

Name _____



What Does a Hippopotamus Eat?

The hippopotamus, often called a hippo, is a large, plant-eating mammal that lives in Africa. Hippos are herbivores, which means they only eat plants. Their main food source is grass. At night, hippos leave the water and walk to grasslands to graze. They can eat up to 80 pounds of grass in a single night!

Even though hippos have large teeth, they do not use them for eating food. Their sharp tusks are mainly used for defense and fighting other hippos. Hippos grind their food using strong jaws and flat molar teeth, which help break down the grass they consume.

Hippos spend most of their time in the water during the day to stay cool, but they rarely eat while submerged. They wait until nighttime when the weather is cooler to find food. This behavior helps them avoid getting too hot under the sun.

A hippo's diet is simple compared to many other animals. They do not hunt or eat meat. However, very rarely, hippos have been seen eating small amounts of meat, but this is not common. Most of their energy comes from plants, which provide them with the nutrients they need to stay healthy and strong.

Because hippos eat so much grass, they play an important role in their ecosystem. They help keep grasslands trimmed, which can prevent wildfires and allow new plants to grow. Protecting hippos and their habitats ensures that grasslands stay balanced and healthy.