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## A continent to discover

Europe is one of the world's seven continents. The others are Africa, America, Antarctica, Asia, Australia and Oceania.

Europe stretches all the way from the Arctic in the north to the Mediterranean Sea in the south, and from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to Asia in the east. It has many rivers, lakes and mountain ranges. The [map](#) tells you the names of some of the biggest ones.



The highest mountain in Europe is Mount Elbrus, in the Caucasus mountains, on the border between Russia and Georgia. Its highest peak is 5 642 metres above sea level.

*Mount Elbrus, the highest mountain in Europe*

The highest mountain in western Europe is Mont Blanc, in the Alps, on the border between France and Italy. Its summit is over 4 800 metres above sea level.

Also in the Alps is Lake Geneva – the largest freshwater lake in western Europe. It lies between France and Switzerland, goes as deep as 310 metres and holds about 89 trillion litres of water.



*Lake Geneva, in the Alps*



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Lake Saimaa, in Finland

The largest lake in central Europe is Balaton, in Hungary. It is 77 kilometres (km) long and covers an area of about 600 square kilometres (km<sup>2</sup>). Northern Europe has even bigger lakes, including Saimaa in Finland (1147 km<sup>2</sup>) and Vänern in Sweden (more than 5500 km<sup>2</sup>). The largest lake in Europe as a whole is Lake Ladoga. It is located in northwestern Russia and it is the 14th largest lake in the world. Its surface covers an area of 17,700 km<sup>2</sup>.

One of Europe's longest rivers is the Danube. It rises in the Black Forest region of Germany and flows eastwards through (Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Moldova and Ukraine) to Romania, where it forms a delta on the Black Sea coast. In all it covers a distance of about 2 850 km.



Pelicans on the Danube delta, Romania



Other big rivers include the Rhine (about 1 320 km long), the Elbe (about 1 170 km) and the Loire (more than 1000 km). Can you find them on the map?

Big rivers are very useful for transporting things. All kinds of goods are loaded onto barges that carry them up and down the rivers, between Europe's sea ports and cities far inland.



Test yourself  
now!

