

The Amazon rainforest (Portuguese: Floresta Amazônica or Amazônia; Spanish: Selva Amazónica, Amazonía or usually Amazonia; French: Forêt amazonienne; Dutch: Amazoneregenwoud), also known in English as Amazonia or the Amazon Jungle, is a moist broadleaf forest that covers most of the Amazon basin of South America. This basin encompasses 7,000,000 square kilometres (2,700,000 sq mi), of which 5,500,000 square kilometres (2,100,000 sq mi) are covered by the rainforest. This region includes territory belonging to nine nations. The majority of the forest is contained within Brazil, with 60% of the rainforest, followed by Peru with 13%, Colombia with 10%, and with minor amounts in Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana. States or departments in four nations contain "Amazonas" in their names. The Amazon represents over half of the planet's remaining rainforests, and comprises the largest and most biodiverse tract of tropical rainforest in the world, with an estimated 390 billion individual trees divided into 16,000 species.

For a long time, it was thought that the Amazon rainforest was only ever sparsely populated, as it was impossible to sustain a large population through agriculture given the poor soil. Archeologist Betty Meggers was a prominent proponent of this idea, as described in her book *Amazonia: Man and Culture in a Counterfeit Paradise*. She claimed that a population density of 0.2 inhabitants per square kilometre (0.52/sq mi) is the maximum that can be sustained in the rainforest through hunting, with agriculture needed to host a larger population. However, recent anthropological findings have suggested that the region was actually densely populated. Some 5 million people may have lived in the Amazon region in AD 1500, divided between dense coastal settlements, such as that at Marajó, and inland dwellers. By 1900 the population had fallen to 1 million and by the early 1980s it was less than 200,000.