

# **Eritrea**

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## **Location and area**

Eritrea is an independent state in Africa, bordered on the east by the Red Sea, on the southeast by Djibouti, on the south and west by Ethiopia, and on the north and northwest by Sudan. Eritrea has an area of 121,144 km<sup>2</sup>.

## **Topography**

Eritrea has four main physiographical regions:

1. The coastal plain, stretching more than 1,000 km along the Red Sea coast, receives little rainfall and is extremely hot. In the Danakil depression, temperatures often exceed 50° C;
2. The south-central plateau highland forms the core of the country. Altitudes range from 1,800 to 2,450 m above sea level and annual rainfall is significantly higher than at the coast;
3. The hills of the northern and west-central areas range from about 750 to 1,350 m above sea level and generally receive less rainfall than the plateau;
4. The broad western plains lie to the west of the Baraka River and north of the Setit River.

A number of rivers drain the plateau and highland regions. The Gash (or Mereb), the Baraka, and the Anseba flow from the plateau west into Sudan, while the Falkat, Laba, and Alighede flow from the northern highlands to the Red Sea.

## **Climate**

Average annual temperatures range from 17° C in the highlands to 30° C in the seaport of Mitsiwa (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

## **Peatlands**

According to the interpreted World Soil Map (Van Engelen & Huting 2002) no histosols exist in Eritrea and 16 km<sup>2</sup> of gley soils.