

All About Guinea Pigs

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Straits

Illustrations
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First Chapter

Cute facts

Guinea Pigs are very well known in the United States. They were once the favorite pets of the ladies of the court in Europe. They were carried in silk pillows. Guinea pigs chew just about everything!! They even chew cords and chairs. If you want a guinea pig to be safe inside, then here are a few things to watch out for your guinea pig: cables, wooden chairs, furniture and cords. The guinea pig was originally from Peru. It probably got the name “Guinea Pig” because it passed by Guinea in Africa. Guinea means “Gold Coin which is said to be how much it cost to buy a guinea pig. These days, you can buy a guinea pig that is a mix of breeds.



Second Chapter

Breeds

There are 13 different breeds in the United States. The types of breeds are separated into two different kinds. Long-haired and Short-haired. Short-haired guinea pigs are Abyssinian, Abyssinian Satin, American, American Satin, Teddy, Teddy Satin and White Crested. The long-haired breeds are Cornet, Peruvian, Peruvian Satin, Silkie, Silkie Satin and Texel.

Third Chapter

Medical Attention & Feed

Each breed has different needs. For long haired guinea pigs, they need to be brushed regularly. All guinea pigs need attention to their teeth. If the guinea pig doesn't get its teeth trimmed, sooner or later, then it will have a hard time eating and may die. A healthy guinea pig will have bright eyes and no bald spots. A sick guinea pig will have bald spots and no brightness in their eyes.

All guinea pigs can eat greens, such as carrots, cilantro, parsley, strawberry tops, squash tops, celery leaves, kale stems, spinach and broccoli. Try not to feed them too many of these treats. They can get sick or fat which is also bad for them. They also can eat Alfalfa pellets and Timothy pellets. They will need a water bottle and a small basket of hay. The basket of hay will need to be refilled because, I am telling you, guinea pigs are little pigs.

If you are going to buy one guinea pig, it is always best to get two because they can be lonely and sad. Just like humans, they too have feelings. Also cover or plug up any holes your guinea pigs can fit through such as mouse holes and big holes your guinea pig can run into. If you don't cover up the holes than your guinea pig can get stuck.



Fourth Chapter

Predators and Defense

The predators of the guinea pigs are: snakes, eagles, foxes, hawks, coyotes, falcons, cats and dogs. These creatures hunt guinea pigs. Guinea pigs have to be alert, ready to run and hide. Usually they are pretty fast and do not get eaten. Sometimes they are slow and the only defenses they are left with are biting hard and kicking hard with their little feet and claws. This sometimes works but not all the time.

If you have a dog or cat, you must teach it to not bother your guinea pig. Guinea pigs can have a heart attack because their bodies are smaller than ours so they can be scared easily. Once the dog or cat lets the guinea pig alone then slowly introduce your new friend to the rest of your family.

If you have a child that is less than 10 years old, then supervise your child while

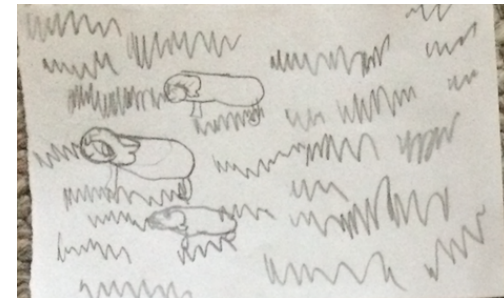
handling your guinea pig. Kids that are 7 to 8 can help take care of the guinea pig by helping to get fresh water or hay. Kids that are 9 to 11 years old can start handling the guinea pig on their own carefully.



Fifth Chapter

Habitat

Wild guinea pigs live in rocky areas and savannas. They can be found in the forest edges of Colombia and Venezuela or south of Brazil and Argentina. They live in colonies of up to 40 members. Males are called Boars and females are called Sows. The babies are called Pups just like wild pigs. They live in burrows. They are most active at dawn and dusk when all the predators are asleep. They eat leaves and grass. They also love to roam about and run, jump and squeak to each other.



Sixth Chapter

Life Cycle

or get disease. It is best to always check your guinea pigs to see if they are sick.

The life cycle of the guinea pig goes like this. The female gets pregnant and gives birth to two litters a year. A sow can have only up to six pups per litter. The pups are born with their eyes open and with their teeth and their fur already grown. After they are one day old, you can pick them up and pet them and handle them carefully. Do not handle a sow that is pregnant. She can get hurt easily. Once the pups are four weeks old, they will leave their mom and become part of the colony or make a new colony.

If your guinea pig is about to give birth, keep the sow in a calm area filled with straws so that the babies are born safely. Always keep the cage and the hayrack clean. Always clean the cage after the sow gives birth because the guinea pigs can get sick from a humid space and

Seventh Chapter

Mating

Mating has its role in the world and is important to the animals. To the guinea pigs, it is part of the cycle of life. It is best to only mate the sow three times a year because after that she can get mad and abandon her litter or even kill them. When a sow is about to give birth, keep the boars away from the sow because the boars will try to mate her more. When a sow is pregnant, also keep boars away.

The alpha can push the others or challenge another male if that male wants the power or for a female. They will make a sound that sounds like a purr mixed with a hiss that means they are the boss. They will both lift their noses and touch them together. They will try to raise their noses higher than the other guinea pig. The loser will retreat and walk away. The winner will proceed forward. This will mean that the winner will always get the first treat, be the

first to the hayrack and drink the water first. It is best if the guinea pigs live together while they are babies, so they get along.

Eighth Chapter

Locomotion and Sounds

Guinea pigs move by zipping across the grass, hopping, running and jumping. Guinea pigs leap high in the air when they are happy or content. That is called “popcorning.” They also squeak and purr when they would like to be petted or when they feel safe with you or if they want their treat. Sometimes, when your guinea pig knows and likes you, then it will squeal at you to say hello when you come home. Guinea pigs will start squeaking when they hear the refrigerator door open or when they hear a bag opening. They assume that means they will get treats.



Ninth Chapter

Classification

Guinea pigs are classified into Mammals and rodents and are also called “tailless rodents of South America”. Its scientific name is *cavia porcellus*. Guinea pigs are not an endangered species and are the cousins of wild guinea pigs. It does feed its babies milk from its breast. That makes it a mammal. It is an herbivore and mainly eats greens. In the wild, wild guinea pigs only eat grasses and dry leaves they can reach, even if it means to stretch out their bodies as much as they can without hurting themselves. Yes, guinea pigs are very flexible but that doesn’t mean to twist your guinea pig. That would be very mean, and you could kill your guinea pig.

Tenth Chapter

Colors

Guinea pigs can come in many, many colors so here are the list of colors: self, agouti, solid and marked. Agouti are black, chocolate, lilac and beige. The tip of the hair can be red, orange, cream and white. Here is the big list of the colors of guinea pigs: Beige, black, blue gray, brindle, chocolate, cream, dalmatian, dutch, golden agouti, Himalayan, lilac, red, red and roan. I am sure that there are other colors, but I don't know them. These colors are very beautiful and match anything. You can buy a guinea pig with your favorite color.

Eleventh Chapter

Hall of Fame

Guinea pigs are small, fluffy, furry and cute little animals. The cavies and chinchillas and rabbits are ranked as the most famous top three animals in the USA. Lots and lots of people love these three animals. Maybe a question you have is how did these three animals get that famous?? Who knows! It could be that they were the first animals to be pets or something else. You can do a project about a rabbit, or if you are a chinchilla person, then you can do a project about chinchillas or both. Another idea is you can research about how these three animals got their place in the rankings. Now it is time to see if you are ready for a guinea pig. When you are ready for a guinea pig then tell your parents that you feel ready for a guinea pig and prepare yourself.

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About the Author

Maria-Fernanda Samibah Straits is ten years old and is going into fifth grade at Coronado Elementary, Albuquerque, New Mexico. She wrote this book over a month's time. She enjoys writing books because it makes her imagine things as if she were taken from one place to another like magic. She wrote this book because she had a guinea pig who gave birth to three pups this year. Sadly, one of her baby guinea pigs died. Their names are Peanut, Butter and Jelly. She has written five other books: The Pegasus and the Serpent; The Three Turtles and the Wolf; My Vacation to Cuba; My Vacation to Seattle, Washington; and La Guerrera. Her father is Navajo and her mother is Peruvian. Sami is half-Navajo and half-Quechua. She loves to ride horses, go to the mountains, and take bike rides. She thanks her mother for helping her to edit and her father for giving her courage to keep going on the writing when she got mad.

