

# Green Iguana Care Sheet

## Introduction

Green iguanas are fascinating reptiles that make great pets! They are known for their vibrant green color and can grow quite large, sometimes over 6 feet long! Taking care of a green iguana can be a big job, but it's very rewarding. Here's everything you need to know to keep your iguana happy and healthy.

## Habitat

### Enclosure

- **Size:** A good home for a green iguana is a large terrarium. For a baby iguana, a 40-gallon tank is fine, but adults need at least **6 feet tall and 8 feet long!**
- **Climbing Space:** Iguanas love to climb, so add shelves, branches, and logs for them to explore.
- **Ventilation:** Make sure the enclosure has good ventilation, as iguanas need fresh air.

### Temperature and Lighting

- **Heat:** Keep the temperature between **75°F and 85°F** in the cooler areas, and around **90°F** in the basking spot. Use a heat lamp to create this warm area.
- **UVB Light:** Use a UVB light to help your iguana absorb calcium, which is essential for strong bones and a healthy life. The UVB light should be on for about **12-14 hours** a day.

## Diet

Green iguanas are herbivores, which means they eat only plants. Here's what to feed them:

- **Leafy Greens:** Provide lots of leafy greens like collard greens, dandelion greens, and mustard greens. These should make up the majority of their diet.
- **Vegetables:** Offer other vegetables like bell peppers, squash, and carrots in small amounts.
- **Fruits:** Treat your iguana with fruits like bananas, mangoes, or strawberries, but only occasionally since they are high in sugar.
- **Calcium and Supplements:** Dust their food with calcium powder a few times a week to help with bone health.

### Water

- **Drinking:** Provide fresh water daily in a shallow dish. Iguanas often prefer to drink from leaves, so misting their food and the enclosure can help with hydration.

## Handling and Socialization

- **Gentle Handling:** When picking up your iguana, support its body gently. Avoid holding it by the tail, as this can cause stress.
- **Short Sessions:** Start with short handling sessions of about **10-15 minutes**. Gradually increase the time as your iguana becomes more comfortable with you.

## Health and Behavior

### Signs of a Healthy Iguana

- **Active and Alert:** A healthy iguana is curious and active, often exploring its environment.
- **Good Appetite:** They should eat well and show interest in their food. If they refuse to eat for more than a couple of days, it's time to check with a vet.
- **Clear Eyes and Skin:** Their eyes should be bright and clear, and their skin should look smooth and healthy.

### Common Health Issues

- **Respiratory Problems:** If your iguana is wheezing or has mucus around its nose, it may have respiratory issues, and a vet visit is necessary.
- **Mouth Rot:** Check for swelling or discharge in the mouth. This can indicate mouth rot, which requires veterinary care.
- **Metabolic Bone Disease:** If your iguana has a soft or deformed jaw, it may be due to a lack of calcium. Consult a vet immediately.

## Exercise and Enrichment

- **Climbing:** Provide plenty of branches and shelves for climbing. Iguanas love to explore vertical spaces!
- **Hiding Spots:** Include caves or plants for your iguana to hide in. This helps them feel secure.
- **Toys:** You can add safe toys or objects to explore, but make sure they are non-toxic and safe for reptiles.

## Cleaning the Habitat

- **Daily Spot Cleaning:** Remove any waste daily to keep the enclosure clean.
- **Deep Cleaning:** Every few weeks, take everything out, clean the enclosure with a reptile-safe cleaner, and replace the substrate.

## Conclusion

Caring for a green iguana is a big responsibility, but it can also be a lot of fun! By following these care guidelines, you can help your iguana thrive and live a long, healthy life. Always remember to ask an adult for help if you have questions or need assistance.

Enjoy your adventure with your green iguana, and watch as it grows and explores!

