

Anaconda



The green anaconda is a member of a family of snakes called **constrictors**. Constrictors are not venomous snakes. They don't kill prey by delivering venom through a bite. Instead, constrictors wrap their bodies around their prey and squeeze until it stops breathing. The giant snake opens its mouth wide enough to swallow its victim—sometimes fish or caiman (relatives of crocodiles) and even jaguars and small deer. Anaconda jaws are held together with stretchy ligaments so they can open wide enough to swallow prey whole.

Anacondas are native to **South America** and can often be found in the swamps, marshes, and streams of tropical rain forests in the **Amazon** and **Orinoco** basins. These creatures prefer dark and damp places to reside, which is one reason why they are difficult to find and study. Anacondas are excellent swimmers who like to be near bodies of water.

Anacondas eat what they can to survive and are not terribly picky about their dinner. They are very likely to eat any prey they can catch and devour, including animals that are even bigger than they are. The ligaments and skin of an anaconda are highly elastic, so it would not be uncommon for them to eat turtles, pigs, deer, or even jaguars.

Other animals anacondas have been known to dine on are: fish, birds, **capibaras** (a large rodent), and **caimans** (animals that are like alligators). The mouth of an anaconda can stretch to accommodate the initial consumption of these larger animals. Upon eating them, an anaconda may have difficulty moving normally due to the digestion process. They will often find a safe place to hide and digest their meals.

What do they look like?

- Anacondas are typically dark green in coloration, and have 2 rows of black spots on their back and white markings on their sides.
- Anacondas are typically very large snakes – the green anaconda in particular is one of the longest snakes in the world. They have an average length of 20 feet, but can be up to 30 long.

Believe it or not!

- Believe it or not, anacondas can be up to 30 feet long – as long as a school bus! They can also weigh up to 550 pounds, which is equal to 11 eleven schoolchildren. Females are generally larger than the males.

Nombre: _____ 4____ Fecha:

▪ Believe it or not, anacondas can stay under water for 10 minutes before they need to come up for air. Typically these creatures prefer to swim with their body submerged and their head above the murky waters.

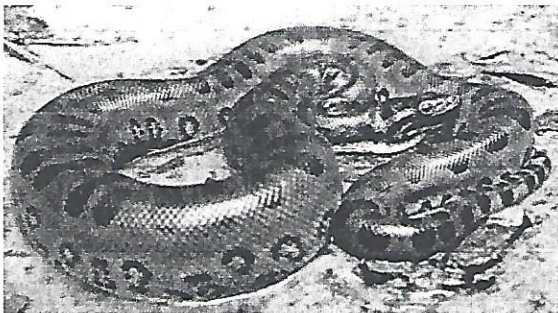
*Believe it or not, a particularly large meal can keep an anaconda satiated for a few weeks. Considering anacondas can eat animals thicker than their own bodies, this kind of makes sense, doesn't it? Imagine if your dinner was thicker than you were – you would probably be full for a little while, too!

*Believe it or not, one of the biggest anacondas ever found weighed an estimated 2,500 pounds. The snake, called **Titanoboa**, was discovered in a coal mine in the Amazon rainforest.

▪ Believe it or not, when anacondas are eating mainly smaller animals, they can eat up to 40 pounds of food a day. For humans 40 pounds of food would be equal to eating your microwave, weight-wise.

▪ Believe it or not, anacondas don't use any venom to kill their prey or attack humans – as we mentioned before, these creatures are not venomous snakes. To eat their food, anacondas use their body to restrict their prey and then swallow the prey without needing to chew.

▪ Despite carrying no venom, anacondas *can* still bite – they do have fangs, after all. People have been bitten by anacondas before, but they have survived with no complications because these bites are not poisonous.



Anaconda



continent of South America

Vocabulary:

Serpiente – snake

Selva tropical -rain forest

América del sur -South America

Amazona - Amazon

Nombre: _____ 4____ Fecha:

Anacondas

Contesta las preguntas.

1. What continent can anacondas be found in? _____
2. In what two **basins** can anacondas be found?

3. Name 4 different animals anacondas eat. _____

4. What is a capybara? _____
5. What is a caiman? _____
6. What colors are typically found on an anaconda?

7. What is the average length of an anaconda? _____
8. How much do they typically weigh? _____
9. What is a Titanoboa? _____

9. How much did the Titanoboa weight? _____
10. How does an anaconda kill its prey? _____

Nombre: _____ 4____ Fecha:

11. How much food (in pounds) can an anaconda eat in one day?

TRUE/FALSE

12. Anacondas do not have venom. _____

13. Anacondas cannot swim. _____

14. Anacondas often find a safe place to hide and digest their food. _____

15. Female anacondas are larger than males. _____

16. Anacondas eat about 4 lbs of food a day. _____

17. Anacondas can stay under water for 10 minutes. _____

18. Anacondas are venomous snakes. _____

19. Anacondas have fangs. _____

20. Titanoboa was discovered in a coal mine in the Amazon rainforest. _____