Name _____

Koalas: The Leaf-Eating Marsupials

Koalas are fascinating animals that live in Australia. They are herbivores, which means they only eat plants. Koalas have a very specific diet and mainly eat the leaves of eucalyptus trees. Eucalyptus leaves make up almost all of their food. These leaves are tough, low in nutrients, and contain toxins that are harmful to most animals. However, koalas have a special stomach that helps them digest these leaves safely.

Koalas spend most of their time in eucalyptus trees where their food is always nearby. They use their sharp claws and strong limbs to climb high into the trees. Koalas eat for about four to six hours each day. They can consume up to one pound of eucalyptus leaves daily!

Koalas are selective eaters. Out of over 700 types of eucalyptus trees, they prefer only a few kinds. They choose the softest and juiciest leaves, which are easier to chew and digest. Koalas get most of the water they need from these leaves, so they rarely drink water.

Since eucalyptus leaves are low in energy, koalas rest for long periods. They sleep up to 20 hours a day to conserve energy. Their slow lifestyle helps them survive on their nutrient-poor diet.

Koalas do not hunt for food because they are herbivores. Instead, they browse for leaves and carefully select the best ones. Their diet and slow movement make them unique among tree-dwelling animals.

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