

The Cost Of A Ferret

What is the cost of owning a ferret?

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Q: How much do ferrets cost?

A: This is a great question and one that every potential ferret owner should read the answer to before jumping into purchasing a ferret. The initial price of a ferret can vary widely. Some fur farms sell ferrets for about \$25 to \$40 (pelt price), whereas some private home breeders sell their ferrets for \$200 to \$400, depending on the color or if the ferret is from championship bloodlines. Ferrets from either source usually are not neutered or de-scented, so add an additional \$100 to \$500 to the above prices depending on what your local veterinarian charges for these services.

Ferrets from private breeders generally do not need to be de-scented because they have been hand-raised and are not as prone to expressing their anal glands as fur-quality stock. But even fur-quality stock ferrets generally stop "poofing" once they are neutered and get to know you, although this can take several months. I do not recommend automatically de-scenting a ferret unless there is a medical problem (chronic impacted anal glands) or if the ferret just will not stop poofing constantly and is in danger of losing its home because of this.

At pet stores, ferrets generally cost between \$100 to \$200. Most of these ferrets are already neutered and de-scented by the breeder before being shipped to the pet store. Some controversy exists about altering the ferrets at a young age (5 to 7 weeks). Some people believe that early altering (before 6 months of age) may cause some health problems – such as adrenal disease – later in the ferret's life.

Most ferret shelters charge between \$30 to \$80 for a ferret, depending on the ferret's age or medical status. Most shelter ferrets are neutered and vaccinated for distemper prior to adoption. Many ferret shelters are also associated with a ferret club, which can be a good source for ferret information and camaraderie with other ferret owners.

Once the initial cost of the ferret is out of the way, you must consider your new pet's basic requirements. Your ferret will need: a roomy cage (\$100 to \$300) quality food (\$15 to \$25) a water bottle and water bowl (\$10 to \$15) a heavy food dish (\$3 to \$10) bedding (old T-shirts and sweats, \$0; or store-bought, \$20 to \$40) toys (\$5 to \$20) treats (\$2 to \$5) hairball laxative (\$5) grooming supplies, such as nail trimmers and shampoo (\$10 to \$20) several litter boxes for inside and outside the cage (\$10 to \$30) a litter scoop (\$1) litter (\$5 to \$15)

You can buy many more non-essential items, but this list gets you started with the basics (some of which need regular replacement).

You also need to schedule a trip to the veterinarian shortly after bringing your new pet home. A wellness check is always a good idea when bringing a new animal into your house.

Most young ferrets from pet shops and fur farms require distemper booster shots right away. Your new ferret will probably also need additional booster shots three to four weeks after you bring it home. If you get a ferret from a breeder or shelter, ask when the ferret's next distemper shot is due. Some states and municipalities also require that ferrets get rabies shots. Your veterinarian should know if a rabies shot for ferrets is required in your area. If the ferret is an older animal from a breeder or shelter (more than 4 years old), consider having bloodwork done to check for potential problems, such as insulinoma.

Overall, the visit to the veterinarian will probably run \$50 to \$100, depending on your veterinarian's charges and whether shots are given. Add more to the total, perhaps another \$50 to \$150, if bloodwork is needed.

So, how much does a ferret cost? Roughly \$350 to \$1,650 (or more if it's pampered) – and that's just for the first month! Some expenditures like a cage and some supplies last quite a while, but other items – such as food, litter and vet visits – are routine expenses required throughout the ferret's life.

See more ferret questions and answers>>