

# Animals of the World: Mammals



## THE GIRAFFE

Giraffes are very distinct animals with long necks that make them easy to recognize throughout the world.

Giraffes are mammals that come from Africa. The adult giraffe's neck measures between 5 to 6 meters long. Their hind legs are taller than their front. Its front legs can be taller than many human beings.

The color of its skin varies from one species to another, but they all tend to have yellowish and brown colors. The pattern of the spots is unique on each animal, which helps scientists and biologists investigate the evolution of these animals. It's like a human fingerprint.

Males have a darker color than females, which serves to distinguish them by just looking at them. Another way they differ is that the females have horns on top of its head with hair while males have horns but without hair.



Giraffes eat mainly leaves and herbs, which they find in the meadows where they live. Because of their great height, giraffes can eat the tall leaves of trees that other animals cannot reach. This allows them to get more food. They use their long tongues to eat, which are black and can be up to 50 centimeters. They also use their tongues to clean their ears and look groomed. Its favorite food is acacia leaves and can eat several kilos daily, depending on its size. They eat almost 12 hours a day to satisfy their hunger. They have 4 stomachs because they are ruminant animals whose digestion is very slow.



Giraffes live about 20 years, depending on the predators around them. They prefer to live in warm places, although they are able to adapt to any temperature.

These spectacular animals take frequent short naps while standing throughout the day, sleeping only about 2 hours total a day. It is believed that they sleep standing so they can defend themselves against their predators if attacked. The only giraffes that do not sleep standing are the youngest and the oldest giraffes.

They are very peaceful animals and live in small groups of no more than 10 members. They do not have a well-differentiated hierarchy; there is not a leader in charge of the group.

Giraffes take more than a year to gestate a baby giraffe, giving birth to a single calf that measures almost 2 meters and weighs about 100 kilos. It can get up and walk shortly after it is born. Its legs are strong and are different lengths. The first weeks of life are spent close to their mothers, to avoid dangers from different predators, such as hyenas, lions, and leopards.



Even though giraffes have such long legs, these tall creatures are not very fast, but they can walk long distances at a good pace. Because of their long legs, they can travel many kilometers without having to rest. Giraffes are awkward when they are fleeing from their predators and often become the predator's dinner.

In addition to its natural predators, humans also hunt them for their meat and skin, which has caused some species such as the Nigerian giraffe to be in danger of extinction.

They are among the most visited and beloved animals in zoos and reserves across the world. In some of these places, humans can even feed them.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# THE GIRAFFE

Answer the questions.

1. Giraffes are among the tallest animals in the world\_\_

- a. because of its long legs.
- b. because of its long neck.
- c. because of its long tongue.
- d. because of its four stomachs.



2. The neck of a giraffe can reach 50 centimeters.

- a. True
- b. False

3. The skin of giraffes \_\_\_\_\_

- a. is brown and yellowish and is the same for all giraffes.
- b. is yellowish and brown, but each has different patterns.
- c. is soft and silky, and its black color is characteristic.
- d. changes depending on whether giraffes eat meat or leaves.

4. Giraffes eat \_\_\_\_\_

- a. all kinds of animals, whether they live in forests or in the savannah.
- b. in groups of 8, and hunt mostly at night.
- c. mostly acacia leaves because it is their favorite.
- d. acacia leaves, but in small quantities because they fill up very quickly.

5. To differentiate a female giraffe from a male giraffe, \_\_\_\_\_

- a. you have to look at its height.
- b. you have to see your fingerprints.
- c. you have to measure the quantities of acacia leaves they eat.
- d. you have to look at the color of their skin and their horns.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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# THE GIRAFFE

6. Giraffes have a \_\_\_\_\_ tongue that measures \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. yellowish / 20 years
- b. black / 100 kilos
- c. brown / 12 hours
- d. black / 50 centimeters



7. When sleeping, giraffes sleep \_\_\_\_\_

- a. standing.
- b. about two hours a day.
- c. in a different position when adults or when young.
- d. All the answers are correct.

8. A female giraffe gives birth \_\_\_\_\_

- a. to a single calf.
- b. and never protects its young because it is self-sufficient.
- c. to a calf that lies on the ground for a long time before it can walk.
- d. and gets very hungry, so she needs to eat many acacia leaves.

9. Giraffes are hunted for \_\_\_\_\_

- a. for their long neck.
- b. their meat and skin.
- c. their unruly behavior in the savannah.
- d. being herbivorous.



10. Giraffes prefer living in cages in zoos around the world because humans feed them.

- a. True
- b. False