

What's a relief map?

Geological processes, such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and the movement of tectonic plates, change the Earth's surface.

The different landforms that result from geological processes are called the Earth's **relief**.

A **relief map** shows the relief and landforms of a country or region.

The colours and **key on a relief map** show the different heights of the land.



Types of landforms

landform	definition	examples in Spain
mountain range	a line of mountains connected at a level that's higher than the ground around them	Cordillera Cantábrica Sistema Central
depression	a large area of land that's lower than the surrounding land	Depresión del Ebro Depresión del Guadalquivir
plateau	a flat area of land high above sea level that's higher than the land around it	Meseta Central
plain	a large area of flat land at a low elevation	the coastal plains in eastern Spain
cape	an area of coastal land that protrudes into the water	Cabo Fisterra Cabo de Creus
gulf	a body of water that cuts into the coastline	Golfo de Cádiz
peninsula	a piece of land that extends into a body of water but isn't surrounded by the water on all sides	Iberian Peninsula
island	land that's completely surrounded by water	Mallorca
archipelago	a group of islands	Canary Islands

What are Spain's main rivers?

There are more than 1 800 rivers in Spain.

The **source** is the place where a river starts.

A **tributary** is a river that flows into another river.

The **mouth** is where a river flows into the ocean or sea.

A **watershed** is an area where all the rivers flow into the same ocean or sea.

Some of Spain's rivers flow into the **Atlantic Ocean** and some flow into the **Mediterranean Sea**. There are some shorter rivers that flow into the **Cantabrian Sea**.

- **Atlantic watershed:** rivers with a volume that varies depending on the season. The main rivers are the **Miño, Duero, Tajo, Guadiana** and **Guadalquivir**.
- **Cantabrian watershed:** generally short rivers that have got a high volume of water all year round due to rainfall. The main rivers are the **Navia, Nalón, Nervión** and **Bidasoa**.
- **Mediterranean watershed:** not very long rivers, except for the Ebro, which is the longest river in Spain. Their volume varies a lot depending on the season. The main rivers are the **Ebro, Júcar** and **Segura**.



river	description
Ebro	Its source is at Fontibre spring in Cantabria. It flows in a south-eastern direction. Its tributaries include the Segre and the Gállego. It flows through Zaragoza and its mouth is in Deltebre (Tarragona).
Duero	Its source is in the Picos de Urbión in the Sistema Ibérico. First, it flows south and then west all the way through Portugal. Its tributaries include the Pisuergra and the Esla. It passes through Zamora and its mouth is near Porto (Portugal).
Tajo	Its source is in the Sierra de Albarracín. It flows west. Its tributaries include the Jarama and the Guadarrama. It flows through Aranjuez and Toledo and its mouth is near Lisbon (Portugal).

What's Europe's political and physical geography like?

Europe is a continent in the **Northern Hemisphere**. It's made up of 45 countries, each with its own language(s) and traditions. 11% of the world's population lives in Europe. Vatican City is the smallest country in the world.

Europe's relief

There are several major mountain ranges in Europe.

- The **Alps** is Europe's highest mountain range and stretches across eight countries in the west of the continent.
- Europe's longest mountain range is the **Urals**. It's located in Russia. It forms a natural border between Europe and Asia.

Europe is the lowest continent in the world. This is mostly because of the **North European Plain**, which stretches for 4 000 km across northern and eastern Europe.

Europe has got numerous rivers that provide transportation for people and goods.

- The **Volga** is Europe's longest river; it flows for 3 690 km from Moscow to the Caspian Sea.
- Other rivers that flow through important capitals are the Spree (Berlin), the Seine (Paris), the Thames (London) and the Tiber (Rome).

Europe has also got many lakes. These are

formed by rivers or by melting **glaciers**. **Lake Ladoga**, in Russia, is the largest lake in Europe. It gets its water from two rivers: the Svir and the Neva.



What information is on a world map?

A **world map** shows continents, countries, seas and oceans. A **world political map** shows national borders and country names, as well as capital cities.

- World maps have got horizontal lines (**parallels**) and vertical lines (**meridians**) that form a grid. We can use these lines to find any place on Earth.
- The **Equator** is a parallel that divides the Earth into the Northern Hemisphere and the Southern Hemisphere.
- The **Greenwich Meridian** divides the Earth into east and west.
- We use meridians to mark the different **time zones** around the world. There are 24 time zones. This means that different parts of the world experience day and night at different times.
- The time zones to the east of the Greenwich Meridian are **ahead of** Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). Those to the west of the Greenwich Meridian are **behind** GMT. This is why we've got the **International Date Line**. The date always changes when you cross this line.



Relief

World physical maps show relief and the major rivers, lakes and mountain ranges. Some of world's important landforms are in the table below.

landform	description
Mount Everest	the highest mountain in the world (8 848 m), located in Asia
Andes	the longest mountain range on the continents (8 900 km), located in South America
Nile	the longest river in the world (6 650 km); it passes through 11 countries.
Dead Sea	the Earth's lowest point (427 m below sea level)
Suez Canal	a narrow body of water that connects the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea
Lake Victoria	the second largest lake in the world; it extends into Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda on the African continent.
Aconcagua	the highest mountain in the Western Hemisphere (6 959 m)
Indonesia	the largest archipelago in the world, with more than 17 000 islands