FORESTS OF LIFE!

Warm, wet and bursting with colour, rainforests are home to amazing animals, unique plants and incredible people. So grab your trekking shoes and come with us as we explore this wild, wonderful world...

DID YOU KNOW...?

The Amazon rainforest in South America is the largest tropical rainforest in the world — it produces more than 20% of Earth's oxygen!

Circling the globe in a broad green belt around the Equator are our planet's tropical rainforests. Soaked in up to 1,000cm of rainfall each year — hence their name '*rain*forests' — these vast, humid jungles create the perfect conditions for plant life to grow. They're bursting with flora found nowhere else on our planet. The 88m-high tualang tree, which grows in the rainforests of Malaysia, is so big that it would be unable to fit inside the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral in London!

Abundant life

More than half of the world's estimated 10 million species of animals, insects and plants live in rainforests — from Sumatran tigers (left) and orang-utans to jumping spiders and poisonous pink millipedes.

One hectare of rainforest (that's a little bit bigger than a football pitch) can contain more than 750 species of tree and 1,500 species of plant. And yet the biodiversity (variety of living species) in these forests is so enormous that scientists believe only 1% of species have actually been recorded and studied!

Breathing trees

Rainforests act as the Earth's 'lungs', helping to remove carbon dioxide (CO_2) — one of the main gases that causes global warming — from the air. Trees absorb and store the CO_2 in their trunks and roots. They then release oxygen back into the atmosphere. Incredibly, if it wasn't for these trees, YOU wouldn't be able to breathe!

Watering the world

Rainforests have another really important job — they absorb water and release it back into the air, forming rain clouds. Each of the big canopy trees releases up to 760 litres of water a year — that's the same amount as three full bathtubs! These rain clouds are then blown around the world, some even ending up in the UK and Ireland, where the rain enters our rivers and lakes, and waters our crops.

The interlocking roots of trees are also vitally important, soaking up water and preventing floods.



Sloths...



... and chameleons love life in the rainforest!

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