many historic sites, Guayaquil boasts great shopping and entertainment venues in its many picturesque squares and plazas, and along its splendid waterfront. The highlight for those who enjoy exploring on foot is the magnificent **Malecón 2000**, a two-and-a-half-kilometer-long boardwalk adjacent to the **Guayas River**.
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# Geography of Venezuela

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- ❑ The Orinoco River and Venezuela's mountain ranges divide the country into some distinct regions, all with different climates.
  - ❑ The Maracaibo Lowlands of the far northwest are dry, windless and hot; the Andes Mountains and northern highlands are more temperate and much cooler in the higher elevations; the central plain fronting the Orinoco River covers about one-third of the country, most of it is less than 50 meters in elevation, and generally quite warm. The wild and largely unexplored Guiana Highlands covering the southeast, with elevations of up to 3,500 meters, are jungle-tropical, hot and very humid.
  - ❑ Angel Falls (the world's highest waterfall) is located in the Guiana Highlands
  - ❑ With over 10,000 rivers (mostly small) within its borders, the Orinoco is by far the most important.
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# The main tourist attractions in Venezuela

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- ❑ In the heart of the country, where table top mountains rise up like giant monoliths from the surrounding landscape, is the magnificent **Angel Falls**. Dropping 979 meters, it is the highest waterfall in the world and one of the highlights of South America.
  - ❑ Sun-drenched beaches, turquoise waters, coral reefs, and modest development with no high-rise hotels, are what draw travelers to this beautiful chain of islands 160 kilometers north of the central coast of Venezuela. The archipelago is **Los Roques National Park**, but most people refer to the area simply as Los Roques.
  - ❑ **Isla de Margarita** is one of the more developed beach destinations in Venezuela. Lying approximately 40 kilometers north of the mainland, this is one of Venezuela's major tourist destinations for sun seekers. The island's main attractions are the beautiful soft sand beaches, which are popular with both foreigners and Venezuelans.
  - ❑ **Morrocoy National Park**, located along the coast about a two-hour drive west of Caracas, is known for its white-sand beaches and coral reefs, which stretch along the mainland and ring the offshore islands and cays.
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# The main tourist attractions in Venezuela

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- ❑ The table-top mountain of **Roraima** has an alluring appeal for nature lovers and adventure seekers, with an almost mystical Jack and the Beanstalk type of wonder attached to it.
  - ❑ **The Orinoco Delta**, in the northeast of Venezuela, offers a completely different landscape and experience than other parts of the country.
  - ❑ While few people plan to spend much time in **Caracas**, the city does have a couple of sites worth seeing. One of the highlights is a trip up the funicular to the small town of Galipan on Avila Mountain in northern Caracas.
  - ❑ **Medanos de Coro National Park** offers surprising sights, with rolling sand dunes typical of a desert scene. The sand dunes, known locally as medianos, roll across the landscape, with twisting and curving lines, and some dunes reach up to 40 meters in height.
  - ❑ **Mochima National Park** - This park covers a portion of the coast and a chain of offshore islands east of Puerto La Cruz to Cumaná. The main attractions here are the beaches and the diving. The islands can be accessed by boat from Puerto La Cruz, Santa Fé, and Mochima.
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# Geography of Chile

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- ❑ With a toothy coastline of almost 4,000 miles, pencil-thin Chile is wedged between the Pacific Ocean and the rugged Andes, the world's longest mountain range. This land of incredible and unusual contrasts is also home to the numerous beaches, fjords, deep sea channels, glaciers and icebergs - and the Atacama Desert - a virtually rainless plateau made up of salt basins and lava flows.
  - ❑ Most of the country's interior is covered by mountains.
  - ❑ Located along the Ring of Fire, the Andes are geologically a young mountain range that includes over 600 volcanoes (within Chile alone), many of them active, and almost 10% have erupted (at least once) within the last century.
  - ❑ The Lake Region of the south, is a group of mostly small, clear blue, cold-water lakes; in this area, waterfalls are common.
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# The main tourist attractions in Chile

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- ❑ **Torres Del Paine National Park** - One of Chile's most spectacular natural areas and popular travel destinations is the Torres del Paine National Park. More than 100 kilometers north of the city of **Puerto Natales** in southern Patagonia, this stunning area encompasses mountains, glaciers, and countless lakes and rivers.
  - ❑ **Valle de la Luna and the Atacama Desert** - Valle de la Luna, which means Moon Valley, lies 13 kilometers west of San Pedro de Atacama at the north end of the country near its border with Bolivia. This rugged, inhospitable looking landscape in the heart of the Atacama Desert attracts many visitors for its eerie resemblance to the surface of the moon.
  - ❑ First visited by Europeans in 1722, the magnificent yet remote **Easter Island** - so named by a Dutch Explorer who first set eyes on it on Easter Sunday - has been inhabited for thousands of years by Polynesians. It told, 887 of these statues, known as Moai, created by the island's early Rapa Nui population, have been identified, most of them now protected by Rapa Nui National Park (the island itself has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site)
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# The main tourist attractions in Chile

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- ❑ **Santiago** is not only the financial and business capital of Chile, it also serves as the country's cultural and entertainment center and is home to its best museums and galleries, along with excellent shopping, dining, and hotel options. Centrally located and the country's main transportation hub, Santiago is where most visitors begin their Chilean travels before heading to the Andes or other areas of outstanding natural beauty.
- ❑ Stretching for more than 330 kilometers from **Temuco** to **Puerto Montt** and resembling the alpine regions of Europe, Chile's Lake District is well worth exploring.
- ❑ Chile's third largest city, **Valparaíso**, is nestled between the sea and the coastal mountain range about 112 kilometers northwest of Santiago and makes for an excellent day trip. As popular for its many old cobbled streets and unique architecture as it is for its lovely harbor and beaches, the city offers a great deal to see and do.
- ❑ In the far north of Chile, just 140 kilometers east of the city of Arica, **Lauca National Park** covers an area of 1,300 square kilometers and consists largely of high plains and mountain ranges, many of the latter consisting of large volcanoes.

# Geography of Bolivia

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- ❑ Bolivia's western half is covered by the Andes, as three meandering high mountain chains dominate the landscape.
  - ❑ The Cordillera Occidental (in the west) is a long line of mostly bleak, dormant volcanoes; the Cordillera Central stands in the middle, while the (eastern) Cordillera Oriental is a massive snow-capped series of stunning granite mountains.
  - ❑ The Altiplano (a high plateau) is sandwiched between the cordilleras. Once just deep valleys (or rifts) between the three mountain ranges, over eons of time it filled with sedimentary debris washed down from the surrounding peaks.
  - ❑ The eastern slopes of the Cordillera Oriental descend gently into rolling hills; numerous rivers flow eastward here, forming long narrow valleys. Northeast of La Paz, the landscape descends into fertile semitropical valleys, drained by narrow rivers.
  - ❑ Deep and cold, Lake Titicaca, 3,810 meters above sea level, is the highest navigable body of water in the world; salty Lake Poopo is the largest inland lake, varying greatly in size based on rainfall.
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# The main tourist attractions in Bolivia

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- ❑ For a truly out-of-this-world travel destination, it's hard to match the **Salar de Uyuni**. One of the flattest places in the world, the 4,000-square-mile salt flats were formed by a prehistoric lake. Visitors travel in 4×4 vehicles across the expanse of the salt flats to visit locally fashioned structures made entirely from bricks of salt.
  - ❑ Located near the south-eastern shore of Lake Titicaca in Bolivia, **Tiwanaku** is one of the most important precursors to the Inca Empire.
  - ❑ Bordering Bolivia and Peru, **Lake Titicaca** is the largest lake in South America. Incans, as well as a number of other native peoples, are thought to have originated in the region.
  - ❑ Each year in **Oruro**, just before Ash Wednesday, the city of Oruro hosts the Carnaval de Oruro, one of the most important folkloric and cultural events in all of South America.
  - ❑ Known as the “City of Four Names”, **Sucre** is also called Charcas, La Plata and Chuquisaca.
  - ❑ The “rich mountain” or “**Cerro Rico**” that towers over the city of Potosí once held the silver that lured Spanish Conquistadors to the world's highest city.
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# Geography of Colombia

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- ❑ Fronted by the Caribbean and Pacific lowlands, as well as the eastern Amazon lowlands that extend to its borders with Brazil and Venezuela, the western third of Colombia is crossed by three rugged parallel ranges of the Andes Mountains, namely the Eastern, Central, and Western Cordilleras.
  - ❑ Many rivers rise in the upper elevations of the Andes, and the most significant include the Cauca, Magdalena and Putumayo.
  - ❑ The Cauca and Magdalena (which flow northward) separate the three principal Andean mountain ranges, eventually merging and then ending in the Caribbean Sea.
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# The main tourist attractions in Colombia

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- ❑ Bogotá might be the Colombian capital, but it's the smaller and more manageable city of **Medellin** that tends to capture the hearts of visitors. Medellin was dubbed the most dangerous city in the world in the early 1990s, but a quarter of a century later, it has earned a reputation for something entirely different: innovation.
  - ❑ The world's third-largest producer of coffee beans, Colombia is a fantastic country for tastings and tours. The vast majority of production takes place in the subtropical Andean hills west of Bogota between the small cities of Armenia, Pereira, and Manizales. This region, known as the **Eje Cafetero** (or Coffee Axis).
  - ❑ Cartagena is the crown jewel of Colombia's Caribbean coast and one of the best-preserved colonial destinations in the Americas. Take a stroll through **Old Town** and you may feel as if you've stepped back in time to a different era.
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# The main tourist attractions in Colombia

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- ❑ Picture the Amazon, and Colombia may not be the first country to come to mind - which is odd, because about a third of the nation is blanketed in its thick (and often impenetrable) jungles. The capital of the vast Amazon Basin is the small frontier **town of Leticia**, which sits along the banks of the mighty Amazon River, right where Colombia bumps up against Brazil and Peru.
  - ❑ You'll find some of the best beaches in Colombia within the protected Tayrona National Natural Park, which is known for its palm-shaded coves and crystal-clear coastal lagoons. Tayrona is also a fantastic place for snorkeling at protected areas near **La Piscina** beach and **Cabo San Juan**.
  - ❑ Most visitors to Colombia will inevitably begin their trip in the nation's largest city - and beating heart - **Bogotá**. It's a city that often divides opinion, with some complaining of its gridlocked streets and dreary weather, and others falling head over heels for its unique combination of colonial charm and urban sophistication.
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