

PHYSICAL FEATURES

The Iberian Peninsula is a largely mountainous region, with several mountain systems: about 75% of the peninsula's total area is Meseta Central, also known as **Inner Plateau**.

This massive plateau occupies the peninsula's central part and rises between 610 and 760 meters above sea level.

Plateau, also called a *high plain* or a *tableland*, is an area of a highland consisting of flat terrain that is raised sharply above the surrounding area on at least one side



It is crossed by **Sistema Central** mountain range: it is the source of most rivers that flow throughout(=atraverso) the peninsula.



Rivers of Iberian Peninsula

The **Pyrenees** mountain range is located at the border between Spain and France. Aneto, the highest mountain in the Pyrenees, is located in Spain.

The **Cantabrian Mountains** stretch over 300 km along the northern coast, with Torre de Cerrado as the highest peak.

On the peninsula's central part, the mountain systems include the **Sistema Central** and Sistema **Iberico**. Other mountain systems are Montes de Toledo, Sierra Morena, and Baetic System.

Several rivers flow through the Peninsula: Tagus, Douro, Ebro and Guadiana are some of them.

Tagus is Iberian's longest river (1007 km). It originates in Monte Universales and forms the border between Spain and Portugal. **Guadiana** River also forms the border between the two countries, separating Andalusia and Extremadura (Spain) from Algarve and Alentejo (Portugal).

The Iberian Peninsula also has a **coastline** of about 3,313 km: 1,653 km on the Atlantic Ocean and 1,660 km on the Mediterranean Sea.

EXERCISES

- ANSWER TO THE QUESTIONS:
 1. Do you know the meaning(significato) of "plateau"?
 2. Which is the most famous plateau of Iberian Peninsula?
 3. Can you recognize on a map and name the main mountainous chains?
 4. Name four (or more) important rivers.
 5. Observe the physical map: try to imagine where and why could live the majority of population.