

Totally Turtle!



photo by Andy

Mini Fact:  
Turtles are quite adaptive and can be found on each continent except Antarctica.

World Turtle Day is May 23. This special day for our shelled friends is sponsored by the American Tortoise Rescue, a nonprofit organization. World Turtle Day is a time for people to celebrate and learn about turtles and tortoises. This week, The Mini Page takes a look at these fascinating animals.

**Fast facts**

World Turtle Day celebrates both turtles and tortoises. They belong to a specific scientific order of reptiles — **Testudines** (tess-TOO-duh-nee-z).

It's reported that 61% of turtles around the globe are threatened or extinct. According to experts, turtles are the most threatened of the major groups of vertebrates, including mammals, birds and fish.

**Turtles**

Turtles are **omnivores**, so they eat both plants and meat. A **terrestrial** turtle, one that lives on land, might fill up on grubs, mushrooms, earthworms, grass, berries and beetles.

Hawksbill and leatherback sea turtles are **specialists**, so they find a specific food to eat most of the time. Hawksbills often eat sea

sponges because their habitats are coral reefs, which is also where sea sponges are found.

Leatherback sea turtles eat jellyfish because they live far out in the open ocean and can dive deep for food. They're able to find jellyfish in the **water column**, or the space between the ocean floor and the surface in the part of the sea where they live.

**Tortoises**

Tortoises spend all of their lives on land. They don't spend much time around water unless they are drinking it or taking a bath. Tortoises are typically **vegetarians**, which means they don't eat meat. They dine on fungi, leaves from plants, grass, and fruits like melons, pears and apples.

The Turtle Conservation Society says the lifespan of a regular-sized turtle can be up to 80 years. But a large turtle can live more than 100 years!

A giant tortoise named Jonathan lives on a remote island in the south Atlantic Ocean called Saint Helena. He is 190 years old! He spends most of his time eating and sleeping.

Ways to help


The people organizing World Turtle Day share some tips on how you can help turtles.

Never remove turtles or tortoises from the wild unless they are sick or injured. If that's the case, talk to a grown-up first so they can help seek proper medical care for it.

If a turtle is crossing a busy street, ask for an adult's help. The adult can check to make sure the road is clear, pick up the turtle and place it on the side of the road the turtle is traveling toward. Make sure it's placed down in the same direction it was going. If the grown-up puts it on the side of the road the turtle was coming from, it will walk into the street again.

Keeping rivers, streams, deserts, forests and beaches clean is a big help to turtles since they can get trapped by litter.

You can also support a turtle conservation or rescue project in your area.



Resources



On the Web:


- worldturtleday.org

At the library:

- "National Geographic Kids Mission: Sea Turtle Rescue" by Karen Young
- "Chase the Moon, Tiny Turtle: A Hatchling's Daring Race to the Sea" by Kelly Jordan

Try 'n' Find

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



AGE, CELEBRATE, COLUMN, DAY, EXTINCT, FOOD, FUNGI, GRASS, LEARN, OMNIVORES, SEA, SHELL, TERRESTRIAL, TESTUDINES, TORTOISES, TURTLES, VEGETARIANS, WATER, YEARS.

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

Cook's Corner


Cherry Tomato Snacks

You'll need:

- 10 to 12 cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/3 cup spreadable cheese (any flavor)
- 1/4 cup chopped olives

What to do:

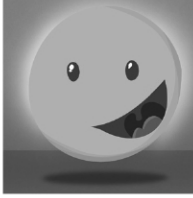
- Place cherry tomato halves on a plate; blot the tops with paper towels.
- Spread cheese evenly on tops of tomatoes.
- Spoon chopped olives on tops. Makes 3 to 4 servings.



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

7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.



1. soup scooper (5) \_\_\_\_\_

2. touch that makes you laugh (6) \_\_\_\_\_

3. early part of the day (7) \_\_\_\_\_

4. very thin (6) \_\_\_\_\_


5. flying machine (8) \_\_\_\_\_

6. firecracker sound (4) \_\_\_\_\_


7. 12:00, when it's dark (8) \_\_\_\_\_

NG NIGHT PLANE CK  
LE MO MID AIR  
RN SKIN TI LE  
LAD ING NY BA

Answers: ladle, tickle, morning, skinny, airplane, bang, midnight.




Mini Jokes



Trinni: What do turtles do when one of them has a birthday?

Tim: They have a shell-a-bration!!

Eco Note




A new solar power technique being launched in Kenya shows how the sun's energy can be harvested twice by placing solar panels above rows of crops. Known as agrivoltaics, the arrangement generates electricity while providing the partial shade some types of crops need. It also helps the soil to retain moisture. Cabbages grown under the well-placed solar panels were a third larger and appeared healthier than those in control plots with the same amount of fertilizer and water.

adapted with permission from Earthweek.

For later:

Look in your newspaper for articles about World Turtle Day.

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