

Latin America



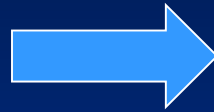
Objective

- Students will familiarize themselves with the physical features and climates of Latin America.

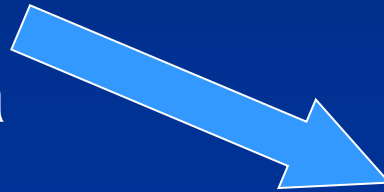


Latin America is divided into 2 regions

- A. Middle America: made up of Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean Islands



- B. South America
- “Latin” America identifies this as a cultural rather than a physical region

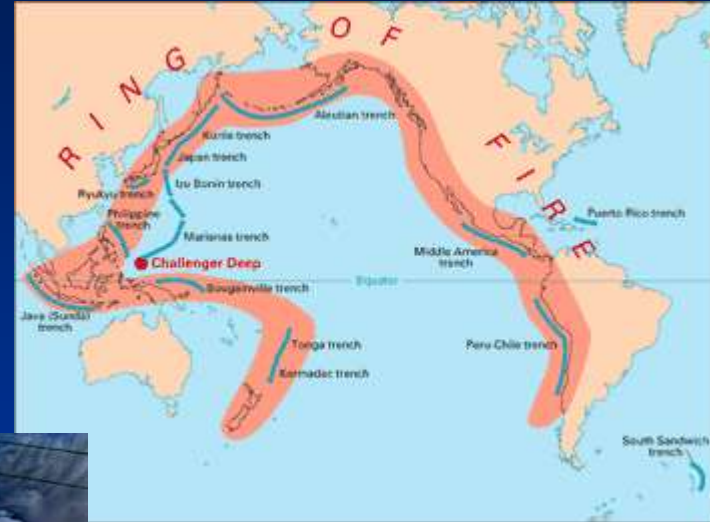


Physical Geography

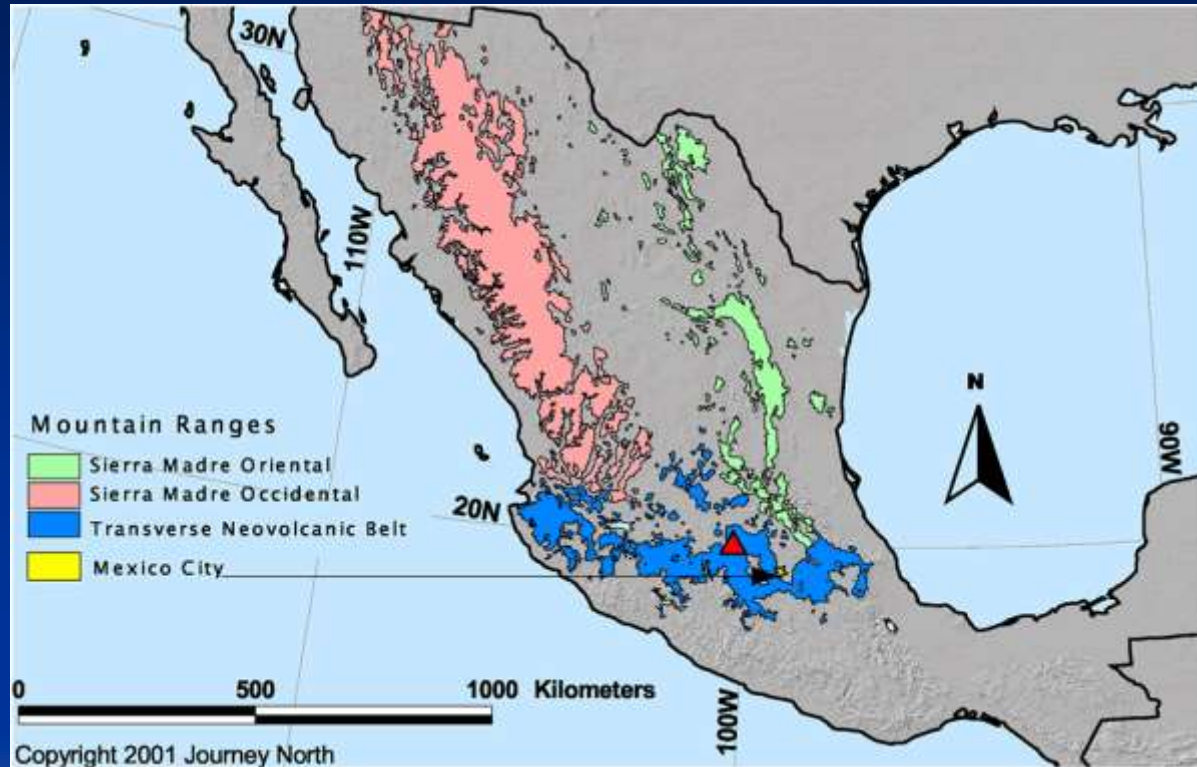
Ring of Fire

- Covers the west coasts of South America and Middle America

- Earthquakes/volcanoes are consequences of a crustal plates convergent, divergent, and transform contacts.



Physical Geography Mountains



- Sierra Madre Occidental and the Sierra Madre Oriental meet near Mexico City to form the sharp-peaked Sierra Madre del Sur.

Physical Geography

Mountains

- Brazilian Highlands of Eastern Brazil: form an escarpment (a slope or long cliff between a higher and lower surface)



Physical Geography

Mountains

- The Andes: 4500 miles long—World's longest mountain chain.
- Second-highest range in the world.



Andes



- Mount Aconcagua is the highest peak in the range. It reaches up to 22,834 feet above sea level.
- The Andes were created from the collision between the Nazca and South American plates.

Positives and Negatives of mountains

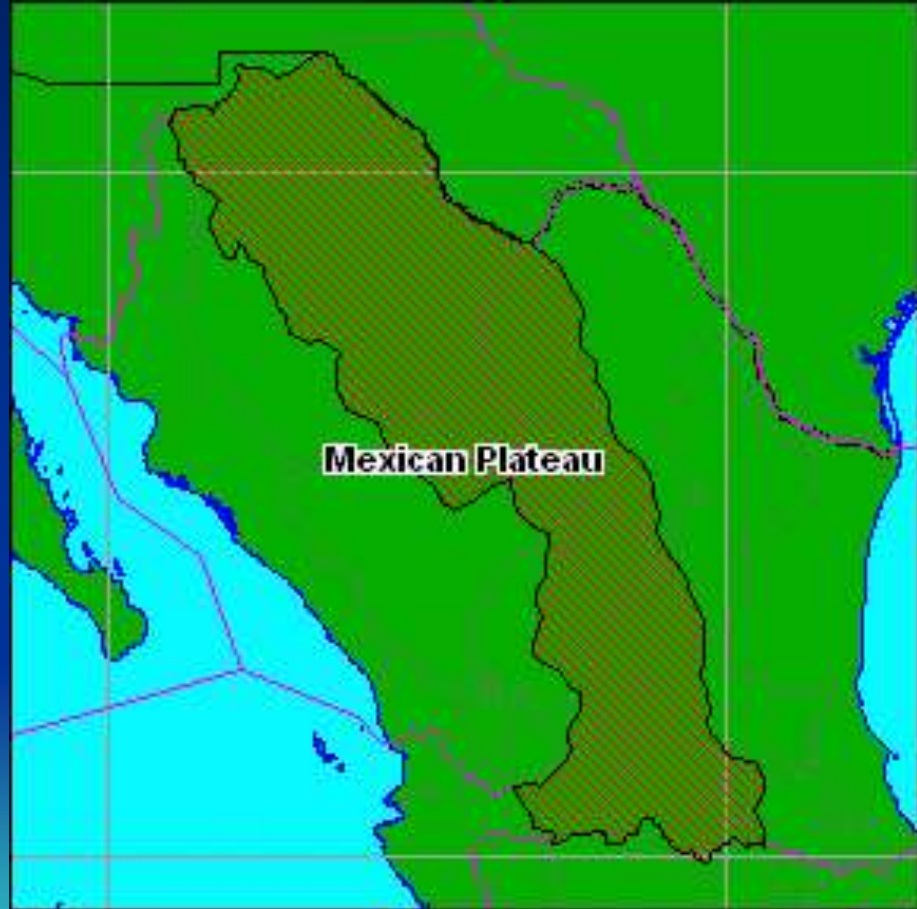
- Mountains often block communications, isolating regions and people.
- They are also rich in mineral and soil resources.



Physical Geography

Plateaus and Hills

- Plateau is an elevated flatland that rises sharply above nearby land on at least one side.
- High flatlands used for grazing and farming.
- Anahuac—densely populated Mexican Plateau



Physical Geography

Plateaus and Hills

- Altiplano: Means “high plain” covers Bolivia and Peru
- Patagonia: Southern Argentina, hills and low flatlands form a plateau area





Physical Geography

Plains Areas

- Llanos: run along the Caribbean coast of South America: fertile plains in Venezuela and Columbia
- Amazon River Basin: largest lowland area of South America
- Pampas: grassy, treeless plains of Argentina and Uruguay. Rainfall and fertile soils needed for producing grain and grazing cattle and sheep.



Physical Geography

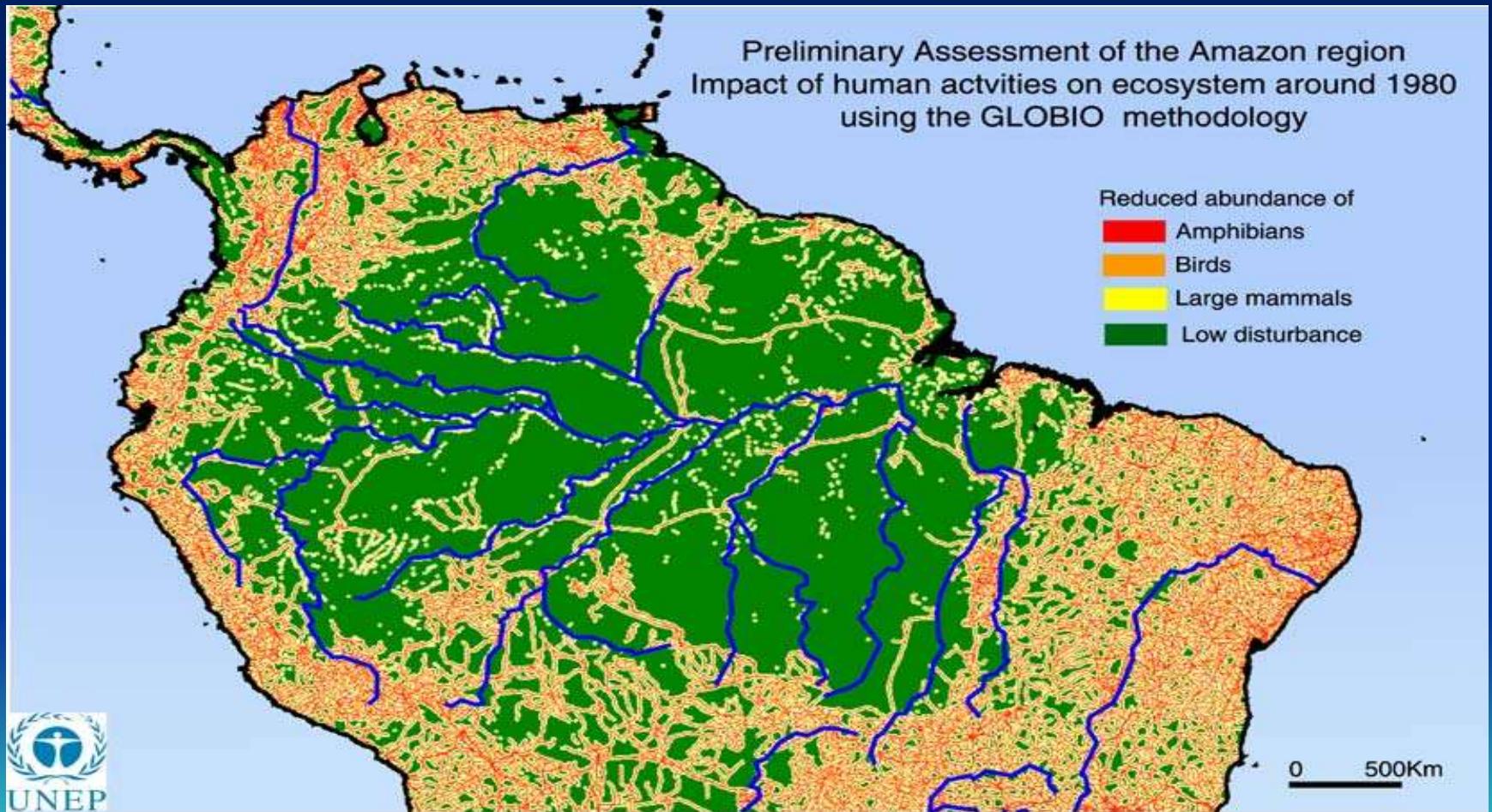
The Amazon

- Plains cover most of South America. The largest of these plains is the Amazon river basin. It covers near 2 million square miles.
- This plain makes up the largest rainforest in the world.



Amazon River Basin

Preliminary Assessment of the Amazon region
Impact of human activities on ecosystem around 1980
using the GLOBIO methodology



Physical Geography Amazon

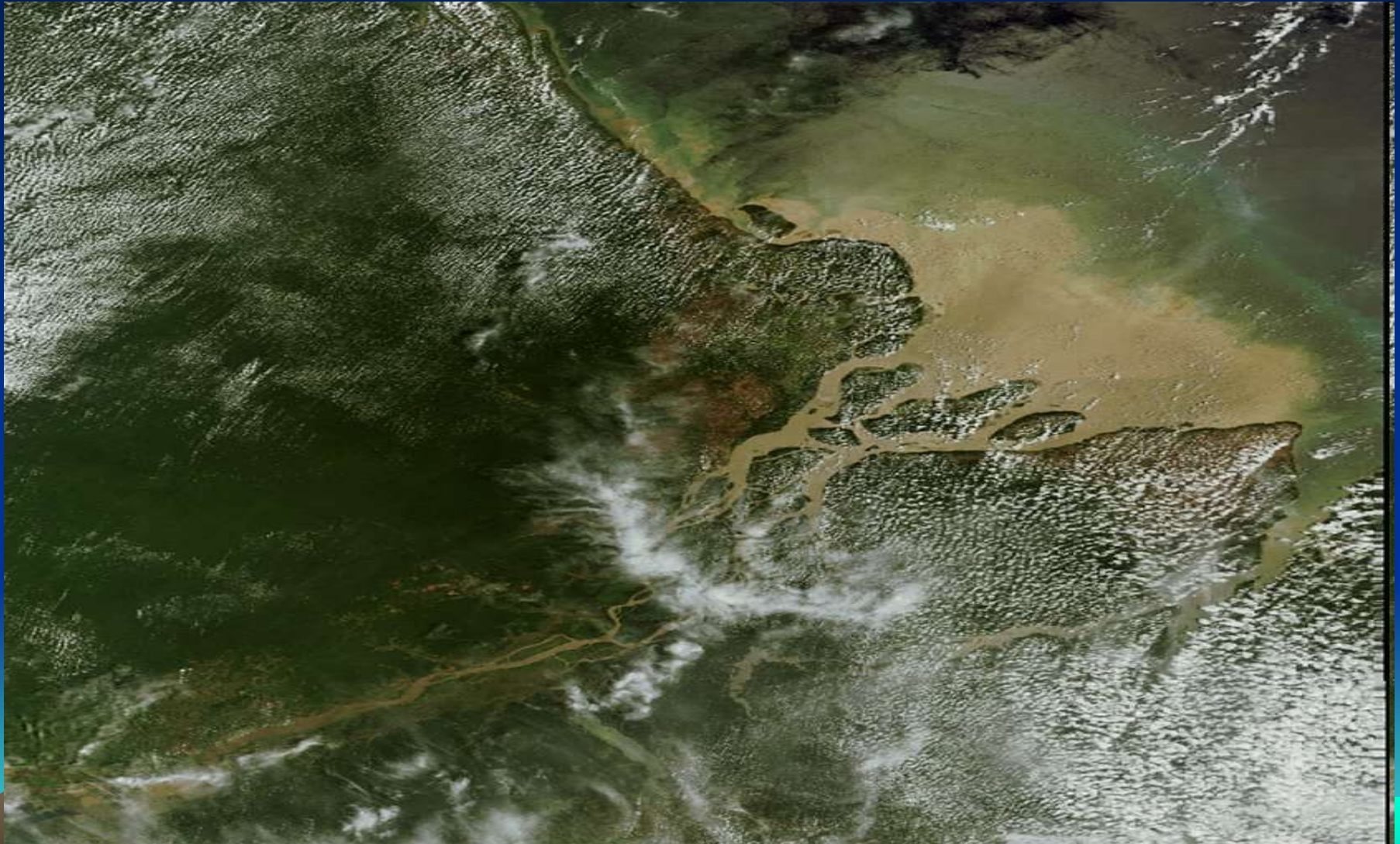


Physical Geography Amazon

- The Amazon River is 4,000 miles long. It is the worlds **LARGEST** river by volume, and no other river drains as large of an area.
- So much water flows into the Atlantic that it dilutes the seawater more than 100 miles from shore.



Amazon Delta



Physical Geography Amazon

- More than 150 inches of rain fall over the Amazon basin every year. That is over 12 times as much as Utah.
- Anacondas, bats, jaguars, monkeys, piranha, and countless other species live in the forest.



















Physical Geography

Pampas



- The Pampas are located in the eastern edge of Argentina. This is the most densely populated area of Argentina.
- It is a very fertile farming land. It is so fertile because of erosion from the Andes that carried soil to the area.

Physical Geography

Pampas

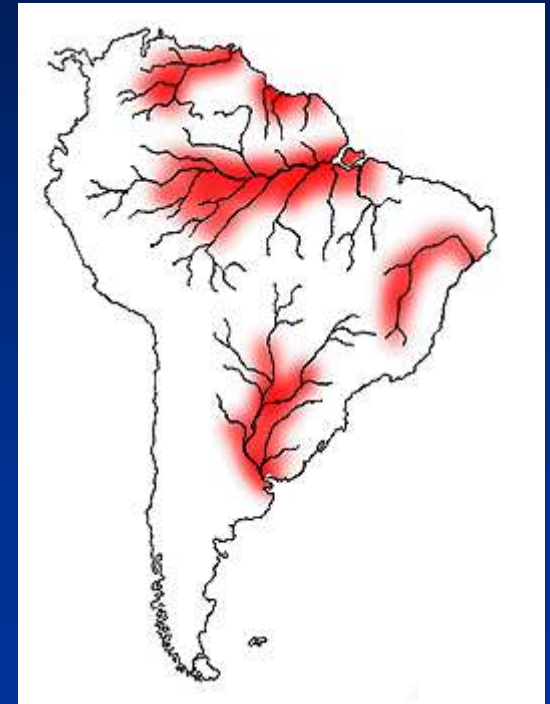


- The Pampas fertile soils enable ranchers to raise cattle and grow grains. Argentina is the 2nd largest cattle producer in the world because of this.

Physical Geography

Rivers, Lakes and Waterfalls

- **Amazon:** Greatest volume of water of any of World's rivers and second longest next to the Nile.
- **Parana, Paraguay, Uruguay:** rivers form the second-largest river system in South America. Near Buenos Aires, the Paraguay and Uruguay rivers join to form the Rio de la Plata, which means "river of silver".
- **Lake Titicaca:** World's highest navigable lake which is found in Bolivia.



Physical Geography

Landforms

- Yucatan Peninsula: surrounded by water on three sides.
- Found in southeastern Mexico
- It separates the Caribbean Sea from the Gulf of Mexico.



Physical Geography

Landforms

- The Antilles extend from Venezuela to Florida.
- The Greater Antilles are the large set of islands of Cuba, Hispaniola, Jamaica, the Bahamas, and Puerto Rico.
- The Lesser Antilles are comprised of 20 small island countries and territories.



Physical Geography

Landforms

- Central America is an Isthmus (a narrow strip of land connecting two larger land areas, usually with water on either side.) that links North and South America together.
- To the east lies the Caribbean Sea and a group of islands called the Greater and Lesser Antilles
- To the west lies the Pacific Ocean



Climates of Latin America

- Tropical: Climates cover most of Latin America: Wet and hot all year.
- Found in Southern Mexico, eastern shores of some Caribbean Islands, large parts of South America



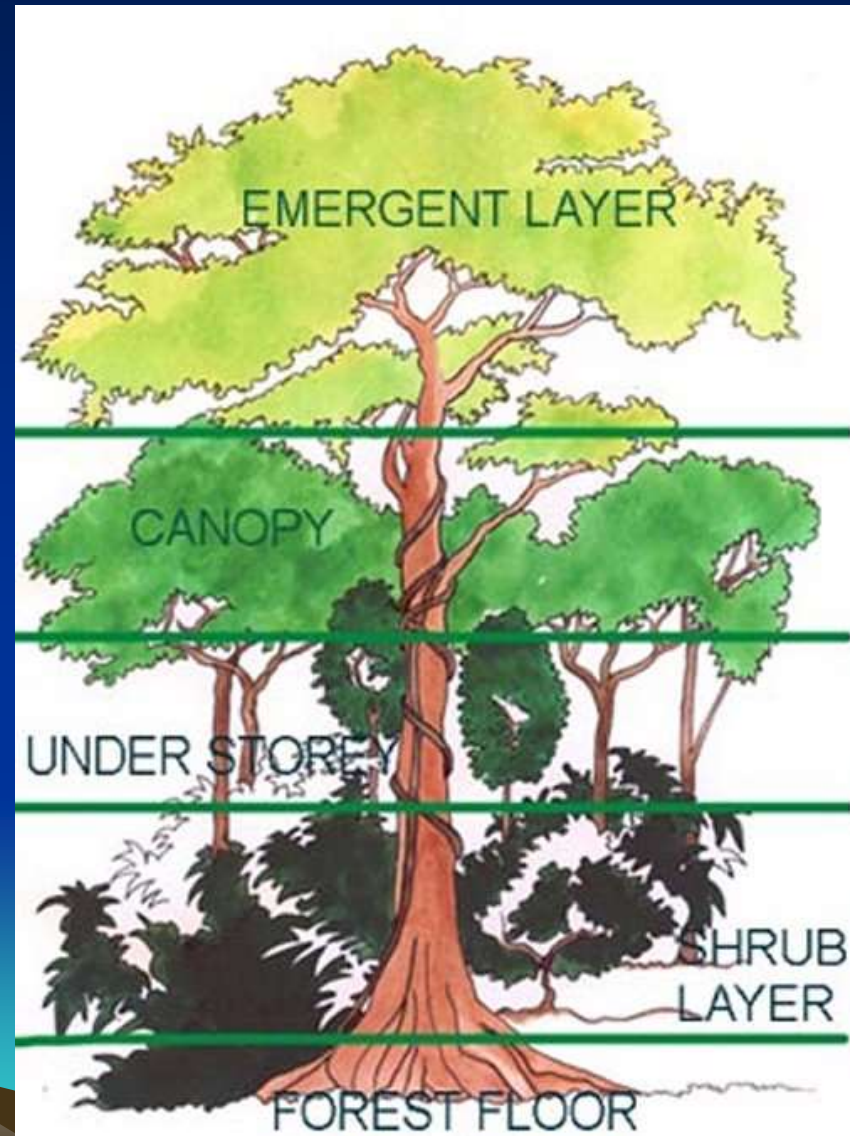
Climates of Latin America

- Rain Forest:
- Only covers 7 % of the earth's surface, yet nearly one half of the world's species of plants and animals are found there.
- What makes a tropical rain forest so unique is its biodiversity.
- A person could walk for a mile through the rain forest and never find two trees of the same kind. Much of this diversity is due to the special layering of plant life, the millions of species of insects and animals, the hot, humid climate and rich fertile soil.



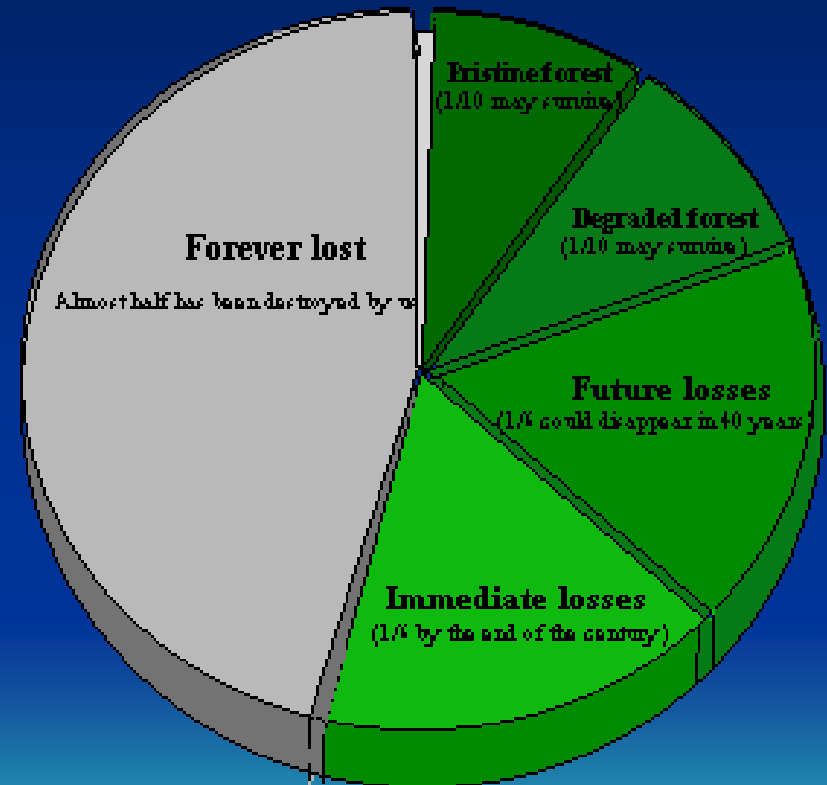
Climates of Latin America

- Rain Forest Layers
- 1. Emergent Layer: Contains very tall trees. Some taller than 160 feet. Butterflies and birds of prey, such as eagles, are found in this layer.
- 2. Canopy: rises about 100-130 feet above the ground. It is thick with vines and trees and gets a lot of sunshine. Most of the animals and plants in the rain forest live in the canopy.
- 3. Understory: the layer beneath the canopy. Bushes, shrubs and trees grow there about 50-80 feet above the ground. Plants do not grow tall in this layer because it gets very little sunlight. Bats, birds and cats like ocelots live here.
- 4. Forest Floor: the bottom layer of the rain forest has almost no direct sunlight. It is usually bare except for decaying plants that don't need as much sun. Beetles, spiders, tapirs and flightless birds live here.



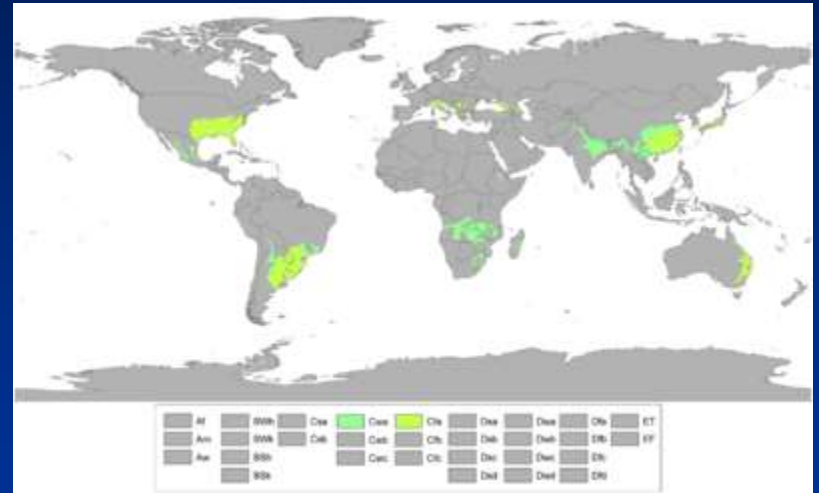
Interesting tidbits about the Rain Forest

- Americans use 50 million tons of paper annually -- consuming more than 850 million trees.
- Every day 50 to 100 species of plants and animals become extinct as their habitat and human influences destroy them.
- In Peninsular Malaysia, more tree species are found in 125 acres of Tropical Forest than in the entire North America.
- 63,000 square miles of Rainforests are being destroyed each year.
- A study has shown that there are possibly over 30 *million* species of insects dwelling in the canopies of tropical forests.
- Greater than a quarter of our rainforest is in Brazil



Climates of Latin America

- Humid Subtropical:
Winters are short and mild,
summers are long and humid.
Southeastern South America
(Rio de Janeiro to Pampas)



Climates of Latin America

- Desert: northern Mexico and southern and northwestern Argentina: Hot and dry climate most of the time: In some parts of the Atacama (border between Chile and Peru), no rainfall has ever been recorded.



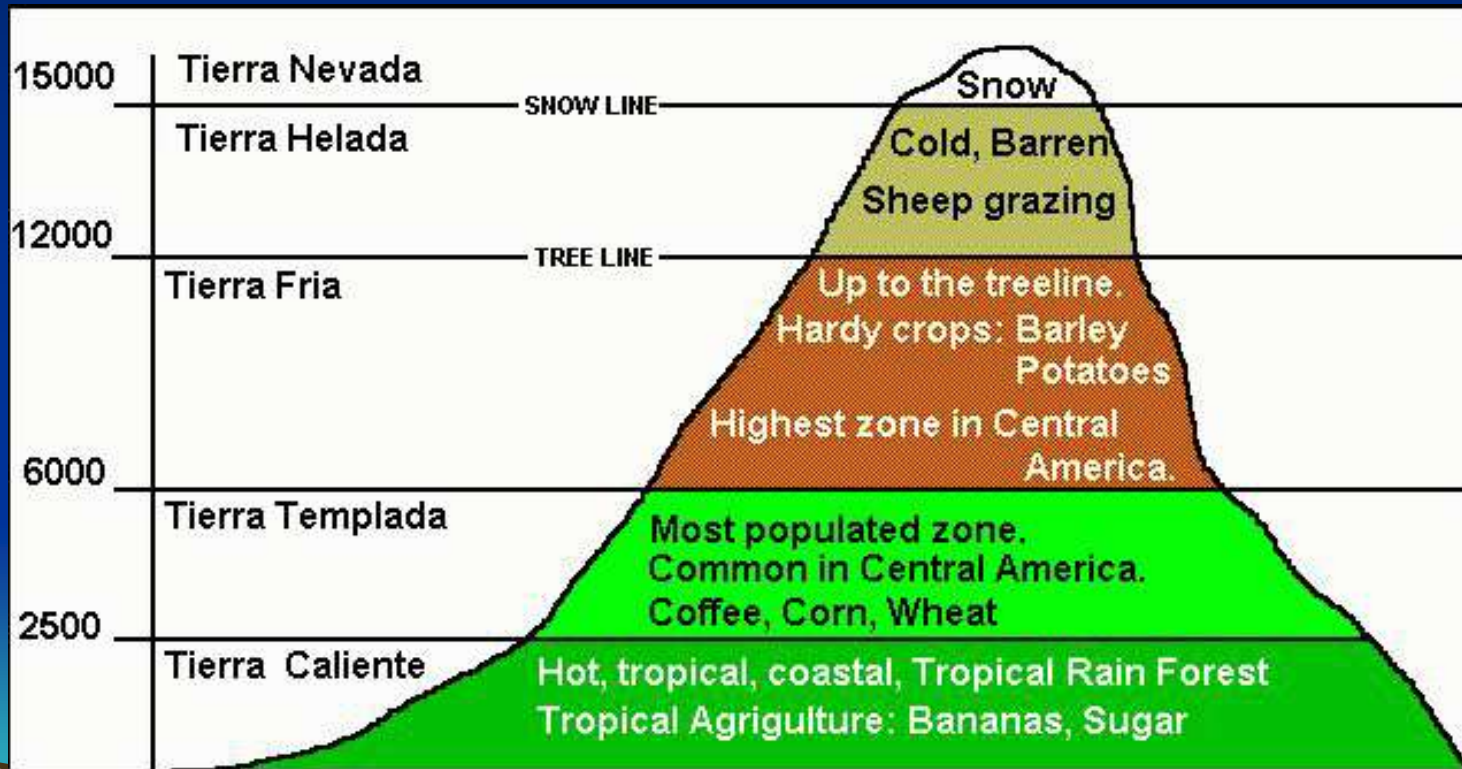
Climates of Latin America

- Steppe: Hot summers, cold winters, light rainfall:
northern Mexico,
highland areas
in South
America near
the Andes



Climates of Latin America

- Highland Climate: depends on Altitude: Altitudinal Zonation
- Copy CHART



ALTITUDINAL ZONATION