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An Essay on

Mediterranean Sea

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Introduction

The Mediterranean Sea is an intercontinental body of seawater between Europe, Africa and Asia that is bordered by 21 countries. It is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world due to its beautiful landscape, mild climate and numerous beach resorts.

The Mediterranean Sea is approximately 3,800 km wide from west to east and has a maximum north to south distance, between France and Algeria, of 900 km. Its only connection to the open (Atlantic) ocean is through the narrow and relatively shallow Strait of Gibraltar, located between Spain and Morocco, which imposes a severe limitation on water exchange. The Mediterranean Sea is also connected to the Black Sea via the Dardanelles Strait and the Sea of Marmara, and since the late 19 century, to the Red Sea by the Suez Canal.

Mountain ranges (e.g. the Sierra Nevada, Alps, Dinaric Alps) are distributed along the northern side of the Mediterranean. Since these mountains slope steeply into the sea, the drainage basin of the north side is relatively small. Furthermore, since the southern side is mainly covered by desert and only a few large rivers (e.g. the Nile, Rhone, Po and Ebro) flow into the Mediterranean, these combined factors tend to limit freshwater input.

Basic Information

Surface area 2.5 million km²
Volume 3.7 million km³
Average depth 1,500 m
Maximum depth 4,982 m
Coastal length 46 000 km
Temperature average 15 – 21 °c
Salinity average 36.2-39 ‰