

Guinea Pig

Average Size: approximately 7"-12" long

Life Span: 5-8 years

Diet and Feeding:

Staple diet: Choose a fortified diet, made especially for guinea pigs. Fill the bowl approximately 3/4 full.

Hay: Offer a handful of Timothy hay every day to add needed fiber to her diet.

Vegetables:* Treat your guinea pig to small amounts (approximately 1/8 cup) of carrots and dark green leafy vegetables like collard greens, kale or mustard greens daily. Take care not to overfeed these fresh foods. They contain a lot of moisture and too much can cause an upset stomach.

Fruits:* Fruits rich in Vitamin C, like sliced kiwi and oranges, are tasty and nutritious treats. Give one or two tablespoons every other day.

Treat sticks & chews: These hard and crunchy treats keep your guinea pig's front teeth trimmed, so always keep one in the habitat. Treats should be less than 10% of total food intake.

Water: Change and fill your guinea pig's water bottle with clean water every day. Don't forget to add the vitamin C drops.

*Remember that fresh food items require their own dish and should be removed from the habitat after four hours to prevent spoilage.

Housing/Habitat:

Housing: Your guinea pig needs a well-ventilated home with a solid floor, large enough for a food dish, water bottle and a hiding area (if one isn't built in). There should be plenty of room for all cage accessories, and for her to move around freely. Minimum cage size is 24"L x 12"W x 12"H.

Bedding: Line the home with 2"-3" of aspen or other appropriate bedding, and change it weekly or more often if needed.

Cage placement: Place the habitat in a cool, low humidity area, out of direct sunlight and away from drafts.

Normal Behavior and Social Interaction:

Guinea pigs are gentle. They are social and will enjoy the companionship of another guinea pig (if you have two, house only same gender pairs), as well as interaction with their pet parents. Although shy at first, guinea pigs will develop intense affection for their owners, and may whistle to signal their happiness.

Guinea pigs are diurnal. This means that guinea pigs are most active during the day. They will sleep about 4-6 hours per night.

Lifting & handling: Handle your guinea pig gently. Place one hand under her shoulders with your thumb over and around the neck, use your other hand to support under her back end, and hold firmly but not tightly.

Vitamin C: Guinea pigs cannot store or manufacture vitamin C, so you'll need to add a supplement to her water daily.

Special needs: Your guinea pig's front teeth never stop growing, so she needs lots of healthy things to chew on like treat sticks and chews.

Health/Cleanliness:

Please remember that all pets may bite or scratch, and may transmit disease to humans. Keep your guinea pig's home clean and wash your hands before and after handling your guinea pig, or cleaning her home. Infants, young children, pregnant women, people with compromised immune systems, and the infirm or elderly are at greater risk of infections and should use caution when in contact with the guinea pig or its habitat. Consult your doctor for more information.

The information on this care sheet is NOT a substitute for regular veterinary care.