

Guinea Pig Care Sheet



Guinea pigs come from the beautiful grasslands and lower slopes of the Andes Mountains in South America. These delightful little creatures are swift, which helps them escape predators in the wild! To keep your guinea pig happy and healthy, it's essential to replicate its natural habitat by providing a consistent diet and environment. They thrive in social groups, as companionship not only prevents loneliness but also provides a sense of security and stability. Interestingly, guinea pigs are crepuscular, meaning they're most active at dawn and dusk. With their keen senses and emphasis on group living and communication, these wonderful pets showcase the beauty of connection and teamwork!

Exercise

Guinea pigs are such lively little companions, often active for nearly 20 hours a day, with delightful short naps sprinkled throughout! To keep their energy thriving, it's perfect to provide them with a spacious exercise area filled with fun pipes, cosy shelters, and deep hay. This setup encourages them to engage in all kinds of enjoyable activities—running, walking, tunnelling, resting, foraging, and even gnawing! While they aren't natural climbers, their curiosity shines through, so it's essential to create a safe environment, free from potential climbing hazards. With the right space and care, your guinea pigs will thrive.

Get to know

Getting to know your Guinea Pig is one of the most important experiences! Although they may be a bit timid and easily frightened at first, taking the time to sit quietly with them is crucial. By allowing them to approach you, they'll learn that you're a friend, helping them to recognise your scent. It's essential to maintain gentle movements and a calm voice, so they feel at ease in your presence.

When you first bring them home, give them a few days to adjust to their new surroundings without much interaction. Gradually introduce yourself over time, building that special bond. It's best to avoid diving in and grabbing them, as this can be intimidating. Instead, offering them tasty treats can make the process more enjoyable and help strengthen your connection.

Enclosure

Guinea pigs are such social and friendly animals, thriving best in pairs or groups! For two of these delightful pets, a cage size of at least 120cm x 60cm (around 7.7 square feet) is ideal, but remember, bigger is always better! Consider setting up a shed or playhouse with a connected exercise area for extra fun. It's terrific to provide them with separate spaces for eating, resting, and toileting, as this helps them feel secure and at home. It's essential to ensure that their hutch is safe and secure, with shaded areas for them to relax during warmer weather. Additionally, raising the shelter off the ground can help protect them from predators and prevent dampness. To enhance their exercise opportunities, consider attaching a run to the hutch, just be sure to cover it adequately to keep them safe while allowing for fun adventures. With the correct setup, you'll create a delightful home that supports your Guinea pigs' active lifestyle.

LIFESPAN

5 to 7 years
in captivity

SIZE

8-10 inches

TEMPERATURE

Preferred temperature is
between 18 °C to 24c °C

HUMIDITY

Below
50%

Environment

Substrate: Creating an inviting bedding area for your Guinea pig is a great way to ensure their comfort. Use warm, edible materials like straw or hay, and consider adding safe, absorbent layers such as newspaper or dust-free wood shavings. Have at least 1-2 inches of bedding so it's soft on their feet. For your pets' well-being, let's avoid dusty bedding, such as sawdust, as it can lead to respiratory issues. Their health is our priority!

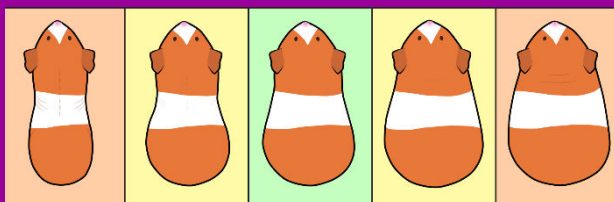
Décor: Guinea pigs are such delightful foragers! You can spark their curiosity and keep them active by offering fun foraging boxes and engaging toys. Did you know they can even be litter box trained? This makes cleaning their space much easier! Additionally, they possess the endearing ability to learn their names and come when called. To ensure your guinea pig stays happy and healthy, provide a variety of toys along with plenty of tunnels and cosy hiding spots. They love to explore, and these additions will keep them entertained and stimulated. Let's create a vibrant environment for our little friends!

Cleaning: Maintaining a clean hutch is crucial for your rabbit's well-being and happiness. Aim to clean it at least once a week, and be attentive to signs that it may need more frequent care. While cleaning can be a bit stressful for your furry friend, you can make it easier by adding a bit of the old bedding back in; this helps them feel secure with familiar smells.

Diet

Feeding: Providing your guinea pigs with high-quality hay should be the foundation of their diet, and they should always have access to it! Since guinea pigs love to graze on grass, herbs, and various plants. Don't forget to offer a daily portion of grass-based guinea pig pellets, following the manufacturer's guidelines, to ensure they receive essential Vitamin C. It's also vital to include a variety of healthy vegetables and leafy greens in their meals, just be sure to avoid anything harmful. Take the time to learn about their dietary needs.

Water: It's essential to provide your Guinea pig with fresh water every day! A hanging water bottle can be a great option, but a bowl can work too; just be careful to prevent spills. For extra peace of mind, consider offering both. Don't forget to clean them regularly.



Underweight

Just right

Overweight

Guinea Pig's weight

Guinea Pig's weight

If you can easily feel your guinea pig's bones, especially the ribs, spine, and hips through their skin, they might be underweight. You may also notice a slightly defined waist and rear when looking from above, but watch closely for this! On the flip side, if they're quite round and you struggle to feel their bones, that could indicate they're a bit overweight. It's always great to keep an eye on their condition to ensure their overall health and happiness.

Grooming

Grooming your guinea pig is a wonderful way to bond with them and ensure they stay healthy and happy. Regular brushing is key, with long-haired breeds requiring daily attention, while short-haired ones need it less frequently. Baths should only be given when absolutely necessary, such as for hygiene issues or occasionally for shows. Regular nail trims are crucial for preventing overgrowth, and it is recommended to have them every four to six weeks. Remember, a little bit of white discharge around their eyes is normal during grooming. However, if you notice changes or any discharge at other times, it could signal a health issue, so don't hesitate to consult a veterinarian. For those nail trims, using small clippers to clip just the clear tips gently can make all the difference! Providing a rough surface in their hutch is also a great way to help naturally wear down their nails. And if you're ever uncertain, don't forget that guinea pig vets are always happy to help!

Health & Welfare

A happy, healthy guinea pig will have bright, sparkling eyes, a clean nose and ears, and a shiny coat free of bald patches (except for the insides of their front feet and behind their ears). They'll be lively and alert, especially when mealtime approaches, and their droppings should be small and nicely shaped. What a joy to watch them thrive!



Diseases and Concerns

Guinea pigs are such resilient little companions, always putting on a brave face! However, even a slight change in their behaviour can be a sign that they need our attention. One common area of concern is their dental health; since their teeth grow continuously, it's super important to provide plenty of chew toys to keep those chompers nice and trim. If you notice any misalignment, don't hesitate to reach out to a vet—early intervention is key to ensuring they can munch comfortably! Another thing to keep in mind is Upper Respiratory Infections (URIs), which can affect their ability to breathe. These infections can escalate quickly, so it's essential to act promptly if you see any signs. By staying proactive about their health, we can help our furry friends thrive and enjoy their lives to the fullest!

Being aware of these potential health concerns will empower you to recognise the signs and take prompt action. Always seek advice from a veterinarian instead of attempting to treat your pet on your own. With the proper care and attention, you can help your furry friend thrive and feel their very best!

Transport

When taking your animals with you, ensure their travel box is safe for them. Ensure there is enough room for your Guinea pig 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's well-ventilated, but also ensure there's no escape. Heat is vital; bring a battery heat pack or a hot water bottle to help provide heat so they stay comfortable.

Guinea Pig

