



LEOPARD GECKOS



Common Leopard Gecko

Leopard geckos are lizards found in South Asia and the Middle East. They can grow up to 10 inches: females grow to around 7 to 8 inches while males usually grow to around 8 to 10 inches. They can live for up to 20 years but usually live up to about 10 to 15 years.

DIET

They have a restricted diet of only insects. No vegetation needed as they acquire all of their nutritional needs from insects alone.

DO LEOPARD GECKOS MAKE GOOD PETS?

Yes, they do. If you are thinking of owning a reptile for the first time, leopard geckos are a great choice! It doesn't cost much to own them (about £200 to £300 in total) and they don't take up much space. As mentioned above, their diet is straightforward, they don't mind being handled (but leave them for a few days so that they can get used to the house). They can't kill you - the bite barely even draws any blood. They don't require a lot of attention, they live for a long time and they don't demand a lot of equipment.

TYPES OF LEOPARD GECKOS

There are many different types of leopard geckos:

- The common leopard gecko (*Eublepharis macularius*).
- The East Indian leopard gecko (*Eublepharis hardwickii*)
- The West Indian leopard gecko (*Eublepharis fuscus*), and many more.

The prices vary depending on what type of leopard gecko you choose. The common leopard gecko is the most inexpensive because it is the most popular.



HABITAT

Just like other reptiles, lizards are cold blooded which means they are unable to produce their own body heat and rely on their surroundings for warmth. They don't tolerate direct sunlight as it can damage their skin but enjoy temperatures ranging from no lower than 15°C in the day to no higher than 20°C. At night, 10°C is the coldest.

Although leopard geckos live in the desert, they don't live on sand - just dry land. If you keep one as a pet, DO NOT use sand on the floor as leopard geckos often taste their surroundings by licking them to become used to where they live which means that they sometimes ingest sand. Sand is not good for them as it could build up in their stomach because it cannot be digested. This can cause blockage which can eventually kill the gecko. A suitable ground for a leopard gecko's vivarium is paper towels. Also, make sure to get them a 20gallon vivarium so that they have a free space to run around.



Leopard geckos use their surroundings to control their body temperature. So, providing a 'thermogradient' is important - with a heat lamp at one end and a cooler area at the other. Regulate temperatures using thermostats. Leopard geckos do require a dry environment and an ultraviolet light, which should be turned off at night.

OTHER INTERESTING FACTS

- Leopard geckos have a small "bark" they use if agitated but are not as vocal as other gecko species.
- They are nocturnal, keeping out of the heat of the day and coming out at night to forage for food.
- Unlike most geckos, leopard geckos have eyelids, allowing them to blink and sleep with their eyes closed.
- They have a life-saving tail! Not only does it detach to allow the gecko to escape if caught by a predator but it's also a fat store ready to support the Leopard Gecko when food is scarce.
- Leopard Geckos will often shake their tails when hunting, mating and defending their territory.
- They eat their shedded skin! – This is one of their numerous defence mechanisms; eating their dead skin removes scent markers for their predators to track them with, allowing the gecko to keep safe in the wild. It also gives the gecko nutrience which will be helpful in the future

FIND OUT MORE... (THIS HAS THE USEFUL WEBLINKS/VIDEOLINKS UNDERNEATH)

<https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/other/leopardgecko&~:text=A%20leopard%20gecko%20can%20grow,handled%20if%20done%20so%20carefully.>

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. How long can they live for?
2. What do they eat?
3. How long can they grow up to?
4. Do leopard geckos make good pets? Explain your answer.
5. Do they bite?