

Dino-Covers!

Dinosaurs hold a continual fascination for most people. They're the ultimate representation of our prehistoric past. They're huge; they're small. They're terrifying; they're cute. They're the stuff nightmares...and dreams...are made of...even more so since *Jurassic Park!*

Dinosaurs lived on Earth from about 230 million years ago to about 65 million years ago. No one knows exactly how long a dinosaur's lifespan was. Some scientists speculate some dinosaurs lived for as long as 200 years. Scientists estimate that there were over 1,000 different species of non-avian dinosaurs and over 500 distinct genera. They speculate there are many still undiscovered dinosaurs and that there may be as many as 1,850 genera. Dinosaurs lived on all the continents, including Antarctica. While many people think dinosaurs were massive, dinosaurs were usually human sized or smaller. Scientists believe that the larger bones were just easier to be fossilized. All dinosaurs laid eggs. About 40 kinds of dinosaur eggs have been discovered.

The first dinosaur to be formally named was the Megalosaurus, back in 1824. Did you know that the smartest dinosaur was...The Troodon!? (Scientists measure smartness by figuring out how big an animal's brain is compared to its body. This is called "encephalization quotient."). Did you know that the dumbest dinosaur was ...The stegosaurus!? It had a brain as big as a walnut in a body weighing nearly two tons!

The fastest Dinosaur was... Coelophysis and other Ornithomimosaurs. Scientists think these dinosaurs ran up to 30 miles per hour for short distances! The biggest dinosaurs were Saurpods. Seismosaurus was 165 feet long (its tail helped!). Arentinosaurus was the heaviest at 100 tons. The Brachiosaurus was 39 feet high (which helped it reach branches in trees). Giganotosaurus was the largest hunting dinosaur, at 46 feet long

and up to 8 tons! The smallest dinosaur was the Saltopus. It was only 3 feet long, and weighed about five pounds. [<http://www.kidsdigdinos.com/dinosaurfacts.htm>]

Since dinosaurs have become so popular in our culture, first via science, then via museums, and finally via the arts, they've been pictured on various advertisements, used for product logos, and pop up now and again on...matchcovers!

There *are* collectors who collect Dinosaurs. Chester Crill, CA, reported having 49 such covers in his collection in April 2005.

