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Understand Datacenters and Regions in Azure

5 minutes

Microsoft Azure is made up of datacenters located around the globe. When you leverage a service or create a resource such as a SQL database or virtual machine, you are using physical equipment in one or more of these locations.

The specific datacenters aren't exposed to end users directly; instead, Azure organizes them into *regions*.

What is a region?

A **region** is a geographical area on the planet containing at least one, but potentially multiple datacenters that are nearby and networked together with a low-latency network. Azure intelligently assigns and controls the resources within each region to ensure workloads are appropriately balanced.

When you deploy a resource in Azure, you will often need to choose the region where you want your resource deployed.

Important

Some services or virtual machine features are only available in certain regions, such as specific virtual machine sizes or storage types. There are also some global Azure services that do not require you to select a particular region, such as Microsoft Azure Active Directory, Microsoft Azure Traffic Manager, and Azure DNS.

A few examples of regions are *West US*, *Canada Central*, *West Europe*, *Australia East*, and

A world map with a dark blue background, showing the locations of AWS re:Invent 2024. The map is divided into three categories of regions, indicated by a legend in the bottom left corner:

- Available region:** Represented by a solid blue dot.
- Announced region:** Represented by a dashed blue circle.
- Availability Zones:** Represented by a small blue star.

The map shows the following regions and zones:

- North America:** West US 2, West Central US, West US, US Gov Arizona, South Central US, US Gov Texas, Central US, US Gov Iowa, North Central US, US DoD East, East US, East US 2, US Gov Virginia, US DoD Central, Canada East, Canada Central.
- Europe:** Norway West, Norway East, West Europe, UK South, North Europe, UK West, France Central, France South, Germany West Central, Germany North, Germany Northeast, Germany Central, Switzerland North, Switzerland West.
- Middle East:** Israel Central, Qatar Central, UAE Central, UAE North.
- Asia:** China North, China North 2, Korea Central, Korea South, Japan East, Japan West, China East 2, China East, East Asia, Central India, South India, Southeast Asia.
- Australia:** Australia East, Australia Southeast.
- South America:** Brazil South.
- South Africa:** South Africa North, South Africa West.

A magnifying glass icon is located in the bottom right corner of the map.

Azure has more global regions than any other cloud provider. This gives you the flexibility to bring applications closer to your users no matter where they are. It also provides better scalability, redundancy, and preserves data residency for your services.

Azure has specialized regions that you might want to use when building out your applications for compliance or legal purposes. These include:

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Regions are what you use to identify the location for your resources, but there are two other terms you should also be aware of: *geographies* and *availability zones*.

Next unit: Understand Geographies in Azure

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