

UPSC Preparation

Plateaus

India's Peninsular Plateaus are one of its major physical features. These plateaus are one of the ancient landmasses on the surface of the earth. Similar to Peninsular Plateaus of India, there are other famous plateaus in the world. For the preparation of the [IAS Exam](#), this article will brief you about:

- What are plateaus?
- What are the types of plateaus?
- What causes a plateau?
- World Famous Plateaus
- Important Facts about Indian Peninsular Plateaus

What is a Plateau?

Plateau is an area of raised land that is flat on top. Plateaus are often by themselves with no surrounding plateau. National Geographic describes plateaus as flat and elevated landform that rises sharply above the surrounding area on at least one side. Usually, plateaus are formed when magma which is located deep inside the earth pushes towards the surface but fails to break through the crust. As a result, these magma ends up lifting large, impenetrable rock above it. These plateaus are formed over millions of years.

What are the types of Plateaus?

The types of plateaus are mentioned below:





Volcanic Plateau

1. **Dissected plateau** - An upward movement in the earth's crust forms dissected plateaus. The cause behind the upward movement is the slow collision of the tectonic plates. An example of the dissected plateau is the stable Colorado Plateau or Colorado Plateau Province which is covered with dry grasslands, mountain woodlands, and forests.
2. **Volcanic Plateau** - As the name suggests, the volcanic plateau is the one which is formed by the small volcanic eruptions. The lava flow of these eruptions slowly builds up over time and a plateau hence formed is called a volcanic plateau. An example of such a plateau is North Island Volcanic Plateau or the Waimarino Plateau in New Zealand. Three active peaks of Mount Tongariro, Mount Ngauruhoe, and Mount Ruapehu Volcanic Plateau.

Where is Plateaus Located?

Plateaus can be found in the following areas

1. Mountainous regions
2. Desert regions
3. Under the oceans

Causes of Plateau Formation

The causes of the formation of the plateaus are:

1. **Thermal Expansion** - Examples of the plateaus formed by the thermal expansion of lithosphere are:
 - Yellowstone Plateau in the United State
 - Massif Central in France, and
 - Ethiopian Plateau in Africa
2. **Crustal Shortening** - Examples of the plateaus formed by thrusting of one block of crust over another or sliding of one block of crust over another, are:
 - Plateaus found in North Africa, Turkey, Iran, Tibet.
3. **Volcanism** - Examples of the plateaus formed by the flood basalts are:
 - India's Peninsular Plateau
 - The USA's Columbia Plateau

- Canadian Shield

Which are some of the Famous Plateaus?

Some of the famous plateaus across the globe are given below.

1. Deccan Plateau (India) - It extends over 8 Indian states, covering entire South India. It is bordered by 3 Mountain ranges.
2. Chotanagpur Plateau (India) - It has huge reserves of iron, coal, and manganese.
3. Tibetan Plateau (China) - It is the highest and biggest plateau on earth.
4. Katanga Plateau (Congo) - Famous for copper mines
5. East African Plateau - Famous for Gold and Diamond mining

Indian Peninsular Plateau

The Peninsular plateau is a tableland composed of the old crystalline, igneous and metamorphic rocks. It has its formation associated with the breaking of Gondwana land. The prominent features of Indian Peninsular Plateau:

1. Broad and shallow valleys and rounded hills
2. Central Highlands of India and Deccan Plateau are the two main divisions of the Indian Peninsular Plateau
3. The Deccan Plateau has Western Ghats and Eastern Ghats of India.
4. Deccan Trap is a part of the peninsular plateau. This part is of volcanic nature and has igneous rocks.