

Top 10 Longest Rivers in the World

Measuring a river's length is difficult because sometimes it is not clearly known where the river starts and ends. While tradition says the Nile is the longest river of the world, some recent Brazilian and Peruvian studies suggest that the Amazon is longer. However keeping with the tradition, the Nile River is the longest, with the Amazon following next. Here is a list of the top 10 longest rivers in the world.

Nile (6853 km)

The Nile River, located in northeastern Africa, is the chief source of water in Egypt and Sudan. Its water resources are shared by eleven countries including Tanzania, Kenya, Egypt, and Sudan. Owing to this, the Nile is an international river. Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and more countries have complained about the domination of Egypt on the Nile waters. To promote peaceful cooperation among these countries, the Nile Basin Initiative was created. The Nile River has two major tributaries, the White Nile and the Blue Nile. The White Nile is the primary source and the Blue Nile is the secondary source of the Nile River. Most of the historical sites of Ancient Egypt are located along the banks of the Nile, including Luxor, Aswan and Giza. The source of the Nile was a mystery for many centuries.

Amazon (6437 km)

The Amazon River, flowing in South America into the Atlantic, has the largest drainage basin in the world. In the upper stretches, above its meeting with the Rio Negro, the river is called Solimoes in Brazil. In Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and the remaining Spanish-speaking world the river is called Amazon. The Amazon Rainforest is the richest tropical forest in the world in terms of biodiversity. More than one-third of all known species reside in this giant forest. Interestingly, there are no bridges to cross over the river. That's because most of the river flows through rainforests and not roads or cities.

Yangtze (6300 km)

In China, the Yangtze River is called Chang Jiang (meaning 'long river') or the Yangzi. It is the longest river in Asia and the longest river to flow entirely within one country. The Yangtze's source is the Geladaindong Peak. The river plays an important and large role in the history, culture and economy of China. The Yangtze River is habitat to the Chinese Alligator and serves as a dividing line between North and South China. The Three Gorges Dam on this river is the largest hydroelectric power producer in the world. However, in recent years, the Yangtze has suffered from industrial revolution, agricultural run-off, siltation and loss of wetlands and lakes.

Mississippi (6275 km)

The River flows entirely in the US. The Mississippi River Valley is one of the most fertile agricultural regions of the country. It is formed from thick layers of the river's silt deposits. The river's source is Lake Itasca. The Mississippi River first served as a barrier. It formed borders for New Spain, New France and the early US. Then it served as a major transportation artery and communications link. The River's name is derived from the Native American Chippewa tribe's *mici zibi*, meaning 'great river'. The most famous tributary of the Mississippi is the Missouri.

Yenisei (5539 km)

The Yenisei River, flowing in Mongolia and Russia, is the largest river system flowing to the Arctic Ocean. It is also written as Yenisey. The river is the central of the three great Siberian Rivers-the other two being the Ob and the Lena-flowing into the Arctic Ocean. During World War II, Nazi Germany and the Japanese Empire agreed to divide Asia along a line that followed the course of the Yenisei River to the border of China, and then along the border of China and the Soviet Union. Hydroelectric dams, like the Krasnoyarsk Dam, control the middle part of the Yenisei River.

Yellow River (5464 km)

This River, flowing in China, is also called the Huang He and is believed to be the birthplace of ancient Chinese civilization. It was also the most prosperous region in early Chinese history. While this river was called the 'cradle of Chinese civilizations', it was also responsible for devastating floods. The reason for the floods is the fine-grained loess (silt) it carries. The River is called yellow due to the lemon-colored silt it gathers from the Loess Plateau.

Ob (5410 km)

The Ob River, also called Obi, flows in Russia and western Siberia. The world's longest estuary is the Gulf of Ob. The Ob River is mainly used for irrigation, drinking water, hydroelectric energy and fishing. The Katun river feeds the Ob.

Parana (4880 km)

The Parana River, located in South America, is highly navigable and helps to connect inland cities to the ocean. It also provides deep water ports. The River runs through Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. Its name is an abbreviation of the phrase 'para rehe onava' coming from the Tupi language. It means 'like the sea' or 'as big as the sea'. The Parana River Delta is one of the world's greatest bird watching destinations.

Congo (2922 miles or 4700 km)

Also called Zaire River, it is the deepest river in the world. The Congo River in Africa got its name from the Kingdom of Kongo. The River along with its tributaries flow through the Congo Rainforest, which is the second largest rainforest in the world, behind the Amazon Rainforest. The Congo River, being the most powerful river in Africa, has great potential to be used for hydroelectric power.

Amur (2763 miles or 4700 km)

The Amur River is called Heilong Jiang or 'black dragon river' in Chinese. It forms the border between the Russian Far East and Northeastern China. Flowing in China and Russia, the Amur River is an important symbol of Sino-Russian relations. The region surrounding the Amur is home to various endangered species like the Amur leopard.