



Leopard Tortoise

Scientific Name: *Geochelone pardalis*

Size: On average, about 16-18 inches and 40-50 pounds (although some reach up to 24 inches and 70 lbs).

Life Span: 50 years or more

Feeding: Herbivorous grazers - their ideal diet is high fiber grasses and greens. Pesticide-free grass is good for grazing, and the diet should primarily consist of grasses such as timothy or orchard grass or hay. Small amounts of vegetables can be offered too. Don't feed foods high in oxalates (beet greens, chard, spinach) or fruit (can cause digestive upsets). Also, never feed dog or cat food or other animal protein.

Supplements: Calcium/vitamin D3 supplementation is recommended (D3 is especially important when housed indoors). Pieces of cuttlebone can also be provided for gnawing and extra calcium.

Housing - Outdoors: Outdoor housing is preferable where the climate allows. Daytime temperatures should be 80-90 F (27-32 C) and nighttime temps can fall to 65-75 F (18-24 C). They cannot tolerate cool or damp conditions. A large sturdy enclosure with protection from predators is necessary, along with shade, hiding spots, and access to a shallow pool of water (deep enough to soak in but shallow enough that drowning isn't a possibility). A dry grassy area that allows grazing is ideal.

Housing - Indoors: You may need to bring your leopard tortoises indoors for part of the year. Provide a large (4 feet by 8 feet minimum) enclosure. Grass hay makes a good substrate. A UVA/UVB lamp is vital. A basking spot at 95 F (35 C) should be provided, while the rest of the enclosure can be heated to 80-90 F (27-32 C) during the day and 65-75 F (18-24 C) at night. A shallow pan of water (deep enough to soak in but shallow enough to prevent drowning) should be provided.

Notes: Do not hibernate, although they may slow down in the cooler months.