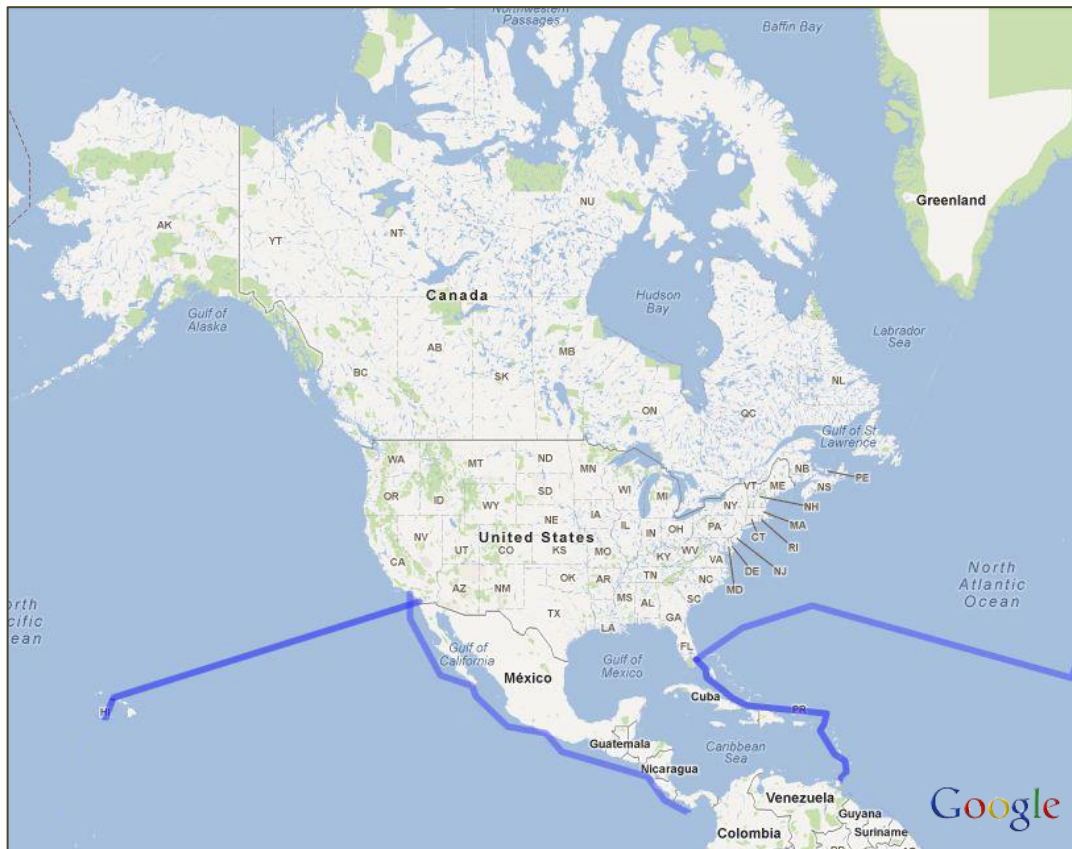




Trekking the Planet

Discovering the Cultural and Natural Significance of the World



North America – An Overview

- Darren and Sandy spent time at the beginning of the journey in North America (California, Hawaii) and are visiting the continent again in the Caribbean. The final days of the expedition will be spent in the countries of Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Mexico before returning to the United States.
- North America is solely within the northern hemisphere, meaning that it is entirely above the equator. It is also entirely in the western hemisphere.
- We have traveled approximately **53,262 miles (85,717 kilometers)** from our starting point in California.

People and Culture

- North America is comprised of 23 countries and 21 territories. It is the fourth most populated continent after Asia, Africa and Europe. Most of the North American population speaks English, French or Spanish.
- There are about 530 million people living in North America with over 400 million of these inhabitants living in the United States or Mexico. Mexico City is the largest city, with 21 million people.
- America is named after Amerigo Vespucci, a European explorer who was one of the first to believe that this land was not part of the East Indies.
- Prior to European arrival, various native groups lived in distinct groups. These included the Inuit people in the north, Native Americans, such as the Cherokee and Sioux, in today's United States, and Mayan and Aztec civilizations in current Central America and Mexico.
- Food in North America is diverse, depending on the location and ethnic composition of the population. It can vary from French cuisine and wild game in Canada, to rice, meat, tortillas and spices in Mexico and Central America.



Mayan ruins in Tikal, Guatemala and modern Mexico City (sources: Flickr.com/Pulpolux, personal library)

Did you know?

It is possible to travel by road from Alaska in the north to Panama in the south, via several highway systems. After a break in the Darien Gap between North America and South America, the Pan American Highway continues all the way to Argentina and Chile.



Southern start to the Alaskan Highway and highway routes (sources: Wikipedia.org, Wikimedia.org)



Baffin Island in the Canadian Arctic and sunset on the Caribbean island of Curacao (sources: Carbon-based-ghq.com, Totallysweetphotos.com)

The Bald Eagle

The only eagle unique to North America, bald eagles are found in many areas of North America, with most living in Alaska and British Columbia. They can fly up to 10,000 feet (3,048 meters) and have a wingspan up to 90 inches (2.3 meters). The name refers to their white head, and not being bald. They were removed from the list of endangered species in 2007.



sources: Baldeagleinfo.com, Rotwnnews.com

Nature and Environment

- North America is the third largest continent. The area is primarily made up of Canada, Mexico and the United States. Also included geographically are Central America and the Caribbean, as well as Greenland, the world's largest island.
- The climate of North America ranges from polar (near the Arctic) to tropical (in the Caribbean and Central America).
- Located in the U.S., the Mississippi River and its tributaries form the longest North American river at 3,902 miles (6,275 kilometers). Lake Superior, in the U.S. and Canada, is the largest fresh water lake in the world.
- Major mountain ranges include the Appalachian, Rocky, Sierra Nevada (in the U.S.) and Sierra Madre (in Mexico). The highest point is Mt McKinley (Denali) in Alaska at 20,320 feet (6,194 meters).
- There are four major deserts in North America. These are the Great Basin and Mohave (located in the U.S.), as well as the Sonoran and Chihuahuan (located in the U.S. and Mexico). Death Valley, in the Mojave Desert, contains the lowest point in North America at - 282 feet (- 86 meters) below sea level.

Our Plans

- Our time in North America has been mainly by sea and has been split up into three parts. We are currently traveling between the island of Bermuda and the Caribbean. We look forward to visiting the islands of Saint Martin, St. Lucia and Tobago before moving on to South America.
- Our third and final visit in North America will be during our travels by sea through Central America and Mexico at the end of our journey.
- What things would you like to see us report on while we are traveling? Send us your questions via Twitter, Facebook or by email. We will include our answers in future emails.

O Canada

Canada is the most northerly country in North America. Here are a few country facts:

- Canada is the world's second largest country, after Russia
- The official languages are English and French
- It is the world's 9th most sparsely populated country with about 34 million people
- Canada has longest overall coastline in the world
- Among Canadian inventions are the electric organ, snowmobile and the electric cooking range
- The lowest recorded temperature in North America was -81° F (-63°C) in Canada's Yukon Territory

sources: Facts.randomhistory.com,
CIA.gov

More Information

- <http://www.ducksters.com/geography/northamerica.php>
- <http://www.biopark.org/nadeserts.html>
- http://www.4cornersclub.com/adventure_trips/north_america/continent_facts
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_America
- <http://www.foodtourism.com/2008/11/food-in-north-a.html>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_North_American_deserts
- <http://geography.howstuffworks.com/north-america/geography-of-north-america.htm>

To listen to the National Anthem, "O Canada", click and play this link: Wikipedia.org

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