

PISCES

PET EMPORIUM



Photo by Pisces Pet Emporium

Guinea Pig

Cavia porcellus

Lifespan: 5 to 7 years.

Size: Males weigh 2 to 3lbs and females usually weigh 1.5 to 2lbs.

Maturity/Breeding: Male guinea pigs are sexually mature from 56 to 70 days old and females from 30 to 70 days old. If you do not want to breed your guinea pigs do not keep a male and female together unless one of them is spayed or neutered. Gestation is 59 to 72 days and guinea pigs will usually give birth to 1 to 6 young. Sexually mature adults will breed year round.

Enclosure: Guinea pigs should be kept in a wire cage with a plastic base that measures a minimum of 34" x 20" x 15" for a single pig, or 48" x 24" for a pair. Aspen shavings or other soft, absorbent bedding should be used. Cedar shavings should be avoided because the vapors can cause respiratory problems and can irritate the eyes. Every cage should contain at least one shelter. Guinea pigs are happiest when they live with at least one other guinea pig. It is best to choose two brothers or two sisters.

Heating: Guinea pigs are extremely susceptible to heat stroke and respiratory infections so avoid drafts, direct sunlight, and temperatures above 27°C (80°F)

Feeding: Young guinea pigs should be fed 1 to 2 ounces of guinea pig pellets, unlimited amounts of alfalfa hay, and a cup of fresh vegetables daily. New babies should be slowly worked up to the 1 cup of fresh vegetables. When your guinea pig is about 6 months old, gradually change the alfalfa hay to unlimited timothy hay (hay is the main portion of a guinea pig's diet so it must always be available). **Pisces recommends: Oxbow Young Guinea Pig Pellets.**

Vitamins, Supplements & Treats: Pisces sells a variety of treats, which can be a fun way to bond with your pet, but feed them sparingly or your pig could gain weight. Guinea pigs cannot synthesize vitamin C on their own so they need fresh veggies every day. You can also give your guinea pig fruit 1-2 times a week, but feed fruits high in sugar (such as apples) in moderation. Berries are the best fruit choice for guinea pigs. Cucumber peelings, carrot peelings (and greens from the tops), baby tomatoes, and parsley are guinea pig favorites and are very nutritious. If no fresh fruits or veggies are available, liquid supplements should be added to its drinking water. **Pisces recommends: Sun Seed Sun Drops for Rabbits & Guinea Pigs**

Health Care: The incisors of rodents such as guinea pigs continue to grow throughout their lives. It is important that your pet has enough toys or blocks to chew on so it can wear down its teeth, otherwise it will have difficulty eating and veterinarian will have to correct the problem. Your guinea pig's nails will also have to be trimmed regularly. This must be done carefully to avoid cutting the quick. Your veterinarian can show you how to do this, or trim them for you. Bring your guinea pig to the vet for an annual check-up.

Grooming: Long-haired guinea pigs should be brushed daily. Brush short-haired guinea pigs at least once a week. Bathe only if absolutely necessary, and dry thoroughly.

Handling: Place one hand under the chest/belly and the other on top of your guinea pig and bring it close to your chest. Always hold your guinea pig with two hands. Guinea pigs are very social animals and love to interact with humans.

Exercise/Toys: Your guinea pig should be allowed out of its cage for at least one hour per day to exercise in a larger area. If you let your guinea pig roam free in your house, be sure to pick up all cords or wires. Be sure there are no places where your guinea pig can get stuck or fall. Provide a variety of items to chew on, such as cardboard tubes and wooden chew treats, in the cage as well as the play area. ***Pisces recommends: Rollin' the Hay Dispenser.***

Safe Handling of Small Animals*: As with all living creatures, small animals can carry microorganisms 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 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.

Recommended Books: *The Guinea Pig Handbook* by Barron's Books

Recommended Supplies:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Super Pet Rollin the Hay Dispenser ❑ Super Pet large Grassy Roll-N-Ring ❑ Oxbow Young Guinea Pig food ❑ Sun Seed Sun Drops ❑ Aspen or Care fresh bedding ❑ Ceramic dish | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Nail clippers & styptic powder ❑ Small animal brush ❑ Timothy/alfalfa hay ❑ Well-ventilated cage ❑ Chew toys ❑ Water bottle |
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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.



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**Safe handling information courtesy of PIJAC Canada*