Visiting the Zoo’s Elephant Exhibit

National Zoo Social Narrative: Elephant Trails

Smithsonian
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There are many animals to visit at the Zoo. Today, I am going to visit the elephant exhibit.
There are many places to see Asian elephants at the National Zoo!
Our elephants have a big habitat which includes four outdoor yards, an elephant exercise trek and the Elephant Community Center.
Sometimes it can be hard to find the elephants because there are so many places for them to explore within their habitat.

If I can’t find the elephants, I can ask a volunteer in a red shirt to help locate them during my Zoo visit!
One place I might see elephants today is the Elephant Outpost. I can follow the orange elephant footprints to get to this outdoor elephant viewing spot.
I may see **signs** that tell me how to be safe when visiting Elephant Outpost. These signs will help keep the animals and visitors safe.
At Elephant Outpost, there are different interactive elements that I can touch and explore to learn more about the animals.
There are some examples of different objects that researchers use to study elephants, like a **dart gun** and a big **elephant collar**. These objects are not real and cannot hurt me.
At certain time of day, I can watch an elephant training demonstration and hear zoo keepers talk about the elephants. It may be crowded at this demonstration, and may be loud. The keeper may talk through a microphone.
Sometimes, elephants are given access to the elephant exercise trek, where they can walk up an enclosed pathway. I can watch them from a distance as they walk up and down the hill. They will be safe, and so will I.
I may see big objects in the elephant habitats, like tires or barrels. These are elephant toys, called enrichment, which the elephants can play with. Big animals need big toys!
I may see or hear **water**. Elephants like to play with water, especially on hot days.
I may see people working in the elephant yards. They are animal keepers, helping to care for the Zoo’s elephants. They are allowed to be in the yard, and know how to stay safe.
I may not see any elephants at Elephant Outpost— and that’s okay! Elephants are sometimes indoors, and sometimes in other parts of their home. I can walk up the hill to look for the elephants in the Elephant Community Center.
I will know I have at the **Elephant Community Center** when I see double doors and a sign that says “Elephant Community Center.”
When I walk in, I may see a **big exhibit** and a lot of **people** looking at the elephants. It may be loud and there may be a strong **smell**.
I may see or smell elephant poop. Asian elephants can poop up to 13 times each day! Keepers pick up poop several times a day.
While in the Elephant Community Center, animal keepers may open or close the big **sliding doors** to let elephants inside the Center or out into the yards. These doors may make a loud noise when opening and closing.
At the Elephant Community Center, there are different **signs and movable pieces** that I can touch and explore to learn more about the animals.
I may see other people looking at the elephants, or playing with some of the different interactive pieces of the exhibit. I can play with the interactive pieces, too, if I want.
If I want to keep watching elephants, I can walk outside and may see them from other places.
It can be fun to visit elephants in different places around the Zoo!