



All About the **Chinchilla**

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The Chinchilla

About the Chinchilla

Chinchillas first originated in Andes Mountains of South America. They began to be domesticated around the 1920's. Though many of them were first used for their fur, they soon were sold as pets. Due to the large amount of hunting for Chinchillas, they are still considered an endangered species, and can only be found wild in Bolivia.

Chinchilla Characteristics

Chinchillas are very soft, cute and somewhat exotic creatures, that are part of the rodent family. They are playful and active mainly at night, sleeping during the day. Because they are so soft and gentle, people often want to hold them close and cuddle them a little too much. Many Chinchillas are not too thrilled about this idea, and would rather be loose to play. Chinchillas tend to prefer a regular routine of feeding, playtime, and handling, or they can become easily stressed. Gentle and consistent interaction with your Chinchilla will build a trusting relationship.

Selecting Your Chinchilla

A Few Words about Breeders

Working directly with a breeder can definitely be a plus for those new to Chinchillas, who want to learn more about the breed and need to understand better the care and commitment required. A good breeder will keep organized records of breeding history, health records, and have ideally been breeding for longer than a few months. There are several resources available for locating a reputable breeder. Many sites on the Internet will list good breeders with a solid history of good business practices and healthy Chinchillas.

A Few Words about Pet Stores

Chinchillas can occasionally be found in pet stores locally. You may have to do some searching to find one. Good pet stores will be familiar with the breed and able to answer any questions or concerns about the animal, as well as the Chinchilla's age and past medical history if any.

Adopting a Chinchilla is always another option and can be a great way for a new owner to obtain a Chinchilla that is a little older, and probably already familiar with being handled.



- [Toys for Your Chinchilla](#)
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How to Choose your Chinchilla

A new Chinchilla may be a little nervous around strangers at first, but if you are gentle and allow them to come to you, they can quickly bond. When selecting, a few things to watch for are

- Bright eyes, with no signs of discharge
- Clean ears (no mites)
- Nose is clean and dry
- Plush, velvety-like fur; no matting or bald areas
- Plump and well-rounded; not skinny
- The front teeth should be yellow to orange in color (adult)

Be sure that you are prepared to spend enough time with your new Chinchilla. They can be somewhat independent, yet still enjoy human interaction daily.

Through The Years

The Chinchilla Kit

Kits are born in the very early hours of morning, usually without being seen by their owners. They have a full body of hair and teeth, weighing approximately 25 - 60 grams. Keep a close watch on the kits to ensure they are gaining weight properly. Sometimes the mother will have difficulty producing enough milk, and the new babies may need your help. Weaning usually occurs around 6 weeks. The kits will be fully grown at 6 months.

The Chinchilla Adult

Adult Chinchillas are very playful and entertaining at times. While some owners may only be able to handle one animal at a time, Chinchillas do prefer to have companions and should be paired if possible. Use caution if housing both a male and female, since females can have up to 3 litters per year. You may end up with more Chinchillas than you know what to do with. If you are introducing a new Chinchilla later on, be sure to house them separately for a week or so, giving them time to smell and become familiar with one another.

The Chinchilla Senior

Temperaments in older Chinchillas need to be more closely monitored, especially when in the company of younger children. While most are very gentle and loving, they can be easily startled or stressed, especially when removed from their familiar environment or routine. Healthy Chinchillas can live for up to 17 years.



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

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Medical Considerations

Chinchillas can easily become ill due to fungus or bacterial infections, which can usually be prevented by clean, fresh water daily, and keeping their cages very clean and free of waste. If your Chinchilla has watery or dull eyes, this can often be signs of illness, and a trip to the vet may be necessary.

Necessary Items

Purchase a wire cage for your Chinchilla that is large enough for them to move about freely, and also house a dust bowl, their food, toys, and water. When providing a dust bowl for your Chinchilla, be sure to purchase the dust from your pet store. Regular sand is not acceptable, and can hurt their skin. Use wood chips to line the bottom of their cage. Chinchillas have a fairly simple diet of pellets, alfalfa, timothy hay, and water.

Popular Products for your Chinchilla

- [Night-E-Night](#)
- [Four Paws Small Litter Scoop](#)
- [Bi-Odor Small Animal](#)
- [Enclosed Hi-Corner Litter Pan](#)
- [Chin Hut](#)
- [Chin-Chiller](#)
- [Earth Multi-Vitamin](#)
- [Alfalfa Bale](#)
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