The **giraffe** (*Giraffa camelopardalis*) is an [African](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Africa) [even-toed ungulate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Even-toed_ungulate) [mammal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mammal), the [tallest](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Largest_mammals%22%20%5Cl%20%22Even-toed_Ungulates_.28Artiodactyla.29%22%20%5Co%20%22Largest%20mammals)[living](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extant_taxon) terrestrial animal and the largest [ruminant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruminant). Its [specific name](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Specific_name_%28zoology%29) refers to its [camel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camel)-like face and the patches of color on its fur, which bear a vague resemblance to a [leopard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leopard)'s spots. The giraffe is noted for its extremely long neck and legs, as well as its horn-like [ossicones](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ossicone%22%20%5Co%20%22Ossicone). It stands 5–6 m (16–20 ft) tall and has an average weight of 1,600 kg (3,500 lb) for males and 830 kg (1,800 lb) for females. It is classified under the [family](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family_%28biology%29) [Giraffidae](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giraffidae%22%20%5Co%20%22Giraffidae), along with its closest extant relative, the [okapi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Okapi). There are nine subspecies, which are distinguished by their coat patterns.

The giraffe's scattered range extends from [Chad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chad) in the north to [South Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa) in the south, and from [Niger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niger) in the west to [Somalia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somalia) in the east. Giraffes usually inhabit [savannas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Savanna), [grasslands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grassland), and open [woodlands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woodland). Their primary food source is [acacia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acacia) leaves, which they can browse at heights that most other herbivores cannot reach. Giraffes are preyed on by [lions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lion), and calves are also targeted by leopards, [spotted hyenas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spotted_hyena) and [wild dogs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lycaon_pictus). Adult giraffes do not have strong social bonds, though they do gather in loose aggregations if they happen to be moving in the same general direction. Males establish social hierarchies through "necking", which are combat bouts where the neck is used as a weapon. [Dominant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominance_%28ethology%29) males gain mating access to females, who bear the sole responsibility for raising the young.

The giraffe has intrigued various cultures, both ancient and modern, for its peculiar appearance, and has often been featured in paintings, books and cartoons. It is classified by the [International Union for Conservation of Nature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Union_for_Conservation_of_Nature) (IUCN) as [Least Concern](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Least_Concern), but has been[extirpated](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extirpated) from many parts of its former range, and some subspecies are classified as[Endangered](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endangered). Nevertheless, giraffes are still found in numerous [national parks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_park) and [game reserves](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game_reserve).