

# Wet Pets N Critters

## Care Sheet - Guinea Pigs



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Guinea pigs are *affectionate* social pets who will sit on your lap and enjoy being petted. They make a wide variety of entertaining sounds, including whistles, purrs, chortles, chuckles, and clucks.

Guinea pigs are a lot like little horses and play chasing games with each other. They come in a wide variety of colors and coat types, including fuzzy hair, long curly hair, and straight hair long enough to braid!

One guinea pig, or more?

Because guinea pigs are herd animals, it's best to get at least two. Guinea pigs are prone to loneliness and require company that only another guinea pig can provide. Two pigs together will make more of their adorable sounds. In Switzerland it is illegal to own just one guinea pig.

### Feeding

Guinea pigs are strict herbivores and need timothy hay for roughage, it is the bulk of their diet and should be available at all times. They also require special guinea pig pellets that contain vitamin C. They also need greens such as cilantro, parsley, red leaf lettuce, green leaf lettuce, butter lettuce, every day. For treats, they can have carrots, celery (cut into small bits), cucumber, very small amounts of oranges, peppers, other veggies, and occasionally fruit.

### Housing

Guinea pigs need a cage at least 48" X 24" X 12" tall, that's 4 X 2 feet for a pair of guinea pigs and an extra 2 sq. feet of space for each additional pig and the bigger the better to provide room for them to run around. You may consider more space for boars (males). The floor of the cage must be solid, not wire, to protect their feet, and covered with aspen shavings or soft paper bedding. Do not use cat litter or cedar shavings. Guinea pigs should also have an open space to run a few times a week for exercise or they can become overweight.

## **Accessories**

Guinea pigs need a large water bottle, a non-tip food dish or hopper, and a hay rack. They also need a house to sleep in! Each guinea pig may need their own house, water bottle, ect especially if you have boars.

## **Sanitation**

Clean the cage, accessories and bedding weekly. Urine deposits can be removed with vinegar. Be sure to scrub all parts of the water bottle and replace bottle every six months. Never leave a guinea pig to sit in dirty bedding as they can get UTIs and URIs.

## **Maintenance**

Provide fresh food and water daily. Guinea pigs need their toenails trimmed regularly. Although you may give your guinea pig a bath they get cold and develop pneumonia easily; as long as you keep their cage clean they will stay clean. All guinea pigs benefit from an occasional brushing and longhaired guinea pigs need to be groomed often.

## **Health care**

If you have any concerns it's best to contact a local vet that sees pocket pets immediately. Things to watch for include blood in the urine, hair loss, bald patches, lethargy, or no interest in food.

## **Special needs**

It's important for guinea pigs to be socialized the day they are born. Those that aren't can be flighty, so try to choose a pig that isn't afraid of people. Because guinea pigs are passive and tend not to bite or scratch, young children need to be taught not to squeeze their pet too hard. Care should also be taken not to drop a guinea pig, as they are easily injured.

## **Life cycle**

Guinea pigs live an average of 4 to 6 years but can live up to 10 years.

## **Expert Help**

If you have questions about your guinea pig, do not hesitate to contact us. We will be happy to help you choose a guinea pig care book for more complete information. While this care sheet was made to get you started it is important to educate yourself more thoroughly on guinea pigs if you plan to purchase one please visit [guinealynx.info](http://guinealynx.info) for more information.

## **Supplies Checklist**

Large cage	Timothy hay
Bedding	House
Water bottle	Nail clippers
Non-tip food dish or hopper	Brush
Guinea pig food	
Hay rack	

