



THE GEOLOGY OF AFRICA



Africa is the most resource rich continent on Planet Earth. In this article we will discuss the geology on the African continent to understand the environment that the ancient African kingdoms, tribes and empires developed within.

THE SCALE OF AFRICA

Planet earth is divided up into seven key continents or land masses namely, Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Europe and Australasia. Africa is the second largest continent on earth with a land mass of 11.7 million square miles. The size of Africa is larger than China, India and most of Europe combined. The continent also makes up 20% of the total land mass of planet earth.

THE LARGEST ISLAND IN AFRICA, LOCATED IN THE INDIAN OCEAN (OFF AFRICA'S EASTERN COAST) IS MADAGASCAR. IT IS ALSO THE FOURTH LARGEST ISLAND IN THE WORLD.

THE WATERS AROUND AFRICA

Africa is surrounded by a number of large bodies of water. In the east of Africa to the east of modern-day Sudan, Ethiopia and Egypt is the Red Sea (*also known as the Erythraean Sea*). East of the Red Sea is the land mass of Arabia in western Asia. To the south east of Africa next to modern-day Tanzania, Mozambique and Somalia is the Indian Ocean. To the south west of Africa next to modern-day Namibia and Angola is the South Atlantic Ocean. To the west of African next to modern-day Mauritania, Western Sahara, Senegal and Guinea is the North Atlantic Ocean. To the north of Africa on the boarder of modern-day Morocco, Algeria, Libya and Tunisia is the Mediterranean Sea.



THE RIVERS INSIDE AFRICA

Africa is also home to a number of larger rivers and river basins. One of the most famous rivers in Africa is the Nile River located in north-eastern Africa. The Nile River which was utilized heavily by the Nubian Empire and Ancient Egypt has a length of 4258 miles long making it the longest river in the world. The Kongo River is located in southern Africa and stretches from modern-day Angola to modern-day Zambia. The Kongo River is 2920 miles long and the deepest river in the world at 220 meters. The Niger River is located in the west of Africa and is 2600 miles in length. The river stretches from modern-day Guinea across to modern-day Nigeria. The Niger River and was utilized by the Empire of Mali as it passed conveniently by the empires cities of Djenne, Gao and Timbuktu. The Zambezi River which starts in

LAKE MALAWI (LOCATED IN EASTERN AFRICA) HAS MORE FISH SPECIES THAN ANY OTHER FRESH WATER LAKE ON EARTH.

central Africa stretches from modern-day Zambia to modern-day Mozambique. The Zambezi River is 1599 miles in length and also feeds into great waterfall Mosi-oa-Tunya (*also known as Victoria Falls*). The Limpopo River is located in central southern Africa and flows into the Indian Ocean.

The Limpopo River is 1087 miles long. The Bantu language spoken in the region is the Sepedi dialect, the name Limpopo is the Zulu version of the original Sepedi name '*diphororo tša meetse*' which means 'gushing strong waterfalls'.

The Senegal River is located in western Africa and forms the boarder between the countries of modern-day Senegal and Mauritania. The Senegal River is 675 miles long and has a number of tributary rivers that flow into it such as the Faleme River, Gorgol River and Karakoro River.



THE MINERALS OF AFRICA

Africa is also the most mineral rich continent on earth and the location of most of the resources utilized by human beings both in modern and ancient times. Africa is home to 73% of the worlds diamond production and 89% of the worlds gold production. Indeed, the most wealthy man to have

ever lived named Mansa Musa was a king of the Mali Empire. Much of the wealth of Mansa Musa was due to his access to the west African gold located within his empire. Other minerals located in abundance in Africa include platinum, uranium, palladium, coal, copper, aluminum, steel, zinc and titanium.

THE FORESTS OF AFRICA

Africa is also home to some extremely large forests. The Mau Forest is located in the east of Africa in the Rift Valley of Kenya. The Mau Forest complex covers a size of 675,000 acres and has been utilized by an east African ethnic group named the Okiek. Within the Mau Forest we find trees such as the Parasol Tree (*Polyscias kikuyuensis*) and plants such as a *Prunus Africana*. The Ongoye Forest is located in southern Africa in modern-day South Africa covering a size of almost 10,000 acres. The Ongoye

Forest is home to plants such as the Natal Wing-nu and the Pondoland fig. The forest has been utilized by the ethnic group known as the Nguni people who later evolved into the Zulu Kingdom. The Congo Rain Forest located in modern-day eastern Congo contains over 600 tree species and 10,000 animal species, 500 species of fish and 1000 species of birds. The Congo Rain Forest covers a size of 781, 249 square miles.