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Photo by Pisces Pet Emporium

## Brazilian Rainbow Boa

*Epicrates cenchria cenchria*

**Lifespan:** Up to 30 years.

**Size:** Adults can reach 5 to 6.5 feet in length.

**Sexing:** There are different methods of sexing snakes: comparing tail lengths, popping and probing. An experienced veterinarian or breeder should do popping or probing.

**Enclosure:** Rainbow Boas do best in a tank that provides them with room to roam around and exercise. A 4x2x2 enclosure is adequate for a single adult but a larger tank like 125gal or bigger tank is better. For a baby or hatchling, a standard Exo Terra 18x18x18 or 24x18x18 tank is good. Snakes can escape from regular screen tops, so the lid needs to be secured with a lock. **Pisces recommends: ExoTerra All-Glass Terrariums, EcoFlex PVC Reptile Lounges and Marineland all glass Aquariums.**

**Hiding/Climbing Spots:** A snake cave or another hiding spot is recommended. Provide a water dish large enough for the snake to curl its entire body into for bathing and to help with shedding. Branches and cork branches are highly recommended for climbing as they can hold their weight.

**Humidity:** The enclosure should be well ventilated and misted well to keep the humidity at about 70-75% during the day and up to 80%-100% at night to aid the process of shedding and prevent health problems. A moss hide helps maintain an area with high humidity for when the snake is shedding. Use a digital hygrometer to maintain a constant humidity level. A mist king system is a good idea to setup to maintain this.

**Substrate:** Reptisoil or Jungle mix is best substrate because it holds moisture and humidity. Other rainforest soils can also be used along with moss to ensure the humidity stays adequate. **Pisces recommends: Zoomed Reptisoil, Zilla Jungle Mix**

**Heat:** Maintain a temperature of as low as 22-24 °C (80 °F) at night and daytime of about 28-30°C (78-84°F) with a hot spot of 32 °C (90 °F). Snakes cannot sustain all bodily functions if kept at a constant temperature. Use a heat bulb on one portion of the tank so the snake can escape the warm area if they need to. **Pisces recommends: ExoTerra and Arcadia bulbs and fixtures.**

**UV Lighting:** Use of a full spectrum T5 bulb for 8-10 hours per day is recommended as there is some research to suggest benefits, but with the proper research and supplements can be omitted. UVB bulbs lose effectiveness and need to be replaced every 8-12 months. **Pisces recommends: Arcadia T5 Pro D3+ 6% UVB kit**

**Feeding:** Feed juveniles about once a week. Adults will eat rats. Snakes will normally eat live prey, but they can be switched to frozen food which is easier to get. If you wish to feed frozen be sure that the food is thoroughly thawed before offering it to your snake. Feed prey approximately the maximum girth of the snake.

**Handling:** When handling a baby or juvenile Boa, it is best to pick them up confidently and slowly. To them, you are a much larger predator and if you hesitate or are nervous, it will induce fear in the snake. These are one of the more docile snakes and are calmer than most snakes but can still behave badly when they feel threatened (biting, striking). If this happens when you are handling your snake, put it back in its tank. Snakes can be head shy so avoid touching its head until you know it's comfortable.

**Safe Handling of Reptiles\*:** As with all living creatures, reptiles can carry microorganisms (including Salmonella) which can make people ill. To reduce the chances of infection, always follow these safe handling steps:

- Always wash your hands thoroughly after you handle your pet, its food and anything it has touched.
- Keep your pet in a habitat designed for it; do not let your pet reptile roam around the home without proper supervision.
- Keep your pet, its food dishes and cage components out of the kitchen.
- Don't nuzzle or kiss your pet.
- Infants, children under 5 years of age, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with a compromised immune system have a greater risk of infection. Extra caution should be taken when they are in contact with any animal. Children under 5 should handle reptiles only under adult/parent supervision.

**Your New Pet:** It is the responsibility of any pet owner to provide their pet with regular veterinary care to maintain their pet's health and to prevent illness. Should you experience any problems with your new pet, contact Pisces Pet Emporium. We will make every effort to assist you, but we may refer you to a qualified veterinarian if the problem is beyond our ability to treat. A pet is a large responsibility and should not be purchased without due consideration. Pets should never be released into the wild.

### **Pisces Recommended Setup:**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Glass/PVC terrarium (4x2x2 Eco Flex Reptile Lounge or bigger is required for an adult)</li> <li>❑ Screen top (if not included with terrarium)</li> <li>❑ Exo Terra hiding cave or 2 to ensure the snake has enough hiding places</li> <li>❑ Jurassic/Zoomed cork flats to add more hiding places and aid in shedding</li> <li>❑ Exo Terra Misting bottle or Mistking system</li> <li>❑ Zoomed Reptisoil, Zilla Jungle Mix for substrate</li> <li>❑ Plants (live or Exo Terra/Pangea or Komodo artificial plants)</li> <li>❑ Exo terra/Newcal branches as this species loves to climb (especially juveniles)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Exo Terra metal feeding tons (optional)</li> <li>❑ Snake hook (optional)</li> <li>❑ Jurassic sphagnum or terrarium moss for humidity</li> <li>❑ Jurassic leaf litter</li> <li>❑ Exo Terra Water dish (large enough to soak)</li> <li>❑ Exo Terra 150w Intense Basking Lamp &amp; Flukers 8.5in Dimmable Deluxe Clamp Lamp</li> <li>❑ Arcadia T5 Pro D3+ 6% UVB kit of provided</li> <li>❑ Repashy Supervite</li> <li>❑ Feeder Mice/rats (size dependent)</li> <li>❑ Exo Terra digital thermometer and hydrometer or combometer</li> </ul> |
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*\*Safe handling information courtesy of PIJAC Canada*