

Name _____

What Does a Capybara Eat?

The capybara is the largest rodent in the world and an expert at adapting to its environment. Found in South America, these semi-aquatic creatures live near rivers, lakes, and marshes. But what do they eat, and how do they survive in the wild?

Capybaras are herbivores, which means they only eat plants. They have a diet that primarily consists of grasses, aquatic plants, and some types of fruit and bark. During the rainy season, when food is plentiful, capybaras munch on lush green grasses that grow near water sources. In drier months, they rely on tougher plants and even the bark of trees to get the nutrients they need. This adaptability helps them survive even when food is scarce.

One of the capybara's favorite foods is aquatic plants, which they find in their watery habitats. These plants are not only nutritious but also abundant in the areas where capybaras live. In addition, capybaras have sharp teeth that keep growing throughout their lives. This is important because chewing on tough grasses and bark helps wear down their teeth, preventing them from growing too long.

Capybaras are also known to eat their own feces! While this may sound strange, it's a natural process called coprophagy. By re-eating their food, capybaras get a second chance to absorb nutrients that weren't fully digested the first time. This process is especially important for getting enough protein and vitamins.

Capybaras usually eat in the early morning or late afternoon when it's cooler outside. They spend much of their day resting in the shade or soaking in water to stay cool. This behavior not only conserves their energy but also protects them from predators like jaguars and caimans.

In summary, capybaras are herbivores that eat a diet rich in grasses, aquatic plants, and bark. Their eating habits, combined with their unique ability to re-digest their food, help them thrive in their environment. These fascinating creatures are perfectly adapted to their plant-based diet and watery homes.

