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Press release

For she's a jolly good fellow!

Zoo Berlin's baby gorilla celebrates her first birthday

It was one year ago today that little Tilla the gorilla was born at Zoo Berlin. Since then, she has enriched the life of her family and conquered the hearts of Zoo visitors. To celebrate her special day, the keepers made a birthday cake out of rice and vegetables for the entire gorilla family to enjoy. A lot of effort was put into preparing the feast – after all, Tilla is Zoo Berlin's first baby gorilla in over 16 years. She came into the world on the night of 15 February 2021, and is the first offspring of female Bibi (24) and silverback Sango (17). The gorilla troop has coped wonderfully with the arrival of the infant. "Tilla has been developing splendidly since birth, with mum Bibi taking great care of her baby and Sango also doing his bit as dad," says division head Christian Aust. "Tilla is now becoming more and more independent and adventurous, inquisitively exploring every corner of her habitat – and occasionally dangling upside down from the vines."

The western lowland gorilla is classified as "Critically Endangered" on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The main factors threatening the gorilla's survival are the destruction of its habitat by deforestation and mining, as well as illegal hunting. But the gorillas at Zoo Berlin can help their fellows in the wild: "Little Tilla is a wonderful ambassador for her species and, together with the entire gorilla group, is helping us draw attention to the threats these animals face in the wild," says Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem. He also makes an urgent appeal to all fans of the adorable little ape: "We would have loved to have given the young gorilla and her family a bigger birthday present than a cake, as our primates urgently need a new home. Their current housing conditions do not meet our high standards for species-appropriate habitats. Unfortunately, however, we cannot make this big birthday wish come true on our own and gratefully welcome any support." With coronavirus-related losses in the tens of millions, the last two years have dealt a huge financial blow to Zoo Berlin. As a result, getting the money together for upcoming construction projects like the new Primate House is an even greater challenge. Zoo Berlin therefore needs outside support to realise its goal of giving the primates a more spacious home with natural features as soon as possible. Donations are currently being collected for Tilla and her family under the campaign motto "My gorilla needs a villa at the Zoo". Each and every contribution towards little Tilla's future is greatly appreciated: **Tilla needs a villa – Zoo Berlin ([zoo-berlin.de](https://www.zoo-berlin.de))**

**Background:**

Gorillas are the largest and heaviest of the great apes. Adult males can weigh up to 200 kilos and reach two metres in height. Western lowland gorillas live in families made up of several females and one dominant male who is known as the silverback. Gorillas are diurnal animals that spend most of their time eating. Their diet is almost exclusively vegetarian, consisting of leaves, herbaceous plants, roots and fruits. They play an important role as “gardeners” in their African rainforest home, as they spread the seeds of numerous plants and thus help to maintain a diverse ecosystem.