

World Giraffe Day:



Giraffes and You

In this activity, you will explore the special adaptations that giraffes have for drinking water, foraging for food, and other survival skills, and compare yourself with a giraffe.

Age: Families with children 7-12 years old

Gather your Gear

- Recycled paper/cardboard
- Blue or purple paint/markers/crayons
- Suitcase
- Pasta, beans, or gummies
- Bowl of water
- Reusable bamboo or metal straws (optional)
- Timer
- Scale
- Homemade Ossicones if made in another activity

Get Ready *You can help your child make connections by thinking about concepts before the activity.*

Giraffes and humans all share the same needs, but we have different ways of acquiring those needs. The following activities are set up for you to compare and test you against a giraffe. If you made your up-cycled ossicones, feel free to pop those on for the following activities to really get into character!

Explore *Do the following activities to get a better idea what it's like to be a giraffe, and how you measure up against giraffe biology.*

Giraffe Fact: Giraffes get most of their water from the vegetation that they eat. What they don't get from their food, they drink from water sources on the ground. In order to lower their heads close enough to the ground to drink, giraffes must spread their front feet apart to form a triangle before lowering their heads. They will then drink for one to two minutes, and raise their heads back up.

Activity 1

- Each person gets a bowl filled with water.
- Placing their hands behind their back, and without kneeling, each person will spread their legs apart, forming a triangle, and lean forward towards their bowl.
- Once the "giraffes" are able to reach their water, set a timer for 10 seconds, and tell the giraffes to begin drinking. The giraffe that drinks the most water wins!

**If you need to use a stool or reusable straws to make the water accessible without kneeling, please do so.

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Giraffe Fact: Giraffes forage for vegetation. At the Zoo, our giraffes are offered around 50 pounds of food per day.

Activity 2

- Find your largest suitcase and a scale (can be a bathroom scale or a luggage scale).
- Using items in your home, pack your suitcase until it contains 50 pounds of items. (Could be clothing, toys, books, etc.)
- Let everyone feel how heavy the suitcase is. Imagine how you'd feel after eating that much food in a day!
- Unpack the suitcase, and look at the pile of things that you used to fill it. Is it a big pile, small pile, or medium pile? How much bigger do you think the pile would be if you had collected fifty pounds of leaves, small fruits, and other foliage to pack your suitcase?

Giraffe Fact: Giraffes have prehensile tongues. This means that they can use their tongues to wrap around food to do things like scrape off leaves and draw the food items into their mouths.

Activity 3

- Place a container of either dried pasta, beans, gummy bears, or jellybeans and an empty container in front of each person.
- Set a timer for 30 seconds.
- Start the timer, and each player will use their tongue to pick food pieces out of the filled container and place them in the empty one. ****Important to note that they may not use lips or teeth to remove items from the bowl.****
- When the timer ends, count how many food items each player was able to successfully move from one bowl to the other. The person who moved the most items wins!

Giraffe Fact: Giraffes have tongues that can be 14-18 inches long!

Activity 4

- Use to-be-recycled materials such as cardboard, paper, or plastic to craft a tongue that is between 14 and 18 inches long. Be sure to color purple or blue to match a giraffe.
- Hold your "tongue" level with your mouth, and roam around your house to see what all you could reach using your "tongue." Can everybody reach the same things, or are some of you able to reach higher or lower items more easily than others of you?

Giraffe Fact: Giraffes sleep for about two hours per day, and typically spread their rest over several short "naps."

Activity 5

- Play the ultimate quiet game. Set a timer for five minutes. During that time, you will all sit in a circle facing each other.
- As you sit, your goal will be to **silently** attempt to make other players laugh.

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- If a player laughs or otherwise makes noise, they are then out, and must move out of the circle.
- Players still in the circle once the timer ends have successfully rested.

Recap *Have a conversation about what you saw/did and questions your child may have.*

- What did you learn about giraffes today?
- During the activity where you explored what you could reach if your tongue were as long as a giraffe's, you probably discovered that not everyone could reach the same items. Adult giraffes vary in height from 12-18 feet. In order to mitigate competition for food, taller giraffes will forage in the taller parts of trees, leaving the shorter foliage readily available to shorter giraffes.

Relate *Create connections to the idea through activities.*

- How does your family utilize the different heights of its family members to benefit the group? Are you ever asked to reach into lower drawers and cabinets by someone taller than you trying not to bend down? Have you ever asked someone taller than you to get something out of a higher drawer or cabinet to avoid using a step-stool?
- What giraffe feature do you most wish you had, and why?

It takes a team.... join ours

Help us save species by joining the "Zoo Conservation Corps" and raise awareness about wild animals, their habitats and why conserving both is so important. If your family members are on social media, post to show what you have learned, and use the hashtags #OnlyZooATL and #WorldGiraffeDay so that we can see all your great work!

Want to know more....

- To learn more about World Giraffe Day and giraffe conservation: <https://giraffeconservation.org/world-giraffe-day/>
- To learn about the giraffes at Zoo Atlanta: <https://zooatlanta.org/animal/giraffe/>