

## ORNATE BOX TURTLE

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- Native to North America; also called the Western Box Turtle.
- Has a documented lifespan of over 100 years in captivity.
- Small turtles, most adults mature to between 4 and 6 inches.

### Diet

The ornate box turtle is an omnivore. Their diet should be made up of about 40-50% fruits and vegetables and 50-60% meaty diets; including mealworms, nightcrawlers, thawed frozen pinky or fuzzy mice, and waxworms. Dark, leafy greens, such as collard, mustard and/or dandelion greens are the best option to feed along with a good variety of finely chopped vegetables like zucchini, squash, carrots, or sweet potatoes. Limited amounts of fruits, such as apples, strawberries and cantaloupe can be offered (max 10% of their diet).

A powdered reptile calcium and vitamin D3 supplement should be sprinkled lightly on their food. A cuttlebone can also be offered.

Though box turtles acquire much of the water from their food, they do need a large, shallow water dish for drinking and soaking provided at all times.

### Housing

Box turtles are very active, requiring a large habitat with as much space as possible to exercise. Provide a deep substrate of reptile bark or coconut bedding for digging and burrowing. The habitat should have a cool end in the low 70's and a basking spot at 80-90°F. Lights should be kept on 12-14 hours a day. Night temperature should drop into the 60's for the entire habitat, providing a hay pile to burrow in. No heat rock or under cage heater is recommended. Enclosures should be well ventilated and kept at about 50% humidity or lower.

### Handling & Care

Box turtles are very friendly, personable, easy to handle pets. In warm weather, allow your tortoise supervised time outdoors for exercise, grazing and absorbing some healthy sunshine for UV and vitamin D. A lukewarm chin-deep bath every week is healthy and enjoyable. Trim overgrown nails and beak as needed.

Wash your hands with anti-bacterial soap after handling any animal.

### Health

An annual veterinary exam is advisable to help ensure the health of your pet. The vet should measure and weigh your tortoise each year and check for internal parasites, a hidden killer easily prevented and treated with the proper medication. Shell rot infections can develop if kept in a too moist climate. Tortoises are especially susceptible to respiratory ailments and nutritional deficiencies. Signs to watch for include lethargy, bubbling from the nose, wheezing, swollen or closed eyes, lack of appetite for more than 2-3 days, loose stools, soft shell or abnormal shell growth or beak growth.



### BOX TURTLE CHECKLIST

- Large Habitat
- Large, shallow dishes
- Calcium D3 supplement
- Substrate
- Heat Source; 75-100W UVB Basking Lamp
- Clamp light fixture
- Decor
- Thermometer
- Hygrometer
- Box Turtle Book