Module One: Europe as a Place, a Space, and a Cultural Realm

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Europe is surrounded by waters which make it a peninsula and sometimes it is said to be a peninsula of peninsulas. Surrounded by the Arctic, the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean, Caspian, and the black seas, precipitation in Europe is always high. Overall, Europe has a mild climate. The landforms of the European continent, including mountain ranges, for example, the Pyrenees and the Alps results in the change of climates of certain areas. Europe lies largely in [moderate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temperate) climate regions. Other regions with the same latitude as that of Europe usually are colder in contrast; this is because of The Gulf Stream. The Gulf Stream makes European weather warmer and rainier than it is supposed to be, this is why it is called the "Europe's central heating." The Gulf Stream warms up the prevalent westerly airstreams and carries warm water to Europe's coast[[1]](#footnote-1). The European climate ranges from polar to subtropical as well. In the south of Europe, the [Mediterranean climate](https://www.encyclopedia.com/earth-and-environment/ecology-and-environmentalism/environmental-studies/mediterranean-climate) is usually warm and dry. The western parts including in Northwest, because of [North Atlantic Drift](https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/oceans-continents-and-polar-regions/oceans-and-continents/north-atlantic-drift) is generally humid and mild. In eastern and central Europe the climate is also humid but with cool summers. Atlantic Ocean's westerly winds influence almost the majority of the European continent. The climate of Europe based on geography can be divided into few categories.

*The Mediterranean*

Countries of the European continent adjoining the Adriatic Sea have a warm and sunny Mediterranean climate, for example, France, Portugal, Italy, southern Spain, the South Slavic and Greece[[2]](#footnote-2). Hot summers, Mild to warm winters, regular sunshine, especially in the summertime and a satisfying spring and autumn is always greatly desirable weather, and that is why the countries as mentioned above make a leading holiday destination in Europe.

*Eastern and Central Europe*

Somewhat like Western Europe, the summers in Eastern and central Europe are usually mild. Winters, on the other hand, are considerably colder. Snowfall is also very common in Eastern and central Europe. Overall, the climate of most of Central and Eastern Europe is considered as humid continental with cool summers[[3]](#footnote-3). This part of Europe comprises of southern Scandinavia.

*Northern Europe*

In Northern Europe, the winters are very long, harsh, severely cold with recurrent snowstorms. Summers, on the other hand, are very short and cold. One of the spectacles of Northern Europe is the endless daylight, with the sun suspended in the horizon throughout the night in locations such as Norway. This part of the continent includes in countries namely Norway, Finland, Sweden and Russia, and the climate is known as subarctic climate.

*Western Europe*

Western Europe climate is classified as the marine west coast. Most of [France](https://traveltips.usatoday.com/france/), northern Spain, the Low Countries, the British Islands and half of westernmost Germany comes under marina west coast climate. Features of this type of climate are that both the summers and winters are mild. There is no extreme cold or hot weather in this region. However, western European weather is quite humid, and rainfall is very frequent, with considerable cloudiness most of the times.

*Spain*

Spain is classified under a semi-arid steppe climate. The weather patterns or the climate in Spain is usually comparable to the Mediterranean climate zone.

*Mountains*

This region of the European continent that includes mainly the mountains of Norway is one of the coldest climate zones in the world; full of glaciers, and the grounds covered with snow throughout the year. This climatic condition of Europe is classified as tundra climate and is almost consistent throughout Europe in high altitudes such as the Alps, Carpathians, Balkans, Pyrenees and the mountains of [Norway](https://traveltips.usatoday.com/norway/).

# End Notes

1. Lionello, Piero, Paola Malanotte-Rizzoli, Roberta Boscolo, Pinhas Alpert, Vincenz Artale, L. Li, Jürg Luterbacher et al. "The Mediterranean climate: an overview of the main characteristics and issues." (2006): 1-26.
2. Lamb, Hubert H. *Climate, history and the modern world*. Routledge, 2002.
3. Palter, Jaime B. "The role of the Gulf Stream in European climate." *Annual review of marine science* 7 (2015): 113-137.
1. Palter, Jaime B. "The role of the Gulf Stream in European climate." *Annual review of marine science* 7 (2015): 113-137. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Lionello, Piero, Paola Malanotte-Rizzoli, Roberta Boscolo, Pinhas Alpert, Vincenz Artale, L. Li, Jürg Luterbacher et al. "The Mediterranean climate: an overview of the main characteristics and issues." (2006): 1-26. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Lamb, Hubert H. *Climate, history and the modern world*. Routledge, 2002 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)