



# Gerbil



**Origin:** Sandy plains of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East

**Size:** 4-5 inches long

**Life Span:** 2-3 years with proper care

## Heat and Lighting:

- Keep in a consistently warm room, but no additional heat is needed. They are tolerant of lower temperatures and will bed down to stay warm.

## Tank setup:

- A 10 gallon tank is appropriate for 1-2 gerbils; 20+ gallons should be used for more than 2 gerbils.
- Gerbils should *not* be kept in wire or plastic cages as they may chew through either.
- 1-2” of bedding (aspen or recycled paper) should be placed in the habitat. Never use pine or cedar bedding – they are allergic to it and it may cause respiratory failure!
- A water bottle with fresh water should be provided at all times.
- A hide such as the “Ediblelogz” or “Snak Shak” should be provided; this doubles as a chew toy for the gerbil.
- Other toys, such as tissue boxes (remove plastic), paper towel tubs, and chewable sticks can be provided to keep them entertained. They love to chew!!

## Diet:

 Herbivores

- A well-balanced diet consists of high-quality gerbil food and limited fruits and vegetables.
- Uneaten fruits and vegetables from be discarded if not eaten within 24 hours.
- A salt block should be kept in their tank at all times.

## Temperament & Handling:

- Gerbils are diurnal, which means that they are active during the day. They do nap though!
- Gerbils are docile and friendly, and rarely bite if healthy.
- Introduce yourself by placing your hand in their tank to let them sniff and explore. Do not jerk your hand away, pick them up, or make sudden movements. As they become familiar with you and your smell, they will be more trusting and receptive to being picked up and held. Be calm and slow, but confident!
- Consider using a treat such as sunflower seeds or alfalfa hay to hand-tame them.

**Housemates:** They are social animals, so we recommend them being with a same-sex sibling. Otherwise, house them separately. A male-female pair will mate and reproduce every 28 days (up to 10 pups each time).