

# NATURE NEWS

## THE HERBIVORE EDITION

### AN INTERVIEW WITH ALF

BY HOLLY

This month we are lucky enough to be interviewing one of the most famous herbivores at Tilgate Nature Centre. Known for his long trunk, gentle demeanor and slobbery chops, it could only be Alf the tapir!

**Hi Alf! Thanks for joining us. What have you been doing today?**

Hello everyone! I'm well, thanks. Today I have been mostly snoozing in the sunshine in my pond paddock, playing with Clarence the capybara and eating lots of delicious food!

**That sounds good! What is your favourite food?**

Well, I'm a herbivore as you know. That means I only eat plant matter like leaves, roots and veg. My favourite things to eat are field maple leaves and twigs, sweet potato and banana!

**Sounds tasty! Is your food cooked before you eat it?**

No! I like it raw!

**How do you manage to bite tough things like potato and twigs? Do the keepers have to cut it up really small for you?**

No, not at all! I like to munch down on big chunks of food and tough leafy greens! I have some impressive teeth that help me to chomp hard and tough foods - look!



SMILE!

**Wow! What a smile!**

Thanks! I have special teeth for eating plant matter, which can be quite hard to break down and digest without chewing it really well. My molars are large and I can move my jaw from side to side so that I can grind down leaves. I have *lophodont* teeth, which means there are lots of ridges on the crowns of my teeth to help me grind down my food. They look like squiggles, it's rather pretty!

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LOPHODONT TEETH

**Cont.**

**That's amazing! Do all herbivores have these teeth?**

No, not all of them. We all have very tough teeth for eating plants, and they usually have special ridges on them like this, but you can get different patterns. Some herbivores don't even have teeth on their top jaw! Some, like goats, have a plate for the bottom teeth to grind against!

**Do you have any other special teeth?**

Yes, I also have small incisors on my upper jaw. These help me rip and tear plants for eating! I don't have any canine teeth though - of course not, I don't eat meat!

**Amazing! Thanks so much for taking the time to speak to us today, Alf!**

No problem. Come back and see me again soon - and next time can you bring some bananas with you please? Yum!



ALF THE TAPIR ENJOYING SOME PUMPKIN!

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### Hungry Herbivores!

Uh-oh! Alf the tapir has arrived at your house unexpectedly – and he's hungry! You will need:

- A stopwatch
- Paper
- A pen

You've got two minutes to look around your kitchen and make note of all the things you can find that a herbivore could eat. Once you have a list of ingredients, you can get creative with a hungry herbivore menu! You can use the template below or design your very own menu from scratch.

Think up some tasty herbivorous meals! Write a short description for each dish. Don't forget to add prices! You could even draw some pictures of the dishes! What do you think Alf would choose? How much would his meal cost? What would you choose? How much would your meal cost? You could even try making one of the dishes for real using the ingredients you find in your kitchen - don't forget to ask an adult for permission and for help!

#### **Example:**

#### *starters*

##### **Carrot salad**

A light leafy salad with plenty of crunch!

£3.25

#### *mains*

##### **Sweet Potato and Beetroot Gratin**

Bright beetroot snugged between layers of fluffy sweet potato. A rainbow of flavour!

£8.50

#### *desserts*

##### **Strawberry and Basil Delight!**

Sweet strawberries smothered in fragrant basil leaves. A feast for the tastebuds!

£5.15

# The Tasty Tapir

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*starters*

*mains*

*desserts*

Enjoy your  
meal!



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### Food Chain Word Scramble!

Can you unscramble these words? Once you have figured them out, put them in the correct place in the text below.

narcioserv

velase

odof

biorehrves

prdetosar

nomiorves

eergyn

amte

nlpat

hacni

All animals need food for \_\_\_\_\_ and nutrients, but what they eat changes from animal to animal. Some animals are \_\_\_\_\_, meaning they only eat plant matter such as \_\_\_\_\_, roots and vegetables. Some animals are \_\_\_\_\_ and eat other animals. These animals are either \_\_\_\_\_, meaning they only eat meat, or \_\_\_\_\_, meaning they eat both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ matter.

Animals can be linked together in a \_\_\_\_\_ chain. An example of a simple food \_\_\_\_\_ can be seen below:

**Leaves** - eaten by - **tapir**- eaten by - **jaguar**