

Going to Extremes



Amazon Jungle South America

Welcome to the Amazon, the wettest area in South America. The weather is generally hot and humid throughout the year, with average temperatures ranging from 23° to 33° C. More than one-third of all the species on Earth live here. And some of those can cause you some problems. You should take care to watch out for snakes, jaguars, and piranhas, to name a few. On a smaller scale, it would be good to try to protect yourself from the mosquitoes (particularly the *Anopheles* that causes malaria). You might also see the poison dart frog while wandering around. It was named that for a reason—the poison it emits is so deadly the equivalent of two to three grains of table salt is likely to kill a human. Some of the less deadly dangers you face here are dehydration, diarrhea, and fungus infection. If you travel to the Amazon, it is likely you will want to see the world's largest water basin, the Amazon River. You can find the biggest freshwater fish in these waters. Called the pirarucu, this fish can weigh 250 kilograms and measure up to 2.5 meters in length. There is something else in these rivers, which while much smaller, may present a bigger problem for you. The rivers contain snails that carry a worm that cause a disease known as schistosomiasis. You will know you have it if you develop a rash or itchy skin, fever, chills, cough, and muscle aches within one to two months of infection.



Denali Alaska, United States

You have arrived at one of the world's seven summits, the highest mountains on each of the world's continents. The National Park and Preserve that contains Denali (also known as Mt. McKinley) boasts more than 2.4 million hectares of land. First climbed in 1913, Denali is 6,194 meters high, making it the highest peak in North America. And with temperatures that can fall below -40° C in winter, it is also one of the coldest mountains in the world. This can give you a serious case of hypothermia. Despite the frigid temperatures, if you exert yourself too much you can get too hot. When this happens, your body's core temperatures can reach dangerous levels of more than 41° C. If you look around you may spot grizzly bears, wolves, and moose. Careful how close you get to any of those, however, as they could all pose some problems for you. If you decide to try to summit this mountain, be careful as you get to the higher altitudes. If you start to get a headache; lose your appetite; and feel nauseous, weak, and dizzy; you may have Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS). Other dangers here include frostbite, hypoxia, and High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE).

Check Out the Glossary

If there is a word you come across that you don't understand, try looking for it in the Glossary on your "Extreme Survival" handout.