

What to Feed Your Guinea Pig

Guinea pigs are herbivores and are considered grazers, so a balanced diet of hay, veggies, pellets, fruits, and fresh water will keep your pig healthy and happy. At HSCC, all guinea pigs have constant access to unlimited timothy hay, in addition to breakfast and dinner meals of greens, a small serving of pellets, and a carrot or pepper snack.

1 Hay

The most important ingredient to a healthy pig's diet is hay. Fresh hay should make up the bulk of your guinea pig's diet and needs to be available at all times. Hay is important for guinea pigs because it provides the essential fiber needed for good digestive health and it helps wear down the teeth (which continuously grow) for good dental health. Store hay in a dry place in a container that allows air flow to keep it from getting moldy.



2 Vegetables

An assortment of vegetables should be a part of your pig's daily diet. When choosing vegetables look for something fresh and free of pesticides. *Always wash your vegetables thoroughly before feeding them to your guinea pig.* Feed new vegetables in small quantities until you can judge if your pig reacts well to them. You may refer to our [feeding guide](#) for ideas. It is recommended to offer ~ ½-1 cup of vegetables (mainly greens) daily.

3 Pellets

HSCC recommends high-fiber, low-protein hay pellets such as [Oxbow Guinea Pig Food](#). You can feed pellets with your daily meals, and be careful not to exceed the recommended serving size based on their age and weight.

4 Treats

To ensure your guinea pig's health, treats should be given only occasionally. Although branded for guinea pigs, many commercially-sold pig treats are high in fat and sugar, such as yogurt chips, and should be avoided. Fruit is the best option for a treat, but again you should give it only in small amounts because of the sugar content. We try to purchase organic fruits that we know are free of pesticides. Like vegetables, be sure that they are thoroughly washed. Fruit snacks should generally be limited to once or twice a week, and you may refer to our [feeding guide](#) for ideas.

Protip: *If your guinea pig is overweight, exclude fruit from the diet as it is high in sugar. Guinea pigs have a sweet tooth and may eat the foods that are high in sugars instead of the beneficial greens.*

And of course... Fresh Water!

Fresh water must always be available to your guinea pig. A hanging water bottle is a fine option.

What not to feed:

Do not feed your guinea pig items high in carbohydrates like breads, crackers, pasta, pretzels, cookies, chips, or cereal. Never give chocolate, as it is toxic to guinea pigs.

A Guinea Pig Owner's Guide to Greens, Veggies, & More

Daily (Recommended for daily nutrition)

Greens	Veggies
Red + green leaf lettuce	Zucchini
Romaine + butterhead lettuce	Sprouts
Swiss Chard	Radicchio

Frequently (2-4 times per week)

Greens	Veggies	Fruits
Cabbage	Carrots, sweet peppers	Raspberry, blueberry
Arugula	Celery	Apples (no pits/seeds!)
Spinach	Cucumber	Grapes

Occasionally (1-2 times per week)

Greens	Veggies	Fruits
Kale	Cauliflower	Strawberry, blackberry
Beet, mustard, collard greens	Broccolini	Mango
Herbs (basil, dill, etc.)	Beets	Peaches

*** Never! ***

Greens	Veggies	Fruits	Other
Iceberg lettuce	Onion	Avocado	Mushrooms
Tomato leaves/stalk	Garlic	Lemon + lime	Bread products
House plants	Potato	Rhubarb	Dairy, nuts

Please refer to the [Happy Cavy food chart](#) for a comprehensive list of fruits and veggies suitable for guinea pigs.



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Safe Fruit, Vegetables, Herbs and Plants List

Guinea Pigs need 1 cup of fresh food daily, in addition to unlimited hay and fresh water.

A good quality chaff and grain mix (no seeds) may also be fed.

Guinea pigs cannot store Vitamin C in their bodies and need this to come through feeding fresh foods daily.

<p>Apple *</p> <p>Banana (including leaves)</p> <p>Blackberries</p> <p>Blueberries</p> <p>Cherries</p> <p>Dried Apricot *</p> <p>Figs *</p> <p>Gooseberries</p> <p>Grapes</p> <p>Grapefruit</p> <p>Honeydew Melon *</p> <p>Kiwi Fruit</p> <p>Mango *</p> <p>Orange *</p> <p>Pawpaw</p> <p>Pear *</p> <p>Pineapple *</p> <p>Pumpkin</p> <p>Rockmelon *</p> <p>Squash</p> <p>Strawberries</p> <p>Watermelon</p> <p>Note - Fruits should be fed sparingly due to their high sugar content.</p> 	<p>Asparagus</p> <p>Baby Spinach</p> <p>Beetroot</p> <p>Bok Choy</p> <p>Broccoli</p> <p>Brussel Sprouts</p> <p>Cabbage</p> <p>Capsicum</p> <p>Carrots</p> <p>Cauliflower</p> <p>Celery</p> <p>Choko</p> <p>Corn (including husks)</p> <p>Cucumber</p> <p>Green Beans</p> <p>Kale</p> <p>Kolrabi</p> <p>Cos Lettuce</p> <p>Pak Choy</p> <p>Parsnip</p> <p>Silverbeet</p> <p>Sweet Potato</p> <p>Tomato</p> <p>Turnip *</p> <p>Wombok</p> <p>Zucchini</p>	<p>Anise</p> <p>Basil</p> <p>Chamomile</p> <p>Chicory</p> <p>Chickweed</p> <p>Cleavers</p> <p>Clover</p> <p>Comfrey</p> <p>Coriander</p> <p>Dandelion</p> <p>Dill</p> <p>Dock</p> <p>Endive</p> <p>Fennel</p> <p>Lemon Balm</p> <p>Milk Thistle</p> <p>Mint</p> <p>Oat Grass</p> <p>Parsley</p> <p>Raspberry Leaves</p> <p>Rocket</p> <p>Rosehips</p> <p>Stinging Nettle</p> <p>Thyme</p> <p>Wandering Jew</p> <p>Watercress</p> <p>Yarrow</p>
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* = High in sugar ≈ Avoid Iceberg lettuce (low nutritional value, too high in water) = High in Vitamin C = Yum Factor
 ◊ = Feed sparingly (can cause stomach upset/bloat) Normal Washed Potato is toxic - DO NOT FEED

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Guinea Pig Housing

Guinea pigs are not natural climbers, and need as much floor space as possible. Solid floor cages are necessary and best in order to avoid injuries or problems like foot sores (aka Bumble Foot). HSCC recommends using [C&C cages](#) (cubes and coroplast) with fleece bedding and towels. C&C cages are easy to make on your own and customize for your space and the number of guinea pigs, and the flooring is easy to sanitize. Fleece blankets with towels underneath are ideal bedding because the fleece wicks away moisture from urine and towels soak it up, keeping their feet dry and making cleanup a breeze.



While minimum cage size requirements for two guinea pigs is 7.5 square feet (or a 2x3 grid cage), we recommend a 10.5 square-foot cage (or a 2x4 grid cage). Two boars should not be housed in less than 10.5 square feet.

What to include

Guinea pig enclosures should include the following:

- Soft, clean bedding (we recommend fleece layered over towels)
- Hay rack or hay canister
- Hidey holes and tunnels
- Stoppered water bottle
- Ceramic food bowls (recommended to avoid spills and inappropriate chewing)
- [Enrichment items and toys](#)

The more places to tunnel through and hide in, the better! Guinea pigs love to scamper around and hide from you, so giving at least one hide is essential so they can feel safe. Tunnels, huts, and hideouts are all favorites that are great to include in your pig's enclosure. You can find some options on [Chewy.com](#) here. Check out more enrichment ideas from our handout on [Guinea Pig Enrichment](#).

How to clean

Cleaning **daily** is absolutely a must as guinea pigs are *not* litterbox trained and living in unsanitary conditions can lead to health problems. At HSCC, we recommend doing a spot clean daily, and a full deep clean weekly:

Spot clean (daily): shake out blankets, remove excess food and waste, replace any blankets that are damp or moist, and replace any loose hay piles in hay racks.

Deep clean (weekly): change out all linens, spray down coroplast cage lining to clean and sanitize, clean and refill water bottle and food bowls.

Protip: DO NOT USE cedar or pine shavings in guinea pig enclosures - they are aromatic and can cause respiratory problems.

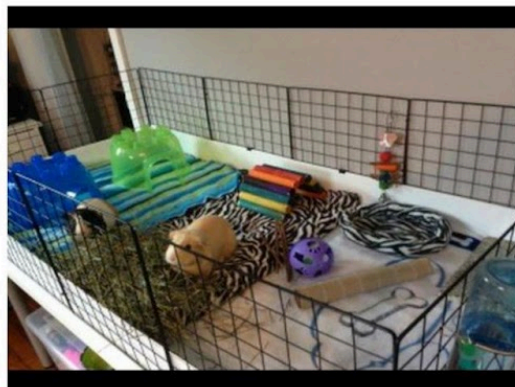
C & C Cages

Cubes & Coroplast Cages

C & C cages are used by guinea pig enthusiasts around the world and have been for over a decade! They are highly recommended because their features make a GREAT experience for the guinea pigs and their caretakers alike.

Here are some of the benefits:

- Easy-to-clean
- Easy-to-assemble
- Easy-to-change design
- Can choose colors
- Esthetically pleasing
- Durable
- Good visibility
- Good air circulation
- Can add levels
- Can cat-proof
- Re-use, recycle materials
- Fit them anywhere, adaptable
- Easy-to-decorate
- Lightweight
- Easy to expand, reduce, divide
- Collapsible to store



Guinea Pig Enrichment

Guinea pigs are active animals that enjoy playing with toys for enrichment. Different types of enrichment (think toys, activities, and a variety of different kinds of spaces within their enclosure) allow guinea pigs to satisfy their natural physical, physiological, and cognitive needs.

Guinea pigs love to scurry around through tunnels and tubes, hide and relax in huts, and munch on toys for fun. In addition to mental enrichment, many guinea pig toys also serve a practical purpose - good oral hygiene! Guinea pigs' teeth grow continuously, so it is very important to provide something for them to chew on in order to prevent the teeth from over-growing. When they chew on toys and sticks, it naturally files down their teeth so you don't have to do it for them!

Some good items for play/enrichment include:

- Tunnels and huts made from twigs or wood
- Cardboard tubes filled with hay (you can use old toilet paper and paper towel rolls)
- Gnawing sticks
- Hanging wooden toys/huts
- Hay balls
- Bells
- Forage bags (brown paper bags filled with hay, forage and other yummy treats)
- Twigs from fruit trees are a good option but AVOID cherry.



You can find these and more options at your local pet store, and you can check out more ideas on [Chewy.com](https://www.chewy.com).

Prototip: DO NOT use exercise wheels or exercise balls! Guinea pigs are not very agile and can easily injure themselves.