

Mexican Spiny-Tailed Iguana Care Guide

Presented by Custom Creatures Pet Shop

Basic Info

Species: *Ctenosaura* spp. (commonly *Ctenosaura pectinata* or *C. similis*)

Lifespan: 15-25+ years

Adult Size: 2-4 feet depending on species and sex

Temperament: Fast, intelligent, and can become tame with regular interaction

Best for: Intermediate to experienced keepers with fast/agile lizard experience

Enclosure Setup

Tank Size:

- Babies: 40-75 gallon vertical or semi-arboreal setup
- Adults: Custom 6x4x4 ft enclosure or larger
- Vertical and horizontal climbing space essential

Temperature & Heating:

- Basking area: 100-110°F
- Ambient daytime temp: 80-90°F
- Nighttime temp: Do not drop below 70°F
- Use basking bulbs or radiant heat panels with thermostats

Humidity:

- Maintain 50-60% humidity
- Mist lightly or offer humid hide; provide dry basking zones
- Use hygrometer to monitor levels

Lighting:

- High-output UVB (T5 HO 10.0 or Arcadia 12%) required
- Provide 12-14 hour day/night cycle
- Ensure basking shelf is within 12-18 inches of UVB source

Substrate:

- Coconut coir, soil/sand mix, or bioactive substrate
- Must be dry or only slightly moist - avoid soggy enclosures

Décor & Enrichment:

- Strong branches, ledges, cork bark, climbing walls
- Secure hiding areas and open basking platforms

Diet & Feeding

Feeding Frequency:

- Feed daily for babies, 5-6x/week for adults

Diet:

- 70-80% leafy greens (collard, mustard, dandelion)
- 15-20% vegetables (squash, bell pepper, green beans)
- Occasional insects (especially for juveniles): roaches, crickets, BSFL
- Occasional fruit (2x/week max): berries, melon, papaya

Supplementation:

- Calcium without D3: 3-4x/week
- Multivitamin: 1x/week
- Provide a cuttlebone or calcium dish

Water & Hydration:

- Shallow water dish available
- Mist enclosure or animal directly if shedding

Handling & Behavior

Handling:

- Start slow - spiny tails are fast and can be defensive
- Support full body and avoid tail grabbing
- Use gloves early on if needed

Behavior to Expect:

- Diurnal and basking-prone

- Will climb, run, and dig
- Intelligent and territorial but very rewarding with patience

Supplies Checklist

- Large enclosure (minimum 40 gallons for juveniles, custom size for adults)
- UVB and basking bulbs
- Thermostat and digital thermometers
- Substrate (coir or soil mix)
- Strong climbing decor and hides
- Water bowl and daily salad mix
- Calcium and vitamin supplements
- Feeding tongs and cleaning tools

Contact Us

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We're here to help!