

1. **Brahmaputra** (or Tsangpo or Jamuna) runs 1,800 miles from its source in the Tibetan Himalayas; it starts eastward across the plateau, then turns south into the Indian state of Assam, and then enters Bangladesh where it merges with the Ganges to form the world's largest delta. While serving as a historical route to Tibet, the river is also prone to disastrous flooding.
2. **Euphrates** defines the western border of Mesopotamia; it also rises in the Zagros Mountains of Turkey and its shores are home to Fallujah and Babylon. It is the longer of the two rivers with a course of 1,740 miles (compared to the Tigris' 1,180). Both the Tigris and this river have changed courses several times leaving ruins in the desert where cities have been abandoned.
3. **Ganges** (or Ganga) is the holiest river of Hinduism. It rises in the Himalayas and flows a comparatively short 1,560 miles to the world's largest delta on the Bay of Bengal. Among that delta's distributaries are the Hooghly (on whose banks Kolkata (formerly Calcutta) may be found) and the Padma (which enters Bangladesh). Approximately one in every twelve human beings lives in the Ganges Basin, a population density that is rapidly polluting the river; a significant source of that pollution is cremated remains.
4. **Indus** is the chief river of Pakistan as well as being the ultimate source of the name of India. It rises in Tibet and flows 1,800 miles to a delta on the Arabian Sea southeast of Karachi. The five major tributaries of the Indus, the Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej Rivers, are the source of the name of the Punjab region, which is Persian for "Land of the Five Rivers". This river is the cradle of the Indus Valley Civilization, one of the world's earliest urban areas, whose main cities were Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa.
5. **Irrawaddy** (or Ayeyarwaddy) is the chief river of Myanmar (also known as Burma). It flows 1,350 miles past Yangon (formerly Rangoon) and Mandalay to the Gulf of Martaban, an arm of the Bay of Bengal. Its delta is one of the world's most important rice-growing regions, and its name is thought to come from the Sanskrit word for "elephant."
6. **Jordan River** rises in Syria from springs near Mount Hermon. It flows south to Lake Merom, through the Sea of Galilee, and into the Dead Sea, which lies 1,300 feet below sea level. The river forms the nation of Jordan's boundary with the West Bank and northern Israel. In the New Testament, the river was the site of the baptism of John the Baptist. In modern times, about 80% of its water is diverted for human use, a figure that has led to the shrinking of the Dead Sea and serious contention among bordering nations.
7. **Mekong** is the chief river of Southeast Asia. It originates in eastern Tibet, forms much of the Laos-Thailand border, flows south through Cambodia, and enters the South China Sea in southern Vietnam just south of Ho Chi Minh City. The capital cities of Vientiane and Phnom Penh are on this river. The building of dams and clearing of rapids are a source of diplomatic conflict between China, Laos, and Cambodia.
8. **Tigris** is the eastern of the two rivers that define the historic region of Mesopotamia (meaning, "The Land Between Two Rivers") that was home to the ancient civilizations of Sumer and Akkad. It rises in Turkey, then flows southeast by Mosul, Tikrit, and Baghdad before joining the Euphrates to make the Shatt-al-Arab, which subsequently empties into the Persian Gulf.
9. **Yangtze** (or Chang Jiang or Ch'ang Chiang) is the longest river in China and Asia and the third longest in the world. It rises in the Kunlun Mountains, flows across the Tibetan Plateau, passes the cities of Chongqing, Wuhan, Nanjing, and Shanghai, and empties into the South China Sea. Its basin is China's granary and is home to nearly one in every three Chinese citizens. The river has been in the news for the construction of the Three Gorges Dam, the world's largest, which will reduce flooding but displace 1.5 million people and bury more than 1,300 known archaeological sites.
10. **Yellow River** (or Huang He or Huang Ho) is, at 3,400 miles, China's second-longest; it is also the most important to the northern half of the country. It rises in Qinghai province and flows into the Bohai Gulf of the Yellow Sea. The river's name comes from the extraordinary amount of loess silt that it carries, an average of 57 pounds for every cubic yard of water. Among its notable features is the Grand Canal, built during the Ming Dynasty, that links it to the Yangtze.