INSIDE FLAP • KEEPER HABITS

4 Keys to Long-Term Health

Small Daily Habits That Prevent 95% of Vet Visits

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.

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!

BACK COVER • TAKE THIS TO THE AISLE

Grab-and-Go Setup Checklist

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

MY GUINEA PIGS' INFO & FEEDING LOG

Name / Morph: _____

Gotcha Date & Weight: _____

Current Diet & Daily Routine: _____

Critter Cabana & Cascade Pet Supply

Questions about habitat setup, nutrition, or bonding? Stop by or call our animal care team anytime — we're here for the full 5–8 year commitment!

CRITTER CABANA & CASCADE PET SUPPLY • CARE GUIDE

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)**.

QUICK VITAL STATS AT-A-GLANCE

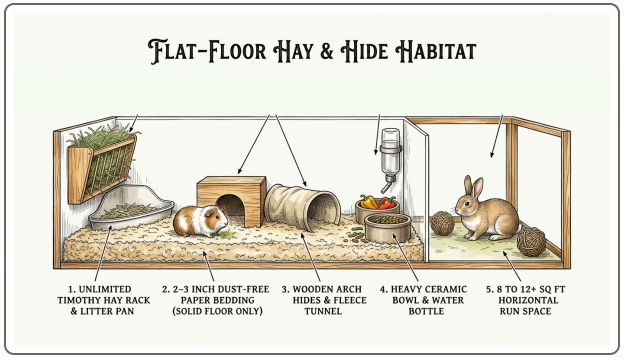
LIFESPAN **5–8 Years**	ADULT SIZE **8–12" (1.5–2.5 lbs)**
SOCIAL RULE **Keep in Pairs (2+)**	MIN CAGE SIZE **8–10.5+ Sq Ft (24×48"+)**
ROOM TEMP **65°–75°F (Avoid >80°F)**	

OPEN FOR TANK SETUP, TEMPS, FEEDING & SHOPPING LIST →

STEP 1 • HABITAT & CLIMATE

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

Thermostat & Gauge Rule: Stick-on dial gauges can be off by 10°F+! Use a digital probe thermometer/hygrometer and always plug heating mats and heat emitters into a **digital thermostat**.

STEP 2 • STOCKED STORE OPTIONS

Two Ways That Work

Pick Option A or Option B Based on Your Home Setup

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,

STEP 3 • DIET & NUTRITION

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

First-Week Rule: Give your new Guinea Pig **5 to 7 days of peace and quiet** with fresh food, hay, and water right away! Speak softly by the cage and offer hand-fed treats so they quickly learn your hands mean good things.