These portraits lovingly capture the koala in all its glory, its serenity, tranquillity, and calmness for all to see.

No other living being on earth more resembles a teddy bear, and strangely, this most affable creature is the farthest thing from being a bear. Even though it is sometimes still called a 'native bear' even by Australians themselves, it's a pouch-bearing marsupial which places it in a completely different zoological family from real bears.

Koala babies are called 'joeys'. They are blind as well as deaf when born in an embryonic state typical for marsupial species. They are born after a 35-day gestation period, weighing less than half a gram. A newborn koala measures less than one inch (less than 2cm), or roughly the size of a small gummi bear.

A joey will stay with the mother until a new young emerges from the pouch. Sometimes the mother will not have a baby each year. In this case the joey might stay with her for a longer period, thereby allowing it a greater chance of survival.

Koalas smell like eucalyptus and are known to be among the cleanest animals, repelling most insects and microbes, except for certain ticks. Eucalyptus is a natural antagonist to fleas, lice, and bacteria.

Koalas are unusually fastidious eaters. They need to carefully smell each gum leaf to detect possible traces of poisons such as hydrocyanic acid and phenolics that are often present in eucalyptus leaves, which koalas also happen to favour most. On any given day, a koala might even prefer the leaves of one tree over those of another. This poses a special challenge for koalas kept in captivity. Zookeepers need to present each koala with up to five pounds of leaves from a variety of branches of different trees each day, to yield one pound of nourishment.

Koalas can store food in their cheeks, as their jaws have a large gap between their front teeth and back molars. Another purpose of this gap is to strip leaves off branches as they are being pulled through the cavity.

Koalas are solitary animals living in complex social groups, or 'home ranges' where trees in overlapping territories are used for social interaction. Koalas are not migratory, but rather highly territorial, and do not exist in stable breeding groups. Females stay close to their young which will occasionally play with other joeys. Males keep to themselves unless they are looking for a mate.











KOCICIS moving portraits of serenity

