

From the world's longest waterways to our streams, brooks and underground springs, rivers flow all around our incredible planet. Learn all about them with our fascinating facts about rivers!

Rivers only hold a small amount of the Earth's water, but they have always been vital to human life, carrying freshwater to people and animals all over the world. And they're super-powerful forces of nature, too — carving out deep valleys and gorges, and shaping the land as they flow to the ocean! Let's dive in to find out more...

## 15 facts about rivers

1) The **Nile River** is widely accepted as the **world's longest river**. Found in north **Africa**, it flows through **11 different countries** and stretches a whopping **6,695km** — that's as long as **65,000 football pitches**!

2) Most scientists agree that the **Amazon River** comes in a close second, winding a huge **6,840km** through the mountains and rainforests of **South America**!

3) That's a **very** long distance, wouldn't you agree? Well, believe it or not, in 2007 a man named **Martin Strel** swam the entire length of the Amazon river! To complete his amazing jungle journey, **Martin swam ten hours a day for 66 days**!

4) But what about the world's deepest river? That's the **Congo River** in **Central Africa**. Whilst its true depth remains a mystery, scientists believe the waters run at least **230m deep** in parts — deep enough to submerge London's famous clocktower, known as **Big Ben**, **2.5 times** on top of each other!

5) As rivers flow their course across the land, they form lots of fascinating geographic features, such as amazing **mountain valleys**, **canyons**, **lakes** and, of course, wonderful **waterfalls**!

6) Some record-breaking waterfalls formed by our planet's rivers include...

**Angel Falls, Venezuela** — the world's highest waterfall at a staggering **979m tall!**

**Khone Falls, Laos** — the widest waterfall, measuring an incredible **10,783m!**

**Inga Falls, Democratic Republic of the Congo** — the world's largest waterfall, if we're talking about the amount of water. Every second, **25,768 cubic metres** plunges down the fall — that's more than **ten Olympic swimming pools!**

7) Rivers can be all kinds of colours — not just blue, clear or muddy brown as you might expect! In '**blackwater rivers**', found in swamps and wetlands, the waters look like strong black tea. And in Colombia, the aquatic plants of **Caño Cristales** — known as the '**River of Five Colours**' — make the waters flow with bright blue, red, black, yellow and green!

8) Not all rivers flow overland — '**subterranean rivers**' run secretly beneath the surface! This is sometimes because of human engineering. Ever heard of London's '**lost rivers**'? These are streams of the **River Thames** and **River Lea** that were built over as the city grew.

9) Subterranean rivers can also exist naturally. In the **Philippines** for example, the **Puerto Princesa Underground River** flows *beneath* a mountain for five miles, before finally emptying into the **South China Sea**. Cool, eh?

10) It's not just rivers themselves which are fascinating — it's the wonderful wildlife that lives in them, too! Rivers provide a home for all kinds of creatures, including **insects, amphibians, birds, reptiles, mammals** and over **10,000 species of fish!**

11) Some of the most fascinating river creatures include **Amazon river dolphins** (which have pink skin!), **electric eels** (which stun prey and predators with powerful electric

shocks!), **freshwater stingrays** (which can grow to an enormous 5 metres!) and **freshwater turtles**, which have been around for **200 million years!**

12) Rivers and lakes are a **vital source of freshwater** for life on Earth. But did you know they **hold less than 1% of the world's water**? Most (over 99%, in fact) is in the **salty ocean** or frozen in our **polar ice caps**. That's why it's super important that we protect our rivers and look after the freshwater our planet provides.

13) Sadly, our rivers and waterways are being polluted by **chemicals, sewage and household waste**, which can cause serious harm to animals — and humans, too. In fact, an estimated **300-400 million tonnes** of waste is thought to pollute our rivers and seas every year!

14) The good news is that people around the world are working hard to keep our rivers and fresh water supplies clean and safe. And you can help, too! Be sure to **reuse and recycle** whenever you can, and bin rubbish responsibly! And you can help save water, too — be sure to **turn off the tap** when brushing your teeth, and why not opt for a **short shower** over a long bath?

15) Did you know there's a day dedicated to our planet's wonderful waterways? Every September, millions of people from more than **70 countries** celebrate **World Rivers Day**. This global event raises awareness of the importance of rivers and how we can best protect them for years to come!