

## Five of the World's Deserts

When we think of deserts, we think of a huge, hot, lonely space. We even use the word “deserted” to describe a hopeless feeling. It might surprise you to learn that not all deserts are hot, and some of them are very small! We are going to learn about five of the world's deserts in this article.

### Antarctica

Let's start with the most surprising fact. The biggest desert on earth has no sand. It's also the coldest place in the world, reaching temperatures as low as minus 89 degrees



Celsius, or minus 128 degrees Fahrenheit. This is the vast, icy expanse of Antarctica, the South Pole. Amazingly, this harsh place boasts a wide range of wildlife, including whales, seals and a variety of birds. Scientists have even discovered microscopic life deep below the surface of Antarctica's dark, frozen lakes.

### The Sahara Desert

This one is closer to what we think of when we hear the word “desert”. The Sahara takes up a huge chunk of North Africa. Its name means “desert” in the Arabic



language. This is a region of massive sand dunes dotted by oases. An oasis is a spot in a desert where underground water breaks through to the surface. This makes it possible for plants to grow. Of course, it also helps lonely travelers and their camels refresh themselves on a long, hot journey!

## The Kalahari Desert



Far to the south, we have the great Kalahari. In the Tswana language, its name means “big thirst”. However, this is technically a semi-desert. The prefix “semi” means “half”. This is because the Kalahari isn’t as dry as a true desert,

like its neighbor, the Namib desert, which is almost completely barren. The Kalahari is the ancestral homeland of the San people. It also boasts a wide range of animals including the beautiful oryx and the mischievous meerkat.

## The Mojave Desert

North America’s driest spot is the Mojave, located in the south western region of the continent. This desert contains places with names like “Death Valley” and “Furnace Creek”, so



you can imagine what the weather is like. Scientists have recorded temperatures as high as 56 degrees Celsius, or 134 degrees

Fahrenheit. If you visit, take your camera for the breathtaking skies and rocky ridges. But also take your sunscreen.

## **The Judean Desert**

This is a thin, sandy strip on the western side of the Jordan Valley. It's full of white, sun-baked hills and deep, dry ravines. Nowadays, most tourists pass right through it to get to the more popular Dead Sea. But this desert is famous in its own right; it's the place where Jesus went in order to fast for 40 days.

