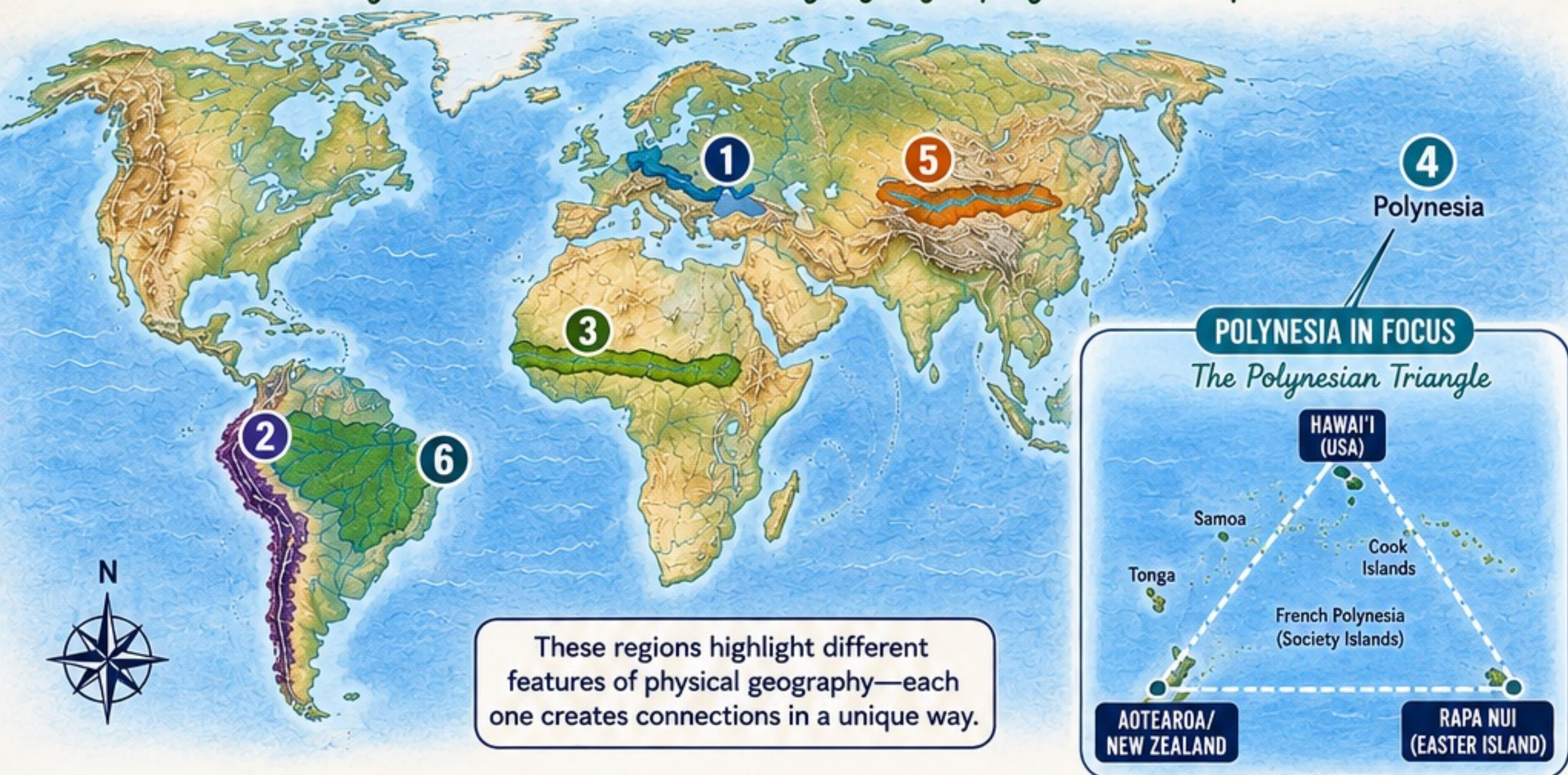


WHAT MAKES A GEOGRAPHIC REGION?

Six regions. Six different ways geography connects places.



1 DANUBE CORRIDOR



RIVER

A river can connect countries.



2 ANDEAN REGION



MOUNTAIN SYSTEM

A mountain system can define a region.

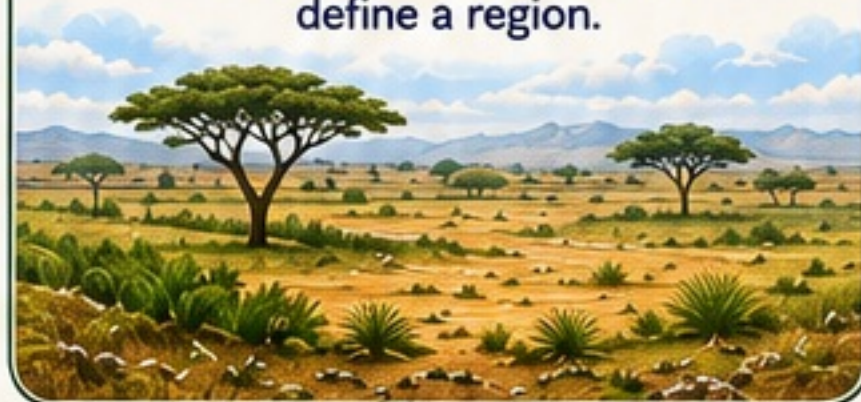


3 SAHEL



CLIMATE TRANSITION

A climate transition can define a region.



4 POLYNESIA



OCEAN

An ocean can connect distant places.



5 SILK ROAD OASIS BELT



GEOGRAPHIC CORRIDOR

Physical geography can funnel movement into corridors.



6 AMAZON BASIN



WATERSHED

A watershed and ecosystem can cross political borders.



REGIONS DON'T HAVE TO FOLLOW COUNTRY BORDERS.



RIVERS



MOUNTAINS



CLIMATE



OCEANS



WATERSHEDS



ECOSYSTEMS



LANDSCAPES



MOVEMENT

can all connect places into geographic regions.

THE DANUBE CORRIDOR

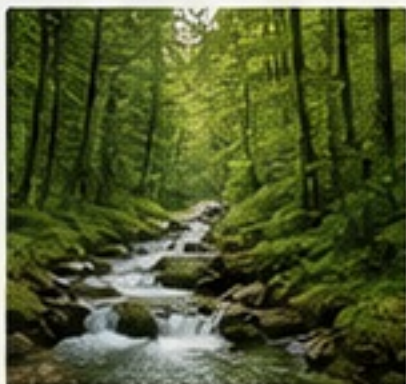
A River That Connects Europe

From Germany's Black Forest to the Black Sea, the Danube creates a natural corridor across Central and Southeastern Europe. Along the way, it passes through mountain valleys, great capitals, broad plains, dramatic gorges, and one of Europe's largest wetlands—connecting countries and landscapes across nearly 1,800 miles.



FOLLOW THE DANUBE

1. HEADWATERS GERMANY



The Danube begins in Germany's Black Forest, where small rivers come together and start flowing east.

2. MOUNTAINS & VALLEYS AUSTRIA



The river continues through Austria, passing between uplands and valleys and through Vienna.

3. THE GREAT PLAIN SLOVAKIA & HUNGARY



After passing Bratislava, the Danube enters the broad, low-lying landscapes of the Pannonian Basin and flows through Budapest.

4. THE IRON GATES SERBIA & ROMANIA



The river narrows dramatically as it cuts between mountain ranges at the Iron Gates, one of the most striking landscapes along its route.

5. THE LOWER DANUBE BULGARIA & ROMANIA



The river widens and crosses broad plains, forming a long stretch of the border between Bulgaria and Romania.

6. THE DANUBE DELTA ROMANIA & UKRAINE



Near the Black Sea, the river splits into branching channels, lakes, marshes, and reed beds, creating the vast Danube Delta.

WHAT MAKES THIS A REGION?



ONE RIVER

The same river system links communities hundreds of miles apart.



CITIES

Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, and Belgrade all developed along the Danube.



LANDSCAPES

The Danube passes through mountains, gorges, plains, farmland, and deltas.



MOVEMENT & TRADE

For centuries, the river has provided a route for people and goods across Europe.



WETLANDS

At the Black Sea, the river spreads into one of Europe's largest and most important wetlands.



10 COUNTRIES • ONE RIVER



GERMANY



AUSTRIA



SLOVAKIA



HUNGARY



CROATIA



SERBIA



BULGARIA



ROMANIA



MOLDOVA



UKRAINE

THE ANDEAN REGION

Life Along a Mountain Spine

Stretching along the western edge of South America, the Andes form the longest continental mountain range on Earth. Across the region, towering peaks, high plateaus, deep valleys, volcanoes, and dramatically different elevation zones have shaped where people live, what they grow, and how communities connect.



2 | TRAVEL THE ANDES

1. THE NORTHERN ANDES COLOMBIA



In Colombia, the Andes split into three major ranges, creating high valleys and basins between the mountains. Bogotá sits on a high plateau more than 8,000 feet above sea level.

2. THE VOLCANIC ANDES ECUADOR



Near the equator, high volcanic peaks rise above fertile valleys. Ecuador's famous "Avenue of the Volcanoes" includes some of the highest active volcanoes on Earth.

3. MOUNTAINS & VALLEYS PERU



The Peruvian Andes contain enormous peaks, deep river valleys, and high plateaus. For centuries, people have adapted steep mountain slopes for agriculture, including extensive systems of terraces.

4. THE ALTIPLANO PERU & BOLIVIA



Between major Andean ranges lies the Altiplano, one of the world's largest high plateaus. Despite its cold, thin air, people have lived and farmed here for thousands of years.

5. LAKE TITICACA PERU & BOLIVIA



At more than 12,000 feet above sea level, Lake Titicaca is the world's highest large lake navigable by commercial vessels. Communities have developed around its waters for thousands of years.

6. FROM ANDES TO AMAZON PERU & BOLIVIA



The eastern slopes of the Andes descend dramatically toward the Amazon Basin. Elevation drops, temperatures rise, and high mountain environments gradually give way to cloud forests and tropical rainforest.

3 | WHAT MAKES THIS A REGION?



ONE MOUNTAIN SYSTEM

The Andes connect countries for thousands of miles along South America's western edge.



ELEVATION

Traveling up or down a mountain can bring dramatic changes in temperature, vegetation, and growing conditions.



AGRICULTURE

Terraces and crops adapted to different elevations have allowed people to farm steep and challenging landscapes.



HIGH-ALTITUDE LIFE

People, plants, and animals have adapted to environments where the air is thinner and temperatures can be extreme.



WATER & CLIMATE

The Andes influence rainfall and watersheds on both sides of the mountains, including rivers that eventually feed the Amazon.



4 | 4 COUNTRIES • ONE MOUNTAIN REGION



COLOMBIA



ECUADOR



PERU



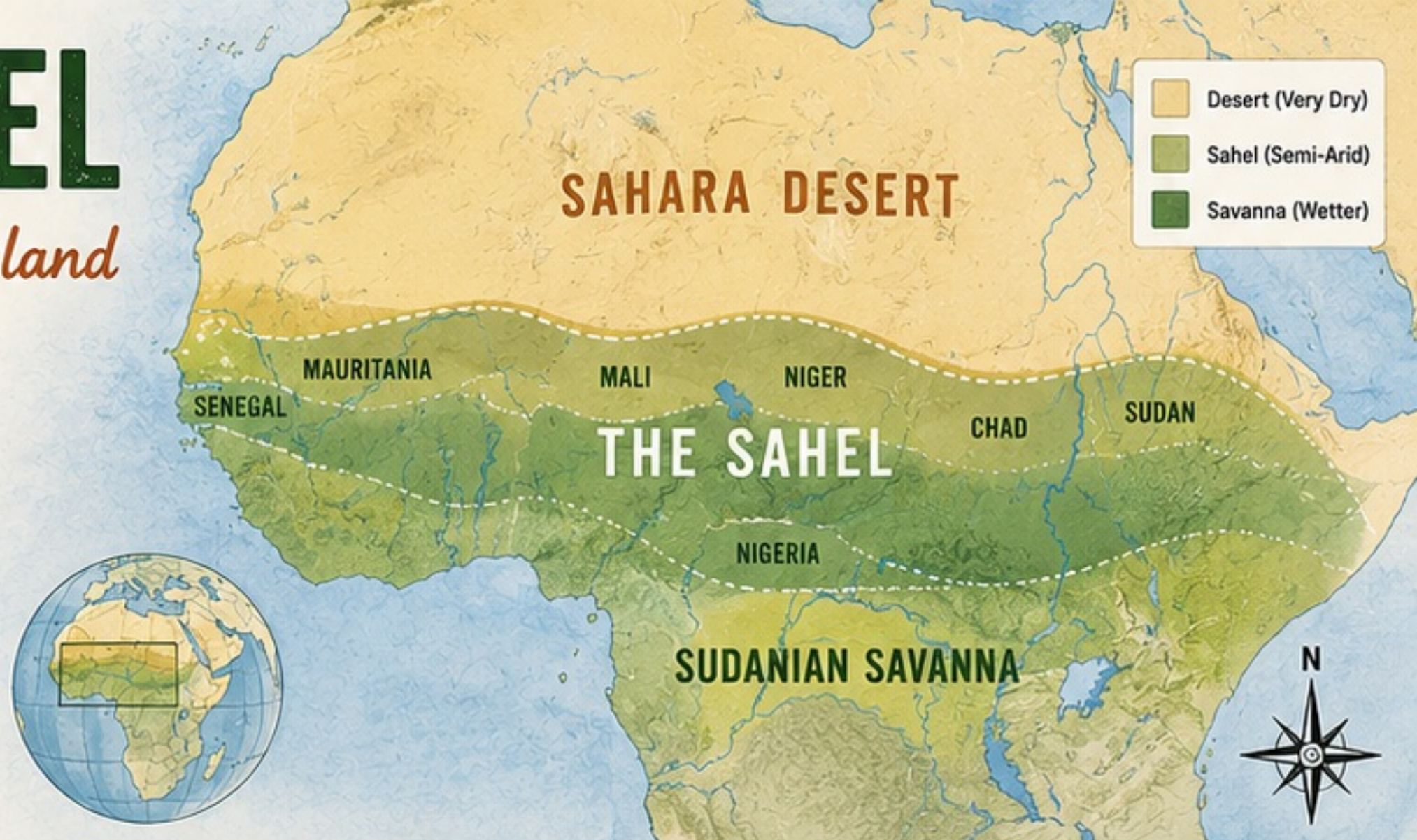
BOLIVIA



3. THE SAHEL

Where Desert Meets Grassland

Stretching across Africa just south of the Sahara, the Sahel is a vast band of semi-arid land between desert to the north and wetter savannas to the south. Rainfall, vegetation, water, and ways of life change across this transition zone, creating a region defined more by climate than by political borders.



ACROSS THE SAHEL

1 SAHARA EDGE

Sparse vegetation and very little rainfall.



2 SEMI-ARID SAHEL

Grasses, shrubs and highly seasonal rainfall.



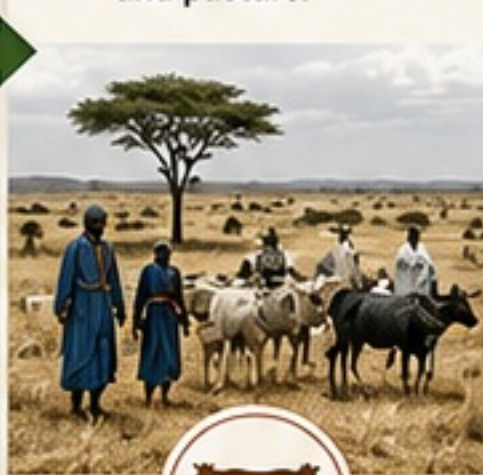
3 WET SEASON

A short rainy season transforms the landscape.



4 PASTORAL LANDS

Herding and seasonal movement respond to changing water and pasture.



5 FARMING ZONES

More reliable rainfall toward the south supports greater cultivation.



6 SAVANNA TRANSITION

Grasslands become greener and vegetation more abundant.



WHAT MAKES THIS A REGION?



CLIMATE

The Sahel has a hot, semi-arid climate with a long dry season and a short, unpredictable rainy season.



SEASONAL RAINFALL

Rainfall gradually increases from north to south, shaping the land, plants, and livelihoods.



VEGETATION

Vegetation shifts from desert to grasses and shrubs, then to taller grasslands and savanna trees.



WATER

Water is scarce and seasonal, from rain, rivers, and ponds—vital for people, animals, and crops.



PASTORALISM

Pastoralism and agriculture adapt to seasonal conditions and available resources.

COUNTRIES TO EXPLORE

SENEGAL



MAURITANIA



MALI



BURKINA FASO



NIGER



NIGERIA



CHAD



SUDAN



4. POLYNESIA

A Region Connected by Ocean

Polynesia stretches across an enormous area of the Pacific Ocean, with thousands of miles of water between many of its islands. Yet ocean currents, winds, stars, and generations of extraordinary navigation connected communities across this vast region long before modern transportation.



ACROSS POLYNESIA

1 A VAST OCEAN



Polynesia covers an immense portion of the Pacific.



2 VOLCANIC ISLANDS



Some islands were built by volcanic activity, creating high mountains and fertile landscapes.



3 CORAL ATOLLS



Others are low rings of coral surrounding lagoons, sometimes only a few meters above sea level.



4 WINDS, WAVES & STARS



Navigators learned to read stars, ocean swells, winds, clouds, birds, and other environmental clues.



5 VOYAGING ACROSS THE PACIFIC



Long-distance canoe voyages connected islands separated by enormous stretches of ocean.



WHAT MAKES THIS A REGION?



OCEAN

A shared ocean space links islands thousands of miles apart.



ISLANDS

Many islands and archipelagos share cultural connections across the ocean.



NAVIGATION

Skilled wayfinding and deep knowledge of the ocean made connection and travel possible.



VOLCANIC LANDSCAPES

Volcanoes built islands with dramatic mountains and rich soils.



ATOLLS

Coral atolls and lagoons support unique ecosystems and island communities.

ISLANDS & COUNTRIES TO EXPLORE

SAMOA



Volcanic islands with vibrant culture and strong traditions.

TONGA



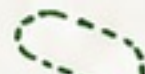
A kingdom of islands known for hospitality and ocean heritage.

TUVALU



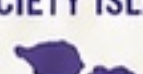
Low-lying coral islands with close ties to the ocean and its rhythms.

COOK ISLANDS



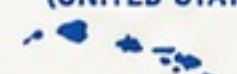
Beautiful islands with rich traditions and Polynesian heritage.

FRENCH POLYNESIA (SOCIETY ISLANDS)



A vast collection of islands and atolls across the Pacific.

HAWAI'I (UNITED STATES)



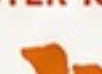
Volcanic islands with deep cultural roots and aloha spirit.

AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND



Two main islands with diverse landscapes and Polynesian heritage.

RAPA NUI/EASTER ISLAND



Remote island famous for its moai and remarkable history.



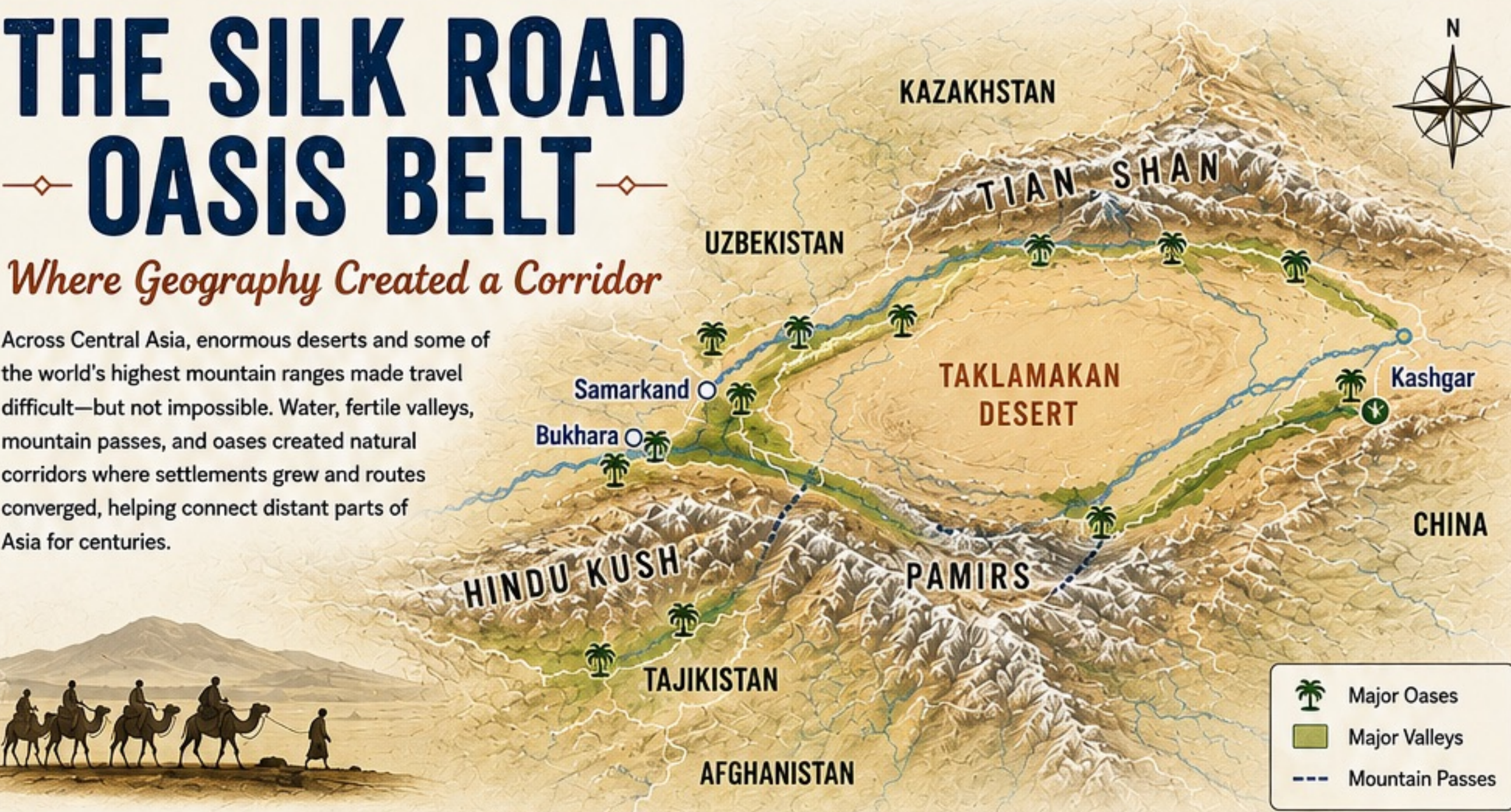
WATER CAN CONNECT PLACES INSTEAD OF SEPARATING THEM.



THE SILK ROAD OASIS BELT

Where Geography Created a Corridor

Across Central Asia, enormous deserts and some of the world's highest mountain ranges made travel difficult—but not impossible. Water, fertile valleys, mountain passes, and oases created natural corridors where settlements grew and routes converged, helping connect distant parts of Asia for centuries.



GEOGRAPHY CREATES THE CORRIDOR

1

MOUNTAINS
CREATE BARRIERS

High ranges restrict where people can travel.

2

PASSES CREATE
OPENINGS

Certain valleys and mountain passes provide routes through difficult terrain.

3

DESERTS LIMIT
MOVEMENT

Arid landscapes make reliable water essential.

4

OASES PROVIDE
WATER

Springs, rivers, and snowmelt support fertile pockets amid dry landscapes.

5

SETTLEMENTS
GROW

Towns develop where water and travel routes meet.

6

CORRIDORS
CONNECT

Networks of viable routes link one oasis and valley to another.

WHAT MAKES THIS A REGION?

MOUNTAINS
High ranges shape the landscape and create natural barriers and boundaries.

DESERTS
Arid environments make water scarce and influence where people can travel and live.

WATER
Rivers, springs, and snowmelt are the source of life in an otherwise dry landscape.

OASES
Fertile pockets of land support growing towns, crops, and communities.

PASSES & VALLEYS
Natural openings through mountains provide corridors for movement and connection.

COUNTRIES TO EXPLORE

CHINA

KAZAKHSTAN

KYRGYZSTAN

TAJIKISTAN

UZBEKISTAN

TURKMENISTAN

AFGHANISTAN

THE AMAZON BASIN

A Region Defined by Water

The Amazon Basin is the enormous area of South America where water drains into the Amazon River and its thousands of tributaries. Stretching from the Andes to the Atlantic, the watershed crosses national borders and connects mountains, forests, floodplains, rivers, and one of the most biodiverse ecosystems on Earth.

- Amazon Basin (Watershed Boundary)
- Amazon River
- Major Tributaries



FROM MOUNTAINS TO ATLANTIC

1

ANDEAN HEADWATERS

Rain and snowmelt high in the Andes feed rivers flowing east.

2

TRIBUTARIES

Thousands of waterways join larger rivers throughout the basin.

3

RAINFOREST

Warm temperatures and abundant rainfall support immense tropical forests.

4

SEASONALLY FLOODED FORESTS

Rising rivers regularly flood enormous areas, creating distinctive ecosystems.

5

THE AMAZON RIVER

Water from across the basin gathers into one of Earth's greatest river systems.

6

THE ATLANTIC

The Amazon carries an extraordinary volume of freshwater into the Atlantic Ocean.

WHAT MAKES THIS A REGION?

WATERSHED
All water in the basin drains into the Amazon River, connecting vast areas of land.

RIVERS
A network of thousands of rivers and streams feed the Amazon from every direction.

RAINFALL
Consistent rainfall across the basin sustains the rivers, forests, and wildlife.

RAINFOREST
Tropical rainforests cover much of the basin and support incredible plant and animal life.

BIODIVERSITY
The Amazon Basin is one of the most biodiverse places on Earth.

COUNTRIES TO EXPLORE

BRAZIL

Holds the largest portion of the basin and the Amazon River's mouth.

PERU

Andean headwaters and vast rainforest in the western Amazon.

BOLIVIA

Includes major tributaries and large areas of rainforest.

COLOMBIA

Rivers flow from the Andes into the Amazon Basin's northern reaches.

ECUADOR

Eastern slopes of the Andes feed important rivers into the basin.

VENEZUELA

The basin includes extensive rivers and seasonal floodplains.

GUYANA

Tropical forests and rivers flow north toward the Atlantic coast.

GEOGRAPHY CAN CONNECT PLACES IN POWERFUL, NATURAL WAYS.