



MEERKATS

KEY INFORMATION

Meerkats originate from deserts in Southern Africa and are part of the Mongoose family. They are often found in the depths of the Kalahari Desert in Botswana and the Namib Desert in Namibia. They live in underground tunnels called burrows.



Meerkats are social animals, who like to be in family groups of around 20. Baby Meerkats are called pups and stay underground with their mother for the first 3 to 4 weeks of life. Meerkats live up to 8 years in the wild, but when in captivity they live between 12 to 14 years.

APPEARANCE

Meerkats are small mammals that have fur, which is a mixture of yellow, brown and grey. They can grow up to 30cm tall and their tails can grow up to 20cm long. Meerkats have long, sharp claws that can help them dig and climb. Meerkats have black rings around their eyes to help protect them from the sun. They are excellent eyesight that allows them to see more than 1000 feet away - this is perfect for spotting their predators, such as snakes, jackals and eagles.

DIET

Meerkats are omnivores, which means they eat both meat and plants. They eat beetles, caterpillars, spiders and scorpions. They will also happily eat eggs, fruit, lizards and small rodents.

FUN FACTS

Meerkats are often able to handle a bite from some types of venomous snakes, as they have receptors that prevent the venom from harming them. If bitten, they feel unwell for several hours but make a full recovery. Meerkats are highly intelligent, they use complex coordinated behaviour, which rivals those of chimps, baboons, dolphins and even humans

Find Out More...

<https://tropicalworld.leeds.gov.uk/keepers-log/meerkat-facts-that-will-amaze-your-kids>

<https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/discover/animals/general-animals/meerkat-facts/>

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS:

1. What family are meerkats part of?
2. What are baby meerkats called?
3. How tall can meerkats grow too?
4. Name 2 foods that meerkats eat.
5. True or false. Meerkats can handle a bite from a snake