

Latin America Physical Geography



LA Physical Geography

- ▶ Includes all nations from Mexico to the southern tip of South America
- ▶ Divided into 3 Regions
 - Middle America
 - Caribbean
 - South America



Middle America

- ▶ Mexico and Central America
- ▶ Dominated by mountains
- ▶ Mexico has a central **plateau** between the mountains
 - Home to most of the people
- ▶ Central America is an **isthmus**
 - Mountainous
 - Over 12 active volcanoes



Caribbean

- ▶ Region made up of 2 types of islands
 - Coral Islands (Bahamas)
 - Tops of underwater mountains (Cuba, Jamaica)
- ▶ Earthquakes common



South America

▶ Andes Mountains

- 2nd highest in the world
- About 5,000 miles long
- Up to 300 miles wide

▶ Pampas

- Quechua meaning “plain”
- Grassland type area
- Similar to Great Plains in US



South America

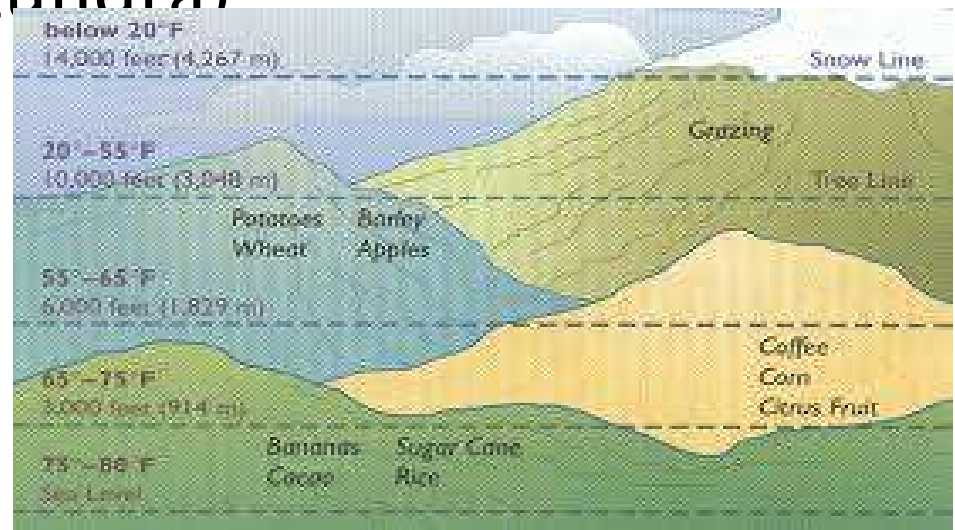


▶ Amazon River

- 2nd longest in world
 - 4,000 miles long
 - Carries more water than any other river
 - 20% of world's fresh river water
 - Over 1,000 **tributaries**
- ▶ River Basin home to largest **rain forest** in the world
- Covers around 1 / 3 of the continent

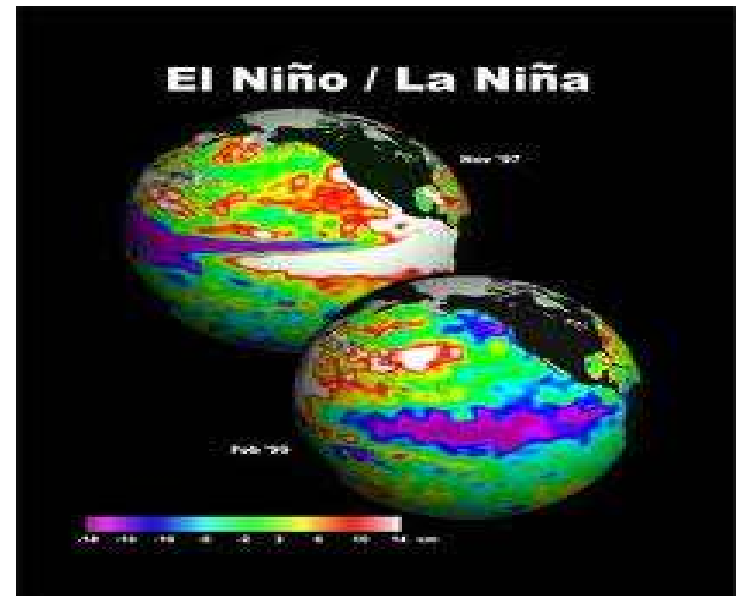
Climate

- ▶ **Elevation** has a large impact on LA climate (p. 18 diagram)
- ▶ Now look at p.16, decide what crops might be successful in (tropical wet, tropical wet/dry, arid, and tundra)



El Niño

- ▶ “Christ Child”
 - Happens around Christmas



- ▶ Warming of ocean water near the west coast of South America
 - Floods, heavy rain, and drought occur in places that usually have different patterns
- ▶ Happens every few years

Resources and Land Use

▶ Middle America

◦ Mexico

- Large variety of minerals
- Huge amounts of oil/natural gas
- Lumber



◦ Central America

- Rich soil (coffee, cotton, banana, sugar cane)
- Cacao (chocolate)
- Fish
- **Hydroelectricity**



Resources and Land Use

▶ Caribbean

- Similar to Central America plus citrus fruits and oil

▶ South America

- Rich in minerals
- Oil
- Coffee
- Wheat
- Rice
- Fish
- [Video Clip](#)

