How to Choose a Proper Guinea Pig Cage

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What Makes a Good Guinea Pig Cage?

Many guinea pig owners don't realize how important housing can be. Because a guinea pig will spend a good deal of their life in his cage, it is imperative that the cage is big enough and outfitted with the proper accessories and supplies.

What should I look for in a cage?

Many of the cages marketed for guinea pigs today are entirely too small. It's important when choosing the right cage for your cavy that you make sure the cage provides enough room for him to play and exercise. The minimum cage sizes are:

One guinea pig: 7-1/2 square feet, or 30" x 36"
Up to four guinea pigs: 13 square feet, or 30" x 76"

Other cage features you should look for include:

- **Safe, escape proof, materials**
  The safest cages are made from plastic, wire, stainless steel, or a combination of these materials. Wood cages are easily chewed through and glass cages don't provide enough ventilation.
- **No wire mesh flooring**
  Housing your guinea pig on a wire floor will hurt his sensitive feet and can cause a condition called bumblefoot, so if your cage has a wire floor, which many do, be sure to cover it with cage mats.
- **Latching door or lid**
  This will keep your guinea pig in and other animals out.
- **Spacious enough to provide ramps and activity areas**
  Though guinea pigs aren't agile and don't climb very well, they do need places to play and explore.

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What should I put in the cage?

What you put in the cage is just as important as what size the cage is. A large cage without the necessary accessories is going to be boring for your guinea pig, and it will eventually have a negative effect on his physical and mental state.

The following items should be in your guinea pig's cage:

- Place to hide, such as a nest box, large diameter PVC pipe, and cardboard boxes
- Heavy ceramic food dish (small enough that she can't climb in it and use it as a toilet)
- Plastic or glass water bottle with a metal spout
- Hay rack or manger to keep hay clean, fresh, and off the floor
- Aspen wood shavings or wood fiber bedding
- Ramps and other furniture for her to explore
- Low plastic shelves
- Toys such as tunnels, tubes, wooden chew toys, wood blocks, paper bags, and hanging bird toys

Be sure that whatever you put in the cage doesn't interfere with the space he needs to run around and exercise.

Where should I put the cage?

The cage should be in a relatively quiet area without a lot of commotion. It should be out of direct sunlight, and the temperature of the room should stay between 65° and 75°F. Temperatures below 50° and over 80° can be dangerous, so you absolutely must place your guinea pig's cage indoors where temperatures are regulated. Be sure to put it in a well ventilated area.

Once you have the perfect cage and setup, be sure to clean the cage daily to keep your guinea pig happy, healthy, and safe.

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