



Camels: Ships of the Desert

Did you know that camels are known as “ships of the desert”? Camels have this nickname because they glide across the deserts in Asia and Africa. They carry people and cargo, just like ships at sea. The desert is very hot and dry, with little food or water. Camels are able to do well in the desert because of the way their bodies are made.

First, camels have thick lips and a thick lining in their mouths. This lets them eat thorny desert plants, like cactus. They also can close their noses to keep sand from blowing in. Their eyelashes are long and thick to keep the sand out of their eyes. Their thick eyebrows shade their eyes from the sun. The ears of camels are short and round, with thick fur to keep sand from getting in.

Also, the long legs of camels keep them high up off the hot sand. Their legs are wide apart. Their huge feet have big pads on them. These keep camels from sinking into the sand.

The camels’ fur reflects the sun and keeps camels from getting too hot. The fur is about the same color as sand. That helps camels blend in.

Camels that live in Asia have two humps. There are not many of them left in the world. Camels that live in Africa have only one hump. The camels’ humps are made of fat. The fat lets camels go for up to two weeks with no food. It also helps to keep them cool.

Still another thing that helps camels live in the desert is that they can go for several days without water. One reason is that the bodies of camels change to fit the heat of the air around them.

Camels eat almost anything. They can carry up to 400 pounds for 25 miles in a day. They can live for as long as 50 years. They can also run very fast – up to 40 miles an hour!

For these reasons, you can see why camels are great animals to have in the desert!