

## Enclosure

- The minimum recommended housing size for two guinea pigs is 7.5 square feet, and for three guinea pigs it's 10.5 square feet. This is just the minimum though; always try to give your guinea pigs as much space as you can! Multiple level cages are discouraged, as they can cause damage to your guinea pigs' spine.
- You will need at least two hides, space for a litter box, a heavy food bowl and water bowl/water bottle (make sure they can't tip or throw them), toys, and room to move around and play.
- Wire bottom cages are not permitted. They can cause sores on their feet which are very painful.
- For litter boxes, make sure to use a hard wood shaving, paper litter, or KILN DRIED pine pellets. Kiln dried is very important as pine is a soft wood that can be dangerous if not properly dried out before use.
- Outside enclosures are not permitted for guinea pigs.
- Guinea pigs are prey animals and need lots of places to hide and feel safe. Make sure to have at least 2 hides in an enclosure, and if you have multiple guinea pigs in one cage, at least one per guinea pig. Do not buy hides that are advertised as "edible". Most of these have unsafe materials in them and can cause stomach upset once ingested. Safe hides are made of fabric, plastic, or straw. If your guinea pigs start to eat a hide, remove it immediately.
- Guinea pigs always need the companionship of at least one other guinea pig. Without this, they can develop depression and may stop eating. Certain guinea pigs will be too territorial to share their enclosure with another pig, but they still need another to talk with. In these rare cases it's best to either neuter the guinea pig and put them with another neutered pig or have two different enclosures in the same room.

## Food

- The bulk of every healthy guinea pig's diet is grass hay. Examples of grass hay include timothy, brome, fescue, Bermuda grass, and orchard grass. The most common, and the one we use, is timothy grass hay. Make sure to stay away from legume hays, such as alfalfa, as these are higher in calories and calcium and can cause gastrointestinal issues and straw, as it has no nutritional value. Each guinea pig should have a pile of clean hay as large as them available 24/7.
- Hay feeders are highly discouraged as they restrict access to the hay, can cause broken teeth if chewed on, cannot hold the amount of hay needed, and can cause broken bones if the guinea pig gets stuck.
- An adult guinea pig should have 1/2-1 cup of leafy greens a day. Guinea pigs under a year old should have half that. For all guinea pigs, introduce new veggies/fruits one at a time to get their systems used to new foods.
- Vegetables should be 1/4-1/2 a cup given daily or every other day. Bell peppers are a staple in their diet, as guinea pigs cannot produce their own vitamin c. If you don't give them vitamin c treats, we highly recommend giving bell peppers -and other vegetables high in vit c- often.

- Fruits should be given sparingly, as treats.
- Do not give dried or frozen foods to guinea pigs.
- Guinea pigs should also get a 1/4 cup of PLAIN (no extra dried fruit or “cookie” bits) pellets daily. We recommend Oxbow Essentials.
- We also recommend supplementing with Oxbow vitamin c treats. As stated above, guinea pigs cannot produce their own vitamin c and without getting enough of it can develop scurvy!

#### Toys & Enrichment

- Wood chews are the most important toys you should get for your guinea pigs. They help wear down your pig’s teeth which are constantly growing. Loofah slices and pinecones are also a big favorite of the guinea pigs here at the Burrow!
- Hard plastic baby toys, such as stacking cups, are a favorite of many guinea pigs as well! They love to have things to throw around and make a mess with, so if you don't have designated toys for that be prepared for them to try and throw everything else they can grab instead.
- Avoid these common toys: Anything made with glue, mineral chews, and salt licks. These can cause gastrointestinal upset to your guinea pig.