

Mountain Ranges - a Compare and Contrast Report

This report compares and contrasts three different mountain ranges from around the world. Similarities and differences in physical and human geography are described for each mountain range: Snowdonia (Wales), the Pyrenees (France and Spain), and the Andes (South America).

Snowdonia



Snowdonia is a region in northwest Wales which includes mountains and glacial landforms. The smallest of the three mountain ranges, Snowdonia's highest point is 1,085m. Similar to the Pyrenees and the Andes, several waterfalls can be found in Snowdonia - although they are much smaller. A tourist railway travels to the summit of Wales' highest mountain, Mount Snowdon, where views as far as Ireland can be seen. Snowdonia's attractions are popular with tourists: hiking trails, picturesque areas and water features. In contrast to the Andes, there are no cities in Snowdonia - only towns and villages; the population of Snowdonia totals 25,702.

The Pyrenees



The Pyrenees mountain range separates France and Spain - stretching more than 430km and reaching 3,404m at its highest point. Although much smaller than the Andes, the Pyrenees are more than three times higher than Snowdonia. It is noted that the Pyrenees are similar to Snowdonia in that they have some glacial areas and other areas which are warmer in temperature. As well as kilometres of hiking trails, there are many holiday resorts on both sides of the Pyrenees - resorts being mostly based in town centres. The Pyrenees are a popular destination for winter sports activities: many areas across the Pyrenees receive regular snowfall.

The Andes



The Andes - traversing all along South America's western side - is one of the world's longest mountain ranges. With a highest peak of 6,962m, this is the largest mountain range considered in this report. Snowdonia is situated in one country, and the Pyrenees are in two countries; however, the Andes pass through seven countries: Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and Chile. Unlike Snowdonia and the Pyrenees, the Andes hosts a wide range of habitats: glaciers, volcanos, grassland, desert, lakes and forest. The Andes, containing approximately 45,000 plant species and 3,700 species of animal, are sometimes referred to as the 'global epicentre of biodiversity'. Although the Andes have many popular tourist attractions, including the historical site of Machu Picchu, there are also several large cities in the region which are home to approximately 85 million people.

To summarise, each mountain range is an important part of its region in terms of human geography, physical geography and ecology; the mountains also support local economies by attracting tourists. The Andes are the largest, most populated and biodiverse mountain range studied within this report, followed by the Pyrenees and then Snowdonia; the Pyrenees and Snowdonia share the most similarities.

