

Giraffes

Giraffes belong to the Giraffidae family and to the species *G. camelopardalis*. The reason giraffes used to be called camelopards in Ancient Rome was because the Ancient Romans noticed that giraffes looked like a mix between camels and leopards. They thought giraffes had bodies that resembled camels and had spots similar to those of leopards.

Giraffes are the tallest living animals on land. The height of the male giraffe is around 16 to 18 feet; whereas the height of the female reaches 14 feet. The weight of the male giraffe is approximately 3,800 pounds and the weight of the female is around 2,500 pounds. The life span of a giraffe is around 20 to 25 years, and they may even live longer when they are in zoos.

Giraffes live in open woodlands, grasslands, and the savannas in sub-Saharan Africa, East Africa, and some parts in Southern Africa. There are nine different kinds of giraffes, which can be identified based on their color, the pattern of the spot on the coats, and where they live.

Giraffes have horns on top of their head. Some people can tell the difference between male and female giraffes based on the horns. If the horns have hair on the top of them, then they are probably females. If the horns do not have hair on them and these horns look bald, then it is probably a male giraffe. Giraffes also have long necks, which they use to eat leaves that are high up in the trees. Their front legs are a bit longer than their back ones. If chased, giraffes can run very fast, up to 55 miles per hour. They also have rough and long tongues, which they use so that they can withstand the tree thorns and twigs. They also use their tongues for cleaning their faces from any insects. Giraffes do not need to sleep long. They can sleep anywhere from 10 minutes to 2 hours. Out of all animals, they need the shortest amount of sleep per day.

Giraffes are herbivores, as they eat twigs, shrubs, leaves, and sometimes even tree thorns. The Acacia species is their favorite and because of their very special and tough tongues, they are able to eat the acacia, though it is known for its very sharp thorns. Giraffes eat around 140 pounds of food a day and since they eat a lot of foliage, which are leaves and plants, they can go for days without water.

Female giraffes travel in herds of around a dozen. These herds include females and males of different ages, though older male giraffes prefer being alone and solitary. The female giraffe will carry her calf around 15 months before she gives birth. Female giraffes usually give birth to one single calf. When the calf is born, the calf is around 6 feet tall. When the calf is born, the mother will stay very close to its calf in order to protect it from predators, such as lions and leopards. The main predator of adult giraffes is lions, but the strong legs and hooves of the giraffe help it to defend itself or its calves by kicking its predator. Their kick is very strong and can cause serious damage to a lion or other predators.

Giraffes are neither extinct nor endangered species. However, they have always been hunted by people for their meat, coat, and tails. However, the real present danger for giraffes is that their habitat, which means the environment in which they live, is being destroyed.

Name _____

Date _____

Giraffes Questions

Fill In:

1. Giraffes live in open woodlands, grasslands, and _____.
2. Giraffes have _____ and long tongues, which they use so that they can withstand the tree thorns and twigs camel.
3. _____ are the main predator of adult giraffes.
4. Giraffes eat around _____ pounds food a day.
5. The different kinds of giraffes can be identified based on their _____, the pattern of the spot on the coats, and where they live.
6. If the horns have hair on the top, then they are probably _____ giraffes.

List three things giraffes eat:

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

True or False:

- ___ 10. Ancient Greeks called giraffes camelopards.
- ___ 11. The reason that giraffes are called camelopards is that they are leopards.
- ___ 12. Out of all animals, giraffes need the least sleep.
- ___ 13. If being chased, giraffes cannot run very fast.
- ___ 14. There are nine kinds of giraffes.
- ___ 15. Giraffes are the second tallest land living animals.
- ___ 16. The kick of the giraffe is strong enough to cause serious damage to its predator.
- ___ 17. The life span of a giraffe is around 10 to 15 years.
- ___ 18. The front legs of giraffes are usually a bit longer than their back ones.

Name _____

Date _____

Giraffes Answers

Fill In:

1. Giraffes live in open woodlands, grasslands, and savannas.
2. Giraffes have rough and long tongues, which they use so that they can withstand the tree thorns and twigs camel.
3. Lions are the main predator of adult giraffes.
4. Giraffes eat around 140 pounds food a day.
5. The different kinds of giraffes can be identified based on their color, the pattern of the spot on the coats, and where they live.
6. If the horns have hair on the top, then they are probably female giraffes.

List three things giraffes eat:

Twigs
Shrubs
Leaves
Tree thorns
Acacia

True or False:

- F 10. Ancient Greeks called giraffes camelopards.
- F 11. The reason that giraffes are called camelopards is that they are leopards.
- T 12. Out of all animals, giraffes need the least sleep.
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