



Ostrich Information

animal	ostrich	0924	Struthio camelus		
		Fast runner	Scavenger	By Noah Fields	
		Big eyeball	Africa		
		Flightless	400 lbs		
		Nine feet tall	Kick predators		

The ostrich is one of the most interesting animals on the planet. Here are some facts.

This summer I saw six ostriches in the zoo at the botanical garden in Paris. The experience was utterly shocking. These animals were more impressive to me than the lions, or the gorillas, and more terrifying too. The birds reminded me of space aliens. They were so much larger than I had imagined, in fact, they were towering over me. They were very different from what I expected, and the encounter demanded that I investigate further. Here are a few facts you might not know about this enormous, and oddly graceful flightless bird.

Ostriches have been hunted to extinction in Syria, Arabia. Now they can only be found in Central Africa, in open country, desert areas, and dry savanna. There are Ostrich ranches in the US, where Ostriches are raised for their meat, eggs, and leather.

The Ostrich can take 3.5-m (12-ft) strides and run at a sustained speed of 50 km/h (30 mph) for 15 minutes or more. In short bursts it may reach 70 km/h (43 mph).

Ostriches are so powerful that a single kick at a predator, such as a lion, could be fatal.

Ostriches can grow up to 9 - 10 feet tall, and can weigh as much as 400lb.

Ostriches have the largest eyes of any land animal, with a diameter of 50mm (only those of whales, are larger).

Ostriches occasionally attempt to hide from predators in the savanna by stretching out their neck, keeping their heads down, hence the myth that ostriches bury their heads in the sand.

Ostriches make many kinds of noises, including snorts, whistles and a sound kind of like a cat hiss and lion roar.

Ostriches are omnivorous, but feed primarily on seeds, leaves, roots and flowers of various grasses, shrubs and trees. Locusts and other invertebrates are sometimes eaten. Many of the items eaten by Ostriches are unpalatable to other creatures, but are broken down by the bird's 14 metre long intestine. Pebbles and sand are regularly swallowed and stored in the gizzard to help break down tough plant material. Ostrich do not need to drink, as most of their moisture is extracted from succulent plants. On hot days they are able to raise their body temperature by four degrees to reduce water loss.

Males are jet black with white plumage and bright red or blue skin; females are fairly uniform in color, with earthy gray-brown plumage and skin color.