

Giant Panda

 **DOMAIN**
Eukaryota

 **KINGDOM**
Animalia

 **PHYLUM**
Chordata

 **CLASS**
Mammalia

 **ORDER**
Carnivora

 **FAMILY**
Ursidae

 **GENUS**
Ailuropoda

 **SPECIES**
A. melanoleuca

WHERE DO THEY HANG OUT?

Giant pandas live in cool mountain forests of central China between 4,000 and 10,000ft in elevation. Dense bamboo forests provide shelter, while rocky slopes and old-growth forests offer ideal denning sites.



A LOOK FOR THE SPOTLIGHT!

Giant pandas have thick white fur with black markings around their eyes, ears, shoulders, and legs. Their dense, coarse coat helps protect them from cold and damp weather. Scientists believe their coloring may help them blend into snowy slopes and shaded forests. Their markings may also help pandas recognize one another from a distance. Adults are usually 4 to 6 feet long and may weigh more than 200 pounds.



WHAT'S ON THE MENU?



Bamboo makes up nearly all of a giant panda's diet, even though pandas have the digestive system of a carnivore. They may spend 10 to 16 hours each day eating and consume large amounts of bamboo just to meet their nutritional needs. Their broad skulls, powerful jaws, large molars, and specialized pseudo-thumb help them crush, grip, rotate, and strip bamboo stems.



Extinct
EX EW CR EN **VU** NT LC
Threatened
Least Concern

A SURPRISINGLY AGILE LIFE IN SLOW MOTION

Despite their laid-back reputation, giant pandas are surprisingly strong climbers and capable swimmers, even with their large, heavy bodies. Young cubs often climb trees to play, rest, escape danger, or explore their surroundings. Unlike many other bears, giant pandas do not hibernate because bamboo provides so little energy. Instead, they must spend much of the year eating to meet their nutritional needs.

GIANT PANDA FAMILIES

Giant pandas usually breed during a short spring season, and females may give birth to one or two cubs. Newborns are pink, blind, hairless, and weigh only 3-5 ounces. About half of panda births result in twins, but wild mothers may tend to only one cub. Female pandas can also experience pseudopregnancy, showing signs of pregnancy without carrying a cub.



THREATS TO THEIR SURVIVAL



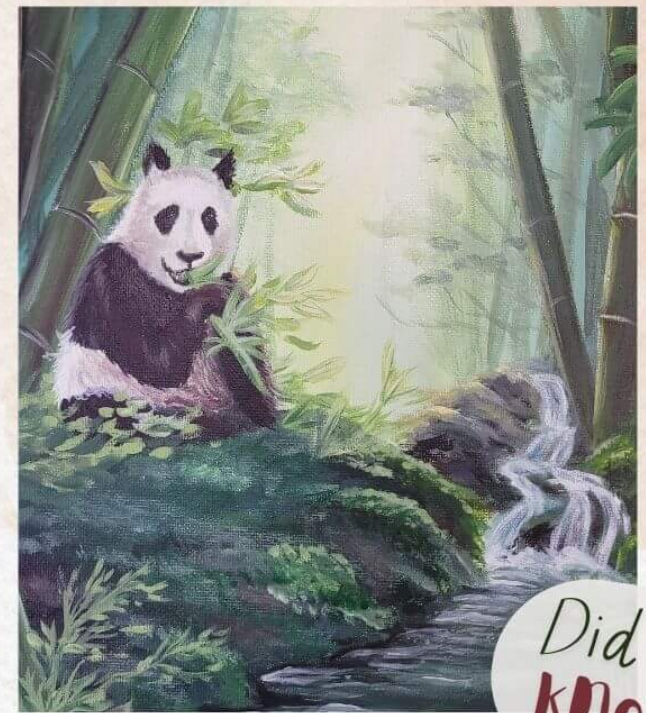
Habitat loss



Forest
Fragmentation



Climate
change



Did you
know?

5 FUN FACTS ABOUT GIANT PANDAS

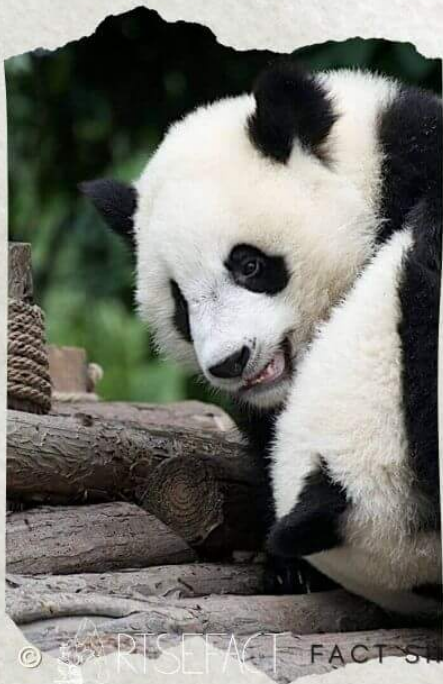
Handstanding Pandas Giant pandas sometimes do handstands while scent-marking trees, allowing their scent to reach higher so other pandas can detect it from farther away.

Butter-Size Babies At birth, a giant panda cub weighs just 3-5 ounces, about the size of a stick of butter, making it one of the smallest newborns relative to its mother's size.

More Sheep Than Bear Instead of roaring, giant pandas often communicate with bleats, chirps, honks, and huffs that sound more like a sheep than a bear.

Poop Machines Because bamboo is so difficult to digest, a giant panda may produce up to 100 droppings every day!

Forest Guardians Giant pandas are an umbrella species, meaning protecting them protects countless other wildlife living in the same forests.



Giant pandas are one of conservation's greatest success stories. After decades of habitat protection and breeding efforts, their status improved from Endangered to Vulnerable in 2016. Today, around 1,864 remain in the wild.

Significant threats include:

- **Habitat loss and fragmentation** from agriculture, roads, logging, and development.
- **Poaching and accidental snaring**
- **Climate change** may threaten the bamboo forests they rely on for food.