

# deserts

*What is a desert?* Deserts are areas that receive less than 20 cm of rainfall a year. The little rain that falls can come in summer or winter, depending on the location of the desert.

*Are all deserts hot?* Although many deserts get very hot (some reaching more than 40°C) there are cool deserts in northern latitudes. Because of the low humidity and sparse vegetation there can be large differences in temperature between day and night in deserts.

*But it's rainfall, not temperature, that makes an area a desert.*

## not always

## deserted



*Where are deserts found?*

Deserts are found at 30° N and 30° S latitude or wherever mountains create a rain shadow.



*How do plants and animals survive in the desert?* Desert plants have special adaptations to help them survive extreme temperatures, lashing winds, and life-threatening water loss. Desert animals rely on their behavior to help them survive extreme desert conditions. For example, many are active in the cooler dusk and dawn hours.

