

At home with the...

Awá of Brazil

NG Kids treks into the forests of Maranhão, Brazil, to meet the world's most endangered tribe...



Harpy eagles are NOT on the Awá's menu!

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS MARANHÃO?



LOCATION Maranhão is a state in north-eastern Brazil, South America, about 7,200km from the British Isles.
HOW TO GET THERE It takes around 21 hours to fly from London to São Luis in Brazil. Then hop onto a bus for a five-hour trip to Santa Inés, where you'll have a five-hour trek by 4x4 car and boat to the Awá communities. The last part of your journey is through the forest, on foot!
LANGUAGE The Awá speak a tribal language called... Awá!

Imagine if strangers came into your town and started to demolish everything in their way, street by street, until they finally turned their bulldozers on YOUR home. How scary would that be? Well, that's what's happening to the Awá, a tribe of hunter gatherers living in Brazil's Amazon rainforest.

Life in the trees

The Awá know their forests like you know the layout of your home. Everything the Awá need comes from the jungle. Their shelters, called Tapái, are made from tree branches and palm leaves. The trees' fibres are used to create hammocks, and they collect honey by using loops of vine to climb to the tops of the tallest trees. Even the resin from trees is burned to provide light!

Wild diet

Hunting for their dinner with two-metre bows and arrows called Irapara, the Awá are choosy about what they eat. Some animals, such as the capybara (a large rodent) and the harpy eagle, are forbidden, while bats are believed to cause headaches. Other animals are hunted only at certain times of the year, and this helps ensure the survival of the entire forest and the tribe itself.

Animal friends

The Awá love their animals, often raising baby creatures they find in the forest as pets! In fact, most families actually contain more pets than people, from coatis (a type of racoon), which sometimes hop into the Awá's hammocks at night, to peccaries (a wild pig) and even king vultures! But monkeys are their favourite animal friends, especially tamarins, who love playing with children. When their pets are fully grown, they release them back into the forest.

Family fun

The tribe's children go fruit picking and fishing with their families, climb trees to help collect honey, make juice out of acai berries, play with miniature bows and arrows, and look after their pets. But unlike you, Awá kids aren't given names at birth – they wait until a name seems to *suit them*. They're usually named after animals, plants or something in the rainforest, like Little Butterfly (below) or Earthworm, who got his name because he wouldn't stop wriggling! Some Awá change their names many times, such as 90-year-old Amerinxá'ta (right), whose latest name means 'grandma'.

DID YOU KNOW...?

The Awá are so close to their pets that they recognise their calls – that way, once they've been released into the forest, they don't accidentally hunt them!



The Awá's homes are made from tree branches and palm leaves



Meet Amerinxá'ta!

Vanishing world

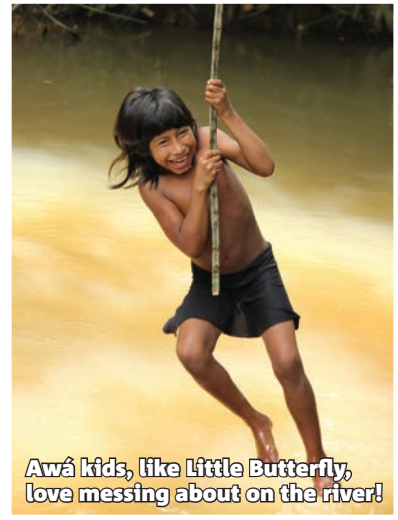
About 350 Awá are known to be living in the Amazon today – but it's thought 100 more have had *no contact* with the outside world, meaning they're some of the last uncontacted people on the planet. Sadly, the forest in which the Awá live is being illegally cut for timber by outsiders. And as the dense rainforest that used to cover vast areas of Maranhão disappears, these hunter-gatherers are vanishing with them. Their bows and arrows are no match for the loggers' guns, and the Awá are now the most threatened tribe in the world. The charity, Survival International, is urging the Brazilian government to stop these illegal loggers destroying the Awá's forest before it's too late. And the good news is that YOU can help. Visit their website, survivalinternational.org/awa now!



The Awá's pets enjoy playing with each other, like this monkey and coati



Little Butterfly's tribe needs YOUR help!



Awá kids, like Little Butterfly, love messing about on the river!



Sadly, the tribe's lush rainforest home is under threat from illegal deforestation

How would your life be different... IF YOU WERE AN AWÁ?

	NAME	DINNER	CHORES	FOR FUN
KIDS IN THE UK	Harry / Emily	Roast chicken and roast potatoes	Vacuuming and taking rubbish out	Surfing the internet and reading books
AWÁ BOY	Earthworm	Fish and wild pig	Hunting and fishing	Making toy bows and arrows
AWÁ GIRL	Parakeet	Acai berries	Fruit picking and collecting honey	Playing with pet tamarin monkey

LEARN TO SPEAK AWÁ...

HELLO Katy **HOW ARE YOU?** Piku katy xipe kwy, hary? **FRIEND** Apihiana **FATHER** Tua **MOTHER** Ihia **BROTHER** Ikwyxa'a **SISTER** Hajnawjya **I LIKE TO STUDY** Amapara pape japoha **COME ON, LET'S EAT!** Xu'u apaj ri!

Amerinxá'ta: Domenico Pugliese/Survival; harpy eagle © Getty Images UK. All other photos © Survival.