

# Primary Worksheets: Echidna

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Animals such as the echidna are unusual. Echidna - pronounced "ee-kid-na" - is sometimes called a spiny anteater because of its sharp spines and habit of eating ants. Only echidnas lay eggs, along with the platypus, a relative. The anteater is not related to porcupines or hedgehogs, despite their similar appearance.

Echidnas come in three different kinds or species. Echidnas of the short-nosed variety are found throughout Australia and Tasmania. New Guinea is home to only two species of long-nosed echidna.

Echidnas have a short tail and are stocky. Spines stick out of their brown fur. They have strong claws on their feet that are useful for digging. Their tongues are very long and sticky, and they have very small mouths. With its long, sticky tongue, the short-nosed echidna catches ants and termites. Earthworms are the main food of long-nosed echidnas.



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Echidnas have two types of hair - short hair that acts as warmth, and it has longer hair that is harder and spikey. The echidna relies on its spiny hairs to defend itself. They curl up into balls like hedgehogs, so the spines are on the outside, or they burrow under rocks or logs, displaying only their backs to the world.

Their diet is based mostly on ants and termites, but they don't have any teeth. Insects and their movements can be detected by the snouts of echidnas. Echidnas extend their long tongues to get at food when they find it.

Short-nosed echidnas can grow from 12 to 18 inches long (30 to 45 centimeters). The snout is straight and pointed forward. The long-nosed echidna is usually 18–31 inches (45–78 centimeters) long. The snout of these animals is longer and downward pointing.



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Even though echidnas have warm blood, their body temperatures are the lowest among mammals - a chilly 32°C. A person's body temperature is 37°C. Also, the echidna is pretty chill; it moves slowly, avoids the heat during the day, and hibernates in the winter. Echidnas live up to 50 years because they live a slow lifestyle.

There are only two mammals in the world that lay eggs: the duck-billed platypus and the echidna. Unlike birds or reptiles, mammals - which include humans - have warm-blooded bodies, grow hair and fur, and have babies that don't hatch from eggs. Except for the egg bit, echidnas have all those things.

The female echidna usually lays one leathery egg. In the pouch on the mother's body, the egg is held. Ten days later, it hatches. Two months are spent in the pouch by the newborn. Milk is sucked from the mother's body through special hairs. A young echidna that is grown up and has grown spines and fur goes off on its own after finding food on its own.

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**Answer the questions.**

What is an echidna?

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What do they look like?

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Where do they like to live?

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**Answer the questions.**

What do they eat?

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How do they protect themselves?

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Why is it special?

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