

Degu Care

Caring for Your Degu: A Friendly Guide

Getting to Know Degus

So, you're thinking about bringing a degu into your home? These little guys are absolutely charming! Native to the beautiful landscapes of Chile, degus belong to the same family as guinea pigs and chinchillas, but interestingly, they might actually be more closely related to rabbits. They're social creatures that thrive in groups and are most active during the day, making them fun companions to observe.



Lifespan and Longevity

Degus typically live for about 5 to 9 years—quite impressive, considering that in the wild, their lifespan is only around 1 to 2 years! With the right care, your degu can be a long-term friend.

Social Butterflies

Now, here's an essential tip: degus are social animals and really shouldn't be kept alone. They can get quite stressed if they don't have a buddy to interact with, which can lead to health problems and behavioural issues. Ideally, you should keep them in pairs or small groups of the same sex so they can enjoy each other's company.



Creating the Perfect Home

When it comes to housing your degus, a sturdy wire cage is your best bet. They need plenty of room to move around, so aim for a cage that's at least 90 cm deep, 60 cm wide, and 120 cm tall for a group of two to five degus. Inside, make sure to provide various levels and ramps for climbing, along with solid flooring covered in soft bedding that they can burrow into.



Cleaning Their Space

Keeping their home clean is important for their health and happiness. You'll want to do a spot clean every few days, removing soiled bedding and uneaten food. A full clean is usually needed once or twice a month. Just remember to leave some of the old bedding to keep familiar smells, which helps them feel secure!

Let's Talk Playtime



Degus are active and playful little creatures, so it's essential to provide them with plenty of enrichment. A solid exercise wheel (around 25 cm in diameter) is a must for their daily workout.

You can also create a digging box filled with organic soil and sand, as they absolutely love to dig! And don't forget a dust bath about three times a week—it's a delightful treat for them!

What's on the Menu?

Now, onto their diet! The bulk of a degu's meals should be hay—this is vital for their digestive health and helps keep their teeth in check. You can also give them degu-specific pellets or chinchilla pellets, about a tablespoon per day. For treats, stick to hay-based goodies, forage mixes, and leafy veggies, but remember to be careful with the sugar content—degus can't handle it well!



Keeping an Eye on Health

Like any pet, degus can face health issues. One common concern is diabetes, which can arise if they eat too many carbs or sugars. Keep an eye out for signs like excessive drinking or urination. Dental problems can also occur, especially if they don't have enough chewable items. Their teeth should be a nice yellow colour; if they're white, it could indicate a problem. Lastly, be gentle when handling them to avoid tail injuries.

Getting to Know Your Degu

Handling your degu can be a delightful experience! Start by letting them sniff your hand and getting used to your presence. When you do need to pick them up, gently scoop them up with both hands, making sure to support their body. A little treat can go a long way in reassuring them that being held is a good thing!



Introducing New Friends

If you're planning to introduce a new degu to your household, take it slow. Start by placing their cages side by side, allowing them to get acquainted without physical contact. You can even swap bedding and toys to help them familiarise themselves with each other's scents. When the time feels right, meet in a neutral space to minimise territorial behaviour. Just make sure there are plenty of resources—like food and hiding spots—available to reduce any squabbling.

Final Thoughts

Degus can bring so much joy and companionship to your life! With proper care, a suitable environment, and lots of love, these little bundles of energy will thrive and keep you entertained for years to come. Enjoy the journey of being a degu owner!