

AFRICAN PYGMY GOAT

updated March 2017



Range	Domesticated
Habitat	Originally, grasslands and semi-desert areas
Diet (wild)	Browsers, leaves preferred over grass
Diet (captivity)	Pelleted grain and hay
Description	Height: 21 inches; weight: 44–60 pounds. Colors are variable: brown, white, black, silver-gray, and caramel. They have a small beard and both sexes have horns, but the males' horns are longer and thicker for display during courtship. Their two-toed hooves provide good balance for climbing.
Lifespan	Wild: 8–10 years. Captivity: 22 years.
Reproduction	After a 150 day gestation, females give birth to 1–4 offspring called kids. The young weigh less than a pound at birth and are quite precocious; they can stand and nurse minutes after birth and are able to run and jump within four hours after birth. They are weaned by 10 weeks and reach maturity between 8–12 months. During breeding season, the male produces a musky odor that is attractive to the females.
Behavior	Goats are very social animals that use group strength to protect themselves from predators. When threatened, the herd will form a ring with pregnant females and young in the center. Female goats will actually simulate pregnancy in order to gain the extra protection the condition invokes from the herd. Goats provide humans meat, fine leather, and milk; milk production has been the main reason for domestication. Goat's milk has approximately the same protein content as cow's milk, but goat's milk is lower in lactose and higher in fat content.
Our animals	1 female, 6 males. Born in 2012
Cool stuff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goats are one of the oldest domesticated species (10,000 years ago). • Pygmy goats originated in the Cameroon Valley of west Africa. They were imported into the United States from European zoos in the 1950s for use in zoos as well as research animals. They were eventually acquired by private breeders and quickly gained popularity as pets and exhibition animals due to their good-natured personalities, friendliness and hardy constitution. Today, they are a common sight as house pets and in petting zoos. • Goats do require grass for grazing, but can thrive in areas of thin growth that would not support other grazers such as sheep or cows. • Goats are ruminants. • Due to a well-developed herding instinct, goats prefer to be in groups of two or more. • More people worldwide use goats for dairy and meat than use cows. • Cashmere is the hair obtained from the neck region of cashmere goats, which are a subspecies of domestic goats. Cashmere is softer and three times warmer regular sheep's wool.

Phylum
ChordataClass
MammaliaOrder
ArtiodactylaFamily
BovidaeGenus
Capraspecies
C. hircus