

Chinchilla Care Sheet



Chinchillas are remarkable creatures native to the stunning Andes Mountains in South America, found in beautiful regions of Bolivia, Peru, and Chile. They've brilliantly adapted to their chilly environment with their thick coats and strong hind legs, which are perfect for navigating the mountain ledges. Similarly, creating a comfortable habitat for a Leopard Gecko is vital; maintaining a consistent diet and surroundings helps them thrive. It's fascinating to note that chinchillas are incredibly social animals and thrive when kept in pairs or groups. In the wild, they often form communities of about 100!

Exercise

Chinchillas are incredibly active and playful little athletes! These charming creatures can leap an astonishing 6 feet high, so it's essential to ensure that when they're out of their cage, they're in a secure area where they can't escape. To keep them fit and happy, provide a cage filled with levels, ramps, cosy hammocks, and engaging toys. Remember, chinchillas love to chew, so ensure everything they interact with is safe for them. Aim for at least 1-2 hours of playtime outside their cage each day, especially in the evening when they're bursting with energy. Your chinchilla will thrive with enriching activities and lots of love!

Get to know

Getting to know your chinchilla is an enriching journey! These delightful creatures have a cautious nature, so a little patience goes a long way. As you build a bond, you'll uncover their captivating personality, and they'll come to recognise you as their haven. When you first bring your chinchilla home, allow them to settle into their new space. Take your time to introduce yourself, letting the relationship develop naturally. Remember, sudden movements can be intimidating, so gently extend your hand to show that you bring comfort, not fear.

Enjoy this special time together; it's an adventure filled with trust and love! Your chinchilla will appreciate your care, and soon you'll both share an excellent connection that brings joy to your lives.

Enclosure

Creating a wonderful home for your chinchilla is an exciting adventure! It's essential to ensure that their cage is just the right size. For a single chinchilla, aim for a minimum of 3 feet by 2 feet by 2 feet, and if you plan to welcome more, go even larger; these playful creatures thrive in spacious environments! Choose a sturdy metal cage, as chinchillas love to chew and could easily escape from plastic. Be mindful of the bar spacing; around half an inch is ideal, as they are surprisingly adept at squeezing through small gaps. Additionally, solid flooring is crucial; avoid gridded wire to protect their delicate feet. With these simple guidelines, you'll create a safe and happy haven for your charming companion!

LIFESPAN

10 to 20
years in
captivity

SIZE

9 to 14 inches long, with a
tail adding another 3 to 6
inches

TEMPERATURE

10 °C - 18 °C
Preferred temperature

HUMIDITY

40% - 50%

Environment

Substrate: Chinchillas thrive best with a soft, high-quality bedding that keeps them healthy and happy! Look for materials like hay, shredded paper, recycled wood pulp, or cardboard litter, as they absorb moisture and control odours beautifully. It's essential to pick dust-free options to protect their little lungs from respiratory issues. Just a heads-up: avoid shredded newspaper, as the printing ink can be harmful. With these thoughtful choices, you can create a safe and comfy home for your chinchilla that they'll absolutely love!

Décor: Your chinchilla's cage décor is crucial for their happiness! They'll thrive with plenty of fun and engaging enrichment. Be sure to include cosy hideaways and a hammock for relaxation, along with a dust bath for grooming. A wheel will keep them active and healthy. Just remember to choose safe, chew-friendly items to ensure their well-being.

Cleaning: Keeping your chinchilla's cage clean is essential for their health and happiness! Regular spot cleaning, whenever you see waste, is a great start. Be sure to do a thorough deep clean once a week with a reptile-safe disinfectant and fresh substrate. If you have several chinchillas, you might need to clean more frequently.

Diet

Feeding: Chinchillas make excellent companions, and providing them with a fantastic diet is crucial to their happy and healthy lives. Their primary food should be high-quality hay, which should be available at all times—placing it in a hay rack keeps it clean and tidy. Additionally, providing 1-2 tablespoons of good grass pellets daily can be a delightful treat for them! Just be careful not to overindulge, as too many pellets can lead to weight and dental issues. While treats can be a fun way to bond, moderation is essential to avoid health problems. Lastly, steer clear of nuts and seeds, as they're too fatty for our furry friends.

Water: Always provide your Chinchilla with fresh water daily in a clean bottle, free from food and bedding, to keep it happy and healthy!



Overweight Chinchilla

Chinchilla's weight

It's fascinating to learn about chinchillas and how their fluffy fur can make it challenging to weigh them accurately. By gently feeling their spines and ribs, you can identify their health status. If their bones are easily noticeable, they might be underweight, as a healthy chinchilla should have a slight cushion of fat. On the other hand, an overweight chinchilla will feel rounder, making it harder to detect their bones.



Health & Welfare

A healthy chinchilla is lively and alert, boasting a gorgeous, soft coat! Their eyes, nose, and ears should be clean and bright. Keep an eye on their appetite; they should produce dry droppings and maintain a healthy weight. If you see any shifts in behaviour or eating habits, don't hesitate to reach out to a veterinarian. Your chinchilla's well-being is worth it!



Grooming

Chinchillas are truly unique animals, and caring for them is an exciting journey! One of the most important things to know is that they should never get wet. Their fur is incredibly dense, which means that if it gets wet, it can take a long time to dry. This may lead to health issues from bacteria developing in their fur. Instead, chinchillas love dust baths, which you should provide in their cage or outside three times a week. Using chinchilla-safe dust, they will effectively groom themselves, ridding their fur of oils and any debris that has become lodged between their thick coat. Since chinchillas shed quite a bit, a soft-bristle brush can help you keep their fur in top condition. Just remember to brush in the direction of their fur growth! Also, due to their dense coat, it's essential to maintain a calm environment for them, as heat can pose a risk of overheating.

Diseases and Concerns

Chinchillas are fascinating little creatures with pain thresholds that are pretty similar to ours. However, they can be masters at hiding their discomfort, which means they might endure more than we realise before we catch on. Keeping an eye on any changes in their usual behaviour can be your first clue that something might be off. And since chinchillas are nocturnal, it can be a bit tricky to notice if they're feeling unwell during the day. One common concern is dental health. Their teeth grow continuously, so a high-fibre diet is crucial to prevent overgrowth, which can lead to painful conditions such as malocclusion or infections. Additionally, be aware of signs of skin issues, such as fungal infections, excessive fur chewing, or hair loss. Regular dust baths are vital for maintaining their gorgeous fur; without them, you could see matting. Before welcoming a chinchilla into your home, it's essential to conduct thorough research and understand the signs of potential health issues. If you ever suspect something is wrong, don't hesitate to consult a vet.

Transport

When travelling with your animals, ensure their travel box is safe for them. Ensure there is enough room for your Chinchilla to sit comfortably, but not so much that they can be knocked around. If they are new to travel, consider placing a cloth over their travel box to create darkness, which can help calm them. Ensure it is well-ventilated, but also ensure there's no escape. Make sure to keep them in a cool part of the vehicle to prevent them from overheating in the sun.

