

Cockatiel

- ◆ Originally from Australia
- ◆ **Natural Habitat:** Light forests and Grasslands
- ◆ **Life Span in Captivity:** 15-20 years
- ◆ **Age at Maturity:** 9 months to 1 year
- ◆ Males have good talking ability, whereas females aren't as vocal
- ◆ Females are often more affectionate and acrobatic
- ◆ Cockatiels are bred domestically – Australia banned all native birds from being exported in 1894
- ◆ Bored cockatiels will screech – they need toys and to regularly spend time with their owner at least once a day for an hour
- ◆ Always in search of a friend. Cockatiels are very sociable birds and will get depressed if they are left alone for long periods of time. They may bang their heads against cages, refuse to eat, or become irritable and violent around owners.
- ◆ Minimum cage size for a single cockatiel should be 20" x 20" and 30" high – if cage is too small they can be injured. Bar spacing should be 5/8 of an inch or less
- ◆ Cage should be out of direct sunlight and away from drafty windows or doors
- ◆ Since cockatiels have only been recently domesticated, they haven't completely let go of some of their survival instincts. This includes hiding their illness—a sign of weakness that could easily attract the attention of a predator
- ◆ Cage should have several perches at different levels
- ◆ Can eat cockatiel seed mix – make sure it doesn't have too many sunflower seeds as these are fattening. Cockatiel pellets are also available
- ◆ Can be supplemented with various fruits and veggies such as apples, grapes, pears, chopped carrots, and peas



Ferret

- ◆ Descended from the European polecat (weasel)
- ◆ Are a fully domesticated animal. Different species than the American Black Footed Ferret
- ◆ Were used to flush rabbits out of holes for hunting purposes, and also to control rodents
- ◆ Life span is 6-8 years
- ◆ Sleep up to 18 hours per day
- ◆ Poor eyesight but extremely good hearing and sense of smell
- ◆ Have an odor many people don't like
- ◆ Carnivores
- ◆ Not territorial – usually get along very well with other ferrets and even ferret friendly dogs and cats
- ◆ Can be litterbox trained
- ◆ Usually do not chew or claw on furniture
- ◆ Very inquisitive and playful
- ◆ When awake have a high energy level – need opportunity out of cage to run around each day
- ◆ Very curious – like to check everything out
- ◆ Can get into everything – like to take objects and hide them.
- ◆ Like to crawl into small dark spaces to sleep
- ◆ If they can get their head into an opening, they can get the rest of their body through it as well
- ◆ Extremely flexible
- ◆ A very large cage is required – cost starts at \$150
- ◆ Need toys – they love to play



Gerbil

- ◆ Found in the sandy plains of Africa, Asia and the Middle East
- ◆ Thought to be more than 100 different species
- ◆ The gerbils kept as pets are Mongolian Gerbils from Mongolia
- ◆ In the wild Mongolian Gerbils live in family groups of up to 20 gerbils
- ◆ Gerbils rarely vocalize – communication is mainly through scent
- ◆ Small rodent – teeth grow continuously
- ◆ Has a long tail which it can shed as a defense mechanism if it gets trapped
- ◆ Uses the tail to balance when standing on hind legs
- ◆ Sharp claws help them burrow underground
- ◆ Use their underground burrows to escape danger
- ◆ In the wild only comes to the surface when they need to find food and water
- ◆ When kept as a pet tend to be awake more during the night than the day
- ◆ Do better when they have another gerbil to live with
- ◆ Minimum space of 10 gallon aquarium – needs exercise wheel
- ◆ Like cardboard tubes
- ◆ Diet is grains, seeds & dried vegetables. Can be fed small amounts of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- ◆ Lives about 2-3 years



Hedgehog

- 🐾 Pets kept are known as “African Pygmy Hedgehogs” and are most likely a mix of different African species
- 🐾 Their spines are a defense mechanism – when threatened will roll up in a ball to protect their bellies.
- 🐾 Life span is about 4 to 6 years
- 🐾 Are illegal to keep as pets in a number of states
- 🐾 They are nocturnal
- 🐾 Need a hiding space so they have someplace to sleep during the day
- 🐾 Recommended space is 16” x 24” for a cage
- 🐾 They are ground dwellers and do not have good height perception – they need to be in a single story cage or they may fall off ledges
- 🐾 Because they are native to Africa prefer temperatures between 72 and 80 degrees
- 🐾 Letting them become too cold (below 70 degrees) can result in their bodies shutting down and death
- 🐾 Should be kept singly – putting two together can result in fighting
- 🐾 Can be litter box trained
- 🐾 Will use an exercise wheel
- 🐾 Like toys like large tubes to run through and small plastic balls that they can push around
- 🐾 In the wild hedgehogs feed on insects. As a pet can be fed commercial hedgehog food supplemented by meal worms and crickets, or cat food if hedgehog food can't be found
- 🐾 When handling care needs to be taken because of the spine. Moving your hand under their tummies is the best way to pick up. They will not cuddle but may sit calmly or climb over you. A thick towel can help



Iguana

Originally from:

Mexico down to Brazil/South America

Adult iguanas will grow between 4 and 6 feet –10-15 pounds

A hatchling is usually between 7 and 10 inches long

3 year old iguanas reach a size of 3 and 3 and a half feet long

With proper care iguanas live 10 – 15 years

Recommended cage space – 6x4 feet

Feeding – finely chopped veggies. Iguanas do not chew well. Adult should get a cup a day. Leafy green veggies: Parsley, snow peas, carrot, collard greens, squash, yams. Need to do a lot of research – feeding the wrong veggies and fruits can cause nutritional deficiency and deformity

Wild Habitat: tropical rainforests, close to water sources such as rivers and streams. Live in the treetops – 40 to 50 feet above ground

Diurnal – awake during day

Cold blooded – keep warm by basking in the sun or laying on warm rocks

Tend to live alone

Adaptations: Besides the long fingers and claws mentioned above, green iguanas have many excellent interesting adaptations. Green iguanas have good senses of hearing and smell, and superb vision. Their long tail is also quite sharp, and is snapped in the air as a defense mechanism. The tail can also break off if caught by a predator, but grows back without permanent damage. Green iguana skin is very water resistant, and tough to avoid cuts and scratches. The coloring of the skin helps camouflage the green iguana, which means that they blend in easily to their surroundings to remain undetected by predators. If they are detected however, and need to escape quickly, these iguanas can dive from trees into water, and swim well. Green iguanas are quite sturdy-- they can fall 40-50 feet to the ground without getting hurt! Male green iguanas have a special flap of skin called the dewlap. Male iguanas can raise their dewlap to appear bigger than they really are, either to intimidate predators, or to impress females. Both male and female green iguanas can store fat under their jaws and in their necks for times when there is not much food available.



Rat

- 🐾 Rats have very little odor and they keep themselves clean with constant grooming. Any bad odor is caused by wastes and means the cage isn't being cleaned often enough for the type of litter being used.
- 🐾 Nocturnal
- 🐾 Rodents – teeth continuously grow and must have stuff to chew on
- 🐾 Lifespan is 2 to 3 years
- 🐾 Very smart – can be taught to come when their name is called and do simple tricks
- 🐾 Use urine to mark their territory– will leave drops of urine as they walk
- 🐾 Rats are unlikely to bite if handled often enough that they are comfortable with it. The exception is if you have the scent of food on your hands.
- 🐾 Wire cages are better than glass aquariums. Aquariums will contain the smell and germs. Wire cages are more hygienic and allow rats to climb.
- 🐾 Rats love to climb – make sure their cage has height as well as lots of floor space. They also enjoy sleeping in hammocks at the top of the cage. A large bird cage with wires close together work well for rats
- 🐾 Cedar and pine shavings are toxic to rats
- 🐾 Tail is long because they do climb a lot and they use it for balance
- 🐾 Tail is naked because it's how they release excess heat when they get too hot. Rats are very vulnerable to heat stress.
- 🐾 Rats are omnivorous – eat both plant and animal
- 🐾 Feed good quality rat food – nothing with a lot of seeds.
- 🐾 Chocolate is toxic to rats
- 🐾 Can eat many fruits and veggies
- 🐾 Love toys they can climb on and through – tubes, tunnels, ladders
- 🐾 Exercise wheel is great for rats

