

BETTA CARE SHEET

Average lifespan: Up to 3 years (Captivity) with proper care

Average adult size: 2.5 inches long (not including the tail)

Tank size: Minimum of 2.5 Litres, preferred size (10 Litres) - (bigger the better)

We can live in smaller tanks or larger aquariums with a low pressure filter

Diet: Carnivore (pellets, flake, bloodworms)

Water temperature: 22 degrees Celsius (keep an eye on this during winter- we get cold)

Behaviour: Aggressive with other fish (must be kept alone or with peaceful fish)

What you need to house your Betta:

- Glass, or plastic tank (bigger the better) with a lid
- Aquarium gravel (do not use cheap alternatives as this can harm your fish)
- Food (Betta bites)
- Betta conditioner (to condition the water and make it safe)
- Live aquarium plants are highly recommended as they will oxygenate their tanks, add something for them to play and sit on and add vibrancy to your tank
- Heat mat or internal Betta heater (during the cooler seasons, keeping your fish in a cold environment can actually be fatal)
- UV light – this is required for vitamin D absorption (like us we need UV to absorb calcium, Betta fish require natural sunlight or a UVB light during the day, turn this off at night)

DIET:

A well- balance Betta diet consists of:

- High quality commercial Betta food
- Frozen or dried bloodworms can be occasionally offered as a treat (thaw frozen foods before feeding)

Feeding:

Things to remember when feeding your Betta fish:

- If your Betta is fussy on his food, try breaking it up into smaller amounts
- Do not overfeed your fish (excess food in the tank may cause ph imbalances and foul the water easily especially in smaller unfiltered tanks. This can potentially harm your fish- scoop out any remaining food to reduce this risk)
- Make sure the food is fresh
 - Keep the container sealed at all times
 - Keep the food out of direct sunlight
 - Check the expiry date
 - Try not to add any moisture into the container as this will spoil the food and make him sick

HABITAT MAINTENANCE:

- Check filter and water temperature daily (a thermometer can be added as a guide)

- Check water quality (cloudiness, algae, level of water etc)
- Check over your Betta fish for imperfections (fungus, injuries, split tails etc)
- Partially change the water weekly (50%) – weekly for smaller tanks. In larger aquariums, change 10 to 25% of the total volume of water every 2 to 4 weeks, or more often as needed – make sure water level is not too high (leave a 2cm gap from the water level to the top of the tank as Betta fish are known to jump out of their aquarium)
 - Lightly wipe the sides of the tank with a fish cleaning sponge to remove algae
 - Never do a 100% water change as your fish needs good bacteria in the tank, if you remove this good bacteria too often it will unbalance the PH and can make your fish sick

Water conditioner MUST be added to the water bowl at each water change as un-dechlorinated water can burn their gills when exposed to chlorine and causes immense pain which will be fatal.

Characteristics:

- Bettas breathe from the water's surface with their labyrinth organ in addition to their gills
- Bettas will 'flare' fins when threatened or disturbed and to show aggression
- Male Bettas will attack other fish with long flowing fins, for this reason, they must be kept alone or be the only Betta fish in a community aquarium
 - May be kept with some tetras – always check with your aquarium specialist in regards to what fish are compatible with Betta fish – (needs to have the same PH balance, non aggressive and same temperature preferences)

Health:

Signs of a healthy Betta fish

- Active and alert, eats regularly, vibrant colours (males only), reacts aggressively to outside stimulus

Avoid overcrowded conditions, which are a major cause of stress and disease. Maintain good water quality with regular water changes and adequate filtration.

Signs of ill health:

- Loss of colour or appetite, spots or fungus on body or mouth, cloudy eyes, elevated scales, unnaturally frayed fins, listlessness, laboured respirations, erratic swimming, weight loss, bloating

If your Betta fish is showing signs of illness, speak to an aquarium specialist for treatment (sooner rather than later)

Recommended enrichments:

Bettas will become bored if there is no mental stimulation provided (coloured plants, variation in the diet etc) brighten up his tank with different plants, ornaments regularly.

- Natural aquatic plant – adds vibrancy and oxygen to the tank (some betas will sit and rest on large leafy plant)
- Change up the food – offer frozen blood worms occasionally as a treat. Betta flake colour enhancers can also be added occasionally
- A Betta fish mirror may be added occasionally to encourage 'play time' - make sure this is aquarium approved (no rust, sharp edges etc)

Remember to monitor your Bettas health regularly as they can be very good at hiding sickness or disease. If signs of illness occur contact your local small animal Vet for advice.

