

# Marsican Brown Bear: A Creative Adventure in the Italian Mountains!

## What You'll Need (Our Explorer Toolkit!):

- Drawing paper
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- Modeling clay (brown for the bear, green for plants, blue for water if you like!)
- A map of Italy (or a way to look at one on a computer/tablet)
- Child-safe scissors (optional, for cut-outs)
- Glue stick (optional, for cut-outs)
- Optional: Brown construction paper, felt pieces (brown, green), googly eyes for extra crafty fun!

## Let's Begin Our Adventure! (Introduction)

Hi there, Young Explorer! Imagine you're trekking through the beautiful, wild mountains of Italy. It's a sunny day, and the air is fresh. Suddenly, you spot something amazing – a magnificent Marsican brown bear! These aren't just any brown bears; they are very special and live only in a particular part of Italy. Today, we're going to become experts on these wonderful animals and use our creativity to bring them to life!

## Meet the Marsican Brown Bear! (Learning Time)

The Marsican brown bear (*Ursus arctos marsicanus*) is a unique type of brown bear. Let's find out some cool facts:

- **Where do they live?** Their home is in the Apennine Mountains, right in the middle of Italy! They love forests and grassy areas high up in the mountains.
- **What do they look like?** They are big and furry, usually a creamy-brown to reddish-brown color. They have strong claws for digging and climbing. They are usually quite shy!
- **What do they eat?** They are omnivores, which means they eat both plants and animals. Their favorite snacks include berries, acorns, roots, insects, and sometimes small animals.

### Activity 1: Map Detective!

Let's find the Marsican brown bear's home! Grab your map of Italy. Can you find the Apennine Mountains? They run down the "boot" of Italy. Point to where you think the bears might live. (Hint: It's in central Italy, including regions like Abruzzo, Lazio, and Molise).

## Let's Get Creative! (Art Studio Time)

Now that we know a bit about these amazing bears, it's time to use our artistic skills! You can choose how you want to create your Marsican brown bear and its home.

### Activity 2: Your Marsican Bear Masterpiece!

Choose one of these fun projects:

- **Option A: Bear Drawing/Painting:** On your paper, draw or paint a Marsican brown bear in its mountain habitat. Think about what its home looks like – are there tall trees? Berries for it to eat? Maybe some mountains in the background?

- **Option B: Clay Bear Sculpture:** Use your modeling clay to sculpt a Marsican brown bear. Then, create a little scene for it. Maybe it's sniffing for berries, or taking a nap under a clay tree you make!

Take your time and have fun! Show us your bear's personality and its beautiful Italian mountain home.

## Protecting Our Bear Friends (Conservation Corner)

Marsican brown bears are very special, but sadly, there aren't many of them left – they are endangered. This means they are at risk of disappearing forever.

### Why are they endangered?

- Their forest homes are sometimes shrinking.
- Sometimes they get too close to towns or farms.

### Activity 3: Bear Guardian Brainstorm!

Let's think like a Bear Guardian! What's one thing people can do to help protect the Marsican brown bear and its home? (Ideas: Create safe parks for them, learn more about them and teach others, be careful not to leave food out if you live near wildlife.)

You can draw a picture of your idea or tell me about it!

## Show and Tell & Wrap-up!

Wow, amazing work, Explorer!

- Let's see your fantastic Marsican brown bear artwork! Tell me about what you created.
- Can you remember two cool things about the Marsican brown bear?
- Where in Italy do these special bears live? (Point to the map again!)
- What's one way we can all help protect them?

You've done an excellent job learning about and celebrating the Marsican brown bear today! You're officially a Marsican Brown Bear Friend! Keep being curious and loving nature!

Maybe later you can find a storybook about bears or watch a nature video (with a grown-up) to learn even more!