



# GIRAFFES

## KEY INFORMATION



Giraffes are the world's tallest mammals. Giraffes live in many different African countries, including Kenya, Cameroon, Chad, Uganda, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania. Their habitats are scattered throughout Africa, mostly found in savanna and woodland habitats.

Giraffes can live up to 26 years in the wild and slightly longer in captivity. Female giraffes grow up to 14 feet tall and weigh up to 1,500 pounds. Meanwhile, males can grow up to 18 feet tall and can weigh 3,000 pounds.

## APPEARANCE

Giraffes have a short body, a tuft tail, a short mane and short skin covered horns. They have a pale coloured coat, with reddish brown spots. They have an extremely long neck and long legs. A giraffe's neck alone can be 6 feet long, which is taller than the average man.

Giraffes use their height to browse for leaves and buds in trees that very few animals can reach. Even a giraffe's tongue is long and can reach up to 21 inches long, which helps them to gather leaves from branches. The dark colour of their tongue is believed to prevent sunburn while reach for leaves. They have tick, sticky saliva that coats any thorns they might swallow.

A giraffe's height also helps them keep a sharp lookout for predators. However, a giraffe's structure can have its disadvantages as it is very difficult for them to drink at water holes. Therefore, they have to spread their legs and bend down in an awkward position. This makes them vulnerable to predators, such as Africa's big cats.

## DIET

Giraffes are herbivores, so their diet is mostly made up of leaves which they gather off tall trees. They also eat shoots, fruits, other vegetation – up to 93 different leaves are part of their diet. Giraffes can eat up to 75 pounds of food per day and will spend most of their day eating. They only need to drink once every other day because they get most of their water from the plants they eat.

## FUN FACTS

Giraffes only need to sleep for between 5 and 30 minutes in a day, which is achieved through short bursts of 1 to 2 minutes. They sleep standing up or lying on the ground with their head on their rump.

Giraffes can run as fast as 35 miles per hour over short distances or 10 mph over long distances. They make noises that include moos, roars, whistles and hisses. Female giraffes give birth standing up and their young will fall more than 5 feet to the ground when born. The Yorkshire Wildlife Park is the home to the male giraffes Jengo, Jambo and Palle.



Find Out More...

<https://www.theanimalfacts.com/mammals/giraffe/>

<https://www.discoverwildlife.com/animal-facts/mammals/facts-about-giraffes/>

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/facts/giraffe>

<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/blog/giraffe-fact-sheet/>

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EXAMPLE QUESTIONS:

1. Which habitats may giraffes be found in?
2. How long do giraffes live?
3. How long is a giraffe's tongue?
4. What do giraffes mainly eat?
5. What are the names of the giraffes from the Yorkshire wildlife park?