



All About the **Betta**

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The Betta

About the Betta

Betta fish (*Betta splendens*) are Anabantids; that is, small freshwater spiny-finned fish of Africa and southern Asia in the family Anabantidae. They are frequently called Siamese Fighting Fish. The fish originated in Southeast Asia in rice paddies.

Average Size	3 inches	Characteristics	Beautiful flowing fins
Average Lifespan	2-4 years	Special Needs	Males cannot be housed together
Coloring	Varies, lots of choices	Health Concerns	Can suffer from typical fish problems: parasites and skin diseases.



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Betta Characteristics

Bettas are lively and pretty, but the males must not be kept together. Male battles are where the well-deserved “fighting fish” reputation comes from. They can, however, do well in community tanks, as long as there aren’t nipping species put in with them. Bettas can grow up to 3 inches long, and are fairly short-lived (2 to 4 years, on average). They breed best under a year of age – bettas in pet shops are usually about 6 months old. There are many different color varieties, including (but hardly limited to): Albino, black, blue, green (rare), red and violet.

All of them are brilliantly, vibrantly colored. The males have long, fancy fins that the females lack. The males are known for their confrontational manner with other males of the species – they spread their fins and raise their gills in a threatening manner, and often will fight to the death. They are not nearly as aggressive with other species, and can co-exist with other breeds.

Bettas are remarkable in that they do some of their breathing directly from the atmosphere. They have an additional labyrinth organ that is not common to most fish that allows them to process some of their oxygen directly from the surface, rather than through gills.

Selecting Your Betta

Do some research before selecting your Betta. Obviously, the fish should be responsive and healthy looking.

A Few Words About Pet Stores

Fish from breeders are usually more expensive, but you will have a wider variety to choose from, and can even select breeding pairs. In addition, breeders will often cultivate gorgeous specimens that you simply won’t see in pet stores.

You’ll need these basics before your Angelfish comes home. Click the items below to go to CheapPetStore.com to find the best prices for online pet supplies.

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A Few Words About Breeders

Fish from breeders are usually more expensive, but you will have a wider variety to choose from, and can even select breeding pairs. Because there are so many variants, you may be able to find precisely the Betta you seek by working with a reputable breeder.

How to Choose your Betta

Bettas are relatively hearty if bred and cared for correctly. If you are buying your fish from a store, the aquariums should be clean and free of dead fish. Most stores have a quarantine tank (or several) for sick fish. If they don't, it's worth asking about.

Unfortunately, choosing healthy fish can be a matter of guesswork.

Signs of unhealthy fish are obvious, however:

- Fin and skin discolorations
- Evidence of injury
- Parasites attached to the fish's skin
- Lethargy or lying on bottom of aquarium
- Scraping body on rocks
- Irregular gill movements

Lack of appetite is hard to determine without seeing the fish eat – ask if your salesperson can give your potential fish a little food. They should be perky and notice the food immediately, because Bettas simply love to eat. They will eat constantly, whenever food is available. Observe your potential fish; they should interact with others. What you see is very much what you get with fish.

Breeding, Care and Feeding

Bettas, like other Anabantids, are bubblenest builders. That is, the male goes to the surface, and blows saliva bubbles that clump together. The water must be no more than 6 inches deep and there must be no surface water movement. The pair does a lengthy courtship dance, swirling in circles around one another and the female lays her eggs in several bursts over 2 to 3 hours, embraced by the male. This embrace assists with fertilization. The male retrieves the eggs and places each one (of hundreds) into its own bubble. The male is left to guard the nest, and will even guard it from the mother. The male will not eat at this time. The fry hatch after 24 to 48 hours. It is a good idea to remove the female after spawning, and the male not long after the fry hatch. Once the fry start swimming free from the egg sacs (usually about 48 hours after hatching), the adult male may just see food, so should be removed while the youngsters mature.

Bettas do not need filtration tanks (although they don't mind), because they can surface breathe, too. Bettas thrive at about 70°F to 82°F. They love warm water as they come from tropical shallows.



Can't miss gifts for the Betta owner:

- [Siamese Fighting Fish Book](#)
- [Full Aquarium Hood](#)
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[Aquariun Betta Fish Food](#)

Betta Fry

Newly-hatched fry don't need to be fed until Day 4 or 5. At that point, you can feed them a live diet of freshly-hatched baby brine shrimp. Food particles are about the right size – boiled egg yolk can be fed in tiny chunks that you press with your fingers with and disperse into the tank. At Day 10 or so, you can start feeding them with powdered flake food, alternated with freshly-hatched brine shrimp if possible. Betta fry need to be fed several times a day.

At about two months of age, you will need to separate out the best of the fry into their own jars. Remember, they dislike other males, and will fight. Separation of the nicest specimens is the way to go. As the fry continue maturing, you can pull other healthy specimens out of the communal tank. Decide how many individual bettas you can successfully care for.

The Betta Adult

Bettas can be picky eaters, and they are carnivores. While they can get by on flakes alone, they prefer more variety. Krill and brine shrimp are particular favorites. They also will happily chomp down on bloodworms and tubifex worms. Baby guppies are also well-received. Bettas can be fed once a day, but do better with twice-a-day feedings. Give your betta only as much as it will consume in one or two minutes, to avoid buildup of uneaten food.

Medical Considerations

Although bettas are perhaps the most popular home aquarium fish and are quite hardy, they can suffer from the following diseases. If your Betta suddenly changes his behavior for any length of time or if his skin, eyes, mouth, gills or fins look different, you might want to do some research to find out what is ailing your fish. Some common ailments are Ick (a parasite), fin rot, and myriad skin diseases. Most of these diseases and parasites can be treated with medications you can buy at any pet supply store.

Necessary Items

Fish need a home and food. The home can be spruced up with a variety of décor. Set up their home at least several days before bringing your fish home. Your fish will need a tank, 20 gallons or larger. Bettas need more room than normally allowed in small bowls or tanks. You will also need a stand for your tank, as well as a hood with a light and a filtration system, although bettas can get by without one. If you do use a filtration system, be sure that it is one that doesn't disturb the water too much, as bettas come from slow-moving water environments

You can also decorate your tank however you like. There is a huge selection of products you can choose from. Tank decorations, gravel, rocks, wood, marbles, live plants, and synthetic plants are just some of the items you can use.



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- [50/50 Fluorescent Lamp 20Watt](#)
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