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deserts are arid ecosystems that receive fewer than 25 centimeters 10 inches of precipitation a year death valley california above receives fewer than 5 centimeters 2 inches of rainfall every year however death valley s infrequent rain and extreme temperatures can impact the landscape when most people imagine an archetypal desert landscape with its relentless sun rippling sand and hidden oases they often picture the sahara but 11 000 years ago what we know today as the 5 min read far from being barren wastelands deserts are biologically rich habitats with a vast array of animals and plants that have adapted to the harsh conditions there some deserts are examples of desert animals include invertebrates such as scorpions and camel spiders reptiles such as the thorny devil gila monster and sidewinder rattlesnake mammals such as the fennec fox meerkat dromedary and bactrian camel and birds such as the sandgrouse and lappet faced vulture a desert is a landscape where little precipitation occurs and consequently living conditions create unique biomes and ecosystems the lack of vegetation exposes the unprotected surface of the ground to denudation about one third of the land surface of the earth is arid or semi arid what is a desert deserts cover more than one fifth of earth s land area and they are found on every continent a place that receives less than 25 centimeters 10 inches of rain per year is considered a desert desert any large extremely dry area of land with sparse vegetation it is one of earth s major types of ecosystems supporting a community of plants and animals specially adapted to the harsh environment desert biomes are the driest of all the biomes in fact the most important characteristic of a desert is that it receives very little rainfall most deserts receive less than 300 mm a year compared to rainforests which receive over 2 000 mm noun area of land that receives no more than 25 centimeters 10 inches of precipitation a year deserts are extremely dry environments that are

home to well adapted plants and animals the main types of deserts include hot and dry deserts semi arid deserts coastal deserts and cold deserts the desert biome is the characteristic community of animals and plants found in the world s deserts deserts are found on every continent and make up around 30 percent of the earth s surface the main characteristic of deserts is a shortage or complete lack of precipitation some desert regions go for years on end without rain desert biomes can be classified according to several characteristics there are four major types of deserts hot and dry semiarid coastal cold hot and dry desert the four major north american deserts of this type are the chihuahuan sonoran mojave and great basin geographically speaking most deserts are found on the western sides of continents or in the case of the sahara arabian and gobi deserts and the smaller deserts of asia are located far from the coast in the eurasian interior they tend to occur under the eastern sides of major subtropical high pressure cells the arid conditions of the major desert areas result from their position in subtropical regions to either side of the moist equatorial belt the atmospheric circulation pattern known as the hadley cell plays an important role in desert climate from african bullfrogs to fennec foxes these desert animals have remarkable adaptations that allow them to thrive in harsh conditions the deserts found on earth are extremely diverse each unique in their own way the dunes of the saharan desert the icy tundra of antarctica and the pacific coastline of the atacama desert are all deserts that is right they are all scientifically classified as deserts despite their differences where are deserts located deserts cover more than one fifth of the earth s land area and are located on every continent hot deserts are mainly found around the tropics of cancer and capricorn discover the importance of desert ecosystems and their natural resources environmental threats and impact learn why desert biomes are crucial deserts are diverse ecosystems that occur on all seven continents learn about the four major types of deserts the surprising amount of wildlife some of them contain and how new desert areas it may seem like nothing can live in a desert because it s so dry but most deserts are full of life with plants and animals that have adapted to survive without much water some plants like common plants that survive desert climates are

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