

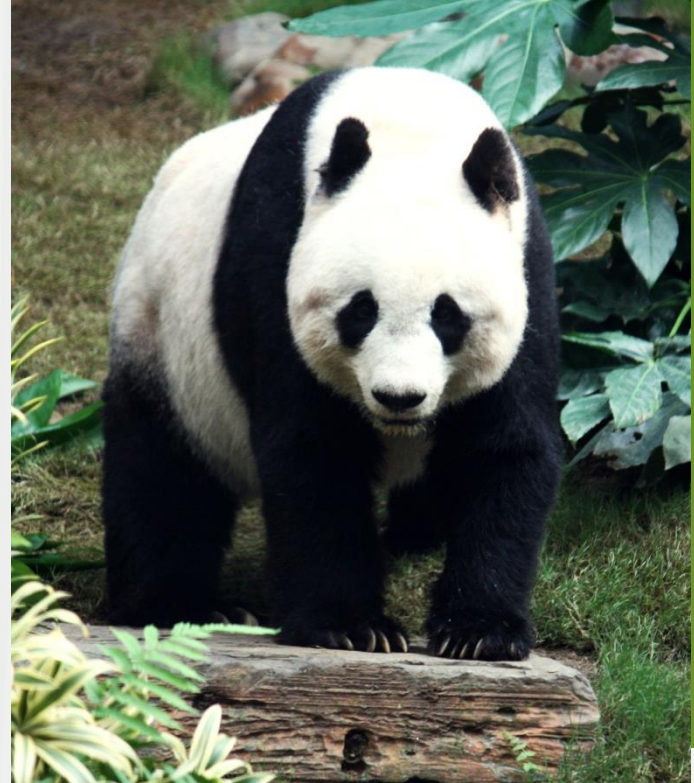
A stylized illustration of a panda's head and shoulders in profile, facing right. The panda has white fur with black patches around its eyes and on its ears. It is surrounded by green bamboo stalks and leaves. The background is a soft, light green color.

All About Pandas

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Giant Pandas

Giant pandas, with their black eyepatches and black and white fur, are a much-loved animal across the world. Pandas are mammals and belong to the bear family.



Appearance

The panda's black and white colouring enables them to be well-camouflaged amongst the bamboo plants where they live.

They have five toes plus a thumb on each paw, which means they can grip the bamboo in the same way a human can grip with their hand.

An adult giant panda can grow to about 1.5 metres in length.

Did You Know...?

Most giant pandas are black and white, but a rarer type are brown and white.



Habitat

Pandas are only found in China. They mainly live in the mountains in the south-west. This area is temperate, which means the temperature does not change much and it is neither very hot, nor very cold. The cool, wet forests are where pandas make their dens out of hollowed-out logs or tree stumps.




Did You Know....?

Pandas prefer to live alone rather than in groups.



Diet



A panda's main diet is bamboo. They spend much of their day eating, and consume around 20kg of bamboo every day. The newer shoots and leaves of the bamboo are the most nutritious part.

Did You Know...?

Pandas will occasionally eat fish, insects or birds if there is not enough bamboo available. They also eat fruit.

Growth and Development

Female pandas give birth every two to three years. They give birth to one or two cubs, usually in August. The panda cubs cannot see until they are about 50 days old and they begin crawling at 10 weeks. They drink only their mother's milk until they are about seven months old, when they begin to eat bamboo.



Male pandas can weigh up to 150kg when fully grown, while females weigh up to 100kg.

Pandas in Danger

Pandas are considered a vulnerable species. This means they are likely to become endangered unless more is done to protect their habitat. Their main threat is the cutting down of forests to build dams, railways and roads.

They were previously classed as endangered, but in recent years, they have been upgraded to 'vulnerable.' This is because panda numbers are finally on the rise after years of falling.



Did You Know...?

The giant panda population has risen 17% in the past ten years. There are approximately 2,000 giant pandas in the wild.

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Did You Know...?

There are 300 pandas living in zoos around the world.

Fun Facts



Pandas are excellent climbers and can also swim.

A giant panda at London zoo inspired the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) logo in 1961.

Panda cubs are born pink and measure about the same size as a pencil!

Unlike other bears, pandas don't hibernate.



A type of prehistoric panda lived around one to two million years ago.

All giant pandas are owned by China. Pandas living anywhere else in the world are on loan from China.



The Red Panda



Although much smaller than the giant panda, the red panda has much in common with it.

Red pandas eat mainly bamboo. They also eat insects, fruit, flowers and eggs.

Like the giant panda, they are excellent tree climbers and live in mountainous areas.

Red pandas spend much of their time eating and sleeping too.

Red Pandas

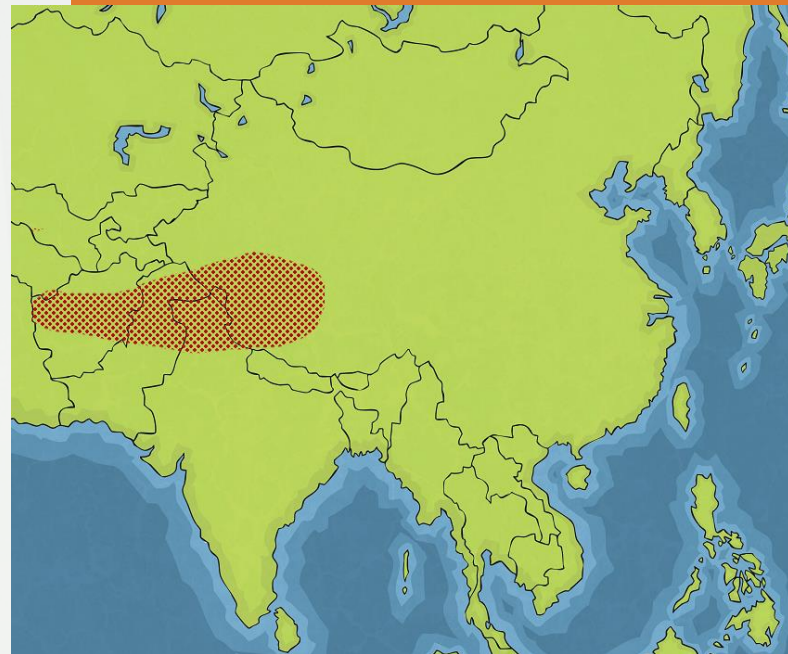
There are several main differences between giant pandas and red pandas:

Red pandas look more like racoons or cats than bears.

Their fur is reddish brown and they have a long, bushy tail, which they use to help them balance when climbing.

They only grow to about 50cm long and weigh up to 5kg.

Red pandas can be found in parts of India, Nepal, Myanmar and Bhutan, as well as China.



Red Pandas in Danger

The red panda population is falling and red pandas are now on the endangered list. This means they are in danger of dying out completely and becoming extinct.

It is estimated there are only 10,000 red pandas left in the wild. More needs to be done to raise awareness of the red panda.



Did You Know?

Sikkim (a state in north-east India) hosts a yearly Red Panda Festival. The event is a fun-filled celebration of the red panda, (Sikkim's state animal) and includes parades and music.



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