

## **Geography of Australia/ Oceania**

**Number of Countries** - 14, 1 transcontinental, 2 associated, 29 dependencies

Oceania is a geographical area which spans the western and eastern hemispheres. Oceania is made up of the four sub-regions of Polynesia, Micronesia, Melanesia, and Australasia. The region occupies an area of about 3,291,903 sq miles. Oceania has a population of approximately 40 million people. It is the second least populous continental grouping on earth and smallest by area.

### **Australasia**

The term literally means "south of Asia" referring to all land that lies to the south of mainland Asia in its widest sense. However, the definition of Australasia has been modified over the years and in its strictest sense, includes Australia, New Zealand, and islands neighboring these two countries in the Pacific Ocean. (2 countries)

### **Melanesia**

Melanesia, another part of Oceania, includes the island of New Guinea and the island nation of Fiji and the area in between these two islands. It thus refers to the area to the north and northeast of Australia from the Arafura Sea to Fiji. Melanesia has a land area of about 1 million square km and includes about 2000 islands. The four independent nations of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands are part of Melanesia. (4 countries)

### **Micronesia**

A sub-region of Oceania, Micronesia is located in the western Pacific Ocean. The region features thousands of islands including four main archipelagos and several small scattered islands. Five independent nations and three US territories are part of Micronesia. The independent countries include Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Palau, Nauru, and the Federated States of Micronesia. The latter must not be confused with the entire region but is an archipelagic nation in Micronesia. (5 countries)

### **Polynesia**

The Oceanian sub-region of Polynesia comprises of over 1,000 islands in the central and southern part of the Pacific Ocean. The indigenous inhabitants of this region are known as the Polynesians. Samoa, Tonga, and Tuvalu. (3 countries)

### **Transcontinental**

A part of Indonesia-occupied New Guinea island and the French collectivity of New Caledonia are also located in Melanesia. (1 country)

### **Non-United Nations member states**

The two entries in this section Cook Islands and Niue are states in free association with New Zealand. While maintaining a close constitutional and political relationship with New Zealand, both states are members of several United Nations specialized agencies with full treaty-making capacity, and have independently engaged in diplomatic relations with sovereign states under their

own name. Because of these features, they are sometimes considered to have *de facto* status as sovereign states. (2 countries)

## **Dependencies**

The following are entities considered to be within Oceania which are either:

1. Federal territories of sovereign states located outside these states' mainland.
2. Territories that constitute integral parts of sovereign states in some form other than a federal relationship, where a significant part of the sovereign state's landmass is located outside Oceania or the territory is located outside the sovereign state's mainland. Many of these territories are often described as dependencies or autonomous areas.
3. Dependent territories of sovereign states.

American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, Northern Mariana Islands (USA)

Easter Island (Chile)

Galapagos Islands (Ecuador)

French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna (France)

Norfolk Island (Australia)

Ogasawara Village (Japan)

Papua, West Papua (Indonesia)

Pitcairn Islands (UK)

Tokelau (New Zealand)

**Area** - 3.292 sq miles

## **Largest by area**

1. Australia, 2. Papua New Guinea, 3. Indonesia, 4. New Zealand, 5. Solomon Islands, 6. Fiji

## **Smallest by area**

1. Nauru, 2. Tuvalu, 3. Marshall Islands, 4. Palau, 5. Federated States of Micronesia, 6. Tonga

## **Population**

The current population of Oceania is 42,225,309 as of Wednesday, September 4, 2019, based on the latest United Nations estimates.

Oceania population is equivalent to 0.54% of the total world population.

The population density in Oceania is 5 per Km<sup>2</sup> (13 people per mi<sup>2</sup>).

67.7 % of the population is urban (28,525,534 people in 2019)

The median age in Oceania is 32.7 years.

### **Largest by population**

1. Australia, 2. Papua New Guinea, 3. New Zealand, 4. Fiji, 5. Solomon Islands

### **Smallest by population**

1. Nauru, 2. Tuvalu, 3. Palau, 4. Marshall Islands, 5. Tonga

### **Major Cities**

1. Sydney, Australia - 4.84 million, 2. Melbourne, Australia - 4.44 million, 3. Brisbane, Australia - 2.27 million, 4. Perth, Australia - 2.02 million, 5. Auckland, New Zealand - 1.57 million

### **Major bodies of Water**

Indian Ocean, Pacific Ocean, Tasman Sea, Coral Sea, Timor Sea

### **Major River**

#### **Murray River**

The longest river in Oceania is the Murray River which flows for roughly 1,558 miles. The river begins on the southeastern side of the country and flows to the southwestern part of Australia from where it drains into the Indian Ocean.

#### **Fly River**

The largest river in Oceania regarding the volume of its discharge is the Fly River that is situated in Papua New Guinea. The Fly River stretches for a length of roughly 650 miles starting from the Star Mountains and draining in the Gulf of Papua. The Fly River's most important tributaries are the Ok Tedi River and the Strickland River which is the larger of the two. The Fly River is famous because its delta is roughly 62 miles long at its entrance. However, as the delta progresses, its width reduces, and by the time it reaches its apex, it is only 6.8 miles wide.

#### **Darling River**

One of Oceania's most famous rivers is the Darling River which flows for roughly 915 miles.

#### **Sepik River**

New Guinea is home to one of Oceania's most important rivers, the Sepik River, which flows for roughly 700 miles. Several fish species make their home in the Sepik River such as catfish and rainbow fish. It is often claimed that the Sepik River remains the largest uncontaminated water system in the Asia Pacific region.

## **Major Mountain Ranges**

Australian Alps - Australia

Sudirman Range - Indonesia

Southern Alps - New Zealand

Owen Stanley Range - Papua New Guinea

Bismarck Range - Papua New Guinea

## **Notable Mountains**

Mount Kosciuszko, Australia - 7,310 ft.

Cartenz Pyramid, Indonesia - 16,024 ft.

Mount Cook, New Zealand - 12,218 ft.

Mount Wilhelm, Papua New Guinea - 14,793 ft.

## **Desert Regions**

Great Victoria, Gibson