



Extra ditty

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6200 Hermann Park Drive,
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Houston Zoo

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Travel the Natural World, No Passport Required.

Sneak Peak!!

Founded in 1922, the Houston Zoo is an exciting live animal adventure that provides a unique educational and conservation resource serving more than 1.9 million guests annually. Set in a 55-acre lush tropical landscape, the zoo is home to more than 6,000 exotic animals representing more than 800 species. Our dedicated staff works around the clock to ensure that the Zoo is always running smoothly for the safety and well-being of both our residents and our guests.





The African Forest

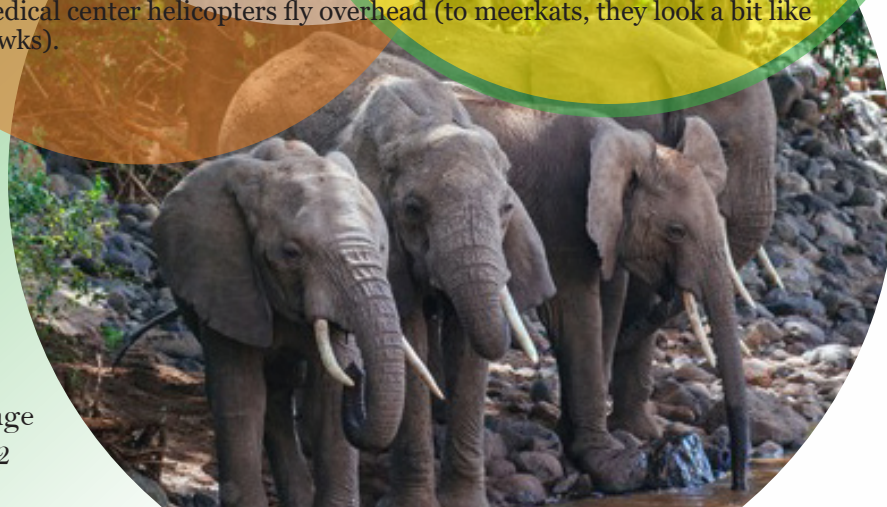
Your adventure begins as you enter The African Forest. As you wind your way into the forest, drums pound in the distance, and you find an indoor chimpanzee study site with a huge glass wall for observation. The chimps enjoy watching you as much as you enjoy them. As you depart, you walk through a rocky tunnel that emerges into a clearing, where you see white rhino relaxing in the sun while kudu stand nearby. Also nearby are elegant Masai giraffes, zebra, and ostriches.

Asian Elephant Habitat

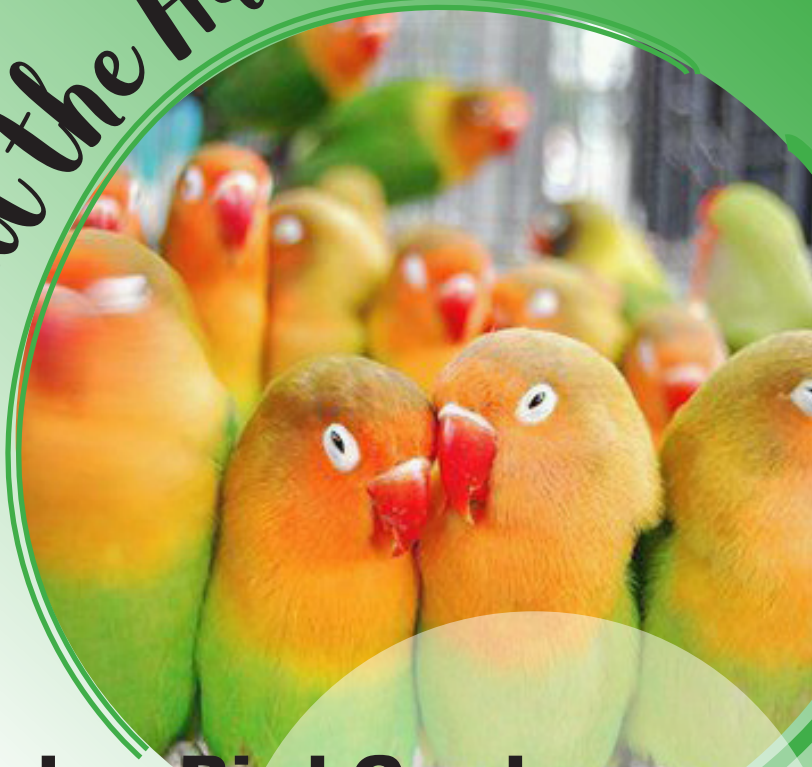
Covering an enormous three acres, the McNair Asian Elephant Habitat is a fun, naturalistic home for the zoo's seven elephants. Watch young elephants Tupelo and Baylor splash around in their 80,000 gallon pool, while a shaded, 200-seat demonstration area is a great place to attend keeper talks by the elephant care team. Since adult males and females live apart in the wild, you'll see the same living arrangement here at the zoo: the females are in one yard with their calves, while our older male, Thai, and younger Tucker enjoy space to themselves.

Natural Encounters

A journey through Natural Encounters is like an adventure through an entire continent: see animals from the river's edge, rainforest canopy, desert, and coral reef, all under one air-conditioned roof. Tree branches stretch out over pathways, waterfalls cascade into pools, and animal meet you at every turn. Come nose to nose with some of the world's most endangered animals as you experience animals up close through large glass viewing panes. You can even crawl right into a see-through tunnel to view piranhas inside their exhibit! As you leave the building, watch meerkats peek out of their burrows while their sentry watches for predators as medical center helicopters fly overhead (to meerkats, they look a bit like hawks).



About the Habitats



Fischer Bird Gardens, Tropical Bird House, and Birds of the World

One of the largest bird collections of any US zoo, the Houston Zoo is home to over 250 species and 800 individual birds. There are three main bird exhibits: Fischer Bird Gardens, the Tropical Bird House, and Birds of the World. As you enter the Bird Gardens, you are greeted by the largest vulture in the New World, the king vulture. You can also see huge rhinoceros hornbills, unusual turacos, and gorgeous scarlet ibis. The Tropical Bird House is a lush retreat filled with the sounds of the rainforest. Play "I Spy" as you try to find all the species of birds flying around you! As you walk through Birds of the World, enjoy beautiful flamingoes, the strange yet amazing shoebill stork, and many more incredible species.

John P. McGovern Children's Zoo

Watch a river otter play underwater, explore a realistic bat cave, get up close and personal with the goats and sheep in the petting area, and watch an entertaining show in the butterfly pavilion. The Children's Zoo takes you through forty exhibits showcasing the six ecosystems of Texas: the city, Gulf Coast, desert, forest, prairie, and farm. There is also a playground so this is a great place to relax for awhile.

Kipp Aquarium

Take an expedition from the coral reefs of the Pacific to the Amazon Basin and the Rift Valley lakes of Africa by visiting the Kipp Aquarium. Home to over 200 species and 2,000 individual fresh and saltwater fish, as well as marine invertebrates, you'll be sure to find a new favorite underwater animal here. As you enter, see a flooded Amazon forest filled with huge stingrays and gigantic catfish—but be careful, as a large school of piranhas is close by! Explore a little further to see a rescued sea turtle swimming with graceful and amazing fish found in the Gulf. Be sure not to miss the bright green moray eel, giant pacific octopus, sharks, and the delicate, beautiful moon jellyfish.



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Wortham World of Primates

Located in the heart of the zoo, Wortham World of Primates offers close up viewing of some of the world's most fascinating and intelligent creatures. Nestled in a naturalistic setting, Wortham World's boardwalks and tree houses allow visitors to observe the behavior of a wide variety of threatened and endangered primates including lemurs, red capped mangabey, siamangs, patas monkeys, Bolivian gray titis, cotton top and golden lion tamarins, howler monkeys, and Sumatran and Bornean orangutans. Observe the animals along the way as they interact with each other, play with toys and treats provided by zoo keepers, and exhibit behaviors that they do in the wild. As you near the end of your walk, be sure to not miss the orangutans enjoying their play structure.



Reptile House

See some of the world's most venomous snakes and exotic amphibians in the reptile & amphibian building! Just outside the building, visit Smaug, one of the zoo's (very large) Komodo dragons. Inside, you'll see Blanco, one of only fourteen white alligators in existence. You can also learn about snakes in Texas—and you surely won't be able to miss some of the world's largest, like the reticulated and Burmese pythons. The dart frogs also aren't hard to find, colored with beautiful, bright jewel tones. There are over 900 animals representing more than 140 species of reptiles and 40 species of amphibians, all just a plate of glass away from you in the Reptile House!



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Hoofed Run

This exhibit is divided into two areas within the Zoo. At west Hoofed Run, you will see several species of African animals in two exhibits, including giant eland with their huge, twisted horns, warthogs, lowland Nyala, and even marabou storks to keep the hoofed animals company. Cranes and ground hornbills also make their home on west Hoofed Run, keeping life interesting for the hoofed animals they live with. Over on east Hoofed Run, bongo, yellow-backed duikers, and okapi make up a large part of this cast of characters. If you've never seen an okapi, make it a "must see" when you visit—it's a relative of the giraffe, but you might think it's closer to a zebra when you see it.



Special Features

Wildlife Carousel

The Houston Zoo's Wildlife Carousel is located at the entrance to the John P. McGovern Children's Zoo. The carousel is a unique work of art, hand carved and painted. Many of the exotic animals represented on the carousel can be found in the zoo, such as the okapi, bongo, babirusa and giant eland. Also represented are the only armadillos known to exist as carousel figures. A portion of the proceeds from the Carousel helps fund the zoo's ongoing conservation efforts. Riders of all ages can have fun taking a spin and knowing that they are bringing hope to endangered species and wild habitats around the world!



4-D Experience

Take your seat and hold on tight for new thrills and chills as the Houston Zoo brings Ice Age Dawn of the Dinosaurs and Grizzly Bears to the 4-D Experience in The African Forest. The 4-D Experience begins with the spectacular visuals and surround sound of a 3-D movie and then adds the fourth dimension of the senses—motion, scent, wind, mist, bubbles and light. You not only see and hear the action but you feel it too! That's the 4-D Experience at the Houston Zoo!

Giraffe Feeding

Zoo guests have a unique opportunity to interact with our our Masai giraffe family at the Giraffe Feeding Platform. Our giraffes are among the most beloved at the Houston Zoo for their charm and obvious curiosity about their visitors. Make your way up the ramp to the feeding area for a birds-eye view of the giraffes, zebra, and ostriches while you offer a crunchy lettuce leaf snack to your new long-necked pals. Feedings daily at 11 am and 2 pm (depending, of course, on weather and giraffe participation). Giraffe food is \$5, and the proceeds help support the care of our giraffes and the other 6,000 animals at the Houston Zoo.





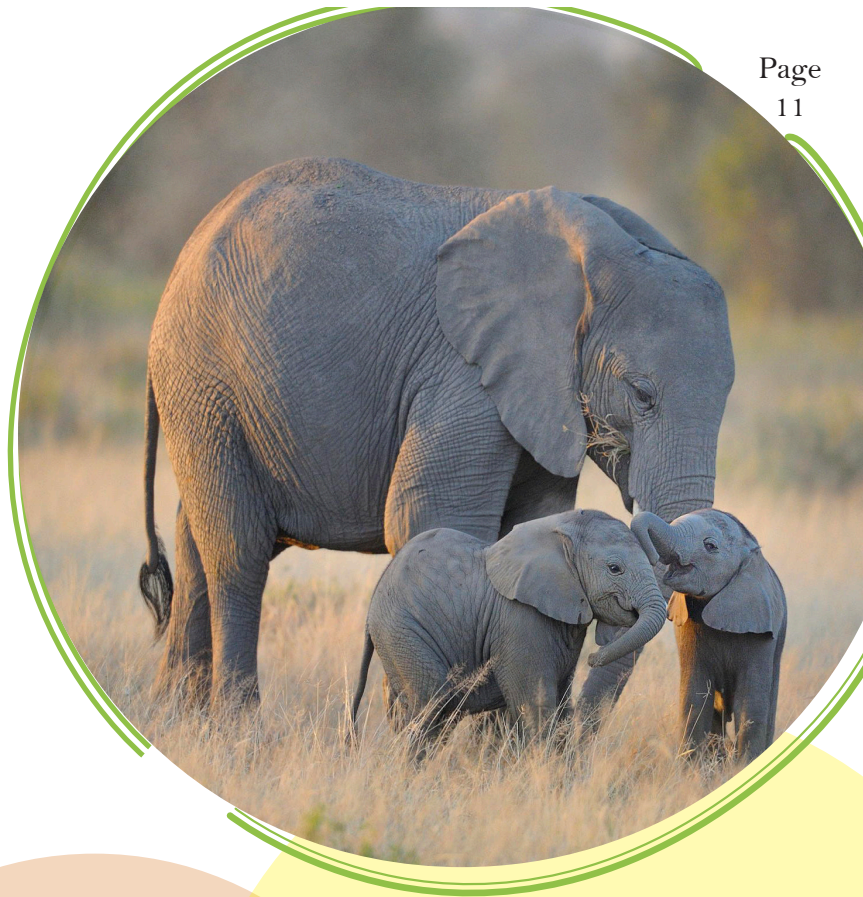
Lions and Tigers and Bears—and more

Lions, tigers, and bears...oh my! Meet the king of the jungle, tigers, jaguars, grizzly bears, fossa, and so many other carnivores as you trek through the wilds of the Houston Zoo. Your journey through the Carnivores exhibits will require a keen sense of sight –keep your eyes peeled in the small cats exhibits, because they like to hide—and their coats provide the perfect camouflage. Also, don't miss the University of Houston's mascot, Shasta the cougar. Think cats don't like the water? Think again! Stop by to visit the tigers, and you might just see them taking a dip in their moat. Take a close-up peek at the lions in the lion tunnel, where you may be able to observe our lion girls playing with special toys and treats.



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Zoo Facts

The word rhinoceros comes from the Greek rhino (nose) and ceros (horn). Rhino horns are made of keratin, the same material that makes up your hair and fingernails.

The scientific name of the giraffe is 'Camelopardalis'. The etymology of this name can be traced to a belief that a giraffe was a cross between a camel (height) and a leopard (coat pattern).

The porcupine is the second largest rodent in North America next to the beaver...and an adult has an average of 30,000 quills!

An elephant's skin is so sensitive that it can feel a fly landing on it.

Elephants use their trunks to drink but the water doesn't go all the way up the trunk like a straw. Instead, the elephant sucks water part way up the trunk, curls it toward its mouth, tilts its head up, and lets the water pour in. Elephants have been relentlessly hunted for their tusks, even though the tusks are made of dentine—the same as our teeth!

An elephant pregnancy lasts longer than any other mammal at nearly 22 months!

