



A Land of Varied Riches

BEFORE YOU READ

In the last chapter, you read about the conditions that helped to shape the countries of South America.

In this section, you will learn how Europe’s diverse geography has shaped its diverse cultures.

AS YOU READ

Use this chart to take notes on the geography, climate, and natural resources of Europe.

Geography	
Climate	
Natural Resources	

TERMS & NAMES

Mediterranean Sea inland sea that borders Europe, Southwest Asia, and Africa

peninsula a body of land surrounded by water on three sides

fjord a long, narrow, deep inlet of the sea located between steep cliffs

Ural Mountains a mountain range along Europe’s eastern border that divides the continent from Asia

plain a large, flat area of land, usually without many trees

The Geography of Europe

(pages 273–275)

What are some important geographic features of Europe?

Europe is a **peninsula**, surrounded by water on the north, south, and west. The European continent also has smaller peninsulas, as well as important inland waterways. Mountain ranges are among the natural landforms found in Europe. In addition, the continent contains a vast **plain** that is used for agriculture.

Among Europe’s inland waterways are a number of rivers, including the Rhine, the Danube, and the Volga. These waterways and the seas on three sides of the continent have enabled people and goods to move both within Europe and to other parts of the world.

Two of Europe’s smaller peninsulas are the Scandinavian and Iberian Peninsulas. Northern Europe’s Scandinavian Peninsula, home to Norway and Sweden, has the deep sea inlets known as **fjords**. Western Europe’s Iberian Peninsula, containing Portugal and Spain, is separated from the rest of the continent by the *Pyrenees* mountains.

Other mountain ranges found in Europe are the *Alps* and the **Ural Mountains**. The Urals run along Europe’s eastern border and divide the continent from Asia. The mountain ranges of Europe separated groups of people as they settled the land. This is one reason why different cultures developed.

Rich farmland is found in the large, flat area of Europe known as the Great European Plain. The ancient trading centers of this plain, which stretches from the coast of France to the Ural Mountains, drew many settlers. It now includes large cities such as Paris, Berlin, Warsaw, and Moscow.

1. How did Europe’s seas and waterways help in its settlement by people from diverse cultures?

Climate (pages 275–276)**How does the climate vary within Europe?**

The Gulf Stream's warm water and warm, moist air help to give much of Europe a mild climate. However, cold winds from the Arctic Circle can cause harsh winters in Northern Europe and in mountainous regions. In these areas, the average January temperature can fall below 0°F.

Southern areas that border the **Mediterranean Sea** are warmer, protected from Arctic winds by the Alps and the Pyrenees mountain ranges.

Here, January temperatures tend to stay above 50°F.

Vacationers enjoy the Mediterranean coast's hot, dry summers, where July temperatures average about 80°F. In more northerly parts of Europe, except in the far north and in the coldest mountain regions, July temperatures range from 50°F to 60°F.

2. How do the Gulf Stream and Arctic winds affect Europe's climate?

Natural Resources (pages 276–277)**What natural resources does Europe have?**

Minerals, rich soil, and plentiful rainfall are some of Europe's natural resources. Mineral resources include the coal deposits of Germany's Ruhr Valley, which help to make that area an industrial center. Large deposits of iron ore are found in Russia and Ukraine.

Because of its rich soil and abundant precipitation, Europe is also a world leader in crop production. In fact, most areas of the continent support some form of agriculture. Among the crops grown in Europe are wheat, rye, and potatoes. Europe also has large expanses of dairy and grazing land, and regions planted with orchards and vineyards.

3. What are the two main uses of Europe's natural resources?
