



MAMMOTHS - FACTS and FIGURES

- In 1796, French Naturalist and Zoologist Georges Cuvier claimed fossilised remains found in Siberia to be different from the bones of the modern-day elephant and so the mammoth is recognised as a distinct species: a long-lost cousin of the elephant.
- The woolly mammoth grew hair up to a metre long and possessed a fine under wool layer giving it the 'woolly' name.
- The mammoth was a vegetarian and its diet consisted of close to 90% grass. The remaining 10% consists of flowering plants, buds or bark.
- The mammoth spent 18 hours a day eating and drinking up to 80 litres of water and 180kg of grass.
- At birth, the infant mammoth measured 70cm in height and weighed 70kg. At the end of its life, around 60 years old, it would have reached a height of 3m and weighed 5 tonnes.
- In comparison to humans that lose their teeth once in a lifetime, mammoths changed their teeth a total of five times between the ages of 6 months and 40 years and die of starvation once their final set of teeth wore down.
- The mammoth had ten teeth - four molars on top, four down below and the two incisors: the tusks!
- The mammoth grasped its food with its trunk and chewed from back to front using every last tooth.
- 100kg of trunk muscle guaranteed the mammoth strength and flexibility to tear away at tall grasses.
- The Mammoth was well equipped against the cold with small ears; short tail; 2cm thick hide and 8cm of fat to contain body heat and for insulation against freezing temperatures.
- The woolly mammoth is not the only type of mammoth to have walked the Earth: at least seven species have either co-existed or succeeded each other.
- The mammoth was a considerable resource for Palaeolithic man: two tonnes of edible meat, fat and bone marrow, as well as 215 bones of all shapes and sizes, sculpted into art objects or tools used to construct huts used for shelter or a place of worship.
- Man sculpted Venus figures, tools and jewellery in the prized ivory of mammoth tusks.

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Australian Museum 1 William Street Sydney NSW 2010 Open Daily 9.30am - 5.00pm

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- The last (dwarf) mammoths disappeared from the face of the earth between 7000 and 4000 years ago, on Wrangel Island, in the Arctic Ocean. They were just shy of being contemporary with the Egyptian Pharaohs!
- The vast majority of other mammoths disappeared close to 10,000 years ago when rising planetary temperatures slowly eliminated the steppe from the Earth's landscapes. For many scientists, this marks the end of the Glacial Period.
- The discovery of numerous incomplete mammoths in frozen Siberian ground and new excavation technologies maintaining freezing temperatures throughout have provided science with important data on the biology, physiology and DNA of this extinct animal.

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