# [Camel](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/camel/):

**Camel Classification and**[**Evolution**](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/evolution/)  
The Camel (also known as the Dromedary Camel, the Arabian Camel and the One-Humped Camel) is a large hoofed [animal](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-animal) that is most commonly found in the hot [deserts](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/desert/) of Northern [Africa](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/location/africa/) and the Middle East. Thought to have been first [domesticated](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-domesticated) by native people more than 5,000 years ago, these hardy [animals](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-animal) have proved vital to the survival of [humans](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/human/) in these areas as they are not just used for transporting both people and goods, but also provide a good source of milk, meat and wool. The Camel is one of the most unique [mammals](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-mammal) on the planet and has adapted perfectly to life in the [desert](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/desert/) where food and water can often be scarce, and the [temperature](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-temperature) changes rapidly from the scorching-hot days to the cooler nights. However, although they would have once been found freely roaming the Arabian [deserts](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/desert/), they are today [extinct](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/endangered/extinct/) from the wild but the domestic population is widespread and numerous.  
  
**Camel**[**Anatomy**](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/anatomy/)**and Appearance**  
Camels have a number of adaptations to help them to survive the most successfully in such dry and arid climates starting with their cream to brown coloured, short but thick fur which not only protects their skin from the sun during the day, but also helps to keep them warm when the [temperature](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-temperature) plummets at night. Their long legs keep their body high above the hot ground and their two toes on each foot are able to spread widely apart to prevent them from sinking into the sand. The bottoms of their feet are also padded to help them when in rocky or stony regions. Camels have large eyes and nostrils which give them good sight and smell. They have a double layer of long eyelashes and can close their slit-like nostrils to protect them from dust storms. Camels are able to survive for long periods of time without either food or water as they store fat in their hump which can be used to give the Camel energy when resources are scarce.  
  
**Camel Distribution and**[**Habitat**](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-habitat)  
Historically the Camel would have roamed throughout the [deserts](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/desert/) of Northern [Africa](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/location/africa/), the Middle East and as far into [Asia](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/location/asia/) as western [India](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/location/asia/india/) where the surroundings can change from the soft, powdery sand dunes to more hostile and rocky regions. Today, Camels are no longer found in the wild but still exist as domestic [animals](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-animal) in these areas and provide both transport and an important source of food for the local people. Their ability to go for so long without both food and water, along with being able to carry heavy loads has meant that they have allowed people to travel further across the [desert](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/desert/). Today, millions of domestic Camels exist in the [desert](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/desert/) along with a [feral](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-feral) population that can be found in the [deserts](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/desert/) of Central Australia.  
  
**Camel**[**Behaviour**](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/behaviour/)**and**[**Lifestyle**](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-lifestyle)  
Camels inhabit these dry and arid regions in herds that can contain up to 40 individuals and are comprised of females with their young and are led by a single, dominant male. During the breeding season, dominant males protect their harem of females by biting, spitting and leaning on their rival males. Camels rest by lying down and do so by bending their front legs underneath them, followed by the back. They are also known to move in a different way to many [mammals](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-mammal)by moving both left legs then both the right to make them walk. In [order](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-order) to try and conserve vital moisture in such hostile conditions, Camels have a minimal number of sweat-glands (very few in relation to their large body size), which along with the fact that they will allow their body [temperature](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-temperature) to rise in the heat, means that they lose water much more slowly than other large mammals.  
  
**Camel**[**Reproduction**](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-reproduction)**and Life Cycles**  
Camels are able to breed by the time they are between three and four years old for females and five years old for males, when the dominant male of the herd has breeding rights with the females. Both female and male Camels come into heat during the breeding season which usually lasts between November and March. After a long [gestation period](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-gestation-period) that can last for up to thirteen months, the female gives birth to either a single calf or occasionally twins which can already weigh as much as 40kg at birth. Within eight hours the young calf is able to stand and is then nursed by its mother in the protection of the herd until it is big and strong enough to become independent. Young Camels begin to eat grass when they are between two and three months old and are weaned at roughly four months of age.  
  
**Camel**[**Diet**](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/diet/)**and**[**Prey**](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-prey)  
Although the Camel is technically a herbivorous [animal](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-animal) their [diet](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/diet/) is not strictly vegetarian as they are known to chew on bones and eat [carrion](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-carrion) to supplement their [diet](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/diet/). Another adaptation for living in the [desert](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/desert/) is their split, leathery lip which helps the Camel to eat tough and thorny plants which other [animals](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-animal) avoid. They are also known to consume plants that are high in salt which again means there is less competition from other [animals](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-animal) for food. One of the most remarkable things about Camels is their ability to store the energy from their food and water as fat in their hump, which means they have a ready supply of energy when food and water are scarce. Camels can lose up to 40% of their body [weight](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-weight) before needing to replenish themselves and once a water-hole or oasis is found, they can drink around 40 gallons of water in a very short time.  
  
**Camel**[**Predators**](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-predators)**and Threats**  
Although they no longer exist in the wild, the large [size](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-size) of the Camel means that it would have had limited [predators](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-predators). [Lions](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/lion/) and [Leopards](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/leopard/) would have been their most common [predators](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-predators)however, the fact that Camels inhabit hostile, arid regions where very few large, carnivorous [mammals](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-mammal) can be found means that they would not have been hunted as regularly as other hoofed [herbivores](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-herbivore). Although they were first [domesticated](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-domesticated) by people more than 5,000 years ago they would have been hunted by them for their meat and hides for longer. Today, although no Camels exist in the true wild their domestic population is high and they are commonly found alongside people from Northern [Africa](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/location/africa/) to Western Asia.  
  
**Camel Interesting Facts and Features**  
Camels are not only hardy, [desert](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/desert/) [animals](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-animal) because they can survive without water for up to 10 months providing they find food, but their relatively slow-paced [lifestyle](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-lifestyle) means that they can also travel vast distances (sometimes more than 30km) in just one day, whilst carrying a load that could exceed 200kg. As with a number of other [domesticated](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-domesticated) [animals](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-animal), there are now various different breeds of Camel that have resulted from cross-breeding Camels with [Bactrian Camels](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/bactrian-camel/) to produce individuals that are either bigger and stronger to be used as working [animals](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-animal)or are incredibly fast. Unlike any other [mammal](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-mammal), Camels have unique oval-shaped red blood cells which allows the blood to keep flowing smoothly when the [animal](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-animal) becomes dehydrated and the blood thickens.  
  
**Camel Relationship with**[**Humans**](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/human/)  
Camels have been used for thousands of years by people both for transporting goods across the [desert](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/desert/) and as a good source of milk and meat. Their woolly hair can also be used to make clothing along with their leathery hides. Like other domestic [animals](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-animal), there are now numerous breeds of Camel but not all have been bred for truly practical uses with faster and faster breeds appearing that are then used for Camel racing. Their placid nature though, has meant that they can live alongside people and other livestock without hardly any problems.  
  
**Camel**[**Conservation Status**](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-conservation-status)**and Life Today**  
Today, although the wild Camel population is [extinct](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/endangered/extinct/) they are Common as domestic [animals](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-animal)throughout much of their natural range and further, with estimates ranging as high as 20 million individuals. In the 1800s, the first Camel was imported into [Australia](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/location/oceania/australia/) to be used to help people get between places in the vast [desert](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/desert/). Since then more and more have followed which has to led there now being a strong [feral](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-feral) population that is possibly as high as 1 million Camels roaming the [deserts](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/desert/) of Central [Australia](https://a-z-animals.com/animals/location/oceania/australia/).

# Camel Facts:

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| [Kingdom](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-kingdom): | Animalia |
| [Phylum](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-phylum): | Chordata |
| [Class](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-class): | Mammalia |
| [Order](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-order): | Artiodactyla |
| [Family](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-family): | Camelidae |
| [Genus](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-genus): | Camelus |
| [Scientific Name](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-scientific-name): | Camelus dromedarius |
| [Common Name](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-common-name): | Camel |
| [Other Name(s)](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-other-names): | Dromedary Camel, Arabian Camel, One-Humped Camel |
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| [Group](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-group): | Mammal |
| [Number Of Species](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-number-of-species): | 1 |
| [Location](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-location): | Throughout the Middle East |
| [Habitat](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-habitat): | Arid desert and scrubland |
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| [Colour](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-colour): | Cream, Tan, Brown, Black |
| [Skin Type](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-skin-type): | Hair |
| [Size (L)](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-size): | 2.2m - 3.5m (7.25ft - 11.5ft) |
| [Weight](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-weight): | 300kg - 690kg (660lbs - 1,500lbs) |
| [Top Speed](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-top-speed): | 64kph (40mph) |
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| [Diet](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-diet): | Herbivore |
| [Prey](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-prey): | Thorny and Salty Plants, Grass, Grain |
| [Predators](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-predators): | Lions, Leopards, Humans |
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| [Lifestyle](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-lifestyle): | Diurnal |
| [Group Behaviour](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-group-behaviour): | Herd |
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| [Lifespan](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-lifespan): | 40 - 50 years |
| [Age Of Sexual Maturity](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-age-of-sexual-maturity): | 3 - 5 years |
| [Gestation Period](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-gestation-period): | 390 - 410 days |
| [Average Litter Size](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-average-litter-size): | 1 |
| [Name Of Young](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-name-of-young): | Calf |
| [Age Of Weaning](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-weaning): | 4 months |
|  | |
| [Conservation Status](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-conservation-status): | Common |
| [Estimated Population Size](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-estimated-population-size): | 20 million |
| [Biggest Threat](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-biggest-threat): | Drought |
|  | |
| [Most Distinctive Feature](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-distinctive-features): | Long, curved neck and large hump |
| [Fun Fact](https://a-z-animals.com/reference/glossary/#jump-fun-fact): | Can survive without water for 10 months! |