

Guinea Pig



Cavia porcellus

Guinea pigs are rodents indigenous to South American and have been kept as domestic pets for over 400 years. Available in a variety of coats and colors, the guinea pig makes a good pet because it is generally nonaggressive and rarely bites or scratches. They range in size from eight to eleven inches at 1.5 pounds to 2.5 pounds and have an average captive lifespan of five years.

Housing

Size

The minimum size you should consider for your pig is 30in x 15in, but as with most small mammals, the larger the enclosure the better. We recommend 24in² for every pig in your enclosure. Baby guinea pigs may be comfortable in something smaller, but they won't stay little for long. It's best to get housing from the start that will accommodate the animal for the entirety of its life. Guinea pigs prefer company and will appreciate the presence of another guinea pig. A pair of same sex adults can be housed together if they were raised together, otherwise they should be kept separate. The enclosure should have a solid bottom; wire bottom cages can cause foot injuries. The temperature in your enclosure should not exceed 80°F.

Bedding

Any one of the many recycled paper or pulp beddings is your best option. Wood based beddings carry the risk of volatile oils that could prove detrimental to your pig's health as well as hazards from your pig chewing the bedding. Bedding should be changed frequently to prevent accumulation of feces and high levels of ammonia from urine.

Decor

A hide for each pig is a must to provide a safe, quiet place for your pigs to retreat to. Guinea pigs should have several options for chewing present in their enclosure. There are a myriad of mineral and wood chew types available to serve this function. Guinea pigs will appreciate and make use of toys they can climb over or push around. Wheels should be avoided as guinea pigs are not structured for their use and back injuries could result.



Some products to look for

- Sunseed Sun Fun Guinea Pig Food
- Boxo Comfort Small Animal Bedding
- Kaytee My First Home Habitat
- Superpet Critter Canteen Water Bottle
- Living World Ergonomic Dish
- Oasis Vitamin C Vita Drops
- 8 in 1 Citru C Treats
- Critter Ware Twigloo
- FM Brown's Crisp Stick Bundle



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Water

Water bowls and water bottles are both options to provide water for your pig; however guinea pigs may sit or play in a water dish. If your pig does this, you'll need to change the water bowl multiple times a day. A water bottle is a more practical option that will prevent your guinea pig from making a mess. A chew proof glass water bottle will prevent your pig from chewing through it. Fresh water should be provided every day.

Diet

Pellets

Pellet food for your guinea pig should be timothy hay based and contain vitamin C because guinea pigs lack the ability to produce their own vitamin C. Vitamin C degrades over time, so you'll want to make sure you finish your bag of food before it hits 90 days after the mill date. Alfalfa hay based diets should be avoided because they can be too high in calcium.

Fresh Food

Fresh foods are an excellent supplemental nutrition option. There are many fruit and vegetable options that are safe for your pig, but some are unsafe; make sure you do your research before offering fresh foods to your pig. Fresh fruits and veggies should make up no more than 5% of your pig's daily food intake, however, an orange slice can be offered daily for extra vitamin C.

Hay

Timothy hay should be made available for your pig to free feed on as it needs to. Alfalfa hay should be avoided as it is too high in calcium. Hay should be green. Yellow or brown hay is old and should not be used.

Treats

There are a variety of treats available, but they should only make up a small percentage of your pig's overall food intake. Some varieties available are yogurt drops, baked pretzels designed for small mammals, and treat bars. Vitamin C supplementation may be required to keep your pig healthy.



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