

THE PACIFIC

THIS map shows half the world. Guess which place is furthest from a continent: it is to be found somewhere in the south Pacific. The Pacific Ocean also includes the deepest place in the world: the Mariana Trench (11,022 metres deep).

There are thousands of islands in the Pacific. Some are volcanic mountains, while many others are low, flat coral islands. Coral also grows around the volcanoes.

A few islands have valuable minerals – for example Bougainville (copper) and Nauru (phosphates). But some islands will disappear if the sea level rises.

INTERNATIONAL DATE LINE

Find this imaginary line on the map. When it is Sunday midday in London it is already Sunday evening in Australia and nearly *Monday* in New Zealand. But travel west and it is Sunday morning in the USA and *Sunday* is beginning in the Cook Islands. The date changes at the Date Line. Use a globe to help you understand why this is.



▲ **Coral reef in French Polynesia, from the air.** Coral **BELOW** sea level is **ALIVE!** A reef is built up from the shells of dead coral. Gradually plants colonize parts of the reef.



This stamp from Fiji shows one of the 300 islands that are part of this country. This is a low coral island with white sand beaches and coconut palms.

