

The Giant Panda

The giant panda, which only lives in China outside of captivity, has captured the hearts of people of all ages across the globe. From their furry black and white bodies to their shy and docile nature, they are considered one of the world's most loved animals.



Quick Fact The estimated number of giant pandas in the wild varies between 1,500 and 3,000.

Intriguing Giant Panda Mysteries

Small Bear or Large Raccoon?

Giant pandas are generally referred to as bears and are typically called panda bears rather than giant pandas. Though we may think they look like bears, there has been a great deal of discussion for decades about where giant pandas fit in the animal kingdom. Much of the debate has been whether they are more closely related to the red panda, once thought to be a member of the raccoon family, than the bear family.

Bear	Red Panda
Shape	Diet
Size	Paws
Shaggy fur	Eyes
Gait	Nose and teeth

Tiny Cubs

An infant giant panda cub is about the size of a croissant, weighs less than a teacup and is about 900 times smaller than its mother. An average adult mother weighs around 91 kilograms (200 pounds) while newborn weighs only 83 to 190 grams (3 to 4 ounces).

Other Fun Giant Panda Facts

1. Researchers have recently discovered that the gene responsible for tasting savory or umami flavors, such as meat, is inactive in giant pandas.
2. For many centuries, giant pandas were thought to be a mythical creature, like a dragon or unicorn.
3. Unlike other bears in the region, giant pandas don't hibernate.
4. Giant pandas can stand erect on their hind legs but rarely walk.