

Masai Giraffes

The Masai or Kilimanjaro Giraffe (G.c. tippelskirchi) is one of nine subspecies in the giraffe family:

- ♦ Reticulated or Somali Giraffe (G.c. reticulata)
- ♦ Masai or Kilimanjaro Giraffe (G.c. tippelskirchi)
- ♦ Angolan or Smoky Giraffe (G.c. angolensis)
- ♦ Kordofan Giraffe (G.c. antiquorum)
- ♦ Rothschild Giraffe or Baringo Giraffe or Ugandan Giraffe (G.c. rothschildi)
- ♦ Nubian Giraffe (G.c. camelopardalis)
- ♦ South African Giraffe (G.c. giraffa)
- ♦ Thornicroft or Rhodesian Giraffe (G.c. thornicrofti)
- ♦ West African or Nigerian Giraffe

♦ Each subspecies of giraffe has a different coat pattern. Just like human fingerprints, no two giraffes have the same coat pattern.

♦ The spots on Masai giraffe are **jagged** compared to the others. They are brown with **several shades** of such color. Its skin resembles a group of dried oak leaves arranged on a background that can have several shades of a lighter color, like orange or cream.

♦ Compared to other species that do not have the distinctive patches on the legs, or that start fading below the knees, the Masai giraffes have them **completely covering the limbs**. The leg part at the bottom of them is very skinny and stick like in appearance.

♦ Adult males reach a height of up to 19.5 feet, and females are not much smaller because they reach between 16 and 18 feet.

♦ Their body is also massive and weighs up to three tons. Males can weigh from 2,000 to 3,000 pounds while females can weigh from 1,300 to 2,000 pounds.

♦ Both male and female giraffe have horns already at birth. These *ossicones* lie flat and are not attached to the skull to avoid injury at birth. They only fuse with the skull later in life. The males have ossicones more developed than the females, who have them thinner and covered with hair.

♦ While the males have darker spots than the females with age, the dominant male have the darkest of all, and it may not be that way when he first steps into his role.

♦ Giraffes can rest while standing but they sometimes also lie down with their head resting on their rump. They eat for 16 – 20 hours a day.

♦ Masai giraffes have a four- chambered stomach and can chew their own cud. If fresh vegetation is available in large quantities they can go without water for weeks, extracting it from their food.

♦ Male Masai giraffes eat from the top branches, the females from the bottom branches.

♦ Giraffes may eat up to 75 lb of leaves per day.

♦ Their diet that is entirely made up of vegetation including leaves, twigs, sprouts, flowers, fruits and bark.

♦ The leaves of the acacia tree are their favorite. Although acacias have dangerous thorns, giraffes are able to eat leaves with the aid of their long tongue and the thick protective saliva they produce.

♦ A giraffe's tongue is 18 – 20 in. long. The color of the tongue is best described as black, blue or purple with a pink base/back. It is generally assumed that the front part of the tongue has such dark coloration to protect it during frequent sun exposure while eating and prevent the tongue from getting sunburned.

♦ A giraffe's feet are the size of a dinner plate, 12 in. across. A giraffe's eyes are the size of golf balls!

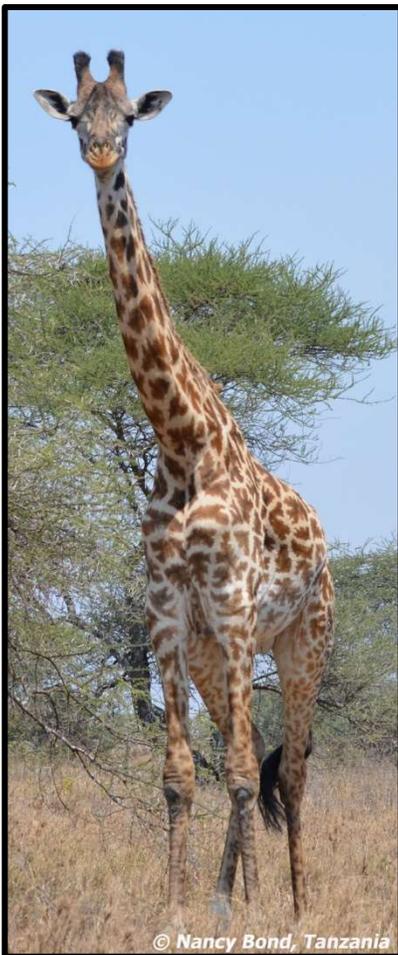
♦ Giraffes can moo, hiss, roar, and whistle.

♦ Its tail is the longest of all terrestrial animals, measuring up to 3.3 feet in length.

♦ The extension of their extremities, allows them to reach great speeds of up to 35 mph when they run.

♦ To protect the giraffe's brain from sudden changes in blood pressure when it lowers its head to drink, it has valves to stop the back-flow of blood and elastic-walled vessels that dilate and constrict to manage flow. NASA has done research on the blood vessels in giraffe legs to get inspiration for human space suits.

- ♦ As the tallest animals in the world, giraffes have a clear view of their surroundings on the African savanna. With excellent eyesight, they often detect predators and threats from a greater distance than other animals.
- ♦ A giraffe's neck is too short to reach the ground. To drink, giraffe first have to splay their forelegs and/or bend their knees. Only then can they lower their necks to reach the surface of the water.
- ♦ Giraffe only drink once every few days. Even when water is readily available, evidence shows that many giraffes do not drink regularly – sometimes not at all. They get sufficient water from leaves.
- ♦ The giraffe's fur works as a chemical defense. It is full of antibiotics and smelly chemicals that repel parasites, **giving the giraffe a strong odor**.
- ♦ A giraffe **heart** weighs approximately 11 kilograms and is **the biggest of any land mammal**. It is used to pump 60 liters of blood around its body every minute at a blood pressure twice that of an average human.
- ♦ The Masai giraffes are native to the African continent, specifically to the savannas at the center and south of Kenya, as well as Tanzania. They live in herds that are smaller. They seem to be very tolerant of each other.
- ♦ They move around through a home territory that can span more than 50 miles. They aren't territorial as far as other animals or other herds of giraffes being in the same location as them.
- ♦ Most males do not mate until they are at least seven years old. They must battle with other bulls. This dominance display, called "**necking**" is performed hitting their necks around each other for 30-60 min.
- ♦ Gestation lasts about 14 months. At birth the head of the calf comes out first, followed by the front legs and then the rest of the body. Female giraffe give birth standing up. Their young fall about 2 m to the ground and can stand up within an hour of birth. Even newborn giraffes are taller than most humans.
- ♦ Masai mothers will only sleep about 30 minutes total per day via 6 5-minute naps!
- ♦ Masai mothers are very protective and throw powerful kicks to keep predators away from their helpless offspring. Those blows with the legs can break the skull or spine of an animal as big as a lion.



- ♦ Primary predators of giraffes are lions and hyenas. Adults are not targeted due to powerful legs and sharp hooves, but young are in great danger.
- ♦ The infant mortality rate in the Serengeti (Masai giraffe) for one-month old calves is over 20% while approximately half of the calves do not survive their first 6 months. This figure reaches nearly 60% by the end of the first year in the Serengeti, dropping to 8% in the second year and just 3% in the third.
- ♦ Giraffe populations are falling by huge numbers except where conservations efforts are happening: <https://giraffeconservation.org/facts/how-many-giraffe-are-there-and-are-they-endangered/> Giraffe are already extinct in at least seven countries in Africa.
- ♦ Giraffes are poached for their tails, meat, brain, bone marrow and fur which bring big bucks. Rumors spread that tails protect people from HIV/AIDS and giraffes have been killed for only a tail. **Heart breaking**.
- Find more giraffe pictures and info about the other animals at: www.theater4church.com/Animals.htm

