

Guinea Pigs: Breeds and Colors

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

guinea pigs: breeds & colors



There are thirteen breeds and ten basic colors of guinea pigs recognized by the American Cavy Breeders Association. Have you ever wondered what breed or color your guinea pig is? Check out the descriptions below to find out.

Breeds

Before we go into the specifics of each breed, we will first define a few terms that you may not have heard before.

Rosette

Hair radiating symmetrically from a center.

Roman Nose

A nose that is wide and curving.

Sheen

When hair has a shiny, satiny appearance.

Resilient

A guinea pig's coat is resilient when it returns to its original position after being ruffled or otherwise disturbed.

Variations

As we mentioned above, there are thirteen recognized breeds of guinea pigs, or cavies. Some of the breeds are variations of another, such as the Abyssinian and the Abyssinian Satin. Each breed has its own distinctive appearance.

Abyssinian

The Abyssinian guinea pig has eight to ten rosettes and erect ridge patterns of fur on the body and the head. He also has a moustache of raised fur around his nose. Abyssinians come in a variety of colors and color combinations.

Abyssinian Satin

Abyssinian Satin guinea pigs are similar in appearance to the Abyssinians, but they have a sheen to their fur.

American

Also known as the "English" cavy, the American guinea pig is the most common breed that you generally find in pet stores. They have short, smooth, straight hair, and they come in a variety of colors and color combinations. They have a Roman nose and a medium length body.

American Satin

American Satin guinea pigs are similar to American guinea pigs, but they have softer coats with a glossy satin sheen, and they feel like satin.

Coronet

Coronets are longhaired guinea pigs with a rosette on top of their heads. They have a Roman nose, and the hair from the rosette to the back end is long.

Peruvian

Peruvians have long, soft, dense sweeps of hair. Their hair grows forward over the head and down the back, giving the Peruvian a circular appearance when you look at one from above.

Peruvian Satin

Just like the Peruvian, Peruvian Satins have very long sweeps of hair. The difference between the two is that the Peruvian Satin's fur has a sheen and a satiny feel.

Silkie

Silkes have long hair, and the hair on the head sweeps back, forming what looks like a mane. They are tear-shaped when you look at them from above. Their hair is soft, fine, and shiny.

Silkie Satin

Silkie Satins have the same characteristics as Silkies, but their hair has a sheen and is satiny to the touch.

Teddy

Teddy guinea pigs have short, wiry, dense coats, and both their hair and their whiskers are kinked. They are about the same size as American guinea pigs, and they have Roman noses. Teddies have resilient coats.

Teddy Satin

Like the other Satin variations, Teddy Satins look like Teddies, but their fur has a glossy sheen.

Texel

Texels have long, soft, thick hair that is formed into curls or ringlets. They have short, compact bodies, and broad, well-rounded heads.

White Crested

White Crested guinea pigs are characterized by a white rosette on the top of their foreheads and a short smooth coat. They come in a variety of colors, but exclude those colors where white is present elsewhere in the coat.

Colors

The above breeds can come in a variety of colors, but what does that mean? Color refers to the actual color of the fur rather than the fur type, fur patterns, or any other distinguishing characteristics like rosettes or ridges.

There are ten basic colors of guinea pigs, though there are many variations that include two or more of these basic colors. The basic colors are:

Self

A solid color

Dutch

Colored head, white blaze, front half of body white, head and hind end same color.

Brindle

One dark color and one white color intermingled consistently over entire body.

Tortiseshell

Well-defined black and red rectangular patches of color even and uniform across entire body.

Tortiseshell & White

Well-defined black, red, and white rectangular patches of color, divided along a line that runs down the middle of the back and belly.

Roan

White and darker hairs mixed evenly over entire body.

Agouti

Each hair has alternate dark and light bands of color.

Albino

Pure white, no dark hairs at all, pink eyes (complete lack of pigmentation).

Dalmation

White body, dark spots.

Himalayan

White body, brown or black nose, ears, and feet, red eyes.

