

# The Rainforests around the world

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Where are rainforests?



\*The rainforests are highlighted in this map in dark green.

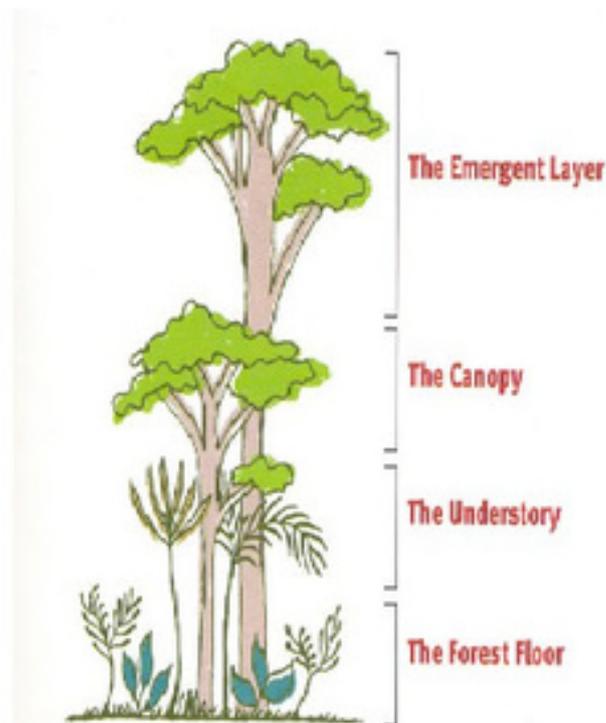
Tropical rainforests are found near the equator due to the amount of rainfall and the amount of sunshine these areas receive. Most tropical rainforests fall between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn. The high temperatures means that evaporation happens at a fast rate, resulting in frequent rainfall.

The Amazon rainforest is the world's largest and richest in plants and animals, it stretches across a huge area of South America. Tropical rainforests are in hot wet and humid places near the Equator. The climate is ideal for plants with growth with plants that grow fast and easy all year round.

The rainforest is made up of several forest layers:

### Forest layers

1. The emergent layer has high tree tops that rise above everything else. Above the canopy, this layer gets the most rain, and it is so much more windy than other layers. The tallest trees can reach heights of up to 70m (230ft). These tree tops are home to vultures, eagles, bats, butterflies and monkeys.
2. The canopy is made up of thick branches and leaves of taller trees. This layer is sunny and wet, with a nice refreshing breeze, but more sheltered than the emergent layer. More wild life is here than any other layer.
3. The understory is the warm, damp and sheltered layer below the canopy. Leafy bushes, shade-loving plants and short trees provide cover for sloths, jaguar and small animals like frogs and monkeys.
4. The forest floor is the darkest and dampest layer. Dead leaves from the upper layers cover the ground floor, which fungi feed on. Lots and lots of bugs then feed on the fungi, with draw attention to bigger animals like anteaters.



## Animals in the rainforests

The rainforests around the world have a lot of animals in them and around them, let's take a look:



Macaws are large and powerful birds their beaks are colourful and bright. They live high in the trees feeding on fruit and nuts.



Toucans are known for their large, powerful beaks that they use for cracking open the shells of nuts. If they can't find any of the nuts they looking for they will eat small animals as well.



Harpy eagles prey on monkeys and sloths, grabbing them from the branches with their strong claws.



Howler monkeys are leaf eaters. They get their names from the large the incredibly loud calls, which echo through the forest.



Caimans are relatives to the crocodile and alligators. They are powerful predators spending more than 3 quarters of their life in the water. They eat fish, but many also seize large land animals that come to drink the water.



Giant Otters grow up to 1.7m (5ft). in length. It lives on the river fish, including piranha.



The Carpybara is the world's largest, heaviest rodent on the planet. It lives in swamps and rainforests around South America.



Jaguars are powerful predators, as they prowl through the forest. They can kill and eat a caiman in a matter of minutes.



Most lizards are meat-eaters but the Green Iguana eats plants. It climbs high into the trees to find its favourite food leaves, fruit and flowers.



Capybaras are expert swimmers. They live in burrows up to 3m (10ft) deep. They come out at night to hunt for food.



Piranha fish are meat-eating with strong jaws and sharp teeth that can tear away at bones.

### **Facts about rainforests**

- About 30 million species of animals live in the Amazon Rainforest
- The rainforests in the world hold more than 2/3 of the plants in the world.
- Many of the world's foods come from the rainforests around the world. Chocolate, cinnamon and even pineapples come from rainforests. Rubber and medicines come from the rainforests too.
- Rainforests have a layer of dense branches and leaves. This is called the canopy. Most of the rainforest animals live in the canopy.
- Not much light reaches the forest floor. The ground is almost all bare.

## How can we help save the rainforests?

**Rainforests** are threatened by climate change which is contributing to droughts in parts of the Amazon and Southeast Asia. Drought causes die-offs of trees and dries out leaf litter, increasing the risk of forest fires, which are often set by land developers, ranchers, plantation owners, and loggers. Here are some ways we can help save rainforests:

- Ask your parents to buy foods—like bananas and coffee—that are grown in a sustainable way, in a way that is safe for the environment, for wildlife, and for people.
- Read about other children who live in or near the rainforest; see how they and their families depend on the plants and animals in the rainforest.
- Tell your friends and family about how important the rainforests are
- Use less paper—re-use paper instead of throwing it out. Cut it up to use as a notepad, or recycle the paper you use. Ask your parents and teacher about how they recycle their paper.
- Ask your school to buy environmentally friendly paper.
- Write a letter and post on social media to thank organizations and companies that are working to protect the rainforest.
- Look around your home for things you use or eat that originate in the rainforest; Think about how many things that we use every day originate in the rainforest, and how it would affect you if they were no longer around.