

Great Rift Valley

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About Great Rift Valley:

- It is one of the **most extensive rifts** on Earth's surface that runs **along part of East Africa**.
- It runs for **4,000 miles** (6,400 kilometers), **from Jordan** in southwestern Asia **to the coast of the Indian Ocean** in central **Mozambique**.
- It runs **across many countries**: **Eritrea**, Djibouti, **Ethiopia**, **Kenya**, **Tanzania**, **Uganda**, Rwanda, Burundi, the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (DRC), Malawi, Zambia, and **Mozambique**.
- It is **part of** a larger feature called the **East African Rift System (EARS)**.
- **Formation:**
 - The valley is situated in a region where three tectonic plates meet.
 - It was formed about **40 million years ago** when **tectonic plates split** and gave rise to the East African Rift.
- The valley is 30 to 40 miles (48 to 64 kilometers) wide on average but reaches nearly 300 miles (480 kilometers) at its **widest section** in the **Danakil Desert** in northeastern Africa.

- The steep walls of the valley rise about 3,000 feet (900 meters) above the valley floor. In some places there are cliffs that reach 9,000 feet (2,700 meters) high.
- The area is **geologically active** and **features volcanoes, hot springs, geysers, and frequent earthquakes**.
- A **series of some thirty lakes** lies along its length; the **three largest in Africa** are known as the **Great Lakes** and include **Lake Tanganyika**, the **second deepest lake** in the world, and **Lake Victoria**, the **second-largest freshwater lake** by surface area in the world.
- Many of **Africa's highest mountains**—including **Mount Kilimanjaro, Mount Kenya, and Mount Margherita**—are in ranges fronting the Rift Valley.

What is a Rift Valley?

- A rift valley is a **lowland region** that **forms where Earth's tectonic plates move apart**, or rift.
- Rift valleys are **found on land and** at the **bottom of the ocean**, where they are created by the process of seafloor spreading.

Rift valleys **differ from river valleys** and glacial valleys **in that they are created by tectonic activity** and not the process of erosion.

Q1: What are Tectonic Plates?

Tectonic plates are pieces of Earth's crust and uppermost mantle, together referred to as the lithosphere. The plates consist of two principal types of material: oceanic crust (sima) and continental crust (sial). These plates lie on top of a partially molten layer of rock called the asthenosphere. Due to the convection of the asthenosphere and lithosphere, the plates move relative to each other.

Source: [42 Dead As Dam Near Kenya's Rift Valley Bursts](#)

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/great-rift-valley/>

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