

GUINEA PIG

RANGE:

Cavies can be found throughout Central and South America. The cavy known as the Guinea Pig is native to South America, mainly found in Peru, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. They can be found in a variety of terrains from mountains to grasslands. The Aperea, the closest living wild relative, is found at high altitudes of up to 13,000 feet. The original guinea pig probably could be found that high or even higher.

HABITAT:

Mountains and Grasslands at high altitudes. Generally in burrows either created by them or by other animals.

SIZE:

Adult Weight: About 2 lbs./ Females average 700 – 900g Males 900 – 1200g

Length: 10 – 12 inches

Height: Approximately 5 inches

LIFE EXPECTANCY:

About 4 to 5 years is average, but have been known to reach 10 years.

REPRODUCTION:

- Females are called sows, Males are called Boars
- Females can reproduce at about 2 – 3 months old or 500g, Males at about 3 – 4 months or 650g. Females may have first estrus at 5 – 6 weeks.
- Gestation is 9 weeks or about 65 days.
- Guinea pigs are polyestrous—thus they breed year round
- Newborns are precocial, meaning they are born fully furred and eyes open at birth. Young can eat solid food in 2 – 3 days. Nursing last about 2 - 3 weeks.
- Offspring are often aggressive to each other and adult males in the wild will drive them off soon after weaning.

DIET:

Wild: All cavies are herbivores. Grasses, leaves, variety of fruits and vegetables.

Zoo: Guinea pig pellets (Alfalfa pellets with Vitamin C), green vegetables & fruit.

BEHAVIOR:

- In captivity they are gentle animals.
- Have loud vocalizations and apparently recognize individuals that have them.
- Vocalization is a "pig-like" squeal, thus the name guinea pig.
- Males can be quite aggressive to each other—territorial

POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Used widely in Medical Research
- Once kept by the Incas and later taken to Europe, becoming a popular pet.
- Long haired varieties have a mutation that wasn't found in wild varieties, that inhibits the hair from molting.
- Guinea Pigs share a characteristic found in certain breeds of horses tails, humans and orangutans in having hair that never stops growing. Other mammals, once the hair reaches a certain length it will stop growing until the root either falls out or is pulled out from the follicle.
- Cavy teeth are rootless and ever-growing, and thus they must wear them down with their diet.
- The digestive system is like that of a horse, rabbit or elephant, with a short small intestine, a long caecum and a long large intestine. They generally take in small amounts of food throughout the day.
- Some early American groups raised them for food.

PHOTO
COMING
SOON

Class:	Mammalia
Order:	Rodentia
Family:	Caviidae
Genus:	Cavia
Species:	procellus

GUINEA PIG



STATUS:

Extinct in the wild. Raised in large numbers in captivity.

REFERENCES:

<http://www.chaffeezoo.org/animals/guineaPig.html>

<http://www.lvma.org/gpig.html>