

The Spotted Hyenas of Kruger National Park



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A spotted hyena in Kruger National Park

Kruger National Park is in South Africa. It has elephants, lions, giraffes, zebras, and hyenas. It has many other types of animals, too. The animals live in the wild. They are safe from humans in the park.

Many Africans do not like hyenas because they think hyenas are evil. It's easy to understand why. Hyenas are nocturnal, which means they are active at night. They are loud. They make weird noises. They make crazy sounding laughing noises. They call to each other by making loud whooping sounds.

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Spotted hyenas work together to solve problems

Many people think that hyenas don't hunt. They think that hyenas eat food they find. But spotted hyenas hunt. They are good hunters. They are as good as lions.

Hyenas are related to dogs. But they are much stronger. The hyena has very strong jaws. It has a very strong bite. It can crush bones with its jaws. Hyenas eat almost every part of an animal. They even eat the bones. Lions cannot eat bones. Their jaws are not strong enough.

Spotted hyenas have big brains. Spotted hyenas are very smart. They are as smart as chimpanzees. They work together to hunt. They watch the sky. They look for vultures. Vultures circle over a dead animal. They follow the vultures to find dead animals. Hyenas also steal food from other animals. They steal food from lions. Lions steal food from the hyenas, too.

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Lions and hyenas are enemies. Hyenas are smarter than lions. But lions are bigger and stronger. Sometimes they fight. Usually they fight over food. That is because they eat the same foods. They also just really don't like one another.

Spotted hyenas live in groups called clans. Clans have between 10 and 40 hyenas. One female runs each clan. Female spotted hyenas are bigger and stronger than the males.

Spotted hyenas live in a den that they dig in the ground. The clan shares the den. The den can be very big.

Baby hyenas are called cubs. The cubs hide in the den to stay safe. A mom usually has two cubs at a time. The cubs are born with their eyes open and grow very fast. They soon join the rest of the clan in hunting.



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Spotted hyena cubs outside their den