



# DEGU FACTSHEET

## WHAT'S A DEGU?



Degus are a little larger than gerbils but are classed as exotics, however as long as you do your research you can easily become the perfect owner. They are best housed in groups of 2 or more as they're social animals and are easily tamed. They're intelligent, playful and curious and love interaction and exercise.

## KEY INFO

- **Lifespan:** 6-8 years
- **Size:** 12-18cm
- **Colour:** brown and/or white
- **Nocturnal:** no
- **Diet:** they're herbivores so need a degu specific or chinchilla hard feed e.g. Science Selective, plus unlimited hay and dried herbs - they're prone to diabetes so avoid anything sugary. They also require unlimited clean water in water bottle with a metal tube.
- **Accommodation:** indoors in a cage - min. size of 100cm x 60cm x 60cm e.g. Savic Royal Suite 95.

## ACCOMMODATION



Degus need a large cage to live in (see above) with multiple levels made of metal or kiln dried pine. They're avid chewers so cannot be housed in a plastic or wooden cage or they'll quickly eat their way out - wire/metal cages are the most suitable. This includes anything you transport them in - ensure it's metal or they'll escape! They're very temperature sensitive so need to avoid hot rooms/conditions or can develop heat stroke. They themselves don't smell, but the toilet area in the cage can have an odour if not regularly changed. They'll need hides/huts/hammocks for sleeping.

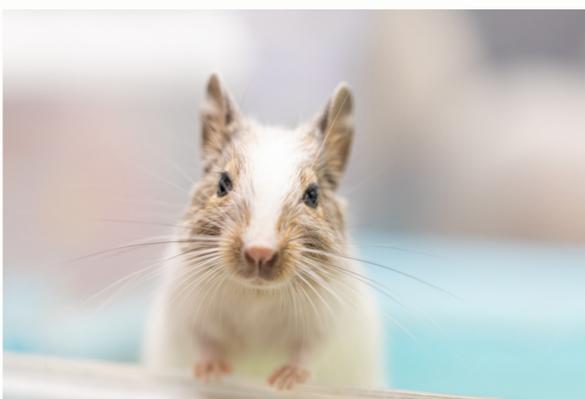
## ENRICHMENT

Provide a (or 2 if a larger group) solid surface exercise wheel e.g. a metal TicTac wheel, min. 12". They love to burrow so will need a tub of sand/hay or paper based bedding e.g. Softacard, Finacard or Bedmax to keep entertained. They enjoy time out of their cage but it must be supervised to prevent any accidents such as chewing cables - they'll appreciate access to a sandbath during this time if you don't have one in the cage as it'll help to keep their fur clean. They make little chirping noises when happy but are generally silent other than this.



## HANDLING

Degus aren't always keen to be handled but will rarely bite you - they can be quite speedy though so just be careful not to accidentally drop them. They'll often happily perch on you whilst having a run around outside their cage and will take treats from your hand. Never grab them by the tail as they'll shed half of it as a way to get away from a predator. As with other prey animals, they can sometimes be jumpy so they're not suitable for young children or homes with curious/excitable cats and dogs unless they can have a separate and secure room.



## NEUTERING

Degus do not need to be neutered unless they're due to be introduced as a mixed sex group - in this scenario, we'd recommend the males are neutered as it's a less invasive procedure in comparison to the females.

