



Report Compliments of **Homes and Lifestyles of Colorado** - *Finding Your Place Called Home*

Denver Office: <http://www.DenverHomeLiving.com> - (303) 816-9199 Office

What is Latitude?



Latitude is measured from the equator in units called degrees. It's often written as a positive number of degrees in the northern hemisphere and a negative number of degrees in the southern hemisphere. Latitude starts at 0 degrees at the equator, down to -90 degrees at the South Pole, and up to +90 degrees at the North Pole.

You can write latitude correctly in a couple of different ways. For example: Las Vegas, Nevada is at +36 degrees latitude; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil is at -22 degrees latitude. The same example can be written specifying North or South instead of using positive and negative. Las Vegas, Nevada is at 36 degrees North; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil is at 22 degrees South.

Why measure in Degrees?

The measurement is in degrees because fundamentally, Latitude is an angular measurement originating from the center of the Earth. If a line is drawn from the center of the Earth to any point on the globe, and another line is drawn from the center of the Earth to any point on the equator, the resulting angle is the degrees of latitude, either North or South depending in which hemisphere the original point lives.

Are Latitudes Different Sizes?

Because the Earth is generally spherical, latitude parallels can be very different sizes. The longest is the equator where the latitude is 24,901 miles (40,075 kilometers) while at the North and South poles the Latitude circles are a single point.

How do you convert to Degrees from Degrees:Minutes:Seconds?

The latitude and longitude are input in degrees, but Latitude is often given in degrees minutes and seconds so you might need to convert to degrees from degrees:minutes:seconds. There are 60 seconds in 1 minute and 60 minutes in 1 degree. So, for example:

65:45:36 south latitude converts to

-(65 degrees +

45 minutes * (1 degree/60 minutes) +

6 seconds * (1 minute/60 seconds) * (1 degree/60 minutes))

= -65.76 degrees latitude

See also [What is Longitude](#)

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