

South America stretches further south than any other continent (apart from Antarctica). The cold and stormy tip of South America, Cape Horn, is only 1000 kilometres from Antarctica.

In every South American country, the population is growing fast. Most of the farmland is owned by a few rich people, and many people are desperately poor. Young people are leaving the countryside for

the cities, which are growing fast. The city centres have skyscrapers, motorways and superstores, but most newcomers have to settle in the huge shanty towns at the edge of the cities.

ONE country occupies nearly half the total area of South America, and has over half the population of the whole continent: BRAZIL. Look at the map to see which countries touch Brazil. Which two do not?



▲ Carnival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Rio de Janeiro is the second-largest city of Brazil. Every year, it bursts into life and colour at carnival time, in February or March. Huge processions of decorated floats and dancers parade through the streets. Poor people from the shanty towns enjoy it as much as the rich people who pay for seats on the special stands.



SOUTH AMERICA FACTS

- AREA** 17,600,000 sq km
 - HIGHEST POINT** Mount Aconcagua (Argentina), 6962 metres
 - LOWEST POINT** Laguna del Carbón (Argentina), 2105 metres
 - LONGEST RIVER** Amazon, 6450 km
 - LARGEST LAKE** Lake Titicaca (Bolivia and Peru), 8300 sq km
 - BIGGEST COUNTRY** Brazil, 8,514,215 sq km
 - SMALLEST COUNTRY** Suriname*, 163,265 sq km
 - RICHEST COUNTRY** Venezuela
 - POOREST COUNTRY** Guyana
 - MOST CROWDED COUNTRY** Ecuador
 - LEAST CROWDED COUNTRY** Suriname
 - HIGHEST WATERFALL** Angel Falls, 979 metres (a world record)
- * French Guiana is smaller, but it is not independent