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Panda Report

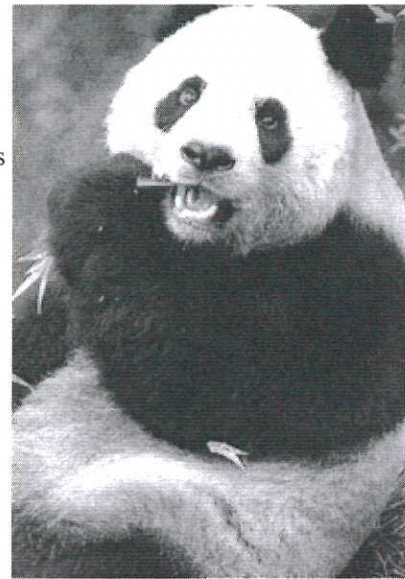
Panda Bears Facts

Like bears, giant pandas are basically heavy ponderous land creatures. The giant panda reaches a length from 120 to 190 centimeters and the adult weight varies from 75 to 130 kilograms. Like many bears, panda bears can climb trees to escape danger or for a quick nap, and are particularly adept at climbing when young.

Although it had long been believed that bamboo shoot comprised the entire panda diet, this was proved to be false by animal bones found in the digestive system of dead animals. In fact, the giant panda will consume small animals and birds, and also carrion that it might come across. It is not the cuddly creature that most believe it to be.



Panda Bears live alone except when breeding and the female generally produces one offspring in winter although twins are not uncommon. The panda's odd markings are still something of a mystery. According to one theory, under certain conditions of contrasting light and shadow on winter snow, the black and white markings act as camouflage, though "beishung" has few enemies to fear in its mountain retreat.



Although it was once thought that the giant panda population did not exceed 150 to 200 individuals, more recent estimates have put the figure at several thousand animals.

What is black and white and black and white and black and white?

Pandas symbolize the diversity and tenacity of life and they does not realize that are on the brink of extinction. Just as humans are the cause of its decline, only humans can now prevent it from ceasing to exist altogether.

- **Name:** Panda Bear (*Ailuropoda melanoleuca*)
- **Kingdom:** Animalia
- **Phylum:** Chordata
- **Subphylum:** Vertebrata
- **Class:** Mammalia
- **Subclass:** Theria
- **Order:** Carnivora
- **Family:** Ursidae
- **Age at Maturity:** 5 to 6 years
- **Length of life:** 30 years in captivity. Unknown in the wild.
- **Size:** 160 to 190 cm
- **Weight:** 75 to 130 kg males
- **Habitat:** Mountain forest
- **Diet:** Bamboo, wild plants
- **Gestation:** 4 to 6 months in the wild. Average 5 months.
In the captivity 3 to 5 months.
- **Cubs:** 1 to 2 cubs, rarely 3
- **SubFamily:** Ursinae
- **Genus:** *Ailuropoda*
- **Predators:** Very rarely leopards and human although panda bears are protected by the Chinese government.

- **Distribution:** China

HABITAT

Pandas live in remote mountainous areas that have dense forests of bamboo. Their remaining living area is at very high altitudes that have not been developed by people. They may descend to lower levels to live during the winter, but not past the point where humans are present. Endangered panda bears are continuously losing their habitat. Loss is most acute at lower levels where deforestation, farming, housing, and other projects of civilization occur.

WHAT DO PANDAS EAT?

The giant panda has a very specialized diet consisting nearly entirely of bamboo. It eats all parts of the bamboo including the stalk, leaves, shoots, and roots. The plant is highly fibrous and low in nutrition. Combined with the fact that pandas digest a very low percentage of what they eat, they must consume huge quantities to absorb sufficient nutrients.

Pandas can eat 30 to 45 pounds of bamboo every day. Once baby pandas are finished nursing, they voraciously dine on bamboo. Panda cubs have been known to devour 5 to 10 pounds a day. When bamboo supplies diminish, populations decline and contribute to their endangered status.

They have evolved specialized features to help them eat their favorite food. Panda teeth are designed to penetrate the fibrous bamboo stalks. The rear molar teeth are huge for grinding down material prior to digestion. Extending from their wrist bone is a unique thumb like feature to grasp bamboo stalks. This is in addition to their five fingers!

Giant panda bear information from studies in the wild indicate that bamboo is nearly 95% of their diet. However, wild giant panda food may include roots, tubers, and bark. Many facts indicate they may also eat wild yams if available in their habitat. They may occasionally graze on grass (like dogs). In captivity, some zoos supplement the pandas diet by feeding them bananas, oatmeal, vegetables, and eggs.

The giant panda bear only exists today in six small areas located in inland China. The habitat, suitable for the bamboo on which it survives, is a cold, damp coniferous forest. The elevation ranges from 4,000 to 11,000 feet high. In most of the areas in which they still roam wild, they must compete with farmers who farm the river valleys and the lower slopes of the mountains.

Panda Bears eat over fifteen different kinds of Bamboo. Because of an inefficient intestinal system the Panda must feed for 12 to 16 hours a day, they can consume 22 to 40 pounds of Bamboo each day. When they eat fresh Bamboo shoots they eat about 84 pounds every day.

<http://www.indianchild.com/panda.htm>

<http://www.bearplanet.org/pandabear.shtml>

<http://www.bearlife.org/panda-bear.html>