

## Distribution and Dietary Behaviour of Tortoises

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### DESCRIPTION

Tortoises are reptiles that come under the family Testudinidae of the order Testudines. They distinguish themselves from other turtles by being entirely terrestrial, whereas many other turtle species are at least partially aquatic. Tortoises are mostly found in southern North America to southern South America, nearby the Mediterranean Sea, across Southeast Asia to Eurasia, in Madagascar, sub-Saharan Africa, and some Pacific islands [1]. Tortoises have tiny, thick feet like an elephant's, while turtles have webbed feet for spinning. A tortoise's shell is thicker and more rounded, while a turtle's shell is lighter and flat. The shell of a tortoise was covered by scales known as "scutes". The digestive process of a tortoise begins in the mouth, where the food gets softened with saliva, passes down the esophagus, and moves into the stomach. The walls of the stomach secrete gastric acid to break down food with the aid of stomach muscles. They have a tendency to swallow their food in distinct pieces. Bone forms beneath the layer of scutes when a tortoise matures. The bones are well grown and the shell is firm by the time the tortoise reaches the age of five [2].

### Dietary behaviour

Tortoises are widespread animals. These come under the species of reptile. Tortoises mainly choose vegetation and vegetables [3]. As such, most tortoises are herbivores. Tortoises in internment eat grass, hay, dark leafy vegetables, and weed. We can occasionally feed the fruits. Very few tortoises are essentially eat animal-based foods such as insects, worms, and molluscs. However, it is important to identify exactly what type of food your pet eats. In wild life, tortoises feed on weeds, grass, and shrubs, which are mostly found in their natural habitats. We should feed all tortoises on a concrete, grassy surface, flat rock or from a tray. One should not feed them on gravel or soil, as they can swallow these materials. Tortoises should be fed commercially produced diets such as the grassland tortoise diet, diet, rep-cal tortoise diet, and mazuri tortoise diet. The foods that tortoises eat every day are turnip greens, orchard grass hay, toss

timothy hay, mustard greens, escarole, endive, alfalfa, cactus pad, cactus pear, and collard greens [4]. The foods the tortoises cannot eat are buttercup, auricular, bean sprouts, citrus fruit, daffodil, azalea, and foxglove. We should not feed them foods that are high in sugar content, such as apples, grapes, melons, and strawberries, as these may cause them to die. Vitamin A and calcium are significant for both turtles and tortoises in order to develop the healthy skin[5].

### CONCLUSION

Some kinds of tortoises change their feeding habits based on their age. For example, sea turtles are mainly carnivorous from hatching until juvenile size; once they reach adult size, they then progressively shift to an herbivorous diet. Black sea turtles travel along the coast from breeding zones to feeding lands between the northern and southern limits of their distribution range. Loggerheads leave scavenging areas and travel on breeding migrations that can be a few thousand kilometers each way.

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