

Pet Care of a Guinea Pig

Guinea pigs are small mammals with short legs and no tail. They originally come from South America.



Diet

Guinea pigs need to eat food like hay to give them fibre. This helps them digest their food.

Guinea pigs should have vegetables and some types of fruit every day but only in small amounts.

Lemons and limes can make them ill so remember not to give them those fruits.

Environment

Guinea pigs need a large area like a hutch so that they have room to explore.

They should have a safe, warm, dry area where they are away from other pets.

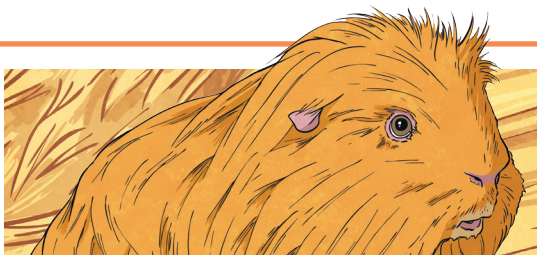
The temperature must be comfortable. If it gets too hot, they can get heat stroke.

Guinea pigs must be in a quiet place. Noises make them scared.



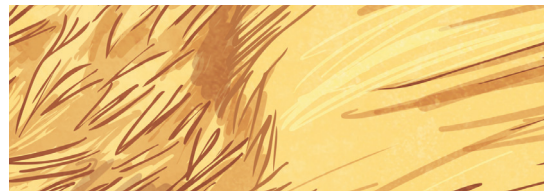
Did You Know?

Guinea pigs are active for up to 20 hours a day!



Did You Know?

Guinea pigs cannot climb or dig but do like to go down tunnels!



Did You Know?

Their teeth grow all the time so they need to chew hay. This wears their teeth down.

Guinea Pig Behaviour

Guinea pigs need lots of exercise. They like to run through tubes and pipes.

They are prey animals so get scared. When this happens, they will freeze and be totally still.

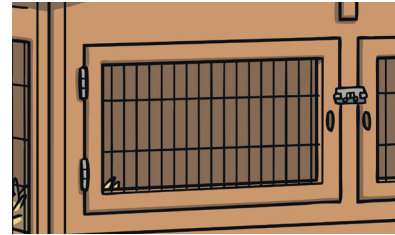
They can see all around themselves, so they can see when they might need to escape!

Guinea pigs need to live in pairs or small groups. They get very unhappy if they are on their own.

They need to get used to being picked up so they need to be with adults and children.

Dangers to Guinea Pigs

- Grass that has been cut by the lawnmower can make them ill.
- Bedding that can be pulled apart can cause problems for guinea pigs. They might eat it which is very dangerous.
- Other animals can frighten guinea pigs. Keep them away.



Guinea Pig Signs of Stress:

- overgrooming;
- chewing the bars of the cage;
- drinking a lot of water.

Take your guinea pig to a vet if it is showing these signs.

Questions

1. Where do guinea pigs come from?

2. What do guinea pigs need to eat?

3. What sort of hutch do guinea pigs need to live in and why?

4. What could happen if a guinea pig gets too warm?

5. Give one example of something guinea pigs like to do?

6. What part of them grows all the time?

7. What do guinea pigs do when they are scared?

8. Name one thing a guinea pig might do if they are stressed?

9. What can make guinea pigs upset?

10. Describe what sort of bedding a guinea pig needs.

Answers

1. Where do guinea pigs come from?

Guinea pigs come from South America.

2. What do guinea pigs need to eat?

Guinea pigs need to eat hay and some fruit and vegetables.

3. What sort of hutch do guinea pigs need to live in and why?

A guinea pig needs a large hutch to have room to explore.

4. What could happen if a guinea pig gets too warm?

If a guinea pig gets too warm, it can get heat stroke.

5. Give one example of something guinea pigs like to do?

Guinea pigs like to go down tunnels/ be active.

6. What part of them grows all the time?

Their teeth grow all the time.

7. What do guinea pigs do when they are scared?

When they are scared, guinea pigs freeze and are totally still.

8. Name one thing a guinea pig might do if they are stressed?

A guinea pig might: overgroom themselves, chew the cage bars, drink too much water. (Accept any one)

9. What can make guinea pigs upset?

Guinea pigs can get upset if they are left on their own with no other guinea pigs.

10. Describe what sort of bedding a guinea pig needs.

A guinea pig needs bedding which does not break off into strands.

Pet Care of a Guinea Pig



Guinea pigs are small mammals with short legs and no tail. They originally come from the grasslands of the Andes Mountains in South America and are an important food source in that region.

Diet

Guinea pigs need a high fibre diet because of the way they digest their food. Good quality hay helps their digestion system work properly. They also need grass based pellets high in Vitamin C. Their bodies are not able to store Vitamin C so they need to have it in their food, regularly.

Guinea pigs should have daily vegetables like broccoli or kale, and some fruits, but only in small amounts. They should never have fruits like lemons or limes, and neither have many root vegetables, like carrots. These foods can make them ill if eaten in large amounts.

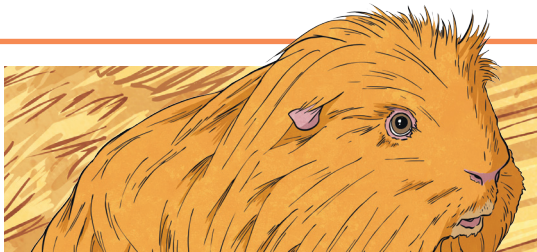
Environment

Guinea pigs need a large area like a hutch, where they can explore and stand on their back legs when they want to.

They should have a safe, warm, dry and clean area where they are away from other pets, and safe from foxes and ferrets.

The temperature must be no warmer than 26°C as they can suffer with heat stroke, and anything colder than 15°C can give them a chill.

Guinea pigs must be in a quiet area as noises can make them scared.



Did You Know?

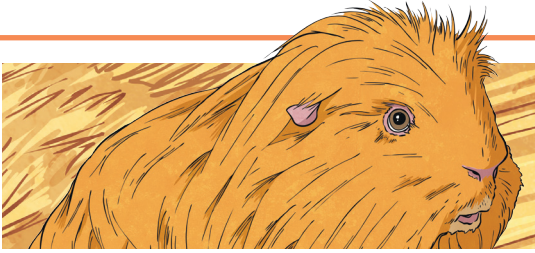
Guinea pigs make different sounds for a range of reasons. For example, when they are missing a companion, enjoying some attention or when they get excited.



Did You Know?

Their teeth grow all the time so they need to chew hay. This wears their teeth down.

Pet Care of a Guinea Pig



Did You Know?

When guinea pigs are born, they are already furry, have their eyes open and can eat solid food straightaway! They still have their mother's milk for a further 3 weeks though.

Guinea Pig Behaviour

Guinea pigs need regular exercise. They like to run through tubes and pipes. Guinea pigs cannot climb or dig but do like to be able to hide in burrows and shelters.

They are prey animals so are easily scared. When this happens, they will freeze for seconds or minutes. They can see all around themselves so they can see when they might need to escape!

Guinea pigs are naturally sociable animals and need to live in pairs or small groups. They become very unhappy if they are on their own. Many like contact with people too. They need to get used to being picked up so the earlier they are with adults and children the better.

Dangers to Guinea Pigs

- Don't be tempted to give guinea pigs grass that has been cut by a lawnmower. It can cause problems with their digestion.
- Make sure they don't have bedding that can be pulled into strands, like cotton wool. Guinea pigs can get tangled up in it, which can be dangerous.
- Make sure other animals cannot frighten them. They are nervous animals.

Guinea Pig Signs of Stress:

- overgrooming;
- chewing the cage bars;
- over drinking;
- walking around in circles.



Take your guinea pig to a vet if it is showing these signs.



Questions

1. What does it mean when the text says that guinea pigs are “an important food source in that region”?

2. Summarise the main points in the paragraph written in italics.

3. What sort of foods should they not have, and why?

4. What sort of environment would not suit a guinea pig?

5. What is the most interesting fact you have learned in the ‘Did you know...?’ section and why

6. Name two things guinea pigs are not able to do.

7. How might a guinea pig owner know if their pet is not happy?

8. What does “guinea pigs are prey animals” mean?

9. What is the benefit of being able to see all around, for a guinea pig?

10. Why would being handled by people from an early age, be good for a guinea pig?

1. What does it mean when the text says that guinea pigs are “an important food source in that region”?

Guinea pigs are “an important food source in that region” means that in South America, guinea pigs are an important food to be eaten by people.

2. Summarise the main points in the paragraph written in italics.

The main points made in the paragraph written in italics, are that guinea pigs need high fibre food to help their digestion work properly, and food with Vitamin C in it because their body cannot store it.

3. What sort of foods should they not have, and why?

They should not have too many root vegetables or any citrus fruits, as they can make them ill.

4. What sort of environment would not suit a guinea pig?

The sort of environment which would not suit a guinea pig is: damp, wet, dirty, or an environment which is near other animals, not safe, and too hot or too cold

5. What is the most interesting fact you have learned in the ‘Did you know...?’ section and why

Pupil’s own response.

6. Name two things guinea pigs are not able to do.

Guinea pigs are not able to climb or dig.

7. How might a guinea pig owner know if their pet is not happy?

A guinea pig owner might know if their pet is not happy, if they see it over grooming, chewing the bars of the cage, over drinking or walking around in circles.

8. What does “guinea pigs are prey animals” mean?

“Guinea pigs are prey animals” means that they are eaten by other animals.

9. What is the benefit of being able to see all around, for a guinea pig?

For a guinea pig to be able to see all around, it means that they can see a predator come from behind them, or above them, so they can freeze or escape.

10. Why would being handled by people from an early age, be good for a guinea pig?

It would be good for guinea pigs to be handled by people from an early age because it would mean they would get used to it and not be scared when being picked up.

Pet Care of a Guinea Pig



Guinea pigs are small, compact mammals with short legs and no tail. They originate from the grasslands of the Andes Mountains in South America and are an important food source in that region.

Diet

Guinea pigs need a high fibre diet due to their unusual digestive system. They need good quality hay to enable their digestion to function properly and grass-based pellets high in Vitamin C. They lack a certain enzyme, which would help store Vitamin C, so need a daily intake of this vitamin.

Vitamin C is vital to ensure proper bone growth and to boost the immune system to enable defence against germs and illness.

Guinea pigs should have daily vegetables like broccoli and kale, and some fruits, but only in small amounts. They should not have citrus fruits or too many root vegetables like carrots. They can become very ill if they have large quantities of these foods.

Environment

Guinea pigs need a large, spacious area like a hutch, where they can explore and have room to stand on their back legs when necessary.

They require a safe, warm, dry area where they are away from other pets and safe from predators.

The temperature must be no warmer than 26°C as they can suffer with heat stroke, and anything colder than 15°C can give them a chill.

Guinea pigs must be in a quiet area as they can get stressed with noise.



Did You Know?

Guinea pigs' teeth continue to grow throughout their life so need to chew hay which wears their teeth down.



Did You Know?

When guinea pigs are born, they are already furry, have their eyes open and can eat solid food straightaway! They still have their mother's milk for 3 weeks though.

Pet Care of a Guinea Pig



Guinea Pig Behaviour

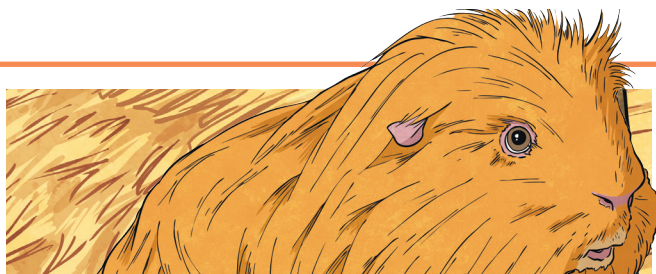
Guinea pigs require regular, interesting exercise. Tubes and pipes are great for exploration and although they are not equipped to dig, guinea pigs like to be able to hide in burrows and shelters.

They are prey animals so naturally nervous and easily scared. When this happens, they will freeze for seconds or sometimes minutes. They can see above and behind themselves so they can see a predator in good time to escape!

Guinea pigs are naturally sociable creatures and thrive in pairs or small groups. They can become very distressed if alone and often respond well to human company too. They need handling from an early age to become used to people and children.

Dangers to Guinea Pigs

- Lawnmower clippings can cause problems for their digestive system so never be tempted to give them these as a treat.
- Nesting material which can separate into strands like cotton wool. The animals can get tangled up in these strands, or if they eat they can become very poorly.
- Other animals are a threat to the security and safety of a guinea pig. As it is a prey animal, potential predators need to be kept away.



Did You Know?

Guinea pigs communicate through making different sounds. For example, when they are missing a companion, enjoying some attention or when they get excited.

Questions

1. What is the purpose of the first paragraph? Give as much detail as you can.

2. Guinea pigs need two very specific foodstuffs. What are they, and why are they so important to a guinea pig?

3. Guinea pigs are not to be given citrus fruits. Name two such fruits.
(Use a dictionary if necessary).

4. Explain why guinea pigs need to be housed in a specific temperature.

5. Which of the Did you know...? facts surprises you the most, and why?

6. Why are guinea pigs easily scared?

7. How do you think a predator might interpret a guinea pig 'freezing' when it senses danger?

8. Look at the paragraph in italics. Summarise the main points in that paragraph.

9. What part of a guinea pig would be affected if it was given mown grass to eat?

10. Imagine you are writing a label describing a guinea pig in a pet shop. In one paragraph, give the most important information to tell a potential owner about guinea pigs.

Answers

1. What is the purpose of the first paragraph? Give as much detail as you can.

The first paragraph is an introduction to the text. It explains what the text is about, and gives some background information about guinea pigs, including what they look like.

2. Guinea pigs need two very specific foodstuffs. What are they, and why are they so important to a guinea pig?

Guinea pigs need hay because it is high in fibre. Guinea pigs need this to help their digestive system function properly. They also need grass-based pellets because these are a good source of Vitamin C. Guinea pigs need Vitamin C to make sure their bones grow properly and that their immune system works well to fight illness and germs.

3. Guinea pigs are not to be given citrus fruits. Name two such fruits.

(Use a dictionary if necessary).

Two fruits which a guinea pig cannot have because they are citrus fruits are: lemons, limes, grapefruits, satsuma, oranges, tangerines, nectarines. (Accept any two).

4. Explain why guinea pigs need to be housed in a specific temperature.

Guinea pigs need to be housed in a specific temperature because if they get too warm, over 26°C they can get heat stroke, and if they are too cold, below 15°C, they can get a chill.

5. Which of the Did you know...? facts surprises you the most, and why?

Pupil's own response.

6. Why are guinea pigs easily scared?

Guinea pigs are easily scared because they are prey animals. This means they are nervous incase a predator comes along and eats them.

7. How do you think a predator might interpret a guinea pig 'freezing' when it senses danger?

I think a predator might think the guinea pig is dead, or not see it properly because it is so still.

8. Look at the paragraph in italics. Summarise the main points in that paragraph.

The main points in this paragraph are: guinea pigs need to live with other guinea pigs; guinea pigs get lonely on their own; guinea pigs need to be handled by people from an early age.

9. What part of a guinea pig would be affected if it was given mown grass to eat?

If a guinea pig was given mown grass to eat, it would affect its digestive system/ stomach.

10. Imagine you are writing a label describing a guinea pig in a pet shop. In one paragraph, give the most important information to tell a potential owner about guinea pigs.

Pupil's own response.