Small Pet Selection Guide: Which One for Me?

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Important Characteristics of Small Animals

The following table provides important information on the life span, weight, reproduction, and recommended environmental temperature for various small animals often kept as pets. Most of the values are given in ranges, and depending upon the source, you may find somewhat different ranges provided elsewhere. Numbers may differ since information gathered from various breeds, species, and husbandry practices can affect the values.

	Life Expectancy	Average Weight (grams*) F=female M=male	Length of Pregnancy (days)	Litter Size	Weaning Age	Recommended Environmental Temperature (ºF)
Chinchillas	8-10 years	F 550-800; M 450-600	105-118, average 111	1-6, usual 2-3	6-8 weeks	50-75
Gerbils	3-4 years	F 50-75, M 50-120	23-26	3-7	21-30 days	65-75
Guinea Pigs	5-6 years	F 700-900, M 900-1200	59-72, average 68	1-10, usual 2-4	3-4 weeks	60-85
Hamsters	18-30 mos.	F 95-125, M 85-120	15-17	5-10	20-25 days	70-75
Hedgehogs	5-7 years	300-1500, depends on species	34-38	1-7, usual 3-4	4-6 weeks	70-80
Mice	12-36 mos	F 30-60, M 38-60	19-21	9-12	18-28 days	70-77
Rabbits	6-11 years, depends on breed	2-8 kg	30-33	4-10	5-8 weeks	40-80; never over 85
Rats	26-48 mos.	F 225-325, M 275-500	21-23	8-12	4 weeks	70-75

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Sugar Gliders	8-10 years	F 100-135, M 120-160	16 days, then move into pouch; emerge from pouch after 60-70 days	1-2	110-115 days	70-80

* There are 453 gms (grams) in a pound. A kilogram (kg) is 1000 gms.

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