

# NINJA GIRAFFES

Giraffes can eat over 35kg of food a day (mostly leaves).

The weight of a giraffe's heart is 11kg – the same as a one-year-old child!

New research suggests that there are four species of giraffes.

A giraffe needs to drink water only once every couple of days.



## These animals have some seriously stealthy moves!

You might not think that giraffes would have much in common with ninjas, skilled combatants who prowled through 15th-century Japan on spy missions. After all, giraffes move awkwardly, and their super-long necks hardly seem stealthy. But these hooved creatures are surprisingly sneaky and agile. Discover how giraffes kick it up a notch, ninja style...



In the 1400s, Japan was divided into kingdoms ruled by leaders called **daimyo** (DY-mee-oh). The daimyo fought each other for control of land and wealth. Ninjas were the daimyo's secret agents, whose job was to gain information on the enemy.



## THE NEED FOR SPEED

Ninjas trained to become swift runners so they could easily slip away from foes during a chase. Giraffes are also **excellent sprinters** using their **long, muscular legs**. At a full gallop, these animals can reach **56kmph**, which helps them evade predators such as lions. But giraffes don't have to go through extensive speed training like ninjas did – babies have been spotted running alongside their mothers just **ten hours after they were born!**



## HIDE-AND-SEEK



Often hired by rulers who were competing for power, ninjas would dress up as farmers or merchants to sneak into enemy fortresses and spy on their leader's opponent. Giraffes don't exactly seem like they'd be masters of disguise because of their distinctive appearance. But these animals sport the perfect **camouflage** for living on the **African savannah**. Their **brown spots** look like the **shadows** created by sunlight shining through trees. This allows them to blend in with their surroundings and hide from predators.

## SPECIAL SENSES



People once believed that ninjas had sharper senses than the average human. According to legend, they could see in the dark and hear tiny movements from far away. This probably wasn't true, but **giraffes** really do have **superb vision and hearing**. Using their keen eyesight, they can spot a moving animal over **800m** away. They also hear noises that humans can't detect. Could giraffes be even better warriors than ninjas? Makes sense!

## GIRAFFE GYMNASTS



Ninjas were renowned for their acrobatic combat moves as well as their ability to contort their bodies to fit into small hiding spots. A giraffe's **tongue** also has **ninja-like flexibility**. It's as long as the arms of some adult humans and strong enough to grip objects. It can pluck leaves one by one from a branch of an acacia tree while avoiding sharp thorns. Giraffes can even **bend their long tongues backwards to clean their ears!** Ninjas probably couldn't do that, no matter how hard they trained.



## WEAPON MASTERS



When ninjas came face to face with their rivals, they could use their skill with weapons such as swords and daggers to defeat the enemy. Giraffes have their own built-in weapons – **hooves with sharp edges**. In fact, a giraffe can be deadly when it uses its feet to kick other giraffes and predators. Two male giraffes might also fight for dominance by **clubbing each other** with their **heavy heads and necks**. Young males even playfully knock heads and necks against one another in mock duels to practise brawling.



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