

## Icy treat for panda stars' birthday in Dutch ZOO

August 8 2017

---



Giant panda Xing Ya celebrated his fourth birthday with an ice cake in Ouwehands Dierenpark zoo. Xing Ya and Wu Wen are on loan from China and will stay in the Dutch Zoo for the next 15 years

Two multi-layered "cakes" made from ice, vegetable juice and fruit greeted a pair of giant pandas at a Dutch zoo Tuesday for their first birthday party since arriving from China.

Female Wu Wen (Beautiful Powerful Cloud) and her male companion

Xing Ya (Elegant Star) both turn four this month and officials at the Ouwehands Dierenpark in the central town of Rheen en decided to throw a joint party.

"At first they both approached the cakes with caution, with the male panda giving his an exploratory lick," said animal biologist Jose Kok.

"Then they became curious and realised 'hang on, this is something nice in my enclosure' and not long after that, the cake's layers were separated," Kok told AFP with a laugh.

It took a week to prepare the icy treats, which were also layered with the pandas' favourite food: bamboo shoots.

The two panda "superstars" arrived in The Netherlands in mid-April after an 8,000 kilometre (5,000 mile) journey from China, following years of negotiations in what has been dubbed "panda diplomacy".

Male panda Xing Ya turned four on August 5, while Wu Wen was born on August 11.

Officials decided to hold their birthday on August 8, the eighth day of the eighth month, figures which according to Chinese culture means good luck, Kok said.



Officials decided to hold their birthday on August 8, the eighth day of the eighth month, figures which according to Chinese culture means good luck

Dozens of delighted visitors were also treated to a real birthday cake in the form of a [giant panda](#).

The two pandas will be housed at the zoo for the next 15 years and for now are being kept in two separate enclosures, specially built for them at a price of seven million euros (\$8 million).

But Kok said it is hoped that the two bears would mate within the next year to help replenish global panda numbers.

Some 1,864 pandas remain in the wild in China, an increase from around 1,000 in the late 1970s, according to the environmental group WWF.

And just over 400 pandas live in zoos around the world, in conservation

projects set up with Beijing.

© 2017 AFP

Citation: Icy treat for panda stars' birthday in Dutch zoo (2017, August 8) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-08-icy-panda-stars-birthday-dutch.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.