



What's That You're Eating?

Audience

Activity designed for 6 years old and up.

Goal

Students will understand that primates eat a wide variety of different foods.

Objective

- To understand that different primates eat different diets.
- To identify the different diets that primates eat.
- To learn the difference between frugivore, herbivore, omnivore and carnivore

Conservation Message

Primates are an important species not only in their own habitat but for the entire ecosystem of the area. Each primate species is unique in their own way and needs to be respected. Zoos throughout the world are working together to educate people about the importance of primates as well as create awareness about how humans can help these magnificent species.

Background Information

There are over 300 species of primates living on our planet and each species has specific needs. There are species of primates that live in the mountains and others that live in rainforests, therefore, they can have very different diets. For example, Western Lowland gorillas live in forests throughout the Congo Basin in Africa and primarily have a vegetarian diet; however, they also have an appetite for insects like ants and termites. This could make them either herbivores, eating mostly plants, an omnivore, eating plants and animals, or an insectivore, eating mostly insects. Classifying an animal's diet can be difficult for scientists. For example, several baboon species eat small animals however they also eat a lot of plant material and fruit, does this make them a carnivore or an omnivore? This makes them an omnivore because while they do eat meat, there are no exclusively carnivorous primates. Also, there are some species of primates that eat almost entirely fruit but will also eat stems, roots and bark, this can make them an herbivore, or a frugivore which is a type of herbivore that eats mostly fruits.

An herbivore is an animal that eats primarily plant materials such as roots, stems, bark, flowers and leaves. The Ugandan Red Colobus is a monkey that is considered an herbivore because its diet consists mostly of leaves.

A frugivore is a type of herbivore, as in they only eat plants, however, frugivores eat mostly fruit and supplement other plant food only when they must. A Gray-bellied night monkey is a frugivore native to South America that feeds at night.

Most primates are considered omnivores because they eat both plants and animals. Macaques, Gibbons, and Aye-Aye's are examples of different primate species that are omnivores. While larger apes such as baboons eat a lot of meat, they are not exclusively carnivorous.

Materials

- What Am I? Worksheets
- Pen or Pencil

Length of Activity

30 minutes

Procedures

- Read the background information.
- On the What Am I? worksheets, read the information below each primate picture.
- Determine if each primate is an omnivore, a frugivore, an insectivore, or an herbivore.
- Write the diet classification under each picture.
- Check your answers to see you are correct.





Mandrill

This is an Old World monkey that lives in tropical rainforests of Africa. They eat roots, stems, fruit and leaves as well as small rodents, invertebrates and sometimes birds.

What Am I?



Red Colobus

This Old World monkey live in humid forests and is arboreal, which means they spend a lot of time in the trees. They eat primarily plants, leaves, fruit and flowers.

What am I?



Eastern Lowland Gorilla

This Great Ape is the larger of the two gorilla species. It lives in forests throughout the Congo Basin. The diet of the Eastern Lowland gorilla consists of plants, fruit, leaves stems and bark.

What am I?



Golden Lion Tamarin

This is a species of New World monkey that live in humid forests in Brazil. They eat mostly fruits, insects and small invertebrates.

What am I?



Black and White Ruffed Lemur

Like all lemur species, this Black and White Ruffed Lemur is endemic to Madagascar, which means Madagascar is the only place they can be found. They spend most of their time in the trees picking and eating ripe fruit that hangs from the branches.

What am I?

Answer Sheet



Mandrill: Omnivore



Red Colobus: Herbivore



**Eastern Lowland Gorilla:
Herbivore**



**Golden Lion Tamarin:
Omnivore**



**Black and White Ruffed
Lemur: Frugivore**