

## Common Breeds



### **American Guinea Pig:**

Life span: Up to 6 years

Size: 18 - 31cm

If you're looking for a pet with a sweet and clownish personality that is easy to care for, the American guinea pig fits that description perfectly. They are quite entertaining, and they respond well to handling. One reason they are so popular is because they're easy to care for. Their short hair requires minimal maintenance, as its hair does not mat easily and they do a good job of keeping themselves clean. They are available in a wide variety of colors and patterns.



### **Abyssinian Guinea Pig:**

Life span: 5 - 6 years

Size: 18 - 31cm

With gentle training, Abyssinian guinea pigs are very affectionate. Some even develop as "lap pigs". They have a tendency to be friendlier and a bit more mischievous than other breeds. These guinea pigs have a distinctive coat with the most common colors being tortoiseshell, roan and brindle.

## Supply list

Here's a list of the necessities you'll need to take home to help your new guinea pig stay healthy and happy. Please ask one of our pet experts to help you choose these items.

### **Home**

- ❖ Appropriate size and type of cage
- ❖ Aspen or other appropriate bedding
- ❖ Water bottle
- ❖ Food bowls
- ❖ Hiding house

### **Food**

- ❖ Fortified guinea pig diet
- ❖ Timothy hay or hay cubes
- ❖ Appropriate fresh fruits and veggies
- ❖ Vitamin C drops
- ❖ Treat sticks and chews
- ❖ Mineral wheel

### **Toys**

- ❖ Tennis balls
- ❖ Ping pong balls
- ❖ Small stuffed animal

### **Extras**

- ❖ Books and magazines
- ❖ Hay holder
- ❖ Cage cleaner and disinfectant  
(Read and follow label instructions)

**Get your *Best Friends Value Card* today and save. Contact the store nearest you for more information.**



## **BEST WEST PET FOODS/ PET FOOD WAREHOUSE**

*"Your Pet Food Experts"*

[www.bestwest.ca](http://www.bestwest.ca)

## **GUINEA PIGS**



**Scientific name:** *Cavia porcellus*

**For Ages:** 8 & up, with adult supervision

**Pet lifespan:** 5 - 8 (depending on breed)

**Pet Size:** Approximately 18 - 31cm long

## Traits & Behavior

**Social:** Guinea pigs are gentle, social and will enjoy the companionship of another guinea pig (if you have two, house only same gender pairs), as well as interaction with their owners.

**Affectionate:** Although shy at first, guinea pigs will develop intense affection for their owners and may whistle to signal their happiness.

**Diurnal:** This means that guinea pigs are most active during the day. They will sleep about 4 - 6 hours per night.

## Things to remember

**Lifting & Handling:** Handle your guinea pig gently. Place one hand under their shoulders with your thumb over and around the neck, use your other hand to support under their back end, and hold firmly but not tightly.

**Vitamin C:** Guinea pigs cannot store or manufacture vitamin C, so you'll need to add a supplement to their water daily.

**Special needs:** Your guinea pigs front teeth never stop growing, so they need lots of healthy things to chew on like treat sticks and chews.

**Safety & Cleanliness:** Please remember that all pets may bite or scratch, and may transmit a disease to humans. Keep your pet's home clean and wash your hands before and after handling your pet or cleaning their home.

Infants, young children, pregnant women, people with compromised immune systems, and the infirm or elderly are at a greater risk of infections and should use caution when in contact with the pet or its habitat. Consult your doctor for more information.

## Nutrition

**Staple diet:** Choose a fortified diet, made especially for guinea pigs.

**Vegetables:** Treat your guinea pig to small amounts (approximately 1/8 cup) of carrots and dark green leafy vegetables like collard greens, kale or mustard greens daily. Take care not to overfeed these fresh foods. They have high moisture content and too much can cause diarrhea.

**Fruit:** Vitamin C rich fruits like sliced kiwi and oranges are tasty and nutritious treats. Give one or two tablespoons every other day.

**Hay:** Offer a handful of timothy hay every day to add needed fiber to your guinea pigs diet.

**Treats sticks & chews:** These hard and crunchy treats keep your guinea pigs front teeth trimmed – always keep one in their habitat.

**Water:** Change and fill your guinea pigs water bottle with clean water every day.

\*Remember that fresh food items require their own dish and should be removed from the habitat after four hours to avoid spoilage. Treats should be less than 10% of total food intake.

## Tip

Guinea pigs are unable to judge height and distances accurately and should therefore never be left on a bed or table without supervision.

## Habitat

**Housing:** Guinea pigs need a well-ventilated home with a solid floor, large enough for a food dish, water bottle and a hiding area (if one isn't built in). There should be plenty of room for all cage accessories, and for them to move around freely.

**Bedding:** Line the home with 5 - 8cm of bedding, and change it weekly or more often if needed.

**Cage placement:** Place the habitat in a cool, low humidity area, out of direct sunlight.

## Health

### Signs of a healthy guinea pig:

- ❖ Clean, bright eyes
- ❖ Soft fur
- ❖ Full, slightly-rounded body (but not too fat)
- ❖ Eats and drinks normally
- ❖ Well-formed droppings with no diarrhea

### Things to watch for:

- ❖ Overgrown front teeth
- ❖ Bare patches in the fur
- ❖ Lethargic behavior; seizures or tremors
- ❖ Weight loss; not eating or drinking normally
- ❖ Diarrhea
- ❖ Sneezing; discharge from the eyes, nose or mouth