

# Ferret Facts

*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*

Ferrets first came to America from Spain in the 1870's.

Egyptians kept the first pet ferrets around 1500 B.C.

Ferrets love to nap and can sleep for up to 15 hours per day.

A newborn ferret is so small she can fit into a teaspoon.

Ferrets are obligate carnivores that must have meat in their diet.

Ferrets are playful animals. They love to explore and get into mischief. Ferrets are also known to hide keys, toys, and other objects from their human companions. Ferrets are a domesticated (which means they can live in a human environment) variety of an Eurasian weasel. Their scientific name is *Mustela putorius*. This name roughly means "weasel skunk." Ferrets are members of the family Mustelidae with the otter, mink, weasel, badger, and skunk. Animals in this family have scent glands located on either side of their rectum. These glands produce a strong-smelling musk. This musk is secreted when the animal is frightened or excited. Ferrets should be fed a concentrated [diet](#) that is high in energy and protein but low in fiber, as well as fresh water. Ferrets are likely to nap throughout the day and night and sleep whenever they are bored.

What Is It Called?		Ferrets Around the World	
Common Name	Technical Name	Language	Name for Ferrets
Father	Hob	French	furet
Mother	Jill	German	fletchen
Baby	Kit	Spanish	huron
Group	Business, Fesynes	Polish	fretka

## The Most Common Question About Ferrets

*What is a "ferret-proofed" room and how do I make one?*

Ferrets love to play and explore. They are extremely curious and will inspect any uncharted area in your home. This could lead to trouble for both you and your pet. Especially since these playful companions can squeeze into the tightest spaces. A "ferret-proofed" area is one that is escape-proof and free from hazards, yet comfortable for your pet. For the most part, ferrets are extremely agile, fast, mischievous, curious, and persistent. Any space they can get into they will get into, eventually. And ferrets can squeeze into some pretty tight spaces! Therefore, all holes, wall vents, pieces of furniture, boxes, etc. need to be blocked or covered. If you can't cover it, the best thing is to remove these and other potentially dangerous objects from the area.

The simplest way to "ferret-proof" a room in your home is to look at the room as though you are seeing it for the first time. Where would you hide, climb, and explore? More importantly, if you were to enter an area would somebody else be able to immediately spot you and know that you were present? Unfortunately, we've seen ferrets who had been crushed after somebody sat down on a couch, unaware the ferret was hiding there. Take your time when you ferret-proof your home. If in doubt, block or remove any object you can. Finally, continue to inspect your "ferret-proofing" to ensure it stays intact.