



Baby Sulcata Tortoise Care Guide

Presented by Custom Creatures Pet Shop

Basic Info

Species: *Centrochelys sulcata* (African Spurred or Sulcata Tortoise)

Lifespan: 50-100+ years in captivity

Adult Size: 24-30 inches, 70-150+ lbs

Temperament: Generally friendly but very strong and curious

Best for: Dedicated long-term keepers with space for a large, powerful tortoise

Enclosure Setup

Tank Size:

- Babies: 40-50 gallon enclosure or large tortoise tub
- Adult: Secure outdoor enclosure or custom indoor space required
- Avoid glass tanks for long-term use

Temperature & Heating:

- Basking area: 95-105°F
- Cool side: 75-85°F
- Night: no lower than 70°F for babies
- Use a ceramic heat emitter or radiant heat panel

Humidity:

- Maintain 60-80% humidity for babies

- Mist daily and provide a humid hide
- Dry conditions can cause pyramiding in the shell

Lighting:

- Full-spectrum UVB lighting required (T5 HO 10.0 or Arcadia 12%)
- Provide 12-14 hours of light daily

Substrate:

- Coconut coir, organic topsoil, or cypress mulch (moist but not wet)
- Avoid sand or pellet bedding (risk of impaction)

Décor & Enrichment:

- Provide low hides, rocks, and logs
- Leave room for walking and grazing behavior

Diet & Feeding

Feeding Frequency:

- Feed daily

Diet:

- Primary: grasses, hay, and leafy greens (collard, dandelion, mustard)
- Occasional: cactus pads, hibiscus, squash
- Avoid fruits, sugary veggies, or high-protein foods

Supplementation:

- Calcium (no D3) 3-4x/week
- Multivitamin: 1x/week
- Provide a cuttlebone for additional calcium

Water & Hydration:

- Shallow water dish at all times (change daily)
- Soak babies in warm shallow water 3-5x/week for 15-20 minutes

Handling & Behavior

Handling:

- Handle gently and infrequently to reduce stress
- Always support their full body

Behavior to Expect:

- Diurnal, burrowing, and grazing
- Strong diggers - will push or knock over objects
- Active and inquisitive when cared for properly

Supplies Checklist

- Large tortoise enclosure or tub (40+ gallons for babies)
- UVB bulb and basking light
- Heat emitter or radiant heat panel
- Moisture-retaining substrate (coir or topsoil mix)
- Digital thermometer and hygrometer
- Shallow water dish and soaking tray
- Grass hay and dark leafy greens
- Calcium and multivitamin supplements

Contact Us

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We're here to help!