**Green Iguana – Care Sheet**

**Green Iguana:** *Iguana iguana*

For those prepared for a more advanced reptile, iguanas can make an excellent and personable pet. However, it’s very important to be prepared for their large size, behavioral tendencies, and demanding care requirements before considering taking on this responsibility. They are not for everyone, and unfortunately many end up being relinquished or rehomed. Below are some care tips to consider before acquiring an iguana of your own.

**Basic Info:**

Age: 12-15+ years, up to 20

Size: Up to 6 feet. Males are generally larger than females.

Weight: 5-20 pounds

Sexual maturity: 3-4 years

Egg laying: 20-40 eggs

Incubation period: 73-93 days

**Behavior:**

Young green iguanas should be well socialized so they’re better able to be handled as large adults. Handling is often needed daily for a year in order to socialize a young iguana.

However, excessive handling can cause stress. They tend to be fast and agile, especially when young, and often use their tail as a defense. Do not grab the tail, as they can drop it as a defense mechanism. As adults some are friendly, while others can be very aggressive and difficult to handle, especially if wild-caught or not socialized when young. They are also solitary animals that tend to be very territorial, so they should also be housed alone. In the wild they spend many hours basking and will seek out heat in captivity.

**Diet**

Iguanas are herbivores. Good food choices include:

* Healthy greens like mustard greens, turnip greens, collard greens, dandelion greens; others can be offered only for variety; avoid iceberg lettuce as it lacks important vitamins and other nutrients
* Various squashes, zucchini, sweet potato, bell peppers
* Broccoli, other green veggies, shredded carrots
* Snow or snap peas, green beans
* Fruit offered as a treat

Make sure the pieces of food are shredded or cut up into

small enough pieces for your iguana to eat it. Mist the salad

with water to keep it fresh and encourage water intake.

Adults should have their food dusted with a phosphorus-free calcium supplement once or

twice a week while young, growing iguanas (up to 2 years of age) should have this done daily. Also make sure your green iguana always has fresh, clean water available. Many like to soak

in it and may defecate in it daily.

**Environment & Caging**

Your green iguana will need plenty of space for moving around as it grows older. This can be one of the most challenging aspects for keeping iguanas, as its habitat should mimic its wild environment as closely as possible. Your iguana’s habitat should:

* Be kept at a temperature of 80ºF on the cool side with a basking area of 90-100ºF. Good ways to provide heat include ceramic heat emitters, basking lights, or PowerSun Mercury Vapor bulbs, which also provide UV light. Under-cage heaters and hot rocks can cause severe burns and are not recommended.
* Contain a UV light that provides light in the UVB spectrum. It will be necessary to replace the bulb even if it is still producing light. Do not let glass or plastic sit between your lizard and the light. We recommend either T5 or T8 tube-type lights or ZooMed PowerSuns for iguanas. Remember all UVB lights have specific distances that they should be placed from the animal- some produce heat and some don’t, so you need to choose what’s appropriate for your cage.
* Use tile, reptile carpet, paper towels or newspapers as bedding.
* Have a large water pan or pool to allow for soaking. Their humidity should also be high, around 70-80% at a minimum. You can increase this through misting daily or providing a mister that turns on automatically throughout the day.
* Contain plenty of vertical branches, ramps, and shelves for climbing and basking. Iguanas need plenty of climbing space so a large, tall enclosure is recommended over a large long one. They grow quickly, so plan for a large cage soon!

If at all possible, a secure outdoor enclosure during the warmer months is often ideal in terms of providing good UV and temperature ranges for your iguana. However, they will still need an enclosure inside that maintains their temperature and humidity in a controlled manner.

In general, most commercial cages are inappropriate for an adult iguana and owners typically opt for custom built or home built cages that are at least over 6 feet in height and length.

Some owners even use entire closets or rooms for their

iguanas, but must still maintain the same humidity, heating,

and lighting requirements in these larger spaces.

**Veterinary Care & Preventive Care**

We recommend a physical examination every 6-12 months, so a vet can perform a fecal examination and order blood tests if necessary. In the meantime, look out for warning signs of health problems like anorexia, weight loss, lethargy, swellings on the face or jaw, trembling, limping, swollen belly, constipation, diarrhea, or a change in behavior.