

fjord

A [fjord](#) is a long, deep, narrow body of water that reaches far inland. Fjords are often set in a U-shaped [valley](#) with steep walls of rock on either side.

Fjords are found mainly in Norway, Chile, New Zealand, Canada, Greenland, and the U.S. state of Alaska. Sognefjorden, a fjord in Norway, is more than 160 kilometers (nearly 100 miles) long.

Fjords were created by [glaciers](#). In the Earth's last [ice age](#), glaciers covered just about everything. Glaciers move very slowly over time, and can greatly alter the landscape once they have moved through an area. This process is called [glaciation](#).

Glaciation carves deep valleys. This is why fjords can be thousands of meters deep. Fjords are usually deepest farther inland, where the glacial force was strongest.

Some features of fjords include [coral reefs](#) and rocky islands called skerries.

Some of the largest coral reefs are found at the bottom of fjords in Norway. They are home to several types of fish, [plankton](#) and [sea anemones](#). Some coral reefs are also found in New Zealand. Scientists know much less about these deep, cold-water reefs than they do about [tropical](#) coral reefs. But they have learned that the living things in cold-water reefs prefer total darkness. Organisms in cold-water reefs have also adapted to life under high pressure. At the bottom of a fjord, the water pressure can be hundreds or even thousands of kilograms per square meter. Few organisms can survive in this cold, dark habitat.

Skerries are also found around fjords. A [skerry](#) is a small, rocky island created through glaciation. Most of the [Scandinavian](#) coastline is cut into thousands of little blocks of land. These jagged bits of coastline are skerries. The U.S. states of Washington and Alaska also have skerries.

Even though skerries can be hard to get around in a boat, fjords are generally calm and protected. This makes them popular [harbors](#) for ships.