

# THE DESERT

A desert is an area that is extremely dry with very little rainfall. There are many different types of deserts, not all are hot and sandy. Some deserts are cool or cold. Deserts are found on many continents. Antarctica is considered a frozen desert!

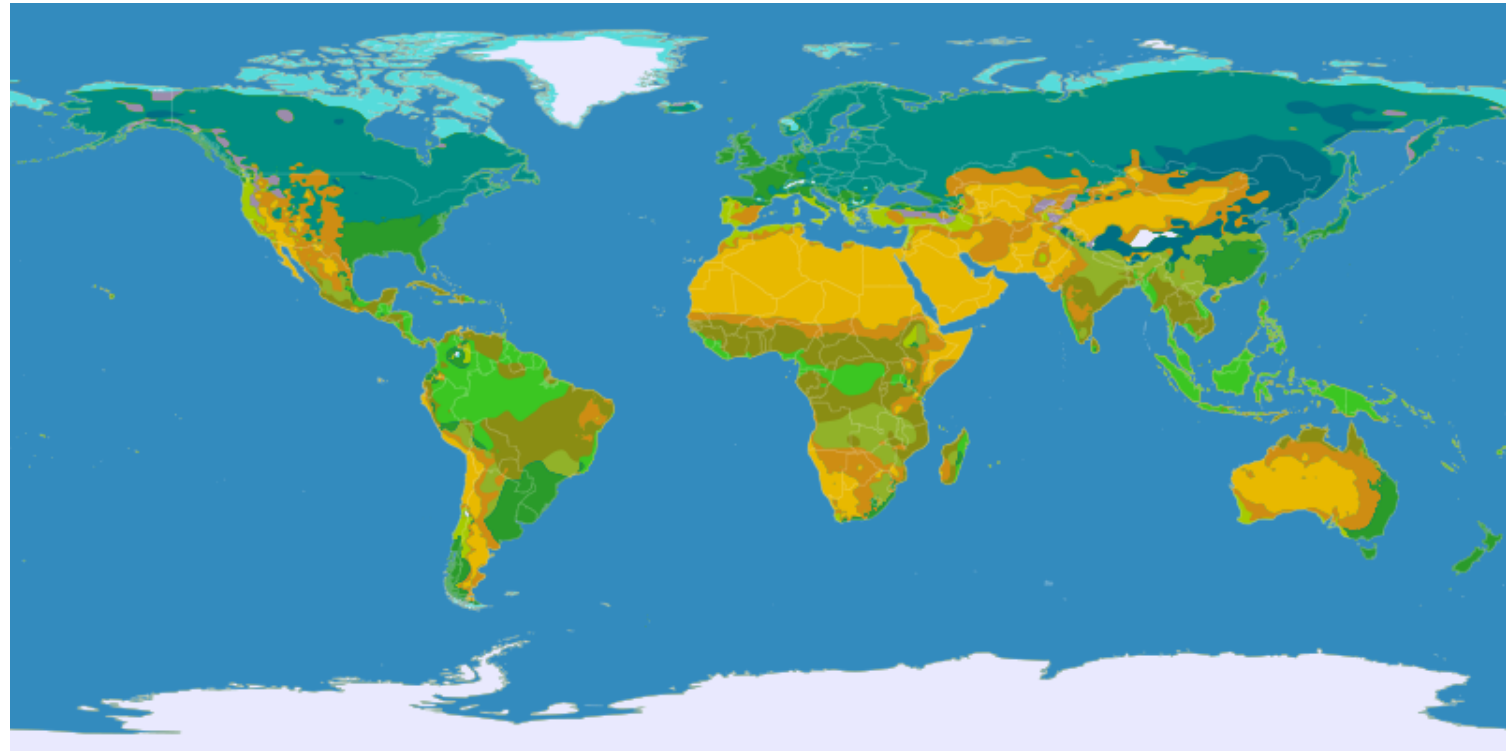
Many deserts have rivers or oases flowing through them. After the sun goes down, the desert can get very cold. The Sahara Desert located in Africa is the world's biggest desert! It is hot there every day of the year and can get over 130 degrees Fahrenheit. Despite the dry conditions, many creatures live there including wild cats, camels, kangaroos, antelopes, wolves, lizards, scorpions, snakes, birds, and lots of insects.

Desert biomes take up about 1/3 of the land mass of earth. This picture from NASA shows all deserts not arctic in nature:



# Desert: Location

The largest hot and dry desert in the world is the Sahara desert in northern Africa but Antarctica is the largest desert in the world. Other major deserts include the Arabian desert in the middle east, the Gobi desert in northern China and Mongolia, and the Kalahari desert in Africa.





# Desert

A desert is an area of land where little rain falls. Because of the lack of water, living conditions are hard for plants and animals.



# Desert: Weather

Most deserts get really hot during the day and then cold during the night because of low humidity. During the day, the temperatures can reach over 100 degrees F and then drop below freezing during the night. The coldest day in Antarctica was -113 degrees F. During winter, deserts get a little rainfall but sometimes the rain evaporates before it hits the ground.





# The World's Driest Place



Rain has never been recorded in parts of Chile's Atacama Desert. It is the driest place on Earth.



# Deserts in the United States

There are three major hot and dry deserts in The United States. The Chihuahuan Desert, which is the largest hot desert in North America, The Sonoran Desert, and The Mojave Desert. The Mojave Desert is the hottest desert in North America. The United States also has The Great Basin, which is a cold desert.





# Cold Deserts

A photograph of a cold desert landscape. The foreground and middle ground are dominated by rolling sand dunes. The dunes are a light tan color, and patches of snow are scattered across their surfaces, particularly in the crevices and on the slopes. The background shows a vast, flat expanse of snow-covered ground extending to a distant, low mountain range under a clear, pale blue sky.

A desert is any place that gets less than 10 inches of moisture each year. Many deserts are hot, but there are deserts that are very cold, too!



# The Cold Desert: Antarctica!

## Cold Desert

Many of the regions of the Arctic and Antarctic are known as polar deserts. The largest cold desert on earth is in Antarctica.







# Desert Plants

Since deserts get so little rainfall, plants that live in the desert are able to collect and store water to survive. The most memorable desert plant is the cactus, but there are many other types of plants that live in the desert.



# Desert: Plants

Certain types of plants can survive the harsh environment of the desert. They have to be good at storing and finding water to adapt to minimal rainfall. Plants you can find in deserts include: cacti, creosote bush, sagebrush, and ocotillo.



Cacti



Creosote bush



Sagebrush



Ocotillo



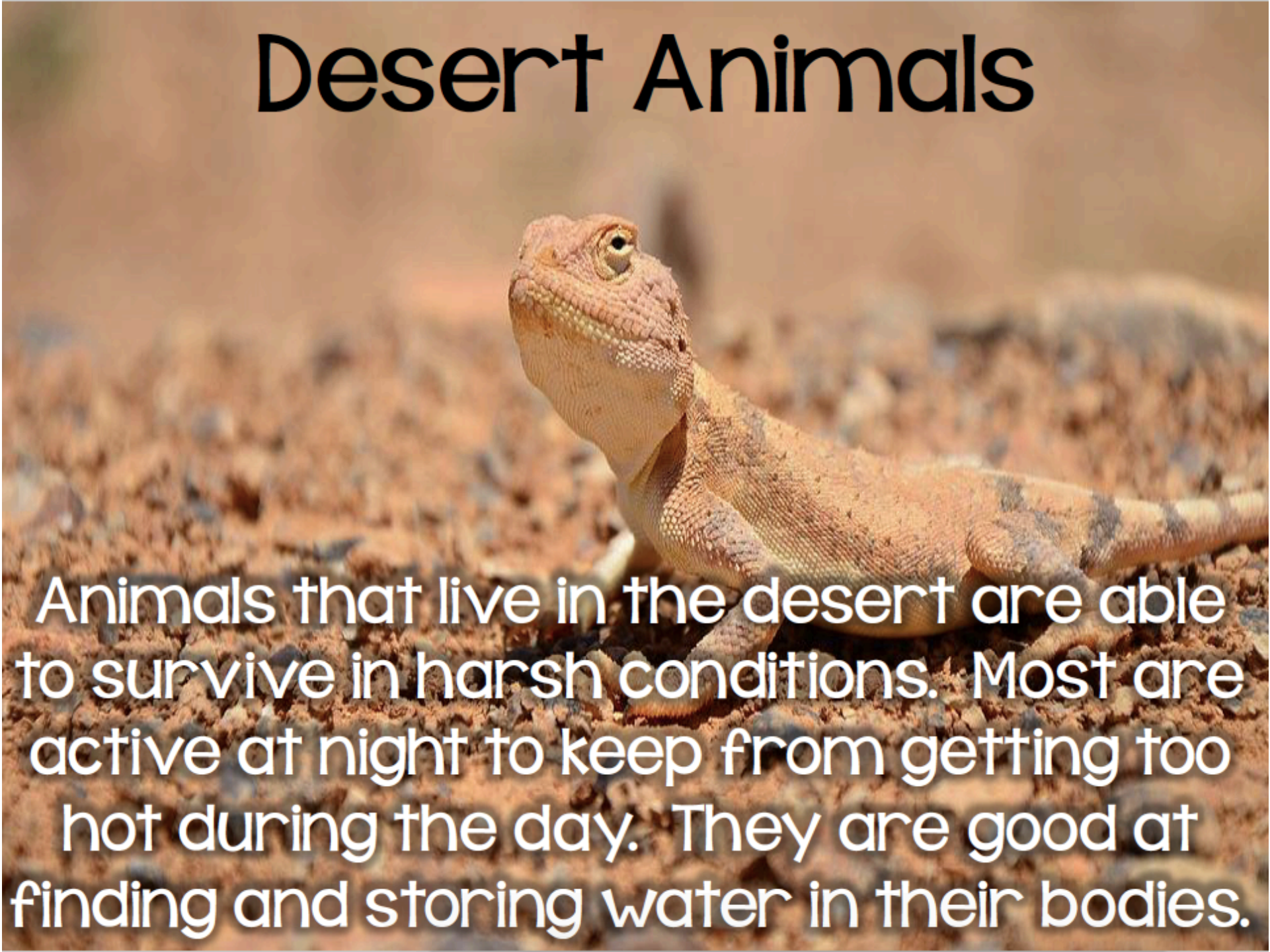
# Cactus Home



Many animals make their home inside the safety of a cactus. It is protected from the heat and other animals.



# Desert Animals

A photograph of a spiny-tailed lizard (Uta stansburiana) resting on reddish-brown desert soil. The lizard is facing left, with its head slightly raised. Its body is covered in small, raised scales, and it has a long, thin tail with a distinct dark band near the tip. The background is a blurred desert landscape with similar soil and some sparse vegetation.

Animals that live in the desert are able to survive in harsh conditions. Most are active at night to keep from getting too hot during the day. They are good at finding and storing water in their bodies.



# Desert: Animals

Some animals that live in the desert are cold blooded such as snakes, insects, and lizards. The mammals that live here are small such as the kangaroo rat and kit fox. The elf owl sometimes live inside a cactus during the day and then come out to hunt during the night.





# Desert Burrows



Some animals dig burrows under the sand. It is much cooler under the ground. The animals stay in the burrow during the day to stay cool.