

Pythons

Snakes are reptiles, which means they are cold-blooded and have scales instead of hair or fur. They can be extremely dangerous and some are very poisonous. They can range in size, from being small enough to fit on a coin, to being longer than a bus! Pythons are one of thousands of different species of snake. There are as many as 26 different types of python.

Habitat

Pythons are very adaptable and are found in many different countries and environments. They tend to be found in environments that are particularly hot, such as parched deserts or humid rainforests. This means that they are largely found throughout the continents of Asia and Africa because they are cold-blooded, which means that they have to use the sun and rocks heated by the sun to warm themselves. If they get too cold, they cannot function properly and they will struggle to hunt and protect themselves from predators. One of the reasons pythons make their home in the rainforest is because it provides many different places to hide. Some pythons will wrap themselves around the branches and disappear amongst the leaves; others will coil up tightly, hidden on the forest floor and wait for prey to come close enough to catch. Pythons have skin which allows them to blend in wherever they are. We call this camouflage. Their skin has patterns that help to hide them by copying the leaves or bark of a tree.

Diet

Pythons are carnivores, which means that they only eat meat. Most pythons will have a diet consisting of small mammals like rats, but they will eat other animals such as birds, lizards, monkeys and even caiman, which are like alligators.

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Pythons do not chase their prey; they wait and then strike quickly, gripping with their teeth before wrapping their body around the prey and squeezing tight.

Fun Facts

- The length of a python can range from very small (about 30cm) to the largest ever recorded, at an amazing 8 metres long!
- Even though they live on land or in trees, they are actually very good swimmers.



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Pythons - Questions

Can you draw a picture of a Python?

1. How many different species of snakes are there?

2. Why are pythons found mostly in Asia and Africa?

3. How does the sun help pythons?

4. What is an 'environment'?

5. Give one way that pythons hide in the rainforest?

6. What is a carnivore?

7. How do pythons catch their prey?

8. What allows pythons to camouflage so successfully?

9. What might a large python eat?

10. Can you name another kind of snake?
