



GERBIL FACTSHEET



WHAT IS A GERBIL?

The Mongolian Gerbil is the most common Gerbil kept as a pet. They are small burrowing rodents adapted for life in deserts. They are sociable animals and live best in groups or a minimum of pairs. They have complex social bonds, and should never be kept alone, as they become depressed and lonely. *Meriones unguiculatus* roughly translated means "Clawed Warrior".

KEY INFO

- **Lifespan:** 3-4 years. Some can live to 5 years.
- **Size:** 11-12cm with an additional tail length of between 9-10cm.
- **Colour:** Variety of colours, including their original wild Agouti.
- **Nocturnal:** Largely diurnal (active during the day, but can also be active at night).
- **Diet:** Omnivores. A quality dry Gerbil food (i.e. Erins Ark Gerbil Food, Bunny Gerbil Dream Expert with Gerri Gerbil mixed in). Fresh fruit & vegetables in small quantities (please note they can't eat all vegetables/fruits). Treats include, mealworms, millet, pumpkin seeds, dried apple and carrot.
- **Accommodation:** Indoors, in a large tank.

ACCOMMODATION

Gerbils live indoors, in a large tank, with a minimum of 20cm deep of substrate for burrowing. Minimum tank size of 75cm x 45cm x 63cm e.g. Skyline Falco, Ikea Detolf, Skyline Marrakesh, Jungle Pets Gerbilariums, or home adapted aquariums with a topper (pictured). Note: Hamster cages, any plastic, or a gerbilarium with wire flooring and plastic tanks, are completely unsuitable.

ENRICHMENT

Gerbils must be able to fulfil their natural instincts to burrow so need 20cm of substrate. i.e. shredded Fina-card, timothy hay (to bind tunnels) and shredded paper. Sawdust and woodshavings are not suitable. Gerbils will appreciate a solid wooden wheel (min 21cm). They require a sand bath (Tiny Friends Farm Sand, not Chinchilla dust) in a large dish a few inches deep to keep their coat in good condition. When cleaning their tank, replace 20% of the old substrate to keep a familiar scent. Scatter additional food & forage mixes into their tank to encourage natural foraging. Gerbils must have wooden chew items to keep their teeth worn down. They also love chewing cardboard and grassy chew toys.



HANDLING & FREE ROAMING

When handling your Gerbil, never lift it by its tail as this can cause the tail to detach, known as de-gloving. When taming your gerbils, try hand-feeding them so they are used to your smell and voice. All Gerbils appreciate the chance to free-roam in a gerbil proof room/area (i.e. remove/cover all wires and chewable items) or playpen. A ladder from their cage is ideal, offer them a sand bath or tube to step into to remove them from their tank. Exercise balls should never be used. If you have an escapee, do not panic! Gerbils are naturally inquisitive, so again, offer a tube or sand bath to step into or a favourite treat (pumpkin seeds, mealworms etc).



NEUTERING/BONDING

Gerbils do not need to be neutered unless they're due to be introduced as a mixed sex pair or in males to calm them. In this scenario, we'd recommend the males are neutered as it's a less invasive procedure in comparison to the females. When introducing Gerbils, never simply place them in a tank together; instead, follow the "split cage" bonding method.

