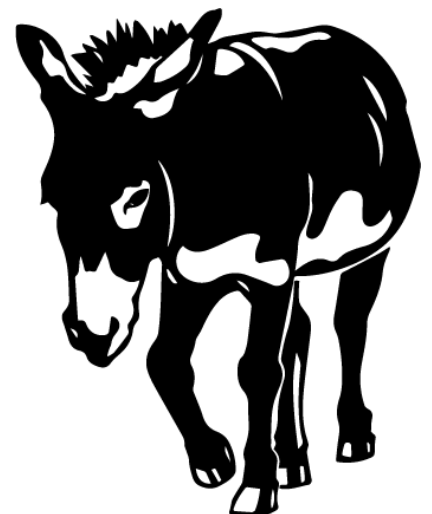
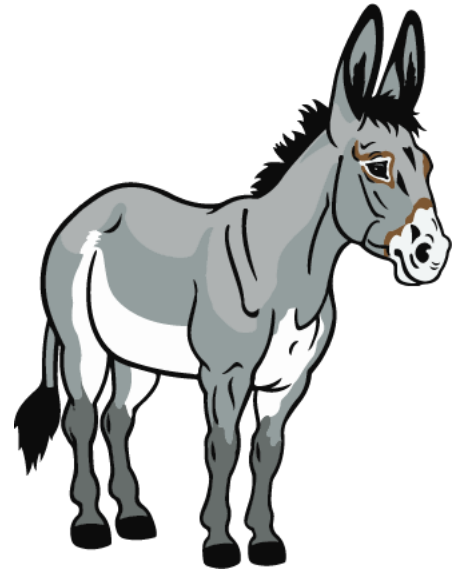


The Diligent Donkey

Donkeys are amazing animals. They were domesticated by humans nearly 5,000 years ago to help with farm work and to carry heavy loads. Smart, curious, and friendly, donkeys are known as the dogs of the livestock world. They form attachments to their human owners and can serve as guards to protect other farm animals.

To learn more about these delightful creatures check out these fun facts.

- Donkeys live on every continent except Antarctica.
- There are more than 40 million donkeys in the world. Most are used as pack animals or in agricultural work.
- Donkeys originated in the African Desert and are a descendant of the African Wild Ass. The African Wild Ass is one of the most endangered animals in the world.
- The first donkeys to arrive in America came with Christopher Columbus on his second voyage in 1495.
- George Washington owned the first donkeys born in the United States.
- A male donkey is called a jack while a female is called a jenny or jennet. A baby donkey is a foal.
- Donkeys were first domesticated around 3000 BC in Egypt or Mesopotamia.
- Donkeys are native to desert areas and have a strong digestive system that can break down vegetation that is inedible for horses, cattle, and sheep.
- Donkeys form such strong bonds with their herd members that when one dies, they mourn for them. Grieving donkeys can become so sad that they make themselves ill.
- Donkeys are stronger than horses or cattle. A healthy donkey can carry 25% of its own weight.
- Mammoth Donkeys are the largest in the world and can be 58 inches tall.
- Miniature donkeys are the smallest type of donkey and only grow to 36 inches tall.



- Donkeys can interbreed with horses and zebras, but the offspring are often sterile.
- The hybrid between a jack and a mare is a mule. The hybrid between a stallion and a jennet is a hinny. The hybrid of a donkey and zebra is called a zonkey.
- Donkeys have great memories and will remember another donkey they met over ten years ago.
- Guard donkeys are used by ranchers to keep coyotes and wolves away from cattle, sheep, and goats. The donkeys use their strong legs and hooves to protect the herd.
- There are three main types of donkeys: wild, feral, and domesticated. Wild donkeys typically grow to around 49 inches from hoof to shoulder and weigh around 551 lbs.
- A donkey's large ears help heighten its sense of hearing, so it can pick up the calls of herd mates from miles away. Another use for the donkey's long ears is heat dissipation. The larger surface area helps the donkey expel its internal heat at a high rate to stay cool in the hot desert environments.
- A donkey's bray can carry up to 60 miles in the desert.
- Donkeys are not stubborn but can be reluctant to do anything that might be unsafe - they consider situations before deciding what to do.
- The record for the oldest documented age for a donkey belongs to Suzy, who reached the age of 54 in 2002. Suzy was owned by Beth Menczer, and lived in Glenwood, New Mexico, USA.
- Donkeys don't like the rain and being out in it for long periods can damage their health as their fur is not waterproof.
- A herd will choose the strongest donkey to be their leader, even if domesticated. In the wild the lead donkey would stay to ward off an attack by a wolf or other predators in order to allow the rest of the herd to escape to safety.
- The wealth of the Egyptians was due to the precious metals carried from Africa by donkeys.

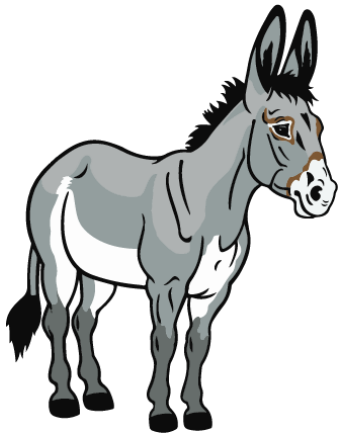


Famous Donkeys

Donkeys in WWI

During World War I Donkeys, mules, and horses were used to carry loads, ammunitions, and the wounded. It is estimated that over 80,000 donkeys and mules lent their strength and muscle to fight the war. Sure-footed donkeys were often used to help transport the wounded since they were able to climb out of the hills and trenches too steep for horse ambulances.

Pte John Simpson Kirkpatrick used his donkey to help carry 300 wounded soldiers from the frontline to the beach for evacuation during ANZAC operations in Gallipoli. A statue was erected to commemorate his and his donkey's brave service in South Shields, England.



Movie Star Donkey

Perry, a donkey who lives in Barron Park in Palo Alto, California may be one of the most famous donkeys alive today. In 2001 he served as the model for the donkey in the movie Shrek and people who know Perry say the artist caught his sassy personality perfectly. The movie grossed over \$500 million. Perry got paid \$75.

Being a famous donkey has not turned Perry's head. He loves having the children of Palo Alto visit him in the park and especially enjoys ear rubs and big patches of grass. Perry enjoys a weekly walk around the park with his fellow donkeys every Sunday from 10 – 11 am.

Donkey Racing

The state of Colorado has a unique tradition of burro racing. In the early days of the mining industry in Colorado, miners would take burros, which is the Spanish word for donkeys, through the mountains of Colorado while prospecting. Because the burros were carrying supplies, the miners could not ride the animals and so they would walk, leading the donkey. The Burro Races, which are held throughout small towns in Colorado, commemorate these men and women and their burros. In 2012, Pack burro racing was recognized as the official summer heritage sport in Colorado.

Buttercup, a miniature donkey who weighs only 250 pounds is the first miniature donkey to win a triple crown. At only 32 inches tall she can walk under the bellies of most of her competitors. Yet she has a heart for racing and keeps beating the bigger burros.

