

# Making the most of your visit: RAINFOREST EXPERIENCE

## Forest facts

The Amazon is the largest rainforest in the world. It is home to one in five of all bird species and one in ten mammal species.

One quarter of all medicines used today are derived from rainforest plants.

The hoatzin of South America, also called a 'stinky turkey' by local people, smells like cow manure because its stomach is full of fermenting leaves.

Some jungle lianas can grow up to a kilometre long. They link many trees together, so that if one tree falls, many others around it may be brought down.

Some species of piranha are vegetarians. They use their powerful jaws to crack open nuts that fall into the water.

An area of rainforest the size of England, Scotland and Wales is cut down every year.



See it · Sense it · Save it

## Before your visit

- 1) Take advantage of the **free pre-visit deal** for group leaders. You can familiarise yourself with the Zoo layout and locate species related to your topic.
- 2) Rainforests occur in many different parts of the world - get hold of a blank world map and mark on the distribution and names of rainforests.
- 3) Find out about a **rare rainforest animal** that lives at Bristol Zoo. See the Zoo website's animal factsheets to find out more, including why their chosen animal is rare.
- 4) Rainforests can be dangerous places. Many jungle mosquitos carry **diseases** such as malaria. Find out how the group would avoid catching malaria if they were sleeping in the rainforest? What do local people do?
- 5) **Compare a rainforest with a forest in this country.** You'll need to consider the structure of the forest, food webs, climate and the influence of people. Collect information on how our forests have changed during the last few hundred years.

## In the Zoo

- 1) Go to the **Aquarium** and walk through the Amazonian Exhibit. Get the group to look at the mouths of fish and read the signs by the tank, to work out what each species eats and how so many big fish live together.
- 2) Visit **Bug World** and stop in the Forest Zone. Find the leaf-cutter ants and watch them at work. What are they doing and why? If you were a plant how would you discourage these ants from taking your leaves?
- 3) **Zona Brazil** is a coastal rainforest exhibit . Find out why this rainforest is disappearing and which animals are most affected.
- 4) **Visit five rainforest animals** in the Zoo - howler monkey (Monkey Jungle), okapi, gorilla, pygmy hippo and Victoria crowned pigeon (Forest of Birds). Read the signs and study them to find out how they communicate with each other.
- 5) Also in **Forest of Birds** use the information to identify as many as you can. Can you work out which call belongs to which bird?



## After your visit

- 1) **Spark off debate** about rainforest conservation issues, e.g. where aluminium comes from, or **take action** by setting up a recycling point at school. Why not join the 'Cans for Corridors' project to help save the Brazilian black lion tamarin.
- 2) Put together a **display of products** that come from the rainforest. Label them to show whether they have positive or negative effects on the forest.
- 3) Using the painting on the doors of the Terrace Theatre for ideas, choose a rainforest from around the world and **produce a rainforest collage or painting** showing the types of animals that live there. Make sure you find out which part of the forest each species of animal lives.
- 4) Animals that live in trees have special adaptations to help them survive, eg prehensile tails for holding on, flaps of skin for gliding, flexible ankle joints for climbing. **Design your own tree-living rainforest animal.**
- 5) **Investigate where chocolate comes from** and what benefits come from buying fair trade or organic brands.



## For more information

- 1) Check out the Zoo's website – we have factsheets on many of the Zoo's species and wildlife-related issues. You can also download this and other leaflets.  
[www.bristolzoo.org.uk](http://www.bristolzoo.org.uk)
- 2) Discover more great rainforest information at:  
[www.enchantedlearning.com](http://www.enchantedlearning.com)
- 3) Find out about Fairtrade at:  
[www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)

If you would like to know more about the Education Department and its work please contact us:  
Education Department, Bristol Zoo Gardens, Clifton, Bristol BS8 3HA  
Tel: 0117 974 7369 or **email:** [education@bristolzoo.org.uk](mailto:education@bristolzoo.org.uk)

# Rainforest Experience:

*Imagine the South American jungle just as day is breaking. You'll hear a group of capuchin monkeys calling excitedly, a jaguar growling and the alarm calls of the spider monkey...*

This is a chance to find out about rainforest animals from around the world - some are masters of disguise, others flamboyantly coloured, some are vegetarian munchers and grazers, others calculating killers. Your experience may involve holding a giant cockroach, watching how a boa investigates the world or seeing how thorny stick insects defend themselves.

We will discover how our lives are linked to rainforests, what threatens rainforests and how we can reduce our impact on them.

We will also invite you to investigate some of our rainforest biofacts - maybe a python or a leopard skin, a gorilla skull or a giant Brazil nut case. Many of these biofacts have been confiscated from tourists and smugglers by HM Customs and Excise at Heathrow airport and are on loan to us.

If you haven't booked an education session this time, but are interested in finding out more, please contact the Education Department on 0117 974 7369, or [education@bristolzoo.org.uk](mailto:education@bristolzoo.org.uk)