



# Russian Tortoise

## CONTENTS:

1. **General Diet**
2. **Vitamins/Supplements**
3. **Housing**
4. **Sanitation/General Care**
5. **General Maintenance**
6. **Health Care**
7. **Special Section**
8. **Supplies Checklist**

## FUN FACT!

A popular pet, the Russian tortoise is one of the most readily available tortoise species. They are a smaller tortoise, making them easy for most people with limited space to keep. They love to eat and are more active than some other tortoises. Most Russian tortoises are imported into the United States.



## General Diet

A well balanced diet for a Russian tortoise should be high in fiber and calcium and low in protein. Vegetables such as yellow squash, carrots, yams, zucchini as well as dark leafy greens (spinach, kale, dandelion greens, green or red leaf lettuce and romaine lettuces) are great staples for the main diet. There are also commercial Russian tortoise diets available, but they should not make up more than 25% of the diet. Fruit should be fed sparingly. Iceberg lettuce should not be offered as it provides no nutritional value. Food should be offered daily. Clean water should be available at all times.



## **Vitamins/Supplements**

Sprinkle food with a calcium w/ D3 and multi-vitamin supplement once or twice a week.

## **Housing**

While Russian tortoises do not get very large, they do benefit from having a large enclosure. The minimum recommended size cage for one Russian tortoise would be about 36" x 18". During the warmer months, under supervision, it is allowable to bring the tortoise outside, but be sure to bring back indoors at night.

Reptiles are ectotherms, which means they get their heat from an outside source, unlike humans who can make their own heat. Russian tortoises need both heat and UVB. UVB is important for both bone and shell growth. It's important to make sure you choose the proper UVB for your tortoise's setup. UVB should be run for 12 to 14 hours.

Different areas of the habitat should be at different temperatures, so reptiles can move around to heat up or cool off. Russian tortoises are comfortable with a daytime temperature in their habitat of 75 to 85 degrees, and a nighttime temperature of 70-75. With larger enclosures, ceramic heat emitters may be needed for a heat source. If the place you live gets too cold at night, use a lower wattage heat emitter or nighttime bulb (which does not give off much light) to keep the temperature correct.

Acceptable substrates for the bottom of your Russian tortoise's cage include Eco Earth, ExoTerra Forrest Floor and ExoTerra Repti-Bark. The substrate should be 2 to 3 inches deep in the bottom of the enclosure.

## **Sanitation/General Care**

Change the water as needed, usually daily. The substrate used on the bottom should be cleaned as often as needed, and this will depend on habitat size and your pet's size, but no less than once a month. We will be happy to recommend how often your set up should be cleaned out.

## **General Maintenance**

Weekly water soaks in warm unchlorinated water are recommended. The water level should be shallow as the tortoise should be able to hold his/her head above the water level. Be sure the habitat is at the right temperature at all times, as a chilled reptile will not eat well or at all and may get sick. Change the reptile full spectrum light as often as recommended by the manufacturer, usually every six months to a year. Although the bulb may still be working, it will lose its potency over a certain period of time and, for example, may not be giving off enough UVB to be effective for calcium absorption and health.



## Health Care

Russian tortoises are usually healthy animals. However, upper respiratory infections can occur if temperatures are not kept at proper levels. Regularly check your tortoise's enclosure to ensure that the temperatures are correct and that the UVB strength is still proper for your tortoise.

A healthy tortoise will have clear, bright eyes with no discharge and a clear nose with no discharge. A healthy tortoise will be active and alert.

## Special Section

Reptiles can carry one disease that can be transmitted to people called salmonellosis. This disease is usually caught by people after they eat undercooked eggs or meat, but reptiles can give it to people as well. Although it is rare for a reptile to carry this disease, it is always important to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after you have handled your pet or anything in your pet's cage. Keep your pet out of the kitchen area and do not allow very small children to handle any reptiles. Taking just a few precautions will keep the chances of catching this disease to an absolute minimum.

## SUPPLIES CHECKLIST

Reptile UVB Bulb	Cave or Hide
Heat Lamp with Heat Emitter or Daylight Heat Bulb	Water dish or tray
2nd Heat Lamp Night Bulb	Food dish
Calcium and Multivitamin supplement	
Screen Cover	
Recommended Substrate	
Cage/Terrarium 36"x18" or Larger	
Thermometer/Humidity Gauge	



1216 Railroad Street  
Saint Johnsbury, Vermont 05819  
(802) 748-8858

 [aquarealmaquarium.com](http://aquarealmaquarium.com)  
 [www.facebook.com/aquarealm.aquarium](https://www.facebook.com/aquarealm.aquarium)  
 [instagram.com/aquarealm\\_aquarium](https://www.instagram.com/aquarealm_aquarium)