



GERBIL FACTSHEET



WHAT IS A GERBIL?

The Mongolian Gerbil is the most common pet Gerbil. 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* means "Clawed Warrior". You can find more information on their care at www.gerbilcare.co.uk

KEY INFO

- **Lifespan:** 3-4 years on average.
- **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 (e.g. Bunny Gerbil Dream 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.
- **More Info:** please visit www.gerbilcare.co.uk



ACCOMMODATION

Gerbils live indoors, in a large tank, with a minimum of 25cm deep of substrate for burrowing. Minimum tank size of 100 x 40 x 40cm (LxWxD), e.g. Ikea Detolf, Skyline Marrakesh, Skyline Falco, Jungle Pets Gerbilariums, Diversa Tanks. 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. For more info: www.gerbilcare.co.uk.

ENRICHMENT

Gerbils must be able to fulfil their natural instincts to burrow so need 25cm+ of substrate. i.e. Finacard, Aubiose, Megazorb or other dust extracted or paper based products, mixed with timothy hay and shredded paper. Sawdust and woodshavings are not suitable. Gerbils will appreciate a solid wooden or metal 28cm wheel. They require a sand bath (Tiny Friends Farm Sand, never Chinchilla dust) in a 20cm+ 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. For more info: www.gerbilcare.co.uk.



HANDLING & FREE ROAMING



When handling your Gerbil, never lift it by its tail as this can cause the tail to detach (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). A ladder from their cage is ideal, or 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. For more info: www.gerbilcare.co.uk.

NEUTERING/BONDING

Gerbils do not need to be neutered unless they're due to be introduced as a mixed sex pair. 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. For more info: www.gerbilcare.co.uk.

