

S2 The Sahara Desert



Here are some amazing facts about the Sahara Desert

- The word “Sahara” is the Arabic word for “desert”.
- It is the largest hot desert on Earth (the cold desert of Antarctica is larger).
- It covers most of North Africa and large sections of 11 different countries.
- The Sahara Desert is so big that if it were a country, it would be the 5th largest in the world – making it almost the same size as the USA.
- It is one of the hottest places on Earth. The average summer temperature is between 38°C and 46°C.
- The climate makes it hard for life to exist there. It is extremely hot during the day, but at night temperatures drop and can even go below freezing (0°C).
- It hardly ever rains there. In some regions there can be years between rainfalls.

- The Sahara was not always so dry. Up to around 4,000 years ago, it was a lush region with many plants and animals. A change in the tilt of the Earth's orbit caused it to dry up.
- Even though it is so large, only about 2.5 million people live there, mostly close to lakes and rivers.