

Guinea Pig Care Guide

Lifespan: 6-8 years possibly up to 12

Social Life

Guinea pigs are extremely social creatures and love interaction from both humans and other guinea pigs. They need to have companions, but only same gender groups.

Housing and Substrate

Their cages need to be very large and well ventilated, and they need daily exercise and socialization. They need to have a solid floor to the cage, no mesh as that will hurt their feet. They need to have plenty of bedding so they can play and burrow in it, at least 2 inches deep. For bedding we recommend you use some sort of paper bedding, such as carefresh. Wooden beddings such as pine, cedar, and aspen contain oils that are irritating to them, and can cause them to get sick. They should NOT be kept in most of the cages pet stores advertise for guinea pigs. These are usually way too small, and not at all adequate for them. They also need to have some levels and ramps to help them move around and be active.

Enrichment

Guinea pigs need lots of enrichment. This can be provided using cardboard boxes, grass balls and other toys of that sort. Try to avoid dyed objects as the coloring can be harmful to the guineas. You can also get a puppy play pen, and use that for them to exercise in. They also need plenty of hides, and other things to interact with.

Diet

Guinea pigs are herbivores, so their diet consists of plant matter. They need hay 24/7 to help their digestion process, and it helps grind their teeth down. They need a pellet food to supplement the hay. This food should not include any extra things in it such as dried corn, seeds etc., as they can be unhealthy for them, and can contain mold. Guinea pigs also can have fresh fruits and veggies (in moderation) in their diets. Some fruits and veggies that are safe for them include: parsley, romaine lettuce, carrots, carrot tops, apples (without seeds), and other things. It's also a good idea to either find a good vitamin C supplement, or feed oranges to them occasionally, as they cannot produce their own vitamin C. Be careful of the sugar content of whatever you give them, as too much sugar can be detrimental to their health.

Grooming

As far as grooming and general upkeep goes, they are not overly high maintenance animals. They do need regular nail clippings though, as otherwise they will become overgrown and cause the guinea pain/health issues. They will also need at least a weekly bedding change to keep their home sanitary and prevent them from getting sick. Their teeth never stop growing, so make sure they have something wooden to chew on to keep them down. You'll need to check them regularly to make sure they are the right length.