

The Pacific Ocean

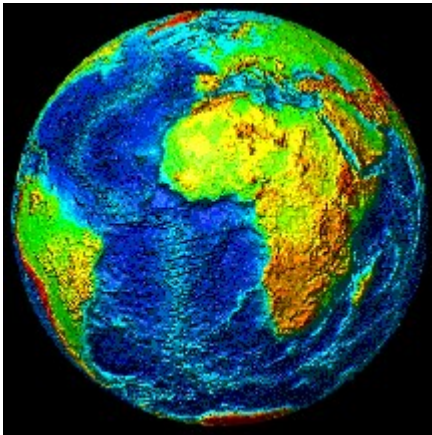
The Pacific Ocean is the largest ocean. This body of water could hold all the continents and almost all three other oceans. It spreads nearly half way around the world, from Asia east to the Americas, and from Antarctica north almost to the Arctic. The Pacific is also the deepest ocean. The world's highest peak, Mount Everest, would disappear if dropped into the Pacific's Philippine Trench, which is 32,995 feet deep.

Ocean Facts

Fraction of world ocean: 48%

Average depth: 13,740 feet (4,188 m)

Deepest point: 36,200 feet (11,033 m) in the Mariana Trench



The Atlantic Ocean

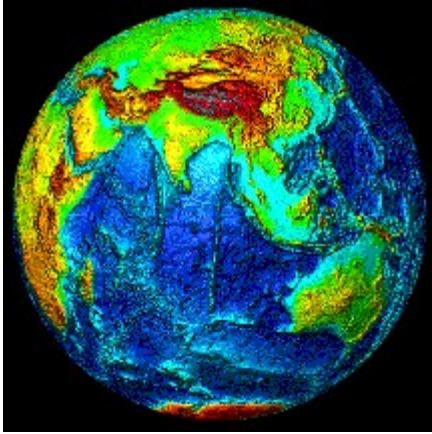
The Atlantic is the second largest ocean. It is also relatively shallow because it has large areas of continental shelves. The most noticeable feature in the ocean's abyss is the S-shaped mid-ocean ridge which runs the entire length of the ocean. Much of the ridge is hundreds of feet below sea level but the volcanic island of Iceland, the Azores, Ascension Island and Tristan de Cunha are all parts of the ridge that appear above sea level.

Ocean Facts

Fraction of world ocean: 28%

Average depth: 12,254 feet (3,872 m)

Deepest point: 28,374 feet (8,648 m) in the Puerto Rico Trench



The Indian Ocean

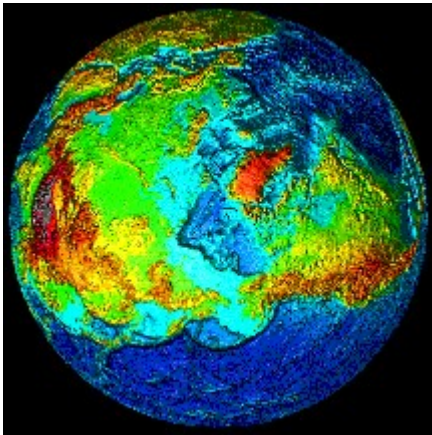
The Indian Ocean lies mostly in the southern hemisphere between Africa, southern Asia, Australia and Antarctica. It was formed by seafloor spreading as Gondwanaland broke up over the last 170 million years. The ocean's main feature is a huge ridge, crossed by many long fractures. The ridge divides into two arms east of Madagascar. One arm runs around Africa and links up with the Atlantic Ridge while the other arm extends south of Australia and eventually links up with the East Pacific rise.

Ocean Facts

Fraction of world ocean: 20%

Average depth: 12,740 feet (3,872 m)

Deepest point: 25,344 feet (7,725 m) in the Java Trench



The Arctic Ocean

To some people, the waters around the North Pole are a part of the Atlantic, mainly because they are joined to the Atlantic Ocean by a broad stretch of sea between Scandinavia and Greenland. However, most oceanographers call these waters the Arctic Ocean. This is the smallest and shallowest of the four oceans. More than thirteen oceans of its size would fit into the Pacific basin and the Arctic Ocean's average depth is only one quarter that of the Pacific.

Ocean Facts

Fraction of world ocean: 4%

Average depth: 3,407 feet (1,038 m)

Deepest point: 17,881 feet (5,450 m) in the Eurasian Basin