



Guinea Pig Helpline Factsheet

Preparing for and Acquiring your Guinea Pigs

If you have considered all of the points mentioned in the “Are Guineaas for Me?” Factsheet and you still feel you are ready to give a pair of guineas a home, it’s time to move onto the next step - preparing for, and then acquiring, your guineas.

Preparing for Piggies

You should aim to set aside an absolute minimum of £200 to buy everything necessary for the first month or so your guinea pigs are with you. Much of this is the initial set up cost when you are starting ‘from scratch’, but there are also the regular costs which start from the beginning too:

- A large cage;
- Suitable bedding and cleaning supplies;
- Appropriate accessories (bowls, water bottles, hay racks, toys);
- A good quality grass hay;
- A good quality dried food;
- Fresh fruits and veggies;
- A run or enclosure for exercise time;
- A suitable travel carrier.

Of course the price guide is merely based on averages; the actual price varies depending on what type of cage you buy, what type of bedding, the amount and brand of hay and dried food you buy etc.

Aim to have all your supplies ready, and ideally the basic set up complete, by the time you go looking for the guinea pigs themselves. Most rescues require a home check be performed prior to permitting the adoption of any animals to you; it saves a lot of time and effort if you have already done plenty of research into what guinea pigs need, and acquired everything necessary.

Acquiring your Guinea Pigs from Rescues

There are guinea pig rescues and animal shelters sited in most major countries in the world. Some rescues that take in and rehome guinea pigs are large public organisations, while others may be individual rescuers, or private rehomingers. Many unwanted guinea pigs are advertised on animal rehoming websites. For the UK, www.guineapigrehome.org.uk is the best place to start looking, and for the US www.petfinder.com is very popular.

While you can sometimes reserve your chosen piggies before adoption, most rescues do require a home check prior to allowing the piggies to go home with you. This home check is nothing to worry about; if the rescue or shelter does home checks, then it does them for everyone who wishes to adopt from them, it is nothing personal. A home check will typically last a short time, usually 10-30 minutes at most. The home checker will be looking to see that your plans for the guinea pigs meet with the rescues rules and guidelines - the main points of a home check tend to be:

- Ensuring the cage/hutch meets their minimum size requirements and is filled with a safe, warm bedding and suitable accessories;
- Ensuring the cage/hutch is located in a safe, secure area and is protected from any other animals or predators;

- Checking that you understand the basic needs of guinea pigs;
- Checking that any guineas you adopt from them will not be bred from.

Some rescues will not rehome to anyone who does not have an outdoor enclosure (or run) for exercise and grazing time, in which case the home checker will also make sure the run meets their size and safety guidelines.

Rescues generally do not adopt animals out to anyone under the age of 16 or 18. The rescue will hold the parent responsible for the guinea pigs' setup and care, and all piggies will be signed over to the parent, not the minor.

Once the home check has been successfully completed, the rescue will confirm that you are ready to take on your chosen guinea pigs and arrange a date for you to collect them.