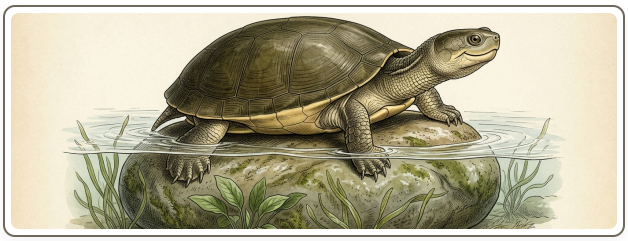
African Side-Neck Turtle

Pelomedusa subrufa & Pelusios castaneus

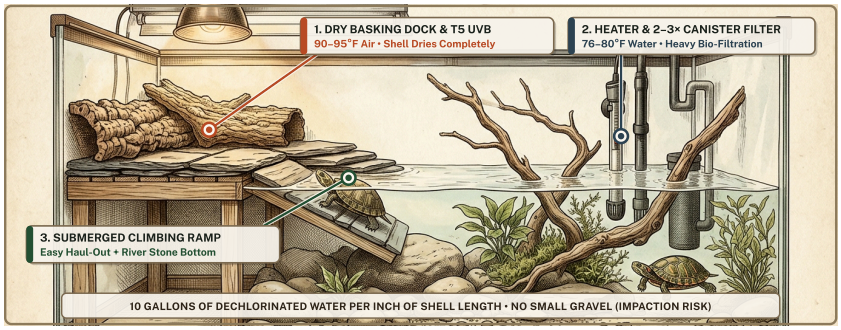
The Quick Version: Instead of pulling their head straight back into their shell, Side-Neck Turtles fold their neck sideways under the rim — and they always look like they're smiling at you! They're super personable, begging at the glass like water puppies.



LIFESPAN	ADULT SIZE	ACTIVE HOURS	ADULT TANK	WATER TEMP
25–40+ Years	7–10 Inches	Daytime (Diurnal)	40B / 50G Low-Boy+	76°–80°F Heated

1. Warm Swimming Water + Bone-Dry Basking Dock

TWO THINGS KEEP SHELLS HEALTHY: STRONG UVB + DRYING OFF 100% ON THE DOCK!



Dry Basking Dock Air — 90°–95°F
Put both heat bulb AND UVB right over the dry ramp!

Heated Swimming Water — 76°–80°F
Use a shatterproof submersible heater 24/7

UVB Over Basking Dock — Strong UVB
10.0 / 12% UVB (Glass blocks UV — never shine through glass!)

Oversized Filtration — 2–3× Volume
Turtles are messy! Pick a filter rated 2–3× your tank size

Water Conditioner — 0% Chlorine
Always dechlorinate tap water during water changes

2. Two Ways That Work — Pick What Fits Your Home

SHORT & SWEET: BOTH OPTIONS WORK GREAT

Tank Style: Wide Breeder / Low-Boy Tank vs. Oval Tub

Side-Neck Turtles are active bottom-walkers and swimmers that care way more about floor space than deep water:

OPTION A: 40-GAL BREEDER OR 50-GAL LOW-BOY GLASS TANK (OUR TOP PICK!)
Great for watching them swim up to greet you! Pair with a floating basking dock or stacked flat river stone island.

OPTION B: HEAVY-DUTY 40+ GAL OVAL STOCK TANK LAGOON
Molded oval tubs make awesome, indestructible turtle lagoons with tons of floor space and easy overhead lamp clamping.

Bottom Flooring: Bare Glass vs. Fine River Sand

Big No-No: never use small colorful fish gravel — turtles eat pebbles and get fatal gut blockages!

OPTION A: BARE BOTTOM + SMOOTH RIVER BOULDERS
Super easy to vacuum clean during weekly water changes, with big stones (larger than their head) for gripping.

OPTION B: FINE AQUARIUM / RIVER SAND
Side-Necks love burying themselves in fine sand on the bottom, and fine sand passes safely if they swallow a few grains.

Keeping the Water Clean

Real talk: one turtle makes about 3× as much waste as a fish of the same size!

OPTION A: CANISTER FILTER RATED 2–3× YOUR TANK GALLON SIZE
On a 75-gallon tank, run a filter rated for 150–200 gallons and do a quick 25–30% water change once a week.

OPTION B: FEED MESSY MEALS IN A SEPARATE TUB
Feeding worms, krill, and pellets in a separate plastic tub of warm dechlorinated water keeps your main tank crystal clear way longer!

Flip Over for Page 2: Feeding Schedule, Team Tips & Grab-and-Go Checklist →

3. What to Feed (Remember: They Can Only Swallow Underwater!)

PORTION TRICK: FEED ONLY ENOUGH PELLETS TO FIT INSIDE YOUR TURTLE'S HEAD (NOT THE SHELL!)

Juveniles Feed Daily	**Floating Pellets + Protein Daily:** A head-sized portion of quality turtle pellets plus earthworms, crickets, roaches, or thawed krill/bloodworms.
Adults Every 2–3 Days	**Pellets, Bugs/Worms & Floating Greens:** Feed pellets and lean protein (worms, roaches, snails) 3×/week, plus floating romaine, dandelion leaves, or duckweed.
Shell Calcium 24/7 in Tank	**Floating Cuttlebone:** Toss a piece of natural cuttlebone right in the water — they'll crunch on it whenever they need calcium for their shell!

Favorite Turtle Foods We Carry:

- **Floating Turtle Pellets** — Balanced growth & maintenance formulas
- **Worms, Roaches & Krill** — Nightcrawlers, Dubia roaches, frozen turtle cubes
- **Floating Greens & Plants** — Dandelion, red leaf lettuce, duckweed, hornwort
- **Cuttlebone & Calcium Blocks** — Keeps shells hard and prevents peeling scutes

Important African Turtle Note: Unlike local painted turtles or sliders, African Side-Neck Turtles come from warm tropical marshes and **never hibernate!** Keep their water heater running at 76–80°F all winter long.

4. Tips, Tricks & Big No-Nos from Our Reptile Team

REAL-WORLD HABITS THAT KEEP THEM THRIVING

100% Dry Basking Dock

Your turtle needs to be able to climb completely out of the water under both heat (90–95°F) and UVB so both the top AND bottom of its shell get bone-dry — that's what prevents shell rot!

Shatterproof Heater

Turtles love bulldozing tank decor! Always use a plastic-guarded or titanium submersible water heater so they can't crack a glass heater tube.

Watch Those Back Claws!

Hold your turtle like a hamburger with both hands supporting its belly — they have surprisingly strong back legs and will kick like crazy if they feel like they're falling.

Wash Hands & Skip Kitchen Sink

Always wash your hands with soap after touching turtle water, and dump dirty tank buckets in the bathroom or yard rather than where you wash dishes!

5. Grab-and-Go Setup Checklist

ASK US ON THE FLOOR — WE'LL HELP YOU MATCH EVERYTHING!

TANK, BASKING DOCK & SAND

- [ ] 40-Gal Breeder (Juvie) or 75–120 Gal Tank / Stock Pond
- [ ] Sturdy Dry Basking Dock / Ramp & Big River Stones
- [ ] Fine River Sand or Bare Bottom (Never Small Fish Gravel!)

HEATER, BIG FILTER & UVB

- [ ] Shatterproof Submersible Heater (78°F) + Water Thermometer
- [ ] Heavy-Duty Filter (Rated 2–3× Tank Volume) + Dechlorinator
- [ ] 75W–100W Splash-Safe Basking Bulb + Ceramic Dome
- [ ] 10.0 / 12% UVB Lamp Positioned Directly Over the Dry Dock

PELLETS, PROTEIN & CALCIUM

- [ ] Floating Aquatic Turtle Pellets (Growth / Maintenance)
- [ ] Frozen Turtle Cubes / Krill + Live Earthworms & Crickets
- [ ] Floating Cuttlebone / Turtle Calcium Block

A Quick Note from Our Team — Keep Learning & Ask Us Anytime!

The quick version: there's more than one right way to set up a great enclosure! As long as your temperatures, humidity, and diet are dialed in, your pet doesn't care whether its cave is fancy resin or a terra-cotta pot. Bringing home this critter is a **25–40+ year commitment** — use these two pages as your home-base cheat sheet, watch what your pet tells you with their daily behavior, find a good local exotic vet, and call or stop by the shop anytime you have questions!

MY TURTLE'S INFO

Name / Morph: _____

Current Diet: _____

Date Adopted: _____