



# Alpaca

*Vicugna pacos*



## What is the history of my relationship to man?

1000 years before the Great Pyramid of Giza was completed, the ancient ancestors of the Inca were measuring their wealth by the numbers of alpacas they owned and were enjoying the finest garments woven from the fleece of their great alpaca herds.

### Habitat / Climate

Mountain valleys  
Grassy plains

All weather patterns

### **Where am I from?**

Alpacas are kept in herds that graze on the level heights of the Andes of Ecuador, southern Peru, northern Bolivia, and northern Chile at an altitude of (11,483 ft)



### Other family members:

Llama

Camel

### **Who are my relatives?**

We are related to the Llama.

Alpacas and llamas differ in that alpacas have straight ears and llamas have banana-shaped ears. Aside from these differences, llamas are on average 1-2 feet taller and proportionally bigger than alpacas.



### Breeding

One cria per year  
twins are rare.

### **How am I born?**

We are born able to stand and drink and run soon after birth. Pregnancies last 11.5 months ± 2 weeks, and usually result in a single offspring called a cria.

### **How long does it take me to grow up and how long do I live?**

I may be weaned through human intervention at approximately 6 months and 60 pounds.

### Breeding Season

We can live as long as 20 years.

A	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
E	A	P	A	U	U	E	C	O	E		

### **What kind of family life do I have?**

We live in herds and work together as a group. We have a communal dung pile where we do not graze. Generally, our males have much tidier, and fewer dung piles than our females who tend to stand in a line and all go at once. Once a female approaches the dung pile and begins to urinate and/or defecate, the rest of the herd often follows.

### Names for:

Adult male- Male

Adult female-Female

Young- Cria

### **What do I eat and when do I eat?**

I like to graze on grassy fields, and if you give me grain I will follow you anywhere

### **Who are my predators?**

My meat was once considered a delicacy by Andean inhabitants. A recent resurgence in Alpaca meat was curtailed by a recent change to Peruvian law granting the Alpaca protected status. Today, it is illegal to slaughter or trade in Alpaca meat.



Comments:

Many plants are poisonous to the Alpaca, including the bracken fern, fireweed, oleander, and some azaleas.