



Kinkajous



HEALTH

Length: 15-24" long
(additional tail length 16-22")

Weight: 4-8 lbs.

Lifespan: 30-40 years in captivity



OVERVIEW

The Kinkajou (*Potos flavus*), also known as the Honey Bear, or Cat-Monkey is a rainforest mammal of the family Procyonidae related to the olingo, ringtail, cacomistle, raccoon, and coati. It is the only member of the genus *Potos*. Native to Central America and South America, this arboreal mammal is not particularly rare, though it is seldom seen by people because of its strict nocturnal habits. Kinkajous may be mistaken for ferrets or monkeys, but are not related.

An average adult kinkajou weighs 2–3 kg (4–7 lb). Growing to an average body length of 17-22 inches, their tail is 16-22 inches in length in addition to the body. Although classified in the order Carnivora and equipped with sharp teeth, they actually primarily eat fruit. One source of help in getting fruit in small areas is their long tongue that is slender and has a length of 5 inches. The tongue is also used to obtain nectar from flowers, allowing the kinkajou to play the role of a pollinator. Nectar is sometimes also obtained by simply eating flowers. Although captive animals will avidly eat honey (earning them the name "Honey Bear"), it has not yet been observed in the diet of wild kinkajous. Like raccoons, kinkajous have remarkable manipulatory abilities, in this respect rivaling primates. Kinkajous also have short-haired, fully prehensile tails (like some New World monkeys), which they use as a fifth hand in climbing. However, they do not use their tails for grasping food. Special scent glands near the mouth and on the throat and belly allow them to mark their travel routes and territory. Kinkajous sleep together in family units and groom each other. While they are usually solitary when foraging, they occasionally do so in small groups, and sometimes also associate with olingos. Kinkajous are distinguished from olingos by their prehensile tail, foreshortened muzzle, extrudable tongue, and lack of an anal scent gland.