

FREE SAMPLE

Guinea Pig Care Package

The first 4 pages of the 41-page printable manual, free to keep.



In this sample: What's inside, How to Use This Package, Quick Profile & Cost Overview. The contents page shows every one of the 41 pages, so you can see exactly what the full package covers before you buy it.

Not in this sample: the 37 pages that follow, which are the full care guide, the health section, the quick reference cards, and the owner tools, checklists and logs.

The full package is \$8.99 at beastlyfacts.com/care-packages/guinea-pig/. One purchase, and every corrected edition is a free re-download from your library. The free guinea pig care guide it was built from is at beastlyfacts.com/guides/guinea-pig/, and stays free.

CONTENTS

What's inside

Every page is written to be used, not just read once.

GETTING STARTED

How to Use This Package	3
-------------------------	---

SECTION 01 · QUICK PROFILE

Quick Profile & Cost Overview	4
-------------------------------	---

SECTION 02 · FULL CARE GUIDE

Enclosure Size, Shape & Flooring	5
Bedding, Hides & Cage Layout	6
Temperature, Heat Stress & Household Climate	7
Common Mistakes, Enrichment & Floor Time	8
Pairs and Groups: Choosing Your Guinea Pigs	9
Introducing & Bonding Two Guinea Pigs	10
Handling, Sounds & Body Language	11
Hay: the 80% Nobody Budgets For	12
Vitamin C: the Rule That Makes This Species Different	13
Daily Vegetables & Greens	14
Pellets, Fruit, Treats & the Never-Feed List	15
Grooming, Nails, Coats & Boar Cleaning	16
Sexing, Neutering & the Breeding Deadline	17

SECTION 03 · HEALTH & COMMON ISSUES

Health Red Flags & the 8 to 12 Hour Rule	18
GI Stasis, Bloat & a Pig That Stops Eating	19
Dental Disease & Malocclusion	20
Scurvy: Stages, Treatment & Recovery	21
Respiratory Infection & Pneumonia	22
Bladder Stones & Urinary Disease	23
Ovarian Cysts & Reproductive Disease	24
Mites, Lice, Ringworm, Lumps & Bumblefoot	25
Antibiotics & Enterotoxemia	26
Anesthesia & the Vet Conversation	27
Droppings, Weight & Body Condition	28

SECTION 04 · QUICK REFERENCE

Setup Checklist & Targets	29
Emergency & Quick Targets Card	30

SECTION 05 · OWNER TOOLS

Budget & Shopping List	31
First 30 Days Checklist	32
Symptom Quick Reference	33
Daily, Weekly & Seasonal Routine	34
Heat Waves, Power Outages & Travel	35
Pet-Sitter Sheet	36
Owner Log	37
Equipment & Vet Log	38

REFERENCE

Glossary	39
Sources & Further Reading	40
Version History & About	41

START HERE

How to use this package

Three ways to get value from it, depending on where you are right now.

If you haven't brought any home yet

Read pages 4 through 15 in order before buying anything. Two decisions cost the most to undo: the enclosure on page 5, which nearly everyone buys too small and replaces inside a year, and the number of pigs on page 9, which is not really a preference. Then use the Budget and Shopping List on page 31 and buy once.

If your guinea pigs are already home

Go to page 13 first. Vitamin C is the one requirement this species has that no other common small pet shares, and it is the most common preventable illness in pet guinea pigs. It takes five minutes to fix and weeks to go wrong. Then audit the setup against the checklist on page 29, and if anything looks off at all, page 18, which explains why the safe waiting window here is measured in hours.

Print these first

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Page 29: Setup Checklist & Targets | ☐ Page 34: Daily, Weekly & Seasonal Routine |
| ☐ Page 30: Emergency & Quick Targets Card | ☐ Page 36: Pet-Sitter Sheet |
| ☐ Pages 26 and 27: Antibiotics, Anesthesia & the Vet Conversation | ☐ Page 37: Owner Log |
| ☐ Page 33: Symptom Quick Reference | ☐ Page 28: Droppings, Weight & Body Condition |

WHY THIS PACKAGE EXISTS

A guinea pig is sold as a starter pet and priced like one, and almost every part of that framing is wrong. It needs more floor space than a rabbit hutch provides, a companion of its own species, a daily fresh vitamin C source, a room that stays cool, and an exotics vet who knows which antibiotics are dangerous to it. Every figure here is cross-checked against veterinary sources, listed on page 40, and every temperature and dimension is given in both imperial and metric.

NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR

A cavy-savvy exotics veterinarian. This is a husbandry reference for day-to-day care. Anything urgent is a professional call, not a page in this book, and the window for urgency in this species is short: a guinea pig that has stopped eating is on a clock measured in hours. Find a vet before you need one and write the number on page 30.

SECTION 01

Quick profile

Everything at a glance before you read the detail.

Scientific name	<i>Cavia porcellus</i> . A cavy, and a rodent. Not a pig, and not from Guinea
Origin	Fully domesticated from Andean wild cavies over 3,000 years ago. There is no wild population of this species anywhere
Adult size	8 to 12 in (20 to 30 cm)
Adult weight	Boars 900 to 1,200 g (2 to 2.6 lb); sows 700 to 900 g (1.5 to 2 lb)
Lifespan	4 to 8 years, with 6 to 8 typical under good care. Diet, companionship and access to an exotics vet are what move it
Diet type	Strict herbivore and hindgut fermenter. Hay is 70 to 80% of the diet. Page 12
Vitamin C	Cannot make its own. 10 to 25 mg per kg of body weight daily for a healthy adult, 30 mg/kg or more when growing, pregnant, nursing or ill. Page 13
Floor space, one pig	7.5 sq ft (0.7 m ²) minimum, plus 2 to 4 sq ft for each additional animal
Floor space, a pair	10.5 sq ft (1 m ²) is the widely used welfare target. Page 5
Room temperature	65 to 79°F (18 to 26°C) at 30 to 60% humidity. Never above 80°F (27°C). Page 7
Social needs	Kept in pairs or small groups. A solo guinea pig is a welfare problem, not a preference. Page 9
Sexual maturity	Sows can conceive from 4 to 5 weeks old. Separate mixed litters by 3 weeks. Page 17
Vocal range	Over eleven distinct calls. Wheeking, purring, rumbling, chutting, teeth chattering. Page 11
Handling difficulty	Beginner, but a prey animal that must be supported at both ends and handled low to the ground
Vaccines required	None for this species

Cost overview

Initial setup, for a pair

\$265 to \$515 for the enclosure and equipment, plus \$20 to \$120 for the pigs themselves and \$100 to \$200 for two first vet exams. Page 31.

Monthly ongoing, a pair

\$80 to \$190. Hay, fresh vegetables and bedding are the three big lines, and they are consumed constantly rather than bought once.

THE NUMBER THAT SURPRISES PEOPLE

Guinea pigs are cheap to acquire and expensive to run. The animal is the smallest line in the budget and the hay is one of the largest, because a guinea pig eats roughly its own body size in hay every day and it never stops. Budget for two animals from the start rather than adding a second later and being surprised by the jump.