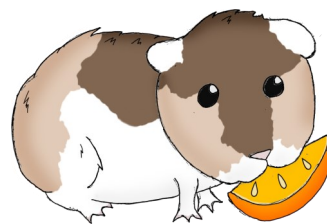




# LWAS Animal Care Sheets

## Guinea Pig



**Guinea pigs are members of the rodent family. They are social, docile herbivores.**

### Quick Facts

**Average size:** 2 lbs   **Diet:** Hay, greens, veggies   **Handling:** Beginner

**Average Lifespan:** 5-7 years   **Enclosure:** large pen or cage

### Housing

**Size:** at least 7.5 sq ft of space for a single pig, with an additional 2-4 sq ft for each additional pig. More space is always better, and horizontal space is better than vertical. We love the "Midwest Guinea Habitat" for a starter cage because they can be combined as modules to make a bigger cage.

**Population:** Guinea pigs can live in same-sex bonded pairs, but must be properly bonded before cohabitating. Male pairs may need more space to avoid territorial behavior. Females can live in herds, but males should only be housed singly or in pairs. Neutered males may be housed with one or many females. Single pigs need lots of love!

**Substrate:** Our vet recommends paper bedding or fleece/fabric cage liners. Use caution with wood beddings as they can cause respiratory and GI issues. Fabric cage liners can be laundered in mesh laundry bags with unscented detergent and vinegar. Guinea pigs make about 100 poops a day so expect frequent cleaning!

**Furniture:** Guinea pigs need hiding spots to feel secure, at least 1 per pig. This can be a pre-made hut or even a cardboard box tunnel. A large water bottle is recommended and should be thoroughly cleaned when refilling. Cardboard chew toys like paper rolls and drink holders are good for their teeth and may discourage unwanted chewing on other furniture. Hay may be given in cardboard boxes to conserve it, Guinea pigs tend to go to the bathroom while eating/drinking, so many choose to put hay, food, water and litter in the same area.

**Temperature/Humidity:** Guinea pigs prefer a cool, dry environment. They should never be over 75F and should be kept out of direct sunlight.

### Handling

Guinea pigs are prey animals and are naturally skittish. Most guinea pigs will run away when you go to pick them up but will calm down once they are being held.

Hand-feeding snacks is the best way to start bonding with your guinea pig. Many guinea pigs will accept gentle pets on the forehead or chin once they are comfortable.

To pick up a guinea pig, confidently scoop them up with two hands, and hold them in a way that supports their feet by holding them against your chest, or on your lap. It is wise to keep a towel or snugglesack under the guinea pig in case of "accidents"

### Grooming

Guinea pigs groom themselves, however they require periodic nail trims when the nails start to look long. Longer-haired guinea pigs tend to require brushing and bathing. Use shampoo for small mammals or puppies when bathing guinea pigs.