



Green Iguana

(Scientific Name: *Iguana iguana*)



Introduction:

For anyone who is considering purchasing an iguana, it is important to know as much as possible about the species before committing to owning one. The first couple of things you need to consider are that iguanas require a lot of space because they grow to be very large, up to 6 feet long. Iguanas also need a lot of attention, especially if you want them to be tame. Finally, consider that iguanas can live to be 15 years old, or more.

Feeding:

Iguanas should follow a strict diet. Certain foods will cause damage to an iguana's system and will cause kidney failure and thyroid problems at a very early age. These foods include spinach, bok choy, broccoli, cauliflower and other cabbage-like vegetables. Iguanas should be fed predominantly greens, supplemented with iguana pellets and fruit.

Housing:

To start, baby iguanas should be kept in a 30-50 gallon tank. As they get bigger, they will need to be upgraded to a cage (homemade or store-bought) that is at least 1½ times the length of the lizard, 2/3 the length of the lizard in width, and the length of the lizard in height. To cover the bottom of the cage, use newspaper, alfalfa pellets, artificial turf or orchid bark. Never use cedar chips because they are toxic to iguanas.

Heating:

During the day, the air inside an iguana's tank should reach about 85°F. This can be accomplished by using an under-tank heater, heat tape, spotlight, etc. Make sure that the heat source is kept away from the iguana to avoid burns. At night, the temperature should be kept around 70°F.



Water/Humidity:

Iguanas get most of their moisture from the air, so it is important to keep the humidity inside their enclosures between 95 and 100%. It is also a good idea to keep a bowl of fresh water inside the enclosure for drinking and soaking.

Health:

Iguanas can be fairly resilient and are not prone to getting many diseases. Proper diet can keep them from suffering from kidney failure. We recommend that you become familiar with your iguana's normal behavior so that any changes in behavior can be quickly identified. Usually, a change in temperament signifies that the lizard is ill. Remember to always keep the number of a qualified veterinarian on hand.

Myths vs. Facts

- ❖ **Myth:** Iguanas will only grow as big as the cage they are kept in.
- ❖ **Fact:** Iguanas that are properly cared for can grow to be 6 feet long!

- ❖ **Myth:** An aquarium/terrarium is a good home for an iguana.
- ❖ **Fact:** In the wild, iguanas live in trees. They will quickly outgrow a tank and will require a large cage equipped with something to climb on.

- ❖ **Myth:** Iguanas carry salmonella.
- ❖ **Fact:** All reptiles carry the salmonella bacteria. Keeping yourself and your iguana clean will prevent the spread of salmonella.

- ❖ **Myth:** Iguanas don't have teeth.
- ❖ **Fact:** Iguanas do have teeth. They can actually bite a human finger off if you're not careful!

- ❖ **Myth:** Iguanas only go to the bathroom in their enclosures.
- ❖ **Fact:** Iguanas can be potty trained! They can learn to drink, swim and go to the bathroom in a tub of water (not at the same time, of course).

- ❖ **Myth:** Hot rocks will provide an adequate heat source for my iguana.
- ❖ **Fact:** Hot rocks can be dangerous to your iguana. Iguanas have little feeling on their bellies, so they cannot feel that they are getting burned if a hot rock overheats or short circuits. DO NOT allow an iguana near a hot rock!

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