Humid Tropical Climates

Humid tropical climates are hot year-round because they are near the equator. These climates are generally in or near the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), where winds from the northern and southern hemispheres converge and hot, humid air rises, causing large amounts of precipitation to fall. The subclimates of the humid tropical climate include the tropical wet climate and the tropical wet and dry climate.

Tropical wet climates, which are closest to the equator, typically receive precipitation during most or all of the year. These climates cover almost 10 percent of Earth’s land area and are home to tropical rain forests, which contain a great diversity of plant and animal life.

Regions farther from the equator have a wet summer and a dry winter and so are called tropical wet and dry. The wet and dry seasons correspond to the seasonal migration of the ITCZ. These climates are home to savannas, which are grasslands with occasional trees. Some scientists believe that the tropical wet and dry regions may once have been covered with woodlands, but the forests were cleared by humans.

Moist Mid-Latitude Climates

The moist mid-latitude climates are divided into two main climate zones. One has mild winters, and the other has severe winters with persistent snow cover.

Mild Winters

Climates with mild winters include humid subtropical climates, marine west coast climates, and Mediterranean climates.

Humid subtropical climates, such as those of the southeastern United States, have hot, muggy summers and mild winters. In the summer, winds associated with subtropical highs carry hot, humid air masses into regions with these climates. Thunderstorms are common in summer. Although there may be occasional frost or snow in winter, the temperature does not remain below freezing for long.

Marine west coast climates, such as those of the western coast of Canada and the Pacific Northwest of the United States, have cool summers and mild winters. The winters are milder than in other areas at similar latitudes because of the moderating effects of the nearby ocean.