

Chapter 6

Physical Geography of Latin America

Section 1

PHYSICAL FEATURES

Landforms

- Latin America- divided into 3 subregions (smaller areas)
- Middle America
 - Mexico and Central America- isthmus (narrow piece of land that links two larger pieces of land)
 - Four tectonic plates meet there- volcanoes and earthquakes- ash makes soil fertile
 - Mexico- mountains on the outside, plateau in the middle
 - Central America- mtns like a backbone- plains are narrow- heavy rainforests

Landforms

- The Caribbean
 - 3 groups- the Greater Antilles, the Lesser Antilles, the Bahamas
 - Greater Antilles: larger islands- Cuba, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, Jamaica
 - Lesser Antilles: archipelago (group of islands)- Virgin Islands to Trinidad
 - Bahamas- another archipelago
 - Cuba- ½ of Caribbean land area
 - Some islands are low-lying, others are volcanic and mountainous
 - Soil is fertile- sugarcane and tobacco

Landforms

- South America
 - Andes mountains- cordillera- 5500 miles long on Pacific coast
 - World's longest mtn system
 - Some peaks over 20k feet
 - Between mtn chains are plateaus and valleys- people inhabit
 - Amazon Basin- east of Andes- 2.7 square miles- Amazon River
 - Brazilian highlands- north and south of Basin- end in escarpment (cliff) that slope down to coastal plain
 - Plains- Llanos (western Columbia and Venezuela) and Pampas (Argentina and Uruguay)- cattle herding and grain like Great Plains