

Ice cream keeps Rio zoo animals cool in heatwave

January 13 2015



A chimpanzee tastes an ice cream bar to endure summer heat at the Zoo in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on January 13, 2015

Ice cream, fruit and copious helpings of frozen meat helped keep the sweltering inhabitants of Rio's zoo cool Tuesday as temperatures soared.

Zoo staff handed out the treats as the thermometer touched 40 Celsius (104 Fahrenheit).

Chimpanzee Paulinho, 30, bagged two ice creams before bounding off to seek shade, while orangutan Else, 35, and her daughter Tanga, 20, gobbled an assortment of fruit.

Carla the elephant wolfed down 50 kilos (110 pounds) of [ice cream](#) dragged in by her handler, while Gabi, an eight-year-old jaguar, preferred to slurp on a hunk of frozen meat.

"The animals have a problem with the heat like all of us—sunstroke, dehydration, apathy. So we are taking measures to deal with the problems the heat can generate," zookeeper Karla Cunha told AFP.

The zoo has spent weeks preparing stocks of frozen food for the hot and sticky weather which assails Rio this time of year, high summer in the Southern Hemisphere.

The [zoo](#) also must ensure the animals have access to water—via pools or sprinklers. Meanwhile vegetation is left untrimmed to ensure maximum shade.

Providing cool meals "refreshes the animal and stimulates memory function, as well as the palate," Cunha said.

She noted that some of the meat-eaters, notably the tiger, lie on top of the meat as an additional means of keeping cool.

Watching Gabi the jaguar take a pre-lunch pool dip, visitor Aline Montez wished she could join.

"Look how cool he is over there while we're here baking in the heat," Montez quipped.



A mandrill takes a rest in the shade during a hot summer day at the Zoo in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on January 13, 2015

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