

Diversity of Africa

Africa, the second largest continent in the world, is a very diverse continent. This diversity is shown in its physical geography and climate; in its plurality of cultures, traditions, beliefs, values, religions, and artistic expressions; in its many modes of economic production, distribution, and consumption; in its diverse social and political structures and practices preserved for many centuries. It is a continent of 54 independent countries.

Africa has a great history - Africa was the birthplace of human societies; it has been home to many great civilizations; its history has been shaped by contact with others through great migrations, wars, slavery and colonialism.

For thousands of years, Africa has interacted with the outside world. This interaction has facilitated many African contributions and exports to the world, such as agricultural products, minerals and other material goods, as well as knowledge and cultural expressions. This interaction has also allowed African societies to benefit from imports from the outside world, such as information and other technologies.

Africa is almost completely encircled by water and is home to the world's largest desert (Sahara), tropical rainforests, the world's longest river (Nile), mountain ranges and fertile grassland. Its natural beauty and wildlife attract an ever increasing number of tourists from around the world. Africa also has a fertile climate and a wide range of natural resources including oil, diamonds and gold. People in the rest of the world use many "exports" that come from Africa, such as chocolate, coffee, cotton used to make cloth, tea leaves used to make tea, sugar cane used to make sugar, rubber used to make tires on cars, and much more. However, despite these natural attributes, Africa is home to the 15 least developed countries in the world and 70% of its population survive on less than \$2 a day.

Africa is a continent made up of many peoples and many languages. There are over 800 ethnic groups of native black Africans, and each group has its own distinctive language. In addition, there are dialectical, or regional, languages. In all, more than 1,000 languages are spoken in Africa. Uganda alone has 48 different languages with a population of 21 million people.

Facts about Africa:

- The largest City in Africa is Cairo, Egypt, 9.2 million people
- The Biggest country in Africa is Sudan, 968,000 square miles
- The Longest river is the Nile, 4,160 miles and starts in Uganda
- The largest Lake in Africa is Victoria, 26,828 square miles, it covers part of Uganda
- The highest mountain in Africa is Kilimanjaro, Tanzania, 19,340 feet
- Africa is almost an island. Its only connection to other land is the tiny Sinai Peninsula in Egypt.
- Africa includes Madagascar, which is the fourth largest island in the world (Greenland is the largest).
- Africa is so large that a full population census has never been made.
- There are over 1,000 different languages in Africa.
- Some African languages are spoken by millions of people, while others are spoken by only a few hundred. Some are on the verge of extinction and are only spoken by a few elderly people.
- The topmost part of Africa has several countries that are actually considered to be part of the Middle East, such as Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia.
- Africa has some of the shortest and the tallest people in the world.