

Meet the Koala



photo by albagloria5

Mini Fact:

The word “koala” comes from an Aboriginal word meaning “no drink.”

Picky eaters

Koalas eat only the tender leaves and bark of certain kinds of **eucalyptus** (yoo-kuh-LIP-tuss) trees. Many kinds of these trees grow in Australia, but koalas are picky about the ones they will eat.

Since there is so much moisture in the leaves, koalas drink very little water. They also may eat dirt when they come down to the ground to move from tree to tree. The dirt may help their digestion.

Their diet of about a pound of eucalyptus leaves a day does not supply them much energy. They spend 18 to 21 hours a day asleep in their treetop homes. Koalas are most likely to be awake at dawn and dusk.

Habitat loss

Aside from the bushfires that have been destroying forests in Australia, the biggest threat to koalas is loss of their habitat from people clearing the land for buildings, roads and homes. Experts also say “dieback,” when eucalypt forests are damaged and die because of nearby development, destroys the koalas’ homes.



photo by GLEN MOREY/via REUTERS

Bushfires burn in Australia in December 2019.

Other marsupials

• **Kangaroos.** There are about 60 different types of kangaroos. Some can grow to be 6 feet tall and weigh about 200 pounds. They are the world’s largest marsupials.

Kangaroos usually move about in the late afternoon or at night, eating grasses and other plants.

They can easily leap higher than a grown man stands, and can travel almost 50 miles per hour.

• **Wombats.** People don’t get to see

wombats very often. They live only in Australia. During the day, wombats stay underground, sleeping. They don’t usually



photo by dmytrok

come out of their burrows until night.

Wombats dig long underground tunnels, or **burrows**. A group of wombats may share the burrow.

• **Pygmy possums.** The pygmy possum is one of the world’s tiniest marsupials.

It might weigh just a half-ounce and be only 3 inches long. It moves about mostly at night, feeding on nectar and pollen.



photo by Michael Pennay

Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/MPkoala

At the library:

- "Jimmy the Joey: The True Story of an Amazing Koala Rescue" by Deborah Lee Rose

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of koalas are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



AUSTRALIA, BARK,
BURROW, BUSHFIRE,
DIEBACK, EUCALYPTUS,
FOREST, HABITAT, JOEY,
KANGAROO, KOALA,
LEAVES, MARSUPIAL,
PAP, POSSUM, POUCH,
PYGMY, SLEEP, TREES,
WATER, WOMBAT.

I	Z	H	L	E	U	C	A	L	Y	P	T	U	S	O
S	L	A	E	E	P	K	T	P	O	S	S	U	M	T
E	A	B	O	R	I	A	U	S	T	R	A	L	I	A
E	I	I	S	I	P	N	P	K	E	A	P	V	B	B
R	P	T	E	F	E	G	H	P	C	R	L	Y	Y	M
T	U	A	V	H	E	A	W	C	Y	A	O	A	E	O
K	S	T	A	S	L	R	K	A	U	G	B	F	O	W
L	R	C	E	U	S	O	Q	R	T	O	M	E	J	K
F	A	M	L	B	Y	O	Y	R	A	E	P	Y	I	O
P	M	L	K	T	W	O	R	R	U	B	R	U	O	D

Cook's Corner

Koala Kookies

You'll need:

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 4 tablespoons powdered sugar, plus extra for sprinkling
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract

What to do:

1. Mix butter and powdered sugar in a large bowl until smooth and creamy.
2. Add vanilla extract. Mix well.
3. Add flour and walnuts. Mix well.
4. Roll into small balls and flatten on a greased baking sheet.
5. Bake in a preheated 350-degree oven for 12 to 15 minutes.
6. When cookies are cool, sprinkle powdered sugar on top. Makes about 5 dozen.



* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

1. Something that stands for something else; emblem (6-letter noun)

□ □ □ □ □ □

2. Covered with a thick, soft coat of hair (5-letter adjective)

□ □ □ □ □

3. Feeling of being without courage; shy (5-letter adjective)

□ □ □ □ □

4. The highest part of a woody plant (7-letter noun)

□ □ □ □ □ □ □

1. This sign, - , is the _____ used in math to subtract.
2. Suzanna likes to wear _____ slippers to keep warm.
3. The _____ puppy was scared and hid behind a chair.
4. Mark's cat climbed rapidly all the way up to the _____.

ROOTONYM®
by Jan & Carey Orr Cook



Study the definition. When you know the missing word, fill in the letter boxes and the sentence blanks.

Answers: Symbol, Furry, Timid, Treetop.

Mini Jokes



Catherine: What's a koala's favorite drink?
Cal: Coca Koala!

Eco Note



Smoke from Australia's massive firestorms is being transported high into the atmosphere, to near the edge of space, by intense thunderstorms created by the bushfires. Meteorologists call the thunderstorm clouds rising above the fires **pyrocumulonimbus** (PY-roh-kyoom-you-loh-NIM-bus). While scientists know a lot about how volcanic debris can have a cooling effect on the planet, they are still learning how the high-altitude smoke affects temperatures.

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For later:

Look in your newspaper for articles about animal rescues in Australia.

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