

# Siamese Fighting Fish

*Betta Splendens*

## Introduction and Origin

Siamese Fighting fish (Bettas) belong to the Family Belontiidae. This family of fish is part of the Anabantids, or 'Labyrinth fish' species. The 'Labyrinth' is a breathing organ, which allows Anabantids to survive in oxygen-deficient waters. Due to the 'Labyrinth organ'

these remarkable fish are able to breathe atmospheric air at the surface of the water.

Bettas originate in the shallow waters in Thailand (formerly

called Siam, hence their name), Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and parts of China. They proliferate rice paddies, shallow ponds, and even slow moving streams. Although many fish keepers are aware that Bettas come from shallow waters, what is often overlooked is the water temperature.

**Did you know  
Bettas can take  
oxygen directly  
from the air?**

## Diet & Water

The Siamese Fighting fish is Omnivorous. In the wild they will feed mainly off small aquatic invertebrates. In an aquarium, Siamese Fighting fish will accept a variety of foods. Fine grade dry food, frozen and freeze-dried food suited to Siamese Fighters is available and generally accepted. Siamese Fighting fish will benefit most from live foods such as 'Blackworms'. A well balanced diet is the best thing to provide for your Siamese Fighters.

## Housing & Heating

Fighting fish are a tropical fish and thrive in a constantly warm environment. Undersized betta containers are prone to rapid temperature changes in comparison to larger containers.

When using betta bowls they should be large and best kept at around 26-28°C for every day temperature.



These fish are quite hardy. Siamese Fighters will tolerate water with a pH of 6.0 – 7.5. Random fluctuation however can lead to stress induced illness, as is the case with most fish.

Avoid strong water flow, as it will quickly exhaust your Siamese Fighter. A cycled tank is a must, as ammonia and nitrite quickly deteriorate the fins of fighters.

Although placid when alone, the males will show extraordinary aggression when together, so males cannot be housed together.

## Breeding

Easily bred in a home aquarium. The males are bubble nest builders. They blow a large series of accumulated bubbles onto the surface of the water, into which they deposit the eggs released by the female. Once the female releases the eggs into the water, the male will collect them in his mouth, deposit them into the nest and fertilize them.

These fish are bubble nest builders because water conditions in the wild are normally close to stagnant. As the fry will not have yet developed a labyrinth system or effective gills, it is best maintained close to the water's

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surface where it is able to absorb oxygen directly through body tissue.

In Thailand, these fish are bred in their thousands in old 'Mekong Whisky' bottles stacked side by side along the ground. There are so many tightly-packed bottles that a person is able to safely walk over the top of them.

## Appearance

Siamese Fighters will grow to approximately 2 – 2.5 inches. Males are brightly coloured with long fins. Females on the other hand are generally less colourful with short fins. Males are very aggressive toward one another and should therefore be kept only one per aquarium. Females are a lot more peaceful and can be housed in larger numbers in an aquarium. Siamese Fighters will live for approximately four years and can be kept in a community aquarium with docile fish that



won't nip at their fins.

## Varieties

A range of colour variations have been developed from the original betta form. Siamese Fighting Fish can be found with one solid colour or a mix of vibrant shades and tones. Red and blue always seem to be the most dominant colours available.



There are also many Betta splendens fin shapes.

The most frequently found is the **Veil tail**. These Siamese fighting fish have long flowing tail fins.

**Crown tail** Siamese fighting fish have extended filaments likened to a crown. The individual rays of the fins extend evenly in a good quality crown tail betta.

**Delta tails, half moons and full moon betta** varieties all have tails shorter and rounder than the veil tail fighting fish. The main difference between these betta varieties is the angle that the extended tail protrudes from the body.

**Double tail** fighting fish are also bred. In such specimens the tail is split into a pair of club shaped lobes.

The tail fins of some varieties of Siamese fighting fish can open up like a fan. This tail posture will be shown when courting female fish or when stimulated by male fighting fish.

**Further information on diet, hygiene & medication and much more is available from the team at Kellyville Pets.**

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from the team  
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