

Biome Summary Chart

Biome	Location	Climate	Soil	Plants	Animals
Desert	midlatitudes	generally very hot days, cool nights; precipitation less than 10 inches a year	poor in animal and plant decay products but often rich in minerals	none to cacti, yuccas, bunch grasses, shrubs, and a few trees	rodents, snakes, lizards, tortoises, insects, and some birds. The Sahara in Africa is home to camels, gazelles, antelopes, small foxes, snakes, lizards, and gerbils
Tundra	high northern latitudes	very cold, harsh, and long winters; short and cool summers; 10-25 centimeters (4-10 inches) of precipitation a year	nutrient-poor, permafrost layer a few inches down	grasses, wildflowers, mosses, small shrubs	musk oxen, migrating caribou, arctic foxes, weasels, snowshoe hares, owls, hawks, various rodents, occasional polar bears
Grassland	midlatitudes, interiors of continents	cool in winter, hot in summer; 25-75 centimeters of precipitation a year	rich topsoil	mostly grasses and small shrubs, some trees near sources of water	american grasslands include prairie dogs, foxes, small mammals, snakes, insects, various birds. African grasslands include elephants, lions, zebras, giraffes.
Deciduous Forest	midlatitudes	relatively mild summers and cold winters, 76-127 centimeters (30-50 inches) of precipitation a year	rich topsoil over clay	hardwoods such as oaks, beeches, hickories, maples	wolves, deer, bears, and a wide variety of small mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and insects.
Taiga	mid- to high latitudes	very cold winters, cool summers,; about 50 centimeters (20 inches) of precipitation a year	acidic, mineral-poor, decayed pine and spruce needles on surface	mostly spruce, fir, and other evergreens	rodents, snowshoe hares, lynx, sables, ermine, caribou, bears, wolves, birds in summer
Tropical Rainforest	near the equator	hot all year round, 200-400 centimeters (80-100 inches) of rain a year	nutrient-poor	greatest diversity of any biome; vines, orchids, ferns, and a wide variety of trees	more species of insects, reptiles, and amphibians than anyplace else; monkeys, other small and large mammals, including in some places elephants, all sorts of colorful birds