

Ideal Guinea Pig Cages

Find out the ideal housing for your guinea pigs.

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The best cage for your guinea pig depends on whether you plan to keep it indoors or outdoors. Either way, the bigger the cage you can provide the better for your guinea pig. Each guinea pig should have at least 7 feet by 7 feet of floor space per cage.

The ideal indoor cage for a guinea pig features powder-coated wire bars and a solid bottom with a removable tray. Some people also use a plastic child's pool, while others keep their guinea pigs inside an exercise pen.

Indoor cages should be placed in a well-lit room, but out of direct sunlight. They should not be situated in drafty areas, and are best kept off the floor if possible. Keep the cage away from radiators and other heat sources.

An outdoor cage for a guinea pig (called a hutch) should be made from a wood frame, with wire mesh that is 14-gauge in weight and holes no larger than 1 inch by 2 inches. The floor should also be wire, but should be 1/3 solid so the guinea pig can get off the wire (to prevent sore hocks). The cage should also have a leak-proof roof and provide enough room for a nest box, food bowl, a hay rack and a couple of toys. The more guinea pigs you intend to house in the cage, the bigger it should be.

Outdoor cages should be placed in areas that are sheltered from the wind and out of direct sunlight. They must be up off the ground, preferably on legs at least 2 feet high.

Whatever type of enclosure you use should be big enough for the guinea pig to stretch out and move around in. The guinea pig should also be able to stand up on its hind legs without touching the top. If you plan to have more than one guinea pig, the cage should be big enough for both animals to be able to get away from each other comfortably when they wish.

The best bedding for guinea pigs is recycled paper bedding or aspen shavings. Both of these are absorbent and do not have a strong odor. Cedar, pine and other aromatic woods should not be used because they can cause problems with the guinea pig's respiratory system.

Cage Accessories & Exercise Toys

A guinea pig needs more than just a cage to live well. It also requires accessories in its cage. Must-have accessories for guinea pigs include a nest box made of wood or plastic, one or two ceramic crock food bowls, a hanging water bottle for the side of the cage, a hay rack that hangs on the side of the cage and wooden chew blocks for gnawing.

Toys that will encourage a guinea pig to exercise inside its cage include balls made for cats, empty toilet paper rolls, small boxes, paper bags and PVC pipe.

Do not put a guinea pig inside an exercise ball or give it an exercise wheel. These products are not safe for guinea pigs.