Guinea Pig

Cavia porcellus

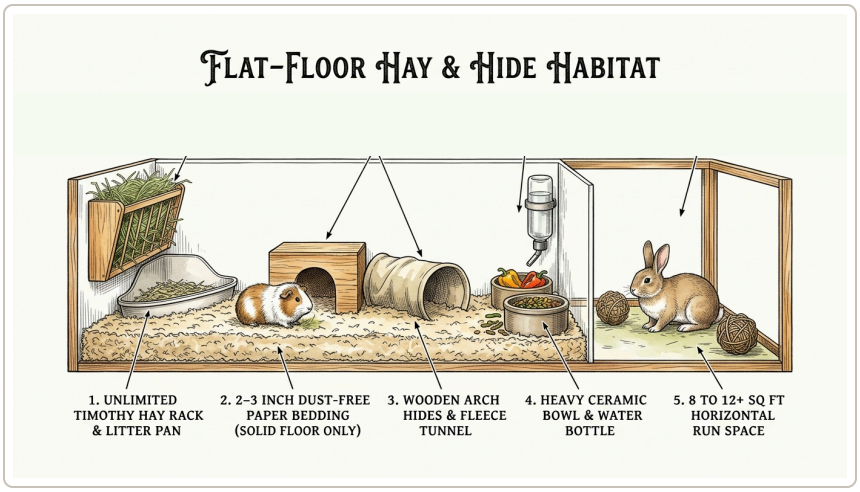
The Quick Version: Guinea pigs ('cavies') are gentle, chatty herd animals from the Andes that wheek with excitement when they hear the fridge open and jump straight in the air ('popcorning') when happy! Three non-negotiables keep them thriving: **keep them in same-sex pairs**, feed **80% unlimited Timothy hay + daily Vitamin C**, and give them a **wide, flat solid-floor cage (8–10.5+ sq ft)**.



LIFESPAN	ADULT SIZE	SOCIAL RULE	MIN CAGE SIZE	ROOM TEMP
5–8 Years	8–12" (1.5–2.5 lbs)	Keep in Pairs (2+)	8–10.5+ Sq Ft (24×48"+)	65°–75°F (Avoid >80°F)

1. Wide Flat-Floor Habitat & Climate Setup

MINIMUM 7.5–10.5 SQ FT SOLID FLOOR FOR A PAIR • NEVER USE WIRE-BOTTOM GRATES OR EXERCISE WHEELS!



Ideal Room Temp
Cool indoor room away from sun & heater vents — **65°–75°F**

Heatstroke Danger Zone
Above 80°F is an emergency — cavies cannot sweat! — **Never >78°F**

Indoor Humidity
Dry, well-ventilated room prevents respiratory bugs — **40–60% RH**

Bedding Depth
2–3" dust-free paper bedding or washable fleece liners — **2–3" Paper**

One Resource Per Pig
2 hides + 2 water bottles + 2 bowls stops bickering — **Rule of 2s**

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

SHORT & SWEET: BOTH OPTIONS WORK GREAT

Enclosure: Midwest Habitat / C&C Grid Pen vs. Starter Pet Store Cage

Guinea pigs are built like little potatoes with delicate spines — they need horizontal running room, not steep ramps:

OPTION A: MIDWEST GUINEA HABITAT PLUS OR 2×4 C&C GRID CAGE (OUR TOP PICK!)
Gives a pair 8 to 10.5+ sq ft of flat running room for zoomies and popcorning! Connect two Midwest cages end-to-end for a dream 16 sq ft herd setup.

OPTION B: LARGE SOLID-BOTTOM PLAYPEN + DAILY FLOOR TIME
Skip tiny 'starter cages' — they force pigs to stand in their own waste and cause fights. Always use a solid bottom (never wire grates, which cause painful bumblefoot).

Bedding: Dust-Free Paper Bedding vs. Fleece Cage Liners

Big No-No: Never use cedar shavings, raw pine, or clumping cat litter — phenols and dust damage sensitive guinea pig lungs!

OPTION A: CAREFRESH OR KAYTEE CLEAN & COZY PAPER BEDDING (2–3" DEEP)
Ultra-soft on sensitive footpads, absorbs ammonia fast, and makes daily spot-cleaning of their favorite bathroom corners easy.

OPTION B: WASHABLE ABSORBENT FLEECE LINERS + CORNER HAY LITTER PAN
Reusable and zero dust! Guinea pigs naturally poop where they munch hay — hang your hay rack right over a paper-pellet litter pan to catch 70% of droppings.

Companionship & Spine Safety (Zero Wheels or Balls!)

In the wild, a lone guinea pig is an easy meal — living alone causes chronic stress and depression:

OPTION A: SAME-SEX BONDED PAIR (2 FEMALES OR 2 YOUNG BROTHERS)
Two females or two littermate males raised together in a roomy cage with 2 open-ended hides will groom, wheek, and popcorn together all day.

OPTION B: STRICT SPINE RULE — NEVER USE WHEELS, BALLS, OR HARNESSES
Guinea pig backs do not bend upward! Exercise wheels, run-about balls, and figure-8 leashes will severely injure their spine — give them flat floor playpen time instead.

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

3. Daily Diet: 80% Hay + Daily Vitamin C + Plain Pellets

LIKE HUMANS, GUINEA PIGS CANNOT MAKE THEIR OWN VITAMIN C — THEY NEED 20–50MG EVERY SINGLE DAY!

80% of Diet 24/7 Unlimited	**Oxbow Western Timothy or Orchard Grass Hay:** Must never run out! Constant hay chewing wears down their ever-growing cheek teeth and keeps their gut moving.
Daily Greens 1 Cup Per Pig	**Leafy Veggies + Bell Pepper Slice:** Romaine, green/red leaf lettuce, cilantro, and 1 slice of sweet bell pepper (loaded with Vitamin C, low in sugar!).
Pellets + Vit C 1/8 Cup + 1 Tab	**Oxbow Essentials Adult Guinea Pig Pellets + Oxbow Natural Science Vitamin C Tab:** Plain uniform Timothy pellets only — skip colorful muesli mixes with seeds and corn!

Vitamin C Rich Veggies vs. High-Calcium Greens to Limit:

Daily Staples
Bell pepper (red/yellow/green), Romaine, Green Leaf, Cilantro

Daily Vitamin C Tab
1 Oxbow Natural Science Vitamin C hay wafer per day

Limit to 1–2x/Week
Kale, Parsley, Spinach (high calcium can cause bladder stones)

Never Feed
Iceberg lettuce, onions, garlic, potatoes, dairy, seeds, or yogurt drops

Young vs. Adult Hay Rule: Babies under 6 months (and pregnant/nursing moms) can have **Oxbow Alfalfa Hay** and Young Guinea Pig pellets for extra growth calcium. At 6 months old, switch strictly to **Timothy or Orchard Grass hay** so excess calcium doesn't form bladder stones!

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

REAL-WORLD HABITS THAT KEEP THEM THRIVING

Never Use Water Drops for Vit C
Vitamin C liquid drops degrade fast in light, turn the water bitter, and make guinea pigs stop drinking! Give an **Oxbow Vitamin C hay tablet** by hand like a daily treat + fresh bell pepper.

GI Stasis Is an Emergency
A guinea pig's gut must keep moving 24/7. If your pig ever stops eating or pooping for **6–8 hours**, or sits hunched with puffed fur, call an exotic vet immediately.

Two Hides with Two Doors
Always give at least one hide per pig — and choose wooden arches or fleece tunnels with **two openings** so a dominant pig can never trap a cagemate inside.

Monthly Nail Trims & Boar Care
Trim nails once a month so toes don't curl (putting a rough slate tile under the water bottle helps wear nails down!). Check long-haired breeds and older males weekly to keep bottoms clean.

5. Grab-and-Go Setup Checklist

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

SPACIOUS FLAT-FLOOR HABITAT

- [ ] Midwest Guinea Habitat Plus or 8–10.5+ Sq Ft Solid-Floor Cage
- [ ] Carefresh or Kaytee Clean & Cozy Dust-Free Paper Bedding (2–3" deep)
- [ ] 2 Open-Ended Wooden Arch Hides or Fleece Tunnels (1 per pig)
- [ ] Corner Litter Pan + Paper Pellet Litter

HAY, VITAMIN C & PELLETS

- [ ] Large Bag of Oxbow Western Timothy Hay (or Orchard Grass)
- [ ] Oxbow Essentials Adult (or Young) Guinea Pig Pellets (Plain, No Seeds!)
- [ ] Oxbow Natural Science Vitamin C Tablets (Daily Scurvy Prevention)
- [ ] Hay Rack / Hay Feeder Bag

BOWLS, BOTTLES & GROOMING

- [ ] 2 Heavy Ceramic Food Bowls (Tip-Proof Stoneware)
- [ ] 2 Lixit Wide-Mouth Ball-Bearing Water Bottles
- [ ] Applewood Chew Sticks, Willow Balls & Oxbow Timothy Cakes
- [ ] Small Animal Nail Clippers + Styptic Powder

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 hide is a fancy wooden arch or a cozy fleece tunnel. Bringing home this critter is a **5–8 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 GUINEA PIGS' INFO

Name / Morph: _____

Current Diet: _____

Date Adopted: _____