Ball Python

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

species profile

ball PYTHON

The Ball Python, also known as the Royal Python, is a remarkably beautiful snake and makes a good pet for a beginner. In the wild, the Ball Python is primarily a ground dwelling species found in rainforests and savannahs in central and western Africa. The natural diet of a Ball Python consists of birds, lizards, other snakes and occasionally small mammals.

The Ball Python responds well to handling and thrives in a home environment. A full-sized, adult Ball Python grows to approximately 5 feet long in captivity, making this a manageable species to maintain in your home. It is important that you research any reptile species before bringing one into your home. It is equally important to commit to practicing responsible reptile husbandry once your reptile is established in your home.

Species Profile Ball Python	
Scientific Name:	*Python regius*
Natural Environment:	Western and central Africa.
Average Size:	Adults range from 3-5 feet.
Average Life Span:	Approximately 20-30 years.

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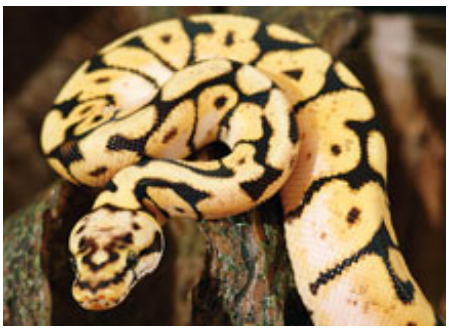
Appearance: The body is a rich chocolate to golden brown with an eye-catching pattern of large cream to yellowish-buff blotches on the entire body. The females tend to be larger and heavier than the males, but the males generally have a larger head and longer spur. The belly is usually an off-white or light gray color. Today, there are many different color and pattern morphs available.



Habitat

Size: The perimeter of the cage should be twice as long as the snake's length.

Lighting: Ball Pythons are crepuscular (appearing or active in the twilight) and lighting requirements are minimal.

Temperature: Provide a thermal gradient with an under-cage heating pad ranging from 77-85°F during the day and 69-75°F at night.

Humidity: Ball Pythons are from very warm, dry areas so misting is generally not needed or recommended.

Housing: It is critical that you make your terrarium as escape-proof as possible. Include a tight-fitting hide box in your snake's enclosure. It should be large enough for your snake to fit his entire body in, yet small enough to provide a feeling of shelter. Do not use hot rocks.

Substrate: Cyprus mulch, newspaper, or paper towels are good choices for substrate. Be sure to spot clean the substrate daily and perform routine maintenance.

Diet/Feeding: Ball Pythons are carnivores and can be fed mice, rats, or baby chickens. Avoid live food to protect the snake from being bitten. Feed during the evening or at dusk. Do not overfeed.

Behavior/Interaction: In general, a Ball Python is docile, curious, and gentle. Work slowly to gain your snake's trust during handling and avoid handling your Ball Python after he has finished eating in order to allow digestion to occur.

Interesting Facts: The Ball Python is also referred to as the Royal or Regal Python. When a Ball Python feels threatened, he rolls up and coils into a ball with his head protected, hence their name.

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