

Small Pet Rodent Awareness Week



Degu Care Sheet

WHAT IS A DEGU?

Degus are a little larger than gerbils and are classed as exotics, however as long as you do your research you can easily become the perfect owner. Degus are best housed in groups of 2 or more as they are social animals and are easily tamed. Degus are intelligent, playful and curious and love interaction and exercise.

KEY INFORMATION

- Lifespan: 6-8 years
- Size: 12-18cm
- Colour: brown and/or white
- Nocturnal: no they are diurnal (most active during the day)

DIET

Degus are herbivores so need a degu specific hard feed, for example Science Selective, plus unlimited hay and dried herbs. Degus are prone to diabetes so avoid anything sugary. Degus require unlimited fresh water in a water bottle with a metal tube.

ACCOMMODATION

Indoors in a cage - min size of 100cm x 60cm x 60cm, for example. Savic Royal Suite 95

Degus need a large cage to live with multiple levels made of metal or kiln dried pine. Degus are avid chewers so cannot be housed in a plastic or wooden cage or they quickly eat their way out - wire/metal cages are the most suitable. This includes anything you transport them in - ensure it's metal or they will escape.

Degus are very temperature sensitive so need to avoid hot rooms/conditions or can develop heat stroke.

Degus don't smell, but the toilet area in the cage can have an odour if not regularly changed. Degus need hides, huts and hammocks for sleeping.

ENRICHMENT

Provide a solid surface exercise wheel - for example a metal TicTac wheel, min 12". Provide two wheels for larger groups.

Degus love to burrow so will need a tub of sand/hay or paper based bedding, for example Softacard, Finacard or Bedmax to keep them entertained. Degus enjoy time out of their cage

but must be supervised to prevent any accidents such as chewing cables and falls. Degus appreciate access to a sand bath to help to keep their fur clean. Degus make little chirping noises when happy but are generally silent other than this.

HANDLING

Degus aren't always keen to be handled but will rarely bite you - they can be quite speedy though so just be careful not to accidentally drop them,

Degus often happily perch on you whilst having a run around outside their cage and will take treats from your hand.

Never grab them by the tail as they can shed half of it as a way to get away from predators in the wild.

As with other prey animals, degus can sometimes be jumpy so they're not suitable for young children or homes with curious/excitable cats and dogs unless they can have a separate and secure room.

NEUTERING

Degus do not need to be neutered unless they're due to be introduced as a mixed sex group - in this scenario, we'd recommend the males are neutered as it's a less invasive procedure in comparison to the females.

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<https://smallpetrodentawarenessweek.co.uk>