

Leopard Gecko

Eublepharis Macularius

Adult Size:	6-10 inches, including the tail.
Life Span:	These geckos are long lived animals, living up to twenty years in captivity with proper care.
Male/Female Differences:	Males are slightly larger and bulkier than females. Mature males will also have a v-shaped row of pores above their cloaca (vent), and two bulges just below their cloaca caused by their reproductive organ.
Compatibility:	Adult males should never be kept together, as they are territorial and will fight. However, a single male can be kept with multiple females peacefully, as long as the cage is of an appropriate size.
Origin:	Leopard geckos have been bred successfully in captivity for some time. Many different colour morphs are now available. The lizard gets its name from the wild specimen, which is spotted.
Climate:	Leopard geckos are desert animals.
Day Cycle:	Like many desert animals, these geckos are nocturnal (awake during the night) in order to avoid the extreme heat of the sun.
Temperature:	85-95° F during the day, with a decrease of ten to fifteen degrees at night.
Lighting:	Like all lizards, leopard geckos require a source of UVB light in order to synthesize vitamin D, and properly metabolize calcium.
Humidity:	These lizards are desert animals, and are accustomed to an arid environment. A small amount of moistened moss or vermiculite placed in the reptile's den will create a small area of humidity (humidor) that will greatly ease the animal's shedding.
Habitat/Territory:	The deserts of Northeastern India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, often found in caves and burrows.

Substrate/Bedding:	A sand substrate appropriate for reptiles (either crushed English walnut shells or calcium sand) will promote the most natural behavior. Cage carpet or paper may also be used if it is changed frequently.
Hiding Place/Den:	These lizards are naturally drawn to caves, where they will hide during the day. As previously stated, they will benefit greatly from a higher humidity in their den.
Cage Type:	10-20 gallon aquariums are appropriate for adult geckos, more space always being better. If multiple geckos are to be kept, the cage should be accordingly larger.
Diet:	Leopard geckos are carnivorous, eating insects and small mammals in the wild. Four appropriately sized crickets per day makes a sufficient maintenance diet. Meal worms and wax worms make great supplements, as long as the lizard is large enough to consume them.
Supplements:	A calcium supplement is necessary to ensure proper bone development. A good vitamin A supplement (found in reptile vitamin mixes) will ensure proper health for your gecko.
Diet Precautions:	Insects are only as nutritious as the contents of their guts. It is imperative to gut load them before feeding them to your gecko. The crickets should be housed for at least 24 hours with a high quality commercial diet, or an assortment of different foods (fruit one week, vegetables the next, or grains). The scrapings from your cutting board usually make great cricket food.
Feeding:	Place the crickets in a bag with a light dusting of calcium and vitamin powder, shaking the bag to coat the crickets. When preparing worms, simply sprinkle the supplements on top before offering them to your gecko.
Water Source:	A small shallow bowl that cannot be tipped over should always be available. Geckos are much more likely to drink moving water, and will appreciate water dribbled onto the tip of their nose from a misting bottle or drip cup from time to time.
Grooming:	All aspects of the environment should be kept clean, sanitized with a 5% bleach solution whenever necessary. The animal itself is relatively low maintenance.
Oral and Foot Care:	Mouth and foot issues are rare in leopard geckos and any concerns should be addressed by a veterinarian.
Proper Handling:	Pick your gecko up from behind, so as not to startle it. Hold it firmly, but gently. Small children may want to hold the gecko (with adult supervision) over its cage, so that if they lose their grip, the gecko will simply fall into its cage. Never grab a gecko by the tail, as they can shed their tails as a defense mechanism.
Habitat Maintenance:	Scoop sand daily. Replace the sand completely every four months or so, or whenever it begins to smell, and use this time to sanitize the cage. If using cage carpet or paper, replace whenever soiled.

Health Concerns:

Metabolic bone disease results from an insufficient amount of calcium in the animals diet, or the lack of proper UVB lighting. If the animal looks listless, refuses to eat, or has soft or deformed limbs, consult your veterinarian.