

Name \_\_\_\_\_



## What Does a Squirrel Eat?

Squirrels are fascinating animals with diverse diets. These creatures are omnivores, which means they eat both plants and animals. However, most of what squirrels eat comes from plants. Their main food sources include nuts, seeds, fruits, and flowers. Acorns, walnuts, and pecans are some of their favorite snacks. Squirrels also eat pinecones, berries, and mushrooms when they find them. Squirrels are known for their incredible ability to gather and store food. They collect nuts and seeds in the fall, hiding them in small holes in the ground or in tree crevices. This behavior, called “caching,” helps them save food for the winter when it is harder to find fresh supplies. Sometimes, squirrels forget where they buried their food, and those forgotten seeds grow into new trees!

Although plants make up most of their diet, squirrels occasionally eat insects, bird eggs, or small animals if they come across them. These high-protein snacks give squirrels extra energy, especially when they are preparing for colder weather.

Squirrels have sharp teeth that never stop growing. These teeth are perfect for cracking open hard shells, like those on nuts. Squirrels also have strong claws and excellent climbing skills that help them reach food high up in trees. You might see squirrels hanging upside-down on a branch while eating seeds from a pinecone!

Different species of squirrels have slightly different diets. For example, ground squirrels, which live on the ground instead of in trees, often eat grasses and roots. Flying squirrels, on the other hand, enjoy sugary foods like tree sap. Despite these differences, all squirrels are resourceful and use their surroundings to find food.

Squirrels play an important role in nature. By spreading seeds and nuts, they help forests grow and thrive. The next time you see a squirrel nibbling on a nut or burying food, remember that they are not just feeding themselves—they are helping the environment too!

