

# Panda pair jet-lagged after flight to Britain

December 5 2011

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Workers unload travel crates containing giant pandas Tian Tian (sweetie) from a plane at the airport in Edinburgh on December 4. A pair of giant pandas are a bit jet-lagged after a long-haul flight from China but are already "frolicking around" in their new surroundings, a spokesman for Edinburgh Zoo said Monday.

A pair of giant pandas are a bit jet-lagged after a long-haul flight from China but are already "frolicking around" in their new surroundings, a spokesman for Edinburgh Zoo said Monday.

Yang Guang (Sunshine) and Tian Tian (Sweetie), the first of the endangered bears to live in Britain for 17 years, were welcomed to the Scottish capital with much fanfare Sunday, including a bagpipe band in kilts and flag-waving well-wishers dressed up as pandas.

The pair have stayed indoors since their arrival but have settled in "very well" in what has been "a positive so far", a zoo spokesman said.

"They are experiencing a little bit of jet lag, just like anyone else would after a long flight, but apart from that they are fine," he said.

"They have two hours' sleep, wake up, get fed, and then go back to sleep. They are eating well.

"We are working now on getting them into a routine after their first night. But they are frolicking around in their new inside enclosure and it's so far, so good."

The pandas will be gradually introduced to their outdoor enclosure in the next few days. Visitors will be able to see them from December 16.

The bears are spending 10 years on loan in Edinburgh, under a deal agreed after five years of high-level political and diplomatic negotiations.

Politicians are stressing their importance to relations between Britain and China, while Scotland is hoping for a tourism boost in austere times.

It is hoped the pandas will take advantage of a specially built "tunnel of love" between their separate enclosures and breed new cubs that will help preserve the [endangered species](#).

Each panda has an indoor section and a large outdoor enclosure, comprising lots of plants, trees, a pond and somewhere for them to shelter from the sun.

Edinburgh Zoo is paying about \$1 million (750,000 euros) a year to the Chinese authorities for the pandas, and has already reported a huge spike in ticket sales.

The bears are also expected to eat up to £70,000 (\$110,000, 80,000

euros) worth of bamboo a year, with the zoo growing 15 percent and the rest coming from The Netherlands.

Internet users can follow Yang Guang, the male, on hidden "panda-cams".

China is famed for its "panda diplomacy", using the endangered bears as diplomatic gifts to other countries.

Just 1,600 remain in the wild in China, with some 300 others in captivity.

Yang Guang and Tian Tian were flown in from Chengdu in Sichuan province, southwest China.

Animal welfare groups have condemned the loan, saying that wild creatures suffer in captivity and serious efforts to help [pandas](#) would instead protect them in their native environment.

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