

# Pandas get their own Christmas cake



Christmas came early for Edinburgh Zoo's giant panda Tian Tian. To celebrate the start of the holidays, keepers baked a special Christmas panda cake as a festive surprise for one of the Zoo's most famous residents.

The panda cake, which panda keeper Alison Maclean measured and mixed to perfection, is made from a secret panda cake recipe gifted from the Zoo's Chinese colleagues. It was crafted into the shape of a Christmas tree and drizzled in honey before being placed on the climbing frame in Tian Tian's outdoor enclosure. A firm favourite with both Tian Tian and Yang Guang, the cake is a special nutritional supplement which they receive daily as part of their regular diet.

Alison Maclean, team leader of Giant Pandas and carnivores, said:

"Christmas is a perfect opportunity for us to get creative with the food and enrichment which we give to the animals living at Edinburgh Zoo.

"The special Christmas panda cake will contain all the same ingredients as the cakes I regularly bake from scratch right here at the Zoo. We are lucky to have been gifted this recipe from our colleagues in China as it supplements a vital part of the giant panda's natural diet.



“It’s a common misconception that giant pandas are vegetarians and only eat bamboo, however they are classed as herbivorous carnivores. Pandas may be known for lazing about and munching their way through forests of bamboo which makes up a mighty 99% of their diet, however they also hunt and catch small rodents as the last 1% of their diet. We feed Tian Tian and Yang Guang panda cake to supplement this protein.”

So now all we have to wonder about is whether 2015 will be the year that the pitter patter of little panda paws is heard.

The pandas have had three attempts at mating and producing a cub since arriving in Scotland but all without success thus far.