Mongolian Gerbil

Meriones unguiculatus

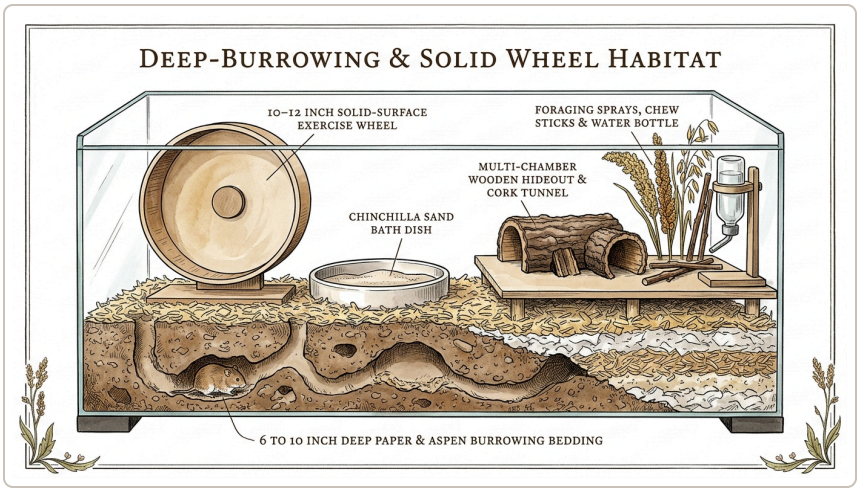
The Quick Version: Unlike nocturnal hamsters, Mongolian Gerbils are **awake off-and-on all day**, virtually odorless (they evolved in the Gobi Desert and produce only a few drops of urine a day!), and must be kept in **same-sex bonded pairs**. Give them a **20L–40B glass tank** with **8–10" of deep burrowing bedding** and endless cardboard to shred!



LIFESPAN	ADULT SIZE	SOCIAL RULE	MIN ENCLOSURE	WHEEL SIZE
3–4+ Years	4" (+ 4" Tufted Tail)	Same-Sex Pair (2)	20L–40B Glass Tank	9–11" Solid Wood/Metal

1. Chew-Proof Glass Tank, 8–10" Deep Bedding & Sand Bath

100% CHEW-PROOF GLASS TANK (ZERO PLASTIC!) + 8–10" DEEP PAPER/ASPEN/HAY TUNNEL MIX!



Ideal Room Temp
Comfortable indoor room temperature — **65°–75°F**

Zero Plastic Rule!
Gerbils chew through plastic cages & bowls in 1 night — **Glass/Wood/Metal**

Bedding Depth
8–10" deep layered paper + aspen + timothy hay — **8–10" Deep**

Indoor Humidity
Dry air (<50% RH) + daily chinchilla sand bath — **30–50% RH**

Active Hours
Polyphasic — awake for 2-hour bursts day & night! — **Day & Night**

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

SHORT & SWEET: BOTH OPTIONS WORK GREAT

Enclosure: 20L/40B Glass Tank vs. Plastic-Bottom Wire Cages

Critical Chew Rule: Gerbils are nature's woodchippers — they will chew right through a plastic cage base in a single weekend and kick bedding 3 feet across the room!

OPTION A: 20-GALLON LONG OR 40-GALLON BREEDER GLASS TANK + MESH LID (OUR TOP PICK!)
100% chew-proof, keeps all 8–10 inches of burrowing bedding inside the glass, and lets you watch your pair excavate multi-room underground burrows.

OPTION B: GLASS TANK + WIRE 'TANK TOPPER' LOFT
Want extra space? Put their water bottle, ceramic food dish, sand bath, and wheel up in a metal tank-topper loft while filling the entire bottom tank with deep digging bedding!

The 3-Layer 'Rebar' Burrowing Mix & Sand Bath

In the Gobi Desert, plant roots hold gerbil burrows together — replicate that at home:

OPTION A: 50% PAPER BEDDING + 30% KILN-DRIED ASPEN + 20% TIMOTHY HAY
Alternate layers of Carefresh/Clean & Cozy paper, aspen, and long-strand Timothy hay, then press it down firmly so their tunnels hold their shape for weeks!

OPTION B: CERAMIC JAR CHINCHILLA SAND BATH (NEVER WATER!)
Give a wide ceramic dish or tilted glass cookie jar with **Chinchilla Bath Sand**. Rolling in sand keeps their desert coat glossy and oil-free.

Same-Sex Pairs Only (Why Trios 'De-Clan')

Gerbils are deeply social and groom, sleep, and thump warnings together — but group size matters:

OPTION A: BONDED SAME-SEX PAIR (2 BROTHERS OR 2 SISTERS)
A pair of 2 littermates is the most stable, lifelong bond! (Never clean 100% of the bedding at once, or they can forget each other's scent and fight!).

OPTION B: 9–11" SOLID WOOD OR METAL WHEEL + DAILY CARDBOARD
Skip thin plastic wheels they'll chew to pieces! Use a 9–11" solid wood or metal wheel and toss in 2–3 cardboard toilet paper rolls or egg cartons every single day.

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

3. Lean Desert Granivore Diet & Scatter Foraging

GERBIL LAB BLOCKS + LOW-FAT SEED MIX (LIMIT FATTY SUNFLOWER SEEDS TO HAND-TREATS!)

Daily Base — 1 Tbsp Per Gerbil
Oxbow Essentials Hamster & Gerbil or Lab Blocks + Lean Seed Mix: Scatter-feed across the bedding so both gerbils forage peacefully without guarding a bowl!

Protein Boost — 2–3x Per Week
Freeze-Dried Mealworms or Crickets: Desert gerbils love hunting dried insects dug into their top bedding layer.

Fresh Greens — Tiny Piece 2x/Wk
Dandelion Leaf, Broccoli, Carrot Shaving, or Romaine: Because gerbils are desert animals, give only tiny thumbnail pieces of veggies so they don't get diarrhea.

Gerbil Tail Safety & Cardboard Shredding Tips:

- **NEVER Grab the Tail!** A gerbil's tufted tail skin slips off permanently ('tail slip') if pulled!
- **Sunflower Seed Trick** Pick sunflower seeds out of their mix and hand-feed them to tame fast!
- **Cardboard Crew** Unscented paper towel tubes, tissue boxes & hay cubes keep teeth trim
- **Water Bottle Guard** Use a glass Lixit bottle or metal guard so they cannot chew the plastic tube

What Does Foot Thumping Mean? When your gerbils are excited or startled, they'll stand up like tiny kangaroos and drum their back feet rapidly against the floor! Talk softly and offer a pumpkin seed so they know everything is safe.

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

REAL-WORLD HABITS THAT KEEP THEM THRIVING

Prevent 'Tail Slip' Injuries

In the wild, if a bird grabs a gerbil's tail, the fur and skin detach so the gerbil can escape — and it never grows back. Always scoop gerbils in a ceramic mug, tunnel, or cupped hands!

Keep 1/3 Old Bedding

Because gerbils only pee a few drops a day, their tank stays clean for 3–4 weeks! When cleaning, always mix 1/3 of their clean old bedding back in to preserve their shared pair scent.

Watch for Red Nose Rub

If a gerbil has a red, raw nose ('sore nose'), remove any wire cage bars they might be chewing and verify their bedding is dust-free paper/aspen (never cedar!).

One Big Sleeping Hide

Unlike guinea pigs that want separate rooms, a bonded pair of gerbils should share one large multi-chamber wooden hideout so they don't claim separate territories!

5. Grab-and-Go Setup Checklist

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

CHEW-PROOF TANK & DEEP BEDDING

- [ ] 20-Gallon Long or 40-Gallon Breeder Glass Tank + Locking Screen Lid
- [ ] 2 Large Bags of Carefresh / Kaytee Paper Bedding + Kiln-Dried Aspen
- [ ] 1 Bag of Oxbow Western Timothy Hay (for tunnel structure & chewing)
- [ ] Large Wooden Hideout, Bendy Wood Bridges & Cork Tunnels

WHEEL, SAND BATH & CHEWS

- [ ] 9–11" Solid Wood or Metal Upright Wheel (No Wire Rungs or Thin Plastic!)
- [ ] Ceramic Dish / Glass Jar + Chinchilla Bath Sand
- [ ] Applewood Sticks, Timothy Hay Cubes & Unscented Cardboard Tubes

FOOD & CHEW-PROOF WATER

- [ ] Oxbow Hamster & Gerbil Pellets + Natural Seed Foraging Mix
- [ ] Freeze-Dried Mealworms (Protein Treat)
- [ ] Chew-Proof Glass Water Bottle (Lixit) with Metal Hanger

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 **3–4+ 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 GERBILS' INFO

Name / Morph: _____

Current Diet: _____

Date Adopted: _____