

Island

An **island** or **isle** is any piece of sub-continental land that is surrounded by water.^[2] Very small islands such as emergent land features on atolls can be called islets, skerries, cays or keys. An island in a river or a lake island may be called an eyot or ait, and a small island off the coast may be called a holm. A grouping of geographically or geologically related islands is called an archipelago, such as the Philippines, for example.

An island may be described as such, despite the presence of an artificial land bridge; examples are Singapore and its causeway, and the various Dutch delta islands, such as IJsselmonde. Some places may even retain "island" in their names for historical reasons after being connected to a larger landmass by a land bridge or landfill, such as Coney Island and Coronado Island, though these are, strictly speaking, tied islands. Conversely, when a piece of land is separated from the mainland by a man-made canal, for example the Peloponnese by the Corinth Canal or Marble Hill in northern Manhattan during the time between the building of the United States Ship Canal and the filling-in of the Harlem River which surrounded the area, it is generally not considered an island.

There are two main types of islands in the sea: continental and oceanic. There are also artificial islands



Atafu atoll in Tokelau

Contents

Etymology

Difference between islands and continents

Types of islands

Continental islands

Oceanic islands

Tropical islands

Artificial islands

Island superlatives

See also

References

External links

Etymology

The word *island* derives from Middle English *iland*, from Old English *igland* (from *ig* or *ieg*, similarly meaning 'island' when used independently, and *-land* carrying its contemporary meaning; cf. Dutch *eiland* ("island"), German *Eiland* ("small island")). However, the spelling of the word was modified in the 15th century because of a false etymology caused by an incorrect association with the etymologically unrelated Old French loanword *isle*, which itself comes from the Latin word *insula*.^[3] Old English *ieg* is actually a cognate of Swedish *ö* and German *Aue*, and related to *Latinaqua* (water).^[4]

Difference between islands and continents

Greenland is the world's largest island, with an area of over 2.1 million km², while Australia, the world's smallest continent, has an area of 7.6 million km², but there is no standard of size which distinguishes islands from continents,^[5] or from islets.^[6] There is a difference between islands and continents in terms of geology. Continents sit on continental lithosphere which is part of tectonic plates floating high on Earth's mantle. Oceanic crust is also part of tectonic plates, but it is denser than continental lithosphere, so it floats low on the mantle. Islands are either extensions of the oceanic crust (e.g. volcanic islands) or geologically they are part of some continent sitting on continental lithosphere (e.g. Greenland). This holds true for Australia, which sits on its own continental lithosphere and tectonic plate.

Types of islands

Continental islands

Continental islands are bodies of land that lie on the continental shelf of a continent.^[7] Examples are Borneo, Java, Sumatra, Sakhalin, Taiwan and Hainan off Asia; New Guinea, Tasmania, and Kangaroo Island off Australia; Great Britain, Ireland, and Sicily off Europe; Greenland, Newfoundland, Long Island, and Sable Island off North America; and Barbados, the Falkland Islands, and Trinidad off South America

A special type of continental island is the microcontinental island, which is created when a continent is rifted. Examples are Madagascar and Socotra off Africa, the Kerguelen Islands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, and some of the Seychelles.

Another subtype is an island or bar formed by deposition of tiny rocks where water current loses some of its carrying capacity. This includes:

- barrier islands, which are accumulations of sand deposited by sea currents on the continental shelves
- fluvial or alluvial islands formed in river deltas or midstream within large rivers. While some are transitory and may disappear if the volume or speed of the current changes, others are stable and long-lived.

Islets are very small islands.

Oceanic islands

Oceanic islands are islands that do not sit on continental shelves. The vast majority are volcanic in origin, such as Saint Helena in the South Atlantic Ocean.^[8] The few oceanic islands that are not volcanic are tectonic in origin and arise where plate movements have lifted up the ocean floor above the surface. Examples are Saint Peter and Paul Rocks in the Atlantic Ocean and Macquarie Island in the Pacific.



A small Fijian island



The British Isles are a large group of islands. The main islands are Great Britain and Ireland.



A small island in Lower Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks in the U.S.



Bangchuidao Island is an islet composed mostly of rock, in Dalian, Liaoning Province, China.

One type of volcanic oceanic island is found in a volcanic island arc. These islands arise from volcanoes where the subduction of one plate under another is occurring. Examples are the Aleutian Islands, the Mariana Islands, and most of Tonga in the Pacific Ocean. The only examples in the Atlantic Ocean are some of the Lesser Antilles and the South Sandwich Islands.

Another type of volcanic oceanic island occurs where an oceanic rift reaches the surface. There are two examples: Iceland, which is the world's second largest volcanic island, and Jan Mayen. Both are in the Atlantic.

A third type of volcanic oceanic island is formed over volcanic hotspots. A hotspot is more or less stationary relative to the moving tectonic plate above it, so a chain of islands results as the plate drifts. Over long periods of time, this type of island is eventually "drowned" by isostatic adjustment and eroded, becoming a seamount. Plate movement across a hot-spot produces a line of islands oriented in the direction of the plate movement. An example is the Hawaiian Islands from Hawaii to Kure, which continue beneath the sea surface in a more northerly direction as the Emperor Seamounts. Another chain with similar orientation is the Tuamotu Archipelago; its older, northerly trend is the Line Islands. The southernmost chain is the Austral Islands, with its northerly trending part the atolls in the nation of Tuvalu. Tristan da Cunha is an example of a hotspot volcano in the Atlantic Ocean. Another hotspot in the Atlantic is the island of Surtsey, which was formed in 1963.

An atoll is an island formed from a coral reef that has grown on an eroded and submerged volcanic island. The reef rises to the surface of the water and forms a new island. Atolls are typically ring-shaped with a central lagoon. Examples are the Line Islands in the Pacific and the Maldives in the Indian Ocean.

Tropical islands

Approximately 45,000 tropical islands with an area of at least 5 hectares (12 acres) exist.^[9] Examples formed from coral reefs include Maldives, Tonga, Samoa, Nauru, and Polynesia.^[9] Granite islands include Seychelles and Tioman and volcanic islands such as Saint Helena.

The socio-economic diversity of tropical islands ranges from the Stone Age societies in the interior of Madagascar, Borneo, and Papua New Guinea to the high-tech lifestyles of the city-islands of Singapore and Hong Kong.^[10]

International tourism is a significant factor in the economy of many tropical islands including Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Réunion, Hawaii, and the Maldives.

Artificial islands



The islands of Fernando de Noronha, Brazil, are the visible parts of submerged mountains.



A subterranean isle in Cross Cave



Manhattan, U.S. is home to over 1.6 million people.



Hawaiian islands from space^[1]

Almost all of the Earth's islands are natural and have been formed by tectonic forces or volcanic eruptions. However, artificial (man-made) islands also exist, such as the island in Osaka Bay off the Japanese island of Honshu, on which Kansai International Airport is located. Artificial islands can be built using natural materials (e.g., earth, rock, or sand) or artificial ones (e.g., concrete slabs or recycled waste).^{[11][12]} Sometimes natural islands are artificially enlarged, such as Vasilyevsky Island in the Russian city of St. Petersburg, which had its western shore extended westward by some 0.5 km in the construction of the Passenger Port of St. Petersburg.^[13]



Kansai Airport is built on an artificial island in Japan.

Artificial islands are sometimes built on pre-existing "low-tide elevation," a naturally formed area of land which is surrounded by and above water at low tide but submerged at high tide. Legally these are not islands and have no territorial sea of their own.^[14]

Island superlatives

- Largest island: Greenland
- Largest island in a lake: Manitoulin Island
- Largest island in a river: Bananal Island
- Largest island in fresh water: Marajó
- Largest uninhabited island: Devon Island
- Most populous island: Java, Indonesia
- Lowest island: Franchetti island in Lake Afrera, Ethiopia
- Island shared by largest number of countries Borneo (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia)
- Island with the highest point: New Guinea (Puncak Jaya, 4884 m), Indonesia
- Northernmost island: Kaffeklubben Island
- Southernmost island (not fully surrounded by permanent ice) Ross Island
- Island with the most populated city: Honshu (Tokyo), Japan
- Most remote island (from nearest land) Bouvet Island
- Island with earliest known settlement: Sumatra (Lida Ajer cave), Indonesia

See also

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| ▪ <u>Desert island</u> | ▪ <u>List of islands by body of water</u> |
| ▪ <u>Inland island</u> | ▪ <u>List of islands by continent</u> |
| ▪ <u>Island biogeography</u> | ▪ <u>List of islands by country</u> |
| ▪ <u>Island ecology</u> | ▪ <u>List of islands by highest point</u> |
| ▪ <u>Island country</u> | ▪ <u>List of islands by name</u> |
| ▪ <u>Island hopping</u> | ▪ <u>List of islands by population</u> |
| ▪ <u>List of ancient islands</u> | ▪ <u>List of islands by population density</u> |
| ▪ <u>List of archipelagos</u> | ▪ <u>List of islands named after people</u> |
| ▪ <u>List of artificial islands</u> | ▪ <u>Phantom island</u> |
| ▪ <u>List of divided islands</u> | ▪ <u>Private island</u> |
| ▪ <u>List of fictional islands</u> | ▪ <u>Small Island Developing States</u> |
| ▪ <u>List of island countries</u> | ▪ <u>Tidal island</u> |
| ▪ <u>List of islands by area</u> | |

References

1. "Hawaii : Image of the Day"(<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/IOTD/view.php?id=82975>). Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20150110044108/http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/IOTD/view.php?id=82975>) from the original on January 10, 2015 Retrieved January 6, 2015.
2. "Webster's Dictionary-Island"(<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/island>) Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20111009102847/http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/island>) from the original on October 9, 2011.
3. "Island" (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Island>). Dictionary.com. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20070307143713/http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/island>) from the original on March 7, 2007 Retrieved March 5, 2007.
4. Ringe, Donald A. (2006). *A Linguistic History of English: From Proto-Indo-European to Proto-Germanic* Oxford University Press. p. 109. ISBN 0-19-928413-X
5. Brown, Mike. *How I Killed Pluto and Why It Had It Coming*(https://books.google.com/books?id=uHq_8awQlbgC&pg=PT179&dq=island+continent+pluto&hl=en&ei=BpA7o6zI4PKgQfnhZH4DA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&sqi=2&ved=0CCKQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false) Archived (https://web.archive.org/web/20160419000758/https://books.google.com/books?id=uHq_8awQlbgC&pg=PT179&dq=island+continent+pluto&hl=en&ei=BpA7o6zI4PKgQfnhZH4DA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&sqi=2&ved=0CCKQ6AEwAA) April 19, 2016, at the Wayback Machine. New York: Random House Digital, 2010. ISBN 0-385-53108-7
6. Royle, Stephen A. *A Geography of Islands: Small Island Insularity*(<https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=XFqpb6gjwbwC&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=definition+island+continent&ots=ayRjsuKnhf&sig=4wLnbYB8HsxyCpE9hkN73waPOPA#v=onepage&q=definition%20island%20continent&f=false>) Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20150921214815/https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=XFqpb6gjwbwC&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=definition+island+continent&ots=ayRjsuKnhf&sig=4wLnbYB8HsxyCpE9hkN73waPOPA>) September 21, 2015, at the Wayback Machine. Psychology Press, 2001. pp. 7–11 ISBN 1-85728-865-3
7. "Island (geography)"(<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/295958/island#ref234009>) *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20141008102906/http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/295958/island#ref234009>) from the original on October 8, 2014 Retrieved September 16, 2014.
8. Lomolino, Mark V. (editor); (et al.) (2004) *Foundations of Biogeography: Classic Papers with Commentaries*(https://books.google.com/books?id=KbkCgsEPv6YC&pg=PR316&dq=Oceanic+island&hl=en&sa=X&ei=NIR_UaycEMqhigLGhYHoAw&ved=0CEEQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=Oceanic%20island&f=false) Archived (https://web.archive.org/web/20160418233729/https://books.google.com/books?id=KbkCgsEPv6YC&pg=PR316&dq=Oceanic+island&hl=en&sa=X&ei=NIR_UaycEMqhigLGhYHoAw&ved=0CEEQ6AEwAw) April 18, 2016, at the Wayback Machine. University of Chicago Press. p. 316. ISBN 0226492362
9. Austrian Academy of Sciences "The Tropical Islands of the Indian and Pacific Oceans". doi:10.1553/3-7001-2738-3 (<https://doi.org/10.1553/3-7001-2738-3>)
10. Amberger, Hertha, Erik (2011). *The Tropical Islands of the Indian and Pacific Oceans*. Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press. ISBN 978-3700127383
11. "Building Artificial Islands That Rise With the Sea"(<http://www.popsoci.com/technology/article/2012-07/building-artificial-islands-rise-sea>) Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20160605152821/http://www.popsoci.com/technology/article/2012-07/building-artificial-islands-rise-sea>) from the original on June 5, 2016 Retrieved June 28, 2016.
12. "What Makes an Island? Land Reclamation and the South China Sea Arbitration | Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative" (<http://amti.csis.org/what-makes-an-island-land-reclamation-and-the-south-china-sea-arbitration/>) July 15, 2015. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20160527053430/http://amti.csis.org/what-makes-an-island-land-reclamation-and-the-south-china-sea-arbitration/>) from the original on May 27, 2016 Retrieved June 28, 2016.
13. "Conception of development of the artificial lands of Vasilevsky island" (https://web.archive.org/web/20160925003154/http://top-mark.biz/en/vasilevskiy_ostrov_namyv/) Archived from the original (http://top-mark.biz/en/vasilevskiy_ostrov_namyv/) on September 25, 2016 Retrieved June 28, 2016.
14. *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Article 13*(http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/closindx.htm) Archived (https://web.archive.org/web/20170902091223/http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/closindx.htm) from the original on September 2, 2017 Retrieved August 25, 2017.

External links

- Definition of island from *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*

- [Listing of islands](#) from [United Nations Island Directory](#)
-

Retrieved from '<https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Island&oldid=833686321>'

This page was last edited on 1 April 2018, at 23:20.

Text is available under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License](#); additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the [Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.](#), a non-profit organization.