Land of Latin America

What Is Latin America Like?
Latin America covers a large part of the Western Hemisphere and has many types of land. It includes Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean Islands. In the north, Mexico’s two major mountain ranges border a large central plateau where Mexico City is located. Much of Mexico has a warm climate, though mountain areas can be cold. Many parts of Central America are rain forests, and the climate there is wetter than Mexico. A mountainous, hilly region, Central America has active volcanoes that can cause earthquakes.

South America
Two of South America’s main features are the Andes Mountains and the Amazon Basin. The Andes curve along the western coast of the continent for about 5,500 miles. East of the Andes in Argentina are grassy plains called the Pampas. In the northern half of South America, the Amazon Basin drains water from the eastern slopes of the Andes into numerous streams and rivers. These tributaries pour into the Amazon River, which flows nearly 4,000 miles before emptying into the Atlantic Ocean. Thick rain forests thrive in the Amazon Basin, a region with a greater variety of plants and animals than any other in the world. However, this rain forest is shrinking daily, as people clear trees for farmland or cut trees to sell as wood.

The Caribbean Region
The islands of this region vary greatly. Some rise out of the water as the tops of volcanoes. Others were formed from coral reefs. On islands with rich soil for crops, such as Cuba, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico, farmers grow sugar, coffee, and fruit. Much of Latin America lies in the Tropical Zone, where temperatures are usually warm or hot. Hurricanes may form in this region from June to November. The climate is much colder in the high parts of the Andes and at the southern tip of South America than it is in other areas of Latin America.