

Guinea Pig Housing

Size and Type

The best guinea pig habitats are usually wire habitats with a solid bottom (metal or plastic) that are easily removed for cleaning. Most habitats marketed for guinea pigs are way too small. Guinea pigs need appropriate room to roam, stand up, and separate spaces for a nest, bathroom area, food, and water. The minimum size per guinea pig is six square feet, but larger is always better!

Avoid:

- **Wire habitat bottoms:** these can easily injure their feet or toes.
- **Aquariums:** these do not offer proper ventilation and will isolate them from their surroundings.
- **Plastic Tubs:** these do not offer proper ventilation and will isolate them from their surroundings.

Temperature

Guinea pigs are indoor pets. Keep their area dry, free from drafts, and maintain a temperature between 65-79°F. Temperatures above 79°F can cause heat stroke; below 59°F can cause them to become chilled. Guinea pig housing should be located away from strong heat sources such as direct sun, wood stoves, fireplaces, and heating vents. Guinea pigs cannot sweat when they become too warm and are particularly susceptible to heat stroke.

Location

A guinea pig habitat should be in an environment that is well lit, but not exposed to direct sunlight, and offers them access to daily human activities. They have very sensitive hearing and their habitats should not be placed next to stereos, televisions, or other loud noises.

An outdoor hutch was once considered acceptable housing for guinea pigs, but keeping a guinea pig outside takes away regular interaction with the family. Short periods of outdoor exercise in good weather should be supervised to reduce risks of illness or injury.



Bedding

To ensure the good health of your guinea pig, bedding must be kept clean. Fresh bedding should be provided at least once a week, while spot cleaning should be done daily.

Good Bedding:

- Aspen
- Kiln-dried pine shavings
- Critter-litter
- Shredded paper
- Recycled pelleted

Avoid:

- Cedar
- Pine bedding that is not kiln-dried

Set-Up and Accessories

- Small house or den to offer a private area to go to when stressed or tired. You can use a small cardboard box or a plastic den.
- Heavy crocks (ceramic) for food and water. A water bottle may not provide the amount of water they need and can harbor bacteria and become jammed.
- Wooden chews. Guinea pigs have constantly erupting teeth and need to keep them filed down.
- Lots of toys. Guinea pigs need toys to play with to help stimulate their minds. Below are some good options for toys:
 - Chews
 - Toilet paper tubes
 - Woven mats
 - Hay toys
 - tunnels
 - Wood toys
 - Willow balls
 - Cardboard boxes

