



Guinea Pig Fast Facts

Important to know BEFORE getting a guinea pig!

- With proper care, the guinea pig lifespan is 5-10 years old. Some live even longer.
- Like humans and many other primates, some reptiles, and fruit bats... guinea pigs do not produce their own Vitamin C and require outside sources to live...
- ...this means they require fresh vegetables every day.
- They also require specialized food and a constant supply of timothy hay or orchard grass, which is the main ingredient of their diet. Like other rodents, without constant chewing material, a guinea pig's teeth can quickly overgrow leading to death.
- Guinea pigs are exotic animals. They require a veterinarian experienced in guinea pig care and illness.
- In addition to food, water, hay, vegetables, bathing (need varies by type of guinea pig), and regular vet checkups, guinea pigs also require monthly nail trims. Many owners feel uncomfortable so pay for this service.
- Generally speaking, guinea pigs prefer to live in herds and they can become despondent without a companion. Females can live with many other females; males prefer the company of only one other male. Sometimes males must live alone.
- Unless handled from a young age, guinea pigs respond to humans like the prey animals they are...they prefer to run and hide. This means that owner satisfaction can be low given that the animals are high maintenance/little reward. Knowing what to expect from a guinea pig's behavior is important to giving them a loving, forever home.
- Guinea pig habitats require at least daily tidying, and a deep clean once per week. They can poop up to ONE HUNDRED times per day per pig!
- Because guinea pigs can breed at as young as only TWO MONTHS, "mistakes" quickly lead to 2-4 additional guinea pigs. Females can give birth up to 5 times per year. Be sure to keep animals that are not spayed and neutered with those of the same sex.
- Due to the costs and effort involved in their upkeep, it would be impossible for a child to maintain a guinea pig without significant effort by a parent. Guinea pigs are NOT "starter pets" or "easy to care for" as pet stores often suggest.