

# The Structure of a Rainforest

In a rainforest, plants and animals have their homes at different levels—it's a bit like a skyscraper. But some inhabitants of the jungle also move between floors.

**50–80 m  
(164–262 ft)**

**25–40 m  
(82–131 ft)**

**1–8 m  
(3–26 ft)**

**Up to 1 m (3 ft)**

Mangroves are trees that grow in or near water, for example at the mouth of the Amazon. Fish, mussels, and shrimps swim among their tall roots.

**Each layer of the rainforest receives a different amount of sunlight and rain.**

## Emergent Layer

Kapok and Brazil nut trees tower above the canopy. These giant trees have special roots which only go a little way underground and instead spread all round the trunk like thick buttresses. There is a lot of sunlight up here as well as animals like monkeys, parrots and butterflies.

## Canopy Layer

At this level, the leafy canopy receives plenty of sunshine and rain. Throughout the year, there are lots of buds, leaves, nuts and berries—much to the delight of the monkeys, bird and sloths that feed on them.

## Understory Layer

Small rodents and snakes live among the bushes, shrubs and flowers. They receive regular visits from the higher levels. Jaguars, for instance, come to hunt smaller mammals, and humming birds suck nectar from the flowers.

## Forest Floor

This is the home of fungi, small plants and of course lots of insects and spiders. Crocodiles, lizards and some mammals also feel at home here. So close to the ground, the air is especially moist, and owing to the thick canopy of leaves, the floor of the forest is quite dark.