

## RUSSIAN TORTOISE

---

- Naturally found in the arid, barren and rocky areas of southern Russia and into Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- Small tortoises, most adult females are 8-10", males 6-8".
- Wonderful pets, it is important to be prepared for this long term pet. With proper care a Russian Tortoise should outlive its owner.

### Diet

Russian tortoises are herbivores. 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. Limited amounts of fruits, such as apples, strawberries and cantaloupe can be offered (max 10-15% of their diet). It is important to choose foods higher in calcium and avoid foods high in phosphorous. It is also important to give as much variety as possible.

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

Though Russian tortoises 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

Russian Tortoises 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 90-95°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 relatively dry (40-45% humidity).

### Handling & Care

Russian Tortoises 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 2-3 days 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.



### TORTOISE CHECKLIST

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