



Domesticated ferret

Mustela putorius furo

Adult Size	Males range from 14 to 17 inches long & weigh 3-5 pounds. Females range from 12 to 14 inches and weigh 1-3 pounds.	Life Span	Anywhere from 7 to 10 years.
Male/Female Differences	One can usually tell whether a ferret is a male/female by their size and weight. Males are easily distinguished since they have their urethra in the center of their belly.		
Compatibility	Ferrets are incredibly social animals. Interaction and socialization are important in the development of a young ferret to eliminate behavioral problems later. If possible consider getting a pair so that you are not the only source of interaction the ferret receives.		
Origin	Europe, Africa		
Climate	Woodlands, prairies, wetlands		
Day Cycle	Crepuscular		
Temperature	A large well-ventilated cage. An average household temperature of 70 degrees F is proper.		
Lighting	Room lighting should not be too bright as it could hurt their eyes. Their cage should not be in direct sunlight.		
Humidity	Dry/low.		
Habitat/Territory	Ferrets live in burrows in diverse habitats; some live in marshlands and feed off of frogs, others in farmlands and feed off of mice.		

Substrate/Bedding	Comfortable towels/blankets make great beds for ferrets. Wash the towels at least once a week and spray with conditioning spray or deodorizer every other day. For litter shredded, pelleted aspen or recycled paper litters will suffice.
Hiding Place/Den	Chew safe toys and non-toxic hiding places will increase their level of interaction when they are left alone. Hammocks and tunnels are also fun toys for your ferret.
Cage Type	Wire cages are the only option since aquarium style enclosures do not provide sufficient ventilation and are not meant for house ferrets. Multi-level cages are the best for keeping the ferret well exercised and interested. Make sure the cage is escape-proof. The bigger the cage the better.
Diet	A ferret should be fed twice a day but food and water should always be accessible. Their diet should be high in protein and relatively high in fat to fuel their energetic lifestyle. There are many high quality dry foods specially made for ferrets. Also consider frozen and raw foods because it closely duplicates their natural diet and because frozen/raw still retain the nutrients and enzymes unlike processed kibble. Sweets such as raisins and treats should be given scarcely because of their high sugar content.
Supplements	Freeze dried cat supplements, fatty acids, and vitamins can aid in their digestion, a healthier looking coat, and less of a musky odor.
Diet Precautions	Some veterinarians discourage feeding raisins or treats with high sugar since they have a tendency to hide their food, and could stockpile the treats and consume them in a short amount of time. Hard treats like bones or peanuts should never be given because they can become lodged in their intestinal tract.
Feeding	A ferret's stomach is about half the size of their head so try not to overfeed. Some ferrets tend to tip their food bowl, to remedy this you can get a ceramic or a heavy bowl.
Water Source	Most ferrets are used to water bottles, but they will happily drink from a bowl. Rinse and wash both and supply fresh water each day.
Grooming	You can bathe your ferret with ferret or cat/dog shampoo. Ferrets should be bathed at least once a month. Another alternative is getting pet safe wipes and wiping them down.

Oral and Foot Care	Ferrets need their nails clipped at least once a month. Use cat safe nail clippers
Proper Handling	Unless your ferret is young they usually do not bite with any pressure involved. Pick them up with both hands and make sure to support their body. Most ferrets are very friendly and will welcome any interaction with you.
Habitat Maintenance	Ferrets tend to go to the bathroom in the same spot. Depending on the size of the cage one or two litter pans are appropriate. Spot clean their cage twice a day.
Health Concerns	Diarrhea due to poor diet. Hair/intestinal blockage is common because of ferret's grooming and affinity towards chewing. Loss of appetite and lack of stools in their litter are symptoms of these serious problems. Anti-social ferrets due to neglect or abuse. Ear-mites that cause itchiness and a brown discharge from their ears. They can also catch and transmit influenza to/from humans so wash your hands before and after handling. The best remedy is plenty of fluids and rest. Ferrets are prone to congenital cancers like insulinoma and adrenal disease, especially in their later years. Symptoms of both can be hair loss, lethargy, and seizures. Seek medical help if you notice any symptom.
