

## **Earth's and its Size**

Earth, the third planet from the sun, is the fifth largest planet in the solar system; only the gas giants Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune are bigger. Earth is the largest of the terrestrial planets of the inner solar system, bigger than Mercury, Venus and Mars.

### **Radius, diameter and circumference**

The mean radius of Earth is 3,959 miles (6,371 kilometers). However, Earth is not quite a sphere. The planet's rotation causes it to bulge at the equator. Earth's equatorial diameter is 7,926 miles (12,756 km), but from pole to pole, the diameter is 7,898 miles (12,714 km) — a difference of only 28 miles (42 km).

The circumference of Earth at the equator is about 24,874 miles (40,030 km), but from pole-to-pole — the meridional circumference — Earth is only 24,860 miles (40,008 km) around. This shape, caused by the flattening at the poles, is called an oblate spheroid.

### **Density, mass and volume**

Earth's density is 5.513 grams per cubic centimeter. Earth is the densest planet in the solar system because of its metallic core and rocky mantle. Jupiter, which is 318 more massive than Earth, is less dense because it is made of gases, such as hydrogen.

Earth's mass is 6.6 sextillion tons ( $5.9722 \times 10^{24}$  kilograms). Its volume is about 260 billion cubic miles (1 trillion cubic kilometers).

The total surface area of Earth is about 197 million square miles (510 million square km). About 71 percent is covered by water and 29 percent by land.

### **Highest and lowest points**

Mount Everest is the highest place on Earth above sea level, at 29,028 feet (8,848 meters), but it is not the highest point on Earth — that is, the place most distant from the center of the Earth. That distinction belongs to Mount Chimborazo in the Andes Mountains in Ecuador. Although Chimborazo is about 10,000 feet shorter (relative to sea level) than Everest, this mountain is about 1.5 miles (2.4 km) farther into space because of the equatorial bulge.

The lowest point on Earth is the Mariana Trench in the western Pacific Ocean. It reaches down about 36,200 feet (11,034 meters) below sea level.