

Bart the Bear Hibernates

Hello, my name is Bart. I am a brown bear who lives in the mountain forest. Today is my last day of hunting for food before the long winter begins. You see, unlike other animals that stay awake during the winter, I go into a long, deep sleep called hibernation.



Now, the word hi-ber-na-tion might sound like a big word, but it's just a fancy word that means I will rest in my cozy den all winter long—without needing to hunt for food. Over the summer and fall months, I eat hundreds of pounds of food to get ready for hibernation.

What is my favorite food, you might ask? Salmon! Salmon is my favorite food. Every day, I hunt for fish in the river and catch them with my paws. I also eat lots and lots of berries. They taste just like dessert to me!

What is your favorite dessert?

Oh, look! There is a giant raspberry bush right over there! It is full of juicy raspberries. Yummy for my tummy!



Now that my face and paws are covered in red raspberry juice, I think I'll go take a bath in the river. The water would feel too cold to most, but to me, it feels very refreshing. Ahh, that feels nice.

I step out of the rushing river and shake all the water out of my fur. I'm nice and clean! The afternoon sun will dry me out and warm me up before nightfall. Since I won't see my forest friends for a few months, I better tell them goodbye. Up in the tree, I see my friend, Squirrel.

"Hello up there!" I call.

"Why, hello Bart," Squirrel says.

"I'm going into hibernation soon and wanted to say goodbye," I say.

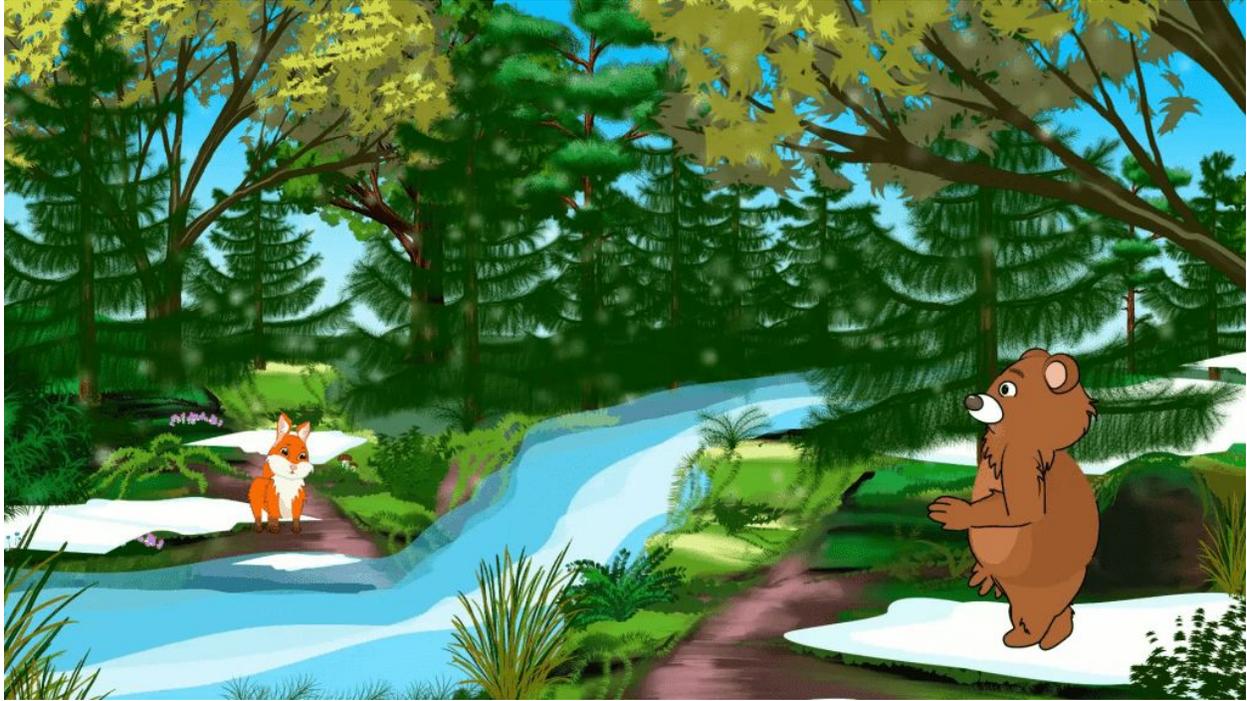
"Have a nice, peaceful sleep," Squirrel says, as she waves goodbye.



She is storing up food for the winter. Her nest is full of nuts, seeds, and berries. Even though squirrels don't usually hibernate, they stay in their nests if it's really cold outside.

Moving on, I see Fox. "Goodbye, Fox," I shout. "I'm heading into my den for the winter."

"Goodbye, Bart!" Fox says. "I'll look forward to seeing you next spring!"



Fox doesn't need to hibernate. His coat has grown thicker and thicker to protect him through the winter months. He will continue to hunt and explore the forest.

I walk along and say goodbye to all my friends. I will miss them. But, it won't be long and spring will come. The temperatures will rise and I'll wake up from my long winter's nap. That's how hibernation works! As long as it stays cold outside, my body will think it's time to sleep. But when it warms up, my body will sense that it's time to wake up. Isn't that neat?

Well, now, look at that. The sun is starting to set and the air is growing cold. I see a few stars appearing in the sky. It is finally time for me to hibernate.



“Good bye, raspberry bush. Goodbye, river. I’ll see you next spring when I wake up. It’s time to make myself cozy in my warm den.”

Laying down in my snuggly bed, I feel my breathing slow down to a soft, steady rhythm. I start to snore and drift into a nice, peaceful slumber. Even if a loud noise wakes me up, I will roll over and go right back to sleep.

Aah, it feels good to hibernate. I just hope I have lots of sweet dreams about exploring the forest with my friends. After all, dreams can be full of fun and adventure!

