

1.2.2 Tropical Rainforests - Characteristics

- climate**
- the climate is same all year round with no definite seasons
 - the temperature is generally between 20-28° and only varies by a few degrees over the year
 - very high rainfall, around 2000mm per year ; usually rains in the afternoon everyday
- soil**
- the soil isn't very fertile as heavy rain washes nutrients away
 - there are only nutrients at the surface due to decayed leaf fall, however this layer is very thin due to fast decay in warm, moist conditions
- plants**
- most trees are evergreen to take advantage of the continual growing season
 - really tall trees & dense vegetation cover -> very little light reaches the forest floor
 - there are lots of *epiphytes* (plants that grow on other living plants to reach higher positions in order to absorb more sunlight) e.g. orchids & ferns
- animals**
- rainforest ecosystems contain more animal species than any other
 - e.g. gorillas, jaguars, anacondas, tree frogs & sloths
- people**
- many indigenous people have adapted to life in rainforests, making a living by hunting, fishing, gathering nuts & berries and growing vegetables in small garden plots

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