

# Going Exotic

by Lin Stone

First it was dogs. Then it was horses. After that came the cats of all kinds, colors and sizes. Mankind INSISTS on having pets. When I was a kid anything that moved of its own free will could become a pet. We even had pet Gila Monsters for a little while. When I got grown I went into high gear and was catching enough pets to keep all nine kids happy. We had a constant flow of gophers, rabbits, snakes and birds of all kinds. To my great regret I kept on catching burros too. Oh, I hate burros for a pet. But that doesn't matter. I'll catch anything trying to get away from me.

These days, tastes have become more exotic. Rats are almost passe now. People don't just want a tarantula for a pet, they must have a LEOPARD tarantula. "You've got a garter snake? You wimp... I have a boa constrictor!"

[I have an alligator.](#) [I have a zebra.](#) [I have a ----](#) Before you go another inch let's sit down and rule out any desire for an exotic pet you may have just for the bragging rights. Many people consider having exotic pets because it seems to be cool to have one. However, having exotic pets is a serious decision that one must carefully examine. Most of the exotic pets need more care than typical pets. You should weigh all factors according to your abilities and capacities before getting any particular exotic pet.

When you bring home an exotic pet you don't own it, it owns you. It will be up to you to furnish your pet with safe shelter, good food, and tender loving care, tender loving care even when it gets angry, tired and irritable.

Pets are normal parts of people's lives. Any more it isn't at all unusual for a family to have a dog, a cat, a bird, a fish, or even a frog at home. However, some people crave more exciting companions at home, and thus, there are people who choose to have an exotic pet instead. While having an exotic pet can be quite rewarding, the process of choosing the best exotic pet for you can be very confusing.

When choosing an exotic pet, it is important to know the reasons for owning one and the responsibilities needed for keeping one. It is wise not to be swayed by impulse. One should have a good knowledge of a particular kind of pet before buying, else, the purchase or adoption could end in disastrous results. You should know what your motivation is to choose an exotic pet, because it involves a continuous commitment.

The best exotic pet for you is one that is legal. You would not be able to keep it, in a long term, if it is illegal in your area. You might get away for the time being, but eventually, you could get caught and face the dreaded consequences.

You should also consider an exotic pet's adult size. A critter may be cute by the time you bring it home, but you might not be aware that it would grow into a giant in a few years' time. Be sure that you have enough space for your exotic pet to live in by the time it reaches its full growth.

It is important to know the sociability of a particular exotic pet and to match it to your preference to find the best one to keep. You should know whether you want a pet that needs much of your attention or one that would best live if left alone in its dwelling.

You must also have in mind the expenses needed in maintaining the exotic pet. A good pet would not be your pet for long if you don't have enough money to feed it and take care of it. This could even be truer with exotic pets who might need special care and attention.

The best exotic pet for you is one that you can keep, and for this to happen, you should know as much as you can, what you need in order to make this happen.

Acquiring and maintaining exotic pets are not really that difficult nowadays, but if you are considering to get an exotic pet, you must first ask yourself the following questions:

Is it legal to keep this exotic pet?

You see, some animals are prohibited by law to be kept as pets. You should make sure that your area allows people to own the particular species you are eyeing before getting it. Otherwise you might have to give up your pet or be penalized for owning it.

As mentioned, most exotic pets need extra care and attention. You must be sure that you have the time, effort and money to spend caring for the exotic pet. Can you KEEP PROVIDING food for it? If your exotic pet has a large appetite and you can't keep your checking account balanced then there may easily come a time when you must choose between feeding your pet and feeding yourself.

Can you provide appropriate shelter? Can you afford the health care expenses? Owning pets, especially exotic ones, takes great responsibility, and you must be certain that you have this quality before owning one.

Can the pet live in your region? Will it be too hot? Too cold? Too wet? Too dry? Too crowded?

Pets usually require a certain amount of refuge, space, air, and sunlight to live well and you have to be sure that your home can provide that. Certain pets may be legal in your area, but they may not necessarily be able to live in your home. Some pets might be too noisy or too rowdy to live in apartments and condominiums.

The next question you must face head on is this: Is the pet **SAFE** for you and your companions?

Pets have different levels of aggression and you must be sure that you and the people you live with can cope with the behavioral tendencies of the pet. Some exotic pets might also be poisonous or are prone to certain infectious diseases, and thus you have to make sure that you and your companions can avoid any untoward incidents.

Having exotic pets is a serious matter and one you should examine thoroughly before deciding to own one.

Going to an auction to examine, and perhaps buy an exotic pet could be a very wise move for you. One thing's for sure, you are going to see lots of wonderful species there. Here are the things that you should know about an exotic animal or exotic bird auction.

1. Most auctions are a one-day event. Some could extend the event to two or three days. There is also a specified date as to when and where they are accepting consignments. Joining an auction isn't limited to being a buyer of exotic animals. You can also join as a seller of such.

2. Some animals aren't accepted in auctions. This includes state regulated animals such as deer and [elks](#), as well as all other types of poisonous animals and certain skunks. So if you are a buyer looking for a rather venomous animal or an animal not allowed in your state, don't go to an exotic animal auction anymore, because you are not going to find what you are looking for there.

3. Cameras and videos usually aren't allowed in an auction place. For security purposes and other related reasons, the auction sponsor reserves the right not to allow any form of camera and other image-taking equipments. So when you begin planning to attend an auction, leave these things at home, because you can't use that inside anyway.

4. Auction sponsors get a sales commission for every item sold. If you intend to join the auction as a seller, you will be informed that your sale is subject to a commission of ranging up to 20%, depending upon the price of the animal you are selling. So you must adjust your prices accordingly.

5. Auction sponsors could request for a registration fee for sellers. To ensure that the animal will arrive on the date of the auction, sponsors will ask for a registration fee, either refundable or non-refundable according to the agreement. Ask exactly how much they are going to charge per pet.

6. Admission fees can be collected from buyers. If you are coming as a buyer, a minimal amount could be asked of you as entrance fee. Usually for a 2-day event, the price is within the range of \$8 to \$15. A single day event will usually be less than \$10 but I have seen some going as high as \$25.

If there is one, and you do want to get an exotic pet, join it. Your next best friend could be there!

There are many things to consider in owning a pet. The household must have the physical structures needed to support the movement and 'lifestyle' of the pet. For example, there must be enough room for the big pet.

There are also specific exotic pets that may be restricted or regulated by the local and federal laws like monkeys and tigers. Make sure no law will be violated by bringing home the exotic creature or you could end up behind bars yourself, and losing your investment too.

Consent of everyone in the household must be acquired first. If you sneak an exotic pet into the house and there is bound to be BIG TROUBLE in the future. One time I brought a baby sidewinder into the house without letting my parents know. Mama raised the roof when she found out. By discussing your desire for an exotic pet BEFORE you make the purchase can save a lot of heartache. This can avoid any problems or fights in the family and help maintain a better harmonious existence. Support or help in the household may also come in handy in caring for the pet.

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## 1. Research First

Before bringing home the exotic pet, be sure that the type will suit the needs and demands of people in the household. Look for any peculiar behaviors that may irritate the household.

Will your pet even fit in the house? Should it stay indoors or outside? What are its toilet habits? Does it ever get noisy? Does it need a mate or can it live alone?

## 2. Consult the Veterinarian

Exotic pets behave differently than household pets. They may have needs that are beyond what the house can provide and only a veterinarian would be aware of. Another thing, make sure there IS a veterinarian nearby who will treat your kind of pet.

Not all veterinarians will accommodate a wild pet. You will need access to a willing one that you can turn to when things get a bit complicated.

## 3. Get a Professional Trainer

There are behaviors in exotic pets that can be trained.

Get a professional trainer that can teach this to them to make life with the pet easier and if possible, more fun.

## 4. Know the Limitations

Owners must know the limitations in the behavior of exotic pets. There are those that can be played with but be alert always of the limitations.

Know in advance the way your exotic pet is likely to behave. This will help in dealing with them and enjoying them.

If you are really serious on taking good care of your exotic pet, you will need to [have it insured](#)! Yes, even exotic pets have medical needs and like people, they can be high maintenance, depending on type. Given from the very start that you own an exotic pet indicates that its maintenance is equally exotic, and it's something you must also prepare for as you turn into a good exotic pet owner.

While it is true that only one or two percent of pet owners feel the need to invest in pet insurance, as an exotic pet owner, it is an unwritten, mandatory thing to have proper pet insurance. These exotic pets need as much care as you could possibly give. And unless you are earning pools of money daily, you won't be particularly enamored to find that your veterinary bills may be bigger than your own medical bills.

For starters, there are a host of available pet insurance plans for ordinary pets. But if you happen to own something more exotic, you would also find that insurance plans for your creature would be hard to come by. But there are available plans, albeit a bit more expensive than others, given that the nature of your pet isn't generally accepted as pet material. You must have considered this before you buy that exotic pet which caught your attention.

Just like any insurance policy, read the fine print carefully. Check the scope of the insurance plan before you sign anything. Make sure that you are aware of what rights you are entitled to with that particular insurance policy. These policies can get quite tricky, so make sure that you have gotten exactly what you wanted for your pets health insurance. You wouldn't want to realize a small but vital detail you overlooked after you have already dutifully paid and invested in the policy.

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Exotic doesn't have to mean overpriced pets! In fact, prices are dropping all the time. Checking out some websites on line which specialize in comparing retail prices of the exotic pet you intend to buy is one good way to start a proper canvassing. Make sure that the said website is a legitimate source.

Actually, you can save more money if you know someone who knows someone who breeds the exotic pet you are after. It seems that everything and everyone you ever need is only four or five hands away if you'll just start asking. So, if you do find a breeder in your network, you are in luck! That person will also help you in long-term maintenance of the exotic pet — something not all stores can guarantee for your pet's lifetime!

If you do end up paying retail prices, remember that you have to add in and check everything, including transportation allowance. You might find a cheaper ferret in a place that is geographically farther away than one found in your area. But when you add in transporting the said exotic pet when you buy it from there might even be more expensive than if you purchase the pet from within your area at a slightly higher buying price.

Make sure you have visited at least five stores selling the specific exotic pet you intend to buy before you decide to buy from any one of them. Having less than five and then making your decision from there doesn't constitute good canvassing. Make sure you have exhausted all possible means to compare prices. This is tedious work, but it will really save you more money in the long run.

Also, as you canvass, make the initial research on what are the indicators of good health of your exotic pet of choice, and seek to check them along with the retail prices.

For example, one store would be selling you the pet at a higher price, but you would see that the pets there are in much better shape than in the other store which sells them at a lower price. From here you can take cues that the pet is already well-fed and is less likely to be aggressive and dangerous.

Another thing to consider is the legality of the said exotic pet in your area. If it is illegal, you might be coughing up more bills just to keep the care for the animal in wraps. There are some states which don't allow certain species of exotic pets, and with good reason. You can never underestimate the ability of these exotic pets to incite more danger to the people within the area.

Make sure to visit pet shops that are reputable and have valid licenses when scouting for your exotic pet. Also do some research on the exotic pet and ask the right questions from the seller like how old the animal is, how safe to keep the exotic pet, its habitat, eating habits and the potential dangers it may pose to your household or the neighborhood.

Before buying the exotic pet, check out the condition of their homes in the pet shop. There are pet shops that take safety and the health of exotic pets in general and this may have a negative result on the exotic pet you are planning to buy. Also ask the pet store if there are vaccines available for the type of exotic pet you want and if such pet has already been given such vaccines if they are applicable.

The popularity of exotic pets has encouraged pet shop owners to come up with their own collection of exotic pets. There are even several pet shops that sell [exotic pets online](#).



Veterinarians can be relied on to take care of common pets but how does one choose a veterinarian for his exotic pet? There are many veterinarians but only a few who are considered experts in taking care of exotic pets. Maybe because taking care of common pets like dogs and cats is much more productive as most people have them for pets rather than exotic pets.

Among the exotic pets that are commonly given to children as gifts are guinea pigs, rats, hamsters, gerbils, mice, Madagascar hissing cockroaches and leopard geckos. Most of these exotic pets are quite easy to handle and require uncomplicated care. They are also generally safe to handle although children should also be advised to exercise caution in handling these exotic pets and to seek the assistance of a veterinarian when necessary.

There may be several veterinarians in the area but those specializing in exotic pets can rarely be found. To be sure that you have adequate protection for an exotic pet, it is best to seek a veterinarian specializing in exotic pet care first before buying the exotic pet. It is important to develop a good relationship with the family veterinarian especially those with exotic pets. It is hard to find veterinarians with expertise on exotic pets so once you do find the right one, it is wise to keep him.

Some adventurous exotic pet homeowners have reptiles such as snaggle toothed crocodiles and bumper nosed snakes. Other exotic animals include ferrets and domestic rats. Because of the growing number of these 'rare and unusual' creatures as animals, the word 'exotic' is relevant only to the owner. Consequently, a number of pet stores and animal service providers like veterinary clinics, insurance carriers and online stores, classified animals aside from cats, dogs, fish and birds, as "exotic."

Proper housing may be difficult to attain because it might be expensive. The correct environment to put the creature in is also dependent on the specific temperature and the amount of sunlight the creature would get.

When you think creatures, alligators, wolves, tigers, lions, snakes, spiders, scorpions, rare birds such as eagles and ostrich, sometimes even monkeys come to mind. But the point of it all is that they're still animals. They too can be cuddling and beautiful creatures if you could only tame them. That's what these unorthodox pet owners are doing.

By reaching out to those wild creatures, the right pet owner can actually tame them – bringing out the cuddling little critter in them.

While it's fabulous to be able to show off your exotic pet, the cost of maintaining one is quite considerable. One of the more expensive things you have to note is simulating the proper environment for your exotic pet, aside from insurance, food costs and veterinary maintenance checks.

A rule of thumb of simulating the proper environment is to put it in a place where it will feel most at home, or close to home. This is very challenging, especially since the said exotic pet was never originally designed for domestication. And another thing is that you won't find your neighbor having the same exotic pet to run to just in case you encounter problems with it. This is also another good reminder you must not forget: you may be the only one within your home who can actually care for and maintain that exotic pet, since some people might be iffy to the idea of feeding your pet ferret while you are away. You have to give a considerable amount of availability for your pet. Make sure that the pet cage is positioned in a place where you can frequently monitor it.

Some elements of proper environment for your exotic pet include ventilation or lighting, available resources for your pet to "play" in (depending on what constitutes safe play as far as your selected exotic pet is concerned), easy accessibility to food and the like. Constant communication with breeders will further help expand your knowledge on how to properly care for your exotic pet. In case anything happens, post a list of contact numbers near your exotic pet's area for easy access.

But proper and meticulously done research on your exotic pet prior to building the environment already takes care of pretty much everything.

For other people's safety, you might want to put your exotic pet in a slightly isolated area, far from children who may be better off not mingling with them. Keep the exotic pet distant but still viewable. Some exotic pets don't exactly welcome the idea of being fawned over by strangers. It might even take more time and considerable training for it to warm up to you, much more with other people. Keeping it out of your sight too much may allow it to escape and wreak havoc on somebody else's home.

I remember one time Jerry Leggit's wife came storming out to where we were. "Jerry, Jerry. You come home and get that new snake out of the bathtub. It can escape from there and there is no telling where it will get to."

Jerry mumbled some but he followed Sheilah home and came back. "I hid that snake where she'll never find it," he bragged.

"Where's that?" we asked.

"In the headboard of the bed!"

They are still married, but it was touch and go there for a long time.

Make sure that you have the environment completely under control. Set boundaries with alarm systems that will alert you if your pet is going where it's not supposed to go.



If you are looking for an exotic pet like an iguana, you should look for reputable pet shops or exotic pet breeders. Iguanas are perfect exotic pets for teens. They are cheaper compared to other exotic pets like snakes and exotic breeds of dogs. Here are some recommended tips to consider when buying an exotic pet from pet breeders.

1. You should first decide what type of exotic pet you might want to have. If you decide to buy an iguana, make sure that you have already prepared a cage where the iguana can live conveniently.
2. Ask the exotic pet breeder about the iguana's adaptation to any kind of environment. Exotic animals may have different living conditions depending on the environment where they live.
3. You should consider if the members of your household can live with an exotic pet like the iguana. They too should know how to care for the pet.
4. Make sure that you purchase an exotic animal from a reputable pet breeder. You may research on the Internet for a selection of pet shops and pet breeders that offer cheaper prices of iguanas.
5. To check on the breed of the iguana, you should look at its skin if it has open pores, this means that the breed of the iguana is very good. You may also check if the iguana has bright and clear eyes.
6. Pet breeders should provide you tips and guidelines on how to take proper care of an iguana. Ask the pet owner what food the iguana eats. You may also ask how many times you should feed the animal in a day.
7. You should buy a cage that is fit for iguanas. The cage should have proper lighting and should have a good cover. Make sure that your iguana is safe from cats or dogs.

8. Ask for legal papers that will prove that you have bought the iguana from a legal pet breeder. There are pet breeders who illegally sell exotic animals they may have gotten from restricted forests.

Adopting exotic pets isn't as easy as taking home a puppy or a kitten. Exotic pets tend to have different needs both physically and legally. If you're looking to adopt an exotic pet in your home, then here are some tips to help you avoid the snags most owners run into.

1. Legal. Some pets are illegal to keep in some states. Monkeys, tigers, certain birds, and others may be outlawed in certain areas. And, while some of these animals may be allowed in a household, they could be under strict provisions.

It would be best if you consulted with your local government to find out whether the animal you're trying to adopt is legally allowed in your state. If so, find out about all the paperwork you will need for the pet, and find out about the provisions regarding its care.

Make sure you follow all the paperwork to a tee. This way you can prevent unnecessary run-ins with the local government -not to mention the ire of your neighborhood.

2. Physical needs of your animals. Exotic animals have exotic needs. You will need to keep this in mind when you adopt an animal. Study the background of the pet you're trying to adopt before consummating the adoption. Dogs, cats and other household pets are all acclimated to urban living. Unfortunately, this isn't the case for most exotic animals.

You'll at least have to give them an alternative to their natural habitat. This could cost a lot of money make sure you are willing to commit to this amount of effort and money. Also, you have to consider their diet - alligators, tigers, and other natural predators are hard to keep in captivity.

You will have to make sure they get their dietary needs, and their space needs before considering adopting them.

3. The place of purchase. If you browse the Internet you'll be surprised at the number of online pet shops now available. You will want to do a background check on fees shops before purchasing from them. This is because it would be best to adopt your exotic pet from reputable sources.

4. Health. You'll also want subject your exotic pet to a physical exam to find out whether it is in good shape. Adopting a sick animal may exacerbate its condition. You really don't want to cause these animals more harm than needed. Also, make sure that these animals don't possess any life-threatening and communicable disease. Exotic animals can be carriers of different viruses, and bacteria. So make sure the veterinarian gives it a good bill of health.

State and federal laws can provide restrictions and regulations of animals that aren't common house pets. For example, ownership of a farm animal -- like the pig -- in an urban area has certain stringent requirements. The house must be big enough to keep it within an enclosure. My Dad could keep three pigs inside a small chicken wire fence with the posts falling down. I had 2 inch by 10 inch stout oak boards buried around a huge pen so they couldn't dig under and two more boards in a fence above that, and they still got out. Once out they would eat everything except pig feed, then they would go lay down in the middle of the highway, some half a mile away. The moral is, build strong and stout, then go out of sight and watch them from a hidden position so you can try to determine where the pets escape.

There are some animals that can't be owned because they are banned by state laws. For example, some states don't allow the ownership of snakes or monkeys. There are also Federal laws that ban the importation of some animals.

For the owner of an exotic pet, it is advised that s/he checks with the local government first. This could be the city, the town or the county. Your best bet is probably to ask your local humane society or the closest animal shelter.

Obtaining exotic pets originating from relatively hot countries could be hazardous, unless you really want to go to great lengths in simulating their natural habitat for them. If the creature is legally obtained, it would only result to the extinction of the animal. What's considered exotic is most of the time endangered. Check out the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora for more information.

Exotic creatures such as crocodiles and large cats are considered potentially harmful when not handled with care.

Generally, these exotic animals need special care (nutrition and living space.) These aren't easily acquired by the owner and the consultation with a veterinarian is required.

According to one survey, the two most common places that children love to visit in a mall are the toy store and the pet store. This is because the products in these establishments always catch their attention, which usually ends up with the parents going in and buying something.



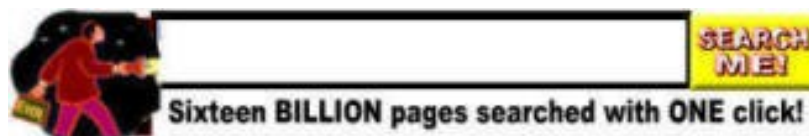
If you want these pets to arrive as a surprise, remember that there are some retailers who sell [exotic animals online](#). These online stores are based all over the United States. Once a selection has been made, it will be shipped via airfreight. Some of the animals carried are Wallabies, Hedgehogs, Snakes, Spiders, Amphibians, Birds and Sugar Gliders.

Most online retailers have other products available aside from pets. These include food, the cage, accessories and books to give more information about taking care of the creature.

The price of each animal will differ depending on the species and the gender. Additional costs will turn up in terms of shipping, handling and local state taxes. This makes it good for those who order more than one or in bulk to sell to others since these charges remain the same.

What if there are problems with the animal? Most retailers give the customer a few days for the pet to be examined by a vet. If there is any dissatisfaction, the amount paid will be refunded after paying off the cost to return it to the sender.

Most of the shipped animals come in good packaging with some food to last a few days. You can buy these from the local pet store or also order them online.



Just typing in a keyword, such as online exotic animals store, in the search engine will direct you to a long list of sites. Most have cuddly pictures of the creatures, which can be ordered, or reserved should these be currently out of stock.

Buying exotic animals online is no different than ordering a book or piece of artwork. This is because these transactions are regulated which makes this perfectly legitimate. File for the permit as quickly as necessary. After making sure that you have all the papers and the requirements met and ready, you are now ready to make a trip to your local government office to file and secure the permit with them.

Laws not only apply to human beings, there are also laws binding to animals. We have the animal welfare law as represented by [PAWS](#) and [PETA](#). There are restrictions in exotic pet laws because the animal must be protected even more when they are separated from their natural habitat. Also, there is a possibility that the owner who adopts the exotic creature may not be able to provide the right home, diet and care to the owner.

Another reason is that since these animals can be sold to the state's zoo – capturing and smuggling of exotic creatures are rampant in an area where there is an exotic creature. It's also better to think of your neighbors. There's no knowing what could happen if you have a wild animal in your backyard. What if it escapes? If it does, it could create great alarm to the public.

- The most frequently kept wild creature in the US is the tiger. About 10% of 5,000 to 7,000 tigers are kept in tiger sanctuaries and zoos. Some of them live in traveling shows with the troupe, circuses and big cat rescues for entertainment. Some people even tame them and make them their pets so they stay in their owners' backyard.

Wild animal trade is worth billions of dollars. Officials believe that one fourth of wild animal trade is illegal. It's disturbing to find out that the second moneymaker on the black market, a close second after trading drugs and weapons, is the illegal trade of exotic animals.

You should find the right materials before buying the pet when making a cage for your exotic pet. You may also find ready-made cages that have installed housing systems. If you prefer buying a snake as your pet, you should prepare a cage that can suit the size and shape of your snake. The size of the cage may depend on the age of the snake. You should also consider the environmental living conditions of the snake.

You could also use an aquarium tank as your extra cage for snakes that are less than six to seven feet in length especially if they would appreciate swim breaks. For desert snakes, you may prepare a screen top cage to provide ventilation. Tropical snakes may need a cage that has a top raise cover screen to sustain their preferred average temperature.

Make sure that your cage has glass-based screens so that you can view your pet clearly. You won't have a hard time in cleaning glass aquariums. However, they are heavy since they are solid and should be placed on a steel stand. You may put solid round casters so that you can move it easily.

You may also find melamine cages that are easier to clean. They are perfect for bigger snakes since they are usually made with large space. It is designed to resist moisture. You can also find plastic-made rubber tubs that are used as breeding cages. This will also serve as your secondary cage in case you need to clean or repair your primary cage. If you can't afford these kinds of cages, you may have the option of using plywood made cages that are cheaper and easier to find. You can create your own design using good grades of plywood, which can give you a nice finish to your snake cage.

For those snake owners who make their own cages, they always prefer using plywood and melamine crafts since they provide the cage with good insulating properties. Cages made from glass may have the tendency to lose heat fast especially on its front portion. You may also find a hard time working on glass cages since you will need special tools for cutting edges and portions of the glass.

Always keep in mind that your cage should provide security for your snake as well as to smaller kids. Make sure that you find the right place in your house where you will place the cage. Your cage should provide the same environmental conditions that your exotic pet needs in order to survive.



Having a pet is just like having a baby. Pet owners take much time and effort in giving names to their pets much like they would do with their own children. Getting the right name for an exotic pet would give more distinction and personality to the pet. Like most people, your exotic pet will be known for its name for as long as its life span, so be careful when giving your exotic pet a name.

Choosing a proper name for an exotic pet can be quite hard but every exotic pet owner can do that with proper research and a little creativity. Make sure the name you choose for your exotic pet is appropriate and can easily be recognized by the pet. The purpose for naming the pet is to have something to call him by which will make him respond so don't give the exotic pet difficult names.

Giving short and easy to recall names can be an important factor in making the exotic pet conscious and responsive to the owner's training and commands.

Names with one syllable are ideal because they are easily recognized by pets. Remember that you are naming an exotic pet and not a person. Even people will have a problem when they are given difficult sounding names so keep the name of your exotic pet as simple as possible.

Choosing one-syllable names that sounds the same with training commands like sit, talk and come will make the exotic pet easier to train. Also avoid giving your exotic pet a name that can cause embarrassment to both of you and even your neighbors.

Today, it is common and acceptable to name pets after humans. Words of caution though; never give identical names to your child and your pet or else, both of them may come at the same time when you call them. Worse, this may cause embarrassment to your child.

Pet experts believe that a pet that is given a wrong and inappropriate name can lead to difficulties in training and behavioral patterns. The pet will also have a difficult time recognizing his own name and won't be as responsive to the owner had he been given a proper name.

Rodents make good pets. Not only are they small and easy to manage, they are also fun to watch and are typically hassle-free. Two of my friends have a pet rat each and they dress them up like people, even give them toys to play with. While some people associate rodents with dark, dirty, and scary sewer rats, you'll find that there are lots of cute and furry rodents that would make perfect companions for people of all ages.



One good thing about rodents is that they are pretty small. This means that you don't need too much to keep them in your home. Also they are low maintenance. You can put them in their cage, play with them a bit, and leave them some food and they will typically take care of themselves. Here is a list of the most common rodent pets.

1. Hamsters-hamsters are not very long-lived rodents. They do, however, live an average of two to three years. You will need large enough cages for hamsters since they are very active. They can also be kept single, without the need for cage mates. They're pretty agreeable especially if you handle them from the time they are very young. They can become grumpy and defensive however, especially if you wake them during the day (they are nocturnal animals).

2. Gerbils - gerbils also live up to three years. They have a furry tail that makes up about half its size. They are also very social rodents so it would be great if you purchase them in pairs. You may want to buy same-sex gerbils however, as they could rapidly procreate if left alone. They have very agreeable temperaments, but you have to refrain from holding them by the tail.

3. Mice-mice are short-lived rodents. They only live for about one to three years. They are also very fun to watch, but due to their skittish nature, they may be very hard to handle out of the cage. They don't typically need too much room to live in. However, being social creatures, you'll have to buy them in pairs-just remember to keep them of the same-sex so they don't procreate uncontrollably.

4. Guinea pigs- guinea pigs are the longest lived of the here mentioned rodents. You could keep a guinea pig for about five years. They are also very gentle in nature, and aren't averse to handling. The truth is they won't bite even when agitated. They are pretty big, so you will need to give them enough cage space. They are social creatures, so you'll need to keep them in pairs. You also have to supply them with an adequate supply of vegetables and vitamin C.

One pet that pops up frequently for children is [the rabbit, and hares](#) are even better for some kids. Rabbits (and hares) are cuddlier and safer when compared to other exotic pets like reptiles and the likes. Can you imagine your child holding up a boa constrictor by the neck and thinking it's a pet? But rabbits, well they look like so much like stuffed toys they don't even seem like exotic pets at all!

[Click HERE for a free jokebook](#) about the Easter Bunny.

Rabbits have become a common sight nowadays because there are people who breed rabbits for business purposes. Some breed rabbits for their meat while some breed rabbits for pets. Giving a rabbit to a child would surely be appreciated without the giver worrying about safety and other issues.



Rabbits are fairly easy to take care of except of course when you have to give them warmth when temperatures go down. You also have to keep your phone lines and electrical cords out of their way as they LOVE to eat them. After they are tame you can take rabbits for walks with you, and play with them on the front lawn. Some rabbits make great pets, and some individuals never do tame down.

We had one named Timmy Tammy Tumper that was just the sweetest thing we ever knew. Then the next one resented any intrusion into his space. Generally speaking, hares are harder to tame than are the rabbits – and they go back wild faster too if not played with enough.

While rabbits are simple exotic pets, they also need more tender loving care than do cats or dogs, so make sure to educate the child on how to take care of the rabbit. Make sure they know that strange dogs AND cats think that rabbits are game to be chased, and eaten.

You'll also want to ask the pet store about vaccines that may be given to the rabbit to make sure it is safe and healthy.



When people think of the fox, the first thing that comes to mind is the animal where men armed with guns and accompanied by dogs go on a hunt. This event, which is quite popular in many parts of Europe and in the United States, still happens today.

The fox is closely related to dogs, wolves and jackals. The pointed nose, bushy tail and at times long ears make this distinction. This animal travels alone and is very wary of humans. Given these facts, can such a creature be brought home and cared for as an exotic pet?

It is possible. In fact, the kit fox is easier to tame than the coyote pup even though their claws are much sharper. The Russians were able to domesticate the Silver Fox after 45 years of hard work. Another example is the Fennec Fox, which is commonly found in North Africa.

Both species are known to be very social and require a lot of attention. To make sure the pet doesn't destroy the household or the surrounding areas, the fox can be tied up or secured in a kennel.

Because these animals need a lot of exercise it is better to have a RUN established for them. The owner can walk it around the neighborhood on a leash but make sure it doesn't get loose because the creature can run quite fast and will take some time to catch.

Foxes need to be toilet trained. This can be done by providing a litter box and giving a reward after seeing the pet perform in the assigned spot. Scolding or punishing the animal won't work since this just makes the pet wilder.

The fox is prone to the same diseases and problems that dogs encounter. Bringing your properly muzzled fox to the vet for a regular checkup and vaccinations can prevent this from happening. The diet of this creature can be vegetables or meat and a mixture of both.

The average life span of a fox in the wild is from two to three years. Being cared for in captivity, this can go from ten to twelve years. If the owner decides to breed the fox, adequate shelter and ground to burrow in for the new born pups must be provided since this is where it will happen.

The professional way to do this is to first dig a substantial hole and line it with thick, heavy construction mesh that the pets can not penetrate. Build the pen up straight from that, and fill in the hole with a cage on top of it. Rabbits breed better like this, too.

You shouldn't disturb the fox during this time and just wait till the pups come out because the threat from outsiders has prompted some mothers to kill their young. Studies have shown pups taken away from the mother after whelping are friendlier so this should be monitored.

For most people foxes are wild animals that are best left alone in their natural habitats. However there are some people who have discovered the joys of keeping a fox as a pet. It may be surprising to some, but caring for a fox as an exotic pet may not be as difficult as it seems.

Foxes can be like dogs. They require attention and a lot of socialization. They are quite energetic, active, and curious. These intelligent creatures are also cunning, and flexible. They can easily escape, and thus it is important to see that they are secure wherever they maybe to avoid losing them.

Foxes have characteristic odors caused by oil and sweat glands. To prevent them from smelling, it is important to keep them cool and well ventilated so that they won't secrete oils excessively. Occasional bathing may also be advisable but too much bathing can cause dryness that exacerbates the secretion of odor-causing oils.

Foxes can be very much treated like dogs; however they should be put in secure cages when they are not being watched since they have this natural inclination to escape. A dog crate is sufficient to secure them indoors, escape-proof pens may be used outdoors. When walking foxes, it is important to leash them securely enough so they can't escape.

Foxes are omnivorous animals, they can eat almost anything. Thus it is important for them to have a balanced diet. There are commercial dry foods available on the market, specifically made for wild animals. These make great bases for their diet. Foxes may also be fed with premium cat or dog food. To make the fox's diet varied, fruits, vegetables, eggs, mice, mealworms, and crickets may be added.

Many fox species can be trained to use the litter box. It is advisable to use a covered box because foxes dig in the wild when they excrete. Potty training is pretty much like that with dogs. Give rewards and praise for each time they use the litter box, but punishments should be avoided when they defecate elsewhere. When the fox is on the verge of defecating or urinating, it should simply be moved to the litter box.

It is important to bring the fox to the vet regularly. Their health care is pretty much similar to dogs, and thus can be quite easy to manage.

Ferrets can make an Exotic Pet too. Ferrets have been around us for centuries and are related to badgers, otters and weasels. People first used this creature to flush out rodents. Known to be friendlier and more playful than cats, it is no wonder that many consider this to be an ideal pet.

1. Ferrets are usually active in the early morning or late afternoon. The owner must make sure that there is time for the animal to exercise its muscles outside its cage because being locked up may cause stress and make it sick.

2. Ferrets are carnivores and buying some mice or rats at the pet store can satisfy this craving. If this is too expensive, you can settle for the same food given to a cat.

3. When ferrets are brought home from the pet shop, many have experienced that the animal hasn't yet been toilet trained. There are two ways to solve this. The first will be putting some cat litter in a box. The other will be bringing the creature to the designated spot whenever there is an urge.

4. Ferrets are prone to diseases and pests commonly found in dogs and cats such as viruses and mites. Regular checkups with the veterinarian will ensure the health and safety of the pet.

5. Ferrets love the outdoors especially in the garden. Those who love to work with plants will love to have this creature as a companion but should be careful since some may wander off and never be seen again.

6. Ferrets are cute and long furred creatures. The proper way to hold them will be to get the animal from behind with one hand holding the chest while the other is on the hips.

Ferrets may not be a common animal choice for pets, but these critters have been domesticated by humans since way back in 4 BC. Many people still find ferrets nice to have and as easy to keep, if not easier, as other typical pets like dogs and cats. Here are some basic tips about caring for ferrets.

Ferrets prefer living in spaces that resemble dens in the wild. A wired cage that is about 30 inches wide, 18 inches deep, and 18 inches long may suffice. Many ferrets like living in cages that have things to climb such as ramps and stairs. The cage should allow good ventilation, thus it is not wise to use aquariums. The floor may be covered by linoleum tiles and carpets or other soft washable materials to make the flooring more comfortable for ferrets to walk on than wire floors. The cage should be kept within 55 to 70 degrees. It should also be cleaned regularly with hot soapy water.

Ferrets are carnivores that require at least 22% fat and 34% protein from animal sources. It isn't recommended to feed them dog or cat food. Chicken and turkey are ideal. Ferrets should never be fed vegetables because they are difficult to digest. Fruits are also not an option because sugars may increase tendencies for insulinoma. Egg whites should also be avoided because they can cause hemolytic anemia.

A small 3 to 5 inches-high cardboard box may be used as a litter box for ferrets. Litter pans should be secured to a side of the cage, far from the ferret's eating and sleeping areas.

Litter products made of plant or paper fibers are recommended to prevent clumping of fecal matter.

Ferrets tend to produce undesirable odors. To prevent them from smelling too strongly, they can be bathed, using a special ferret shampoo, kitten shampoo, or diluted baby shampoo. It isn't advisable to bathe ferrets daily, because it will dry their skin, causing an overcompensation of oil secretion, making the ferret smell even more. It is also important to check the ferret's ears for mites regularly. Mites can drive them crazy. Ears should be cleaned using cotton soaked in a special cleanser that can be bought from a pet store.

Ferrets are very energetic animals. It is recommended to keep them entertained with toys that aren't easy to break in order to maintain the animal's safety. Ferrets can be nice pets when one knows the right ways of caring for them. Having them can be a fun and exciting experience.

Sugar gliders make great pets, they are also very social. One of the normally colored (gray with black stripe) baby gliders sell for **\$175**; colored sugar gliders [are more expensive](#).

Sugar gliders are so much happier when they have glider companions and it's really the best way to keep them ... so if you get more than one glider, the price for each additional glider is only **\$150**. Sugar gliders are known to bond very well with their owners, and you will very often find the sugar gliders comfortably squeezed in an owners pocket or bonding pouch.

But what are these sugar glitters anyway, and why do they make great pets. Here are a few facts on the sugar glider that should turn the few heads towards their way. First off, Sugar gliders are marsupials. When they are born, they stay in the pouch of their mothers since they are still very immature and unready to go out on their own. They have pantagium, or a membrane that stretches from their ankles up to their wrists.

This acts as their gliders, helping them swoop from tree branch to tree branch. These patagium, are furry and flexible, allowing the sugar glider movement like normal marsupials. Also Sugar gliders have opposing thumbs which they use to grab on to trunks and branches. Their other fingers are used for grooming.

Sugar gliders were originally found in Australia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. In all, they measure 12 inches from head to tail. Their bodies measures 6 inches, while their tails measure another 6 inches. They only weigh about 5 ounces, or 150 g. In captivity, they can live from 10 years to 15 years depending on how well they are cared for.

Sugar gliders are nocturnal, so you'll find them sleeping throughout the day. If you carry them along with you often, they will feel snug and comfortable in your pocket. They are very social animals, so you always have to give them constant attention, and groom them often. If you aren't able to take care of them constantly, you may want to consider bringing in another sugar glider to keep them company. However, it is hard to introduce adult sugar gliders, so it is better if you purchase them in pairs when they are young.

You can, however, keep them single just as long as you give them constant attention. Make sure that if you do purchase them in pairs, you keep them of the same-sex or they could procreate and do so uncontrollably. You could also give them partners that are of different sexes, just as long as they are both neutered.

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Monkeys are such a treat that people go ape over having one of their own for a pet. Exotic animals, like monkeys, may indeed be attractive as pets but such is certainly in violation of the poor animals' natural living condition. As early as days or even hours after they are born, they are already being separated from their mothers, which is both unusual and unhealthy. The monkeys are deprived of the opportunity to develop the way they are predisposed. This further adds up to the many factors that you have to take into consideration when taking care of them.

Separated from its mother, an exotic pet monkey may manifest signs of depression and other symptoms of psychological maladjustment. Thus, it may not immediately appreciate the traditional methods of caring for pets and may long for what it was supposed to have experienced in its natural living environment.

As an exotic pet owner, then, you must create an atmosphere that closely depicts such conditions. You must aim to respond to both physical and psychological needs. The only way to be aware of these needs is to gather information and observe at the very start, taking note of typical behaviors and responses.

Its living area must be secure and spacious. In general, the area must be representative enough of nature. It would even be better if you can provide a companion of the same specie. Modern habitats such as those commonly sold in pet shops are obviously inappropriate especially during younger years. An unsuitable cage may worsen your pet's psychological distress and cause further behavior problems.

An exotic pet monkey, likewise, has specialized needs for food and nutrients. Diet may depend on the breed but should generally include protein-rich foods. Flowers, fruits, vegetables, insects, bugs, grasshoppers, and nuts are some other possible treats.

Unlike domestic cats and dogs, an exotic pet monkey has a greater tendency of being a carrier of diseases that may be passed on to humans. As such, ensure that it is regularly seen by a veterinarian specializing in exotic animals and is given the necessary vaccines. However, such services may be difficult to find and may be expensive as very few actually focus on it. Just the same, though, it is still a major requirement as it protects both your pet and yourself.

Caring for an exotic animal indeed involves commitment. Keep in mind that the lifespan of these types of animals can be much longer than that of the usual pets. Thus, before embarking on this responsibility, make sure that you are ready to face and respond to their needs and are capable of sustaining such devoted attitude. Otherwise, it would be best to leave them to nature's care.



Before getting a cougar as your pet, you need to consider many factors. First, taking care of a cougar is expensive. It will cost you thousands of dollars to support their needs. You will also need to pay for the papers and ownership rights before you can own a cougar.

Cougars are very active animals. You need a wide space to accommodate the cougar because cougars love to play, jump and run around. You have to prepare your exotic pet a spacious cage that is made of solid steel. Make sure that it is properly secured and then, on top of that, these enclosures should have perimeter fences. Here are care tips you can consider before getting a cougar.

1. Cougars are outdoor animals. Set up a steel cage where they can freely run and do their cat things conveniently. However, if you want to make a special bond with your cougar, it is best to at least begin to raise him indoors. In this way, you can create a closer connection between you and your pet.

2. You have to feed cougars properly. Make sure that it takes 2 to 3 pounds of meat daily. It may sound heavy on the pocket that is why you have to be financially secure if you want to own a cougar. They can consume large amounts of meat to get their stomachs full.
3. Schedule a monthly check up with veterinarians who specialize in cougars. Seek proper health maintenance advice for your cougar.
4. You should always keep your cougar's cage clean. Prepare a secondary cage outdoors if you need to clean the primary cage. An outdoor cage for your cougar can also serve as your cougar's recreational place where you can play with your pet.
5. Your cougar will be a lot stronger than you are and if it ever comes to a contest of will in deciding who is leading whom then you must take it for granted that you will lose, every time. You must use your allegedly bigger brain to prepare in advance for ways to convince the cougar to go the way you desire.

Most importantly of all, if you choose to own a cougar as your pet, make sure that you would ALWAYS be responsible. Take time to care for your pets and treat them like human beings. You will discover that you will not only have an amazing pet but you will also realize that it has improved **your** sense of responsibility.



Tigers are especially cute, alluring and cuddly. Pick them up when they are tiny cubs and you actually become their mothers. They will come to you when they need to be tickled so they can go to the bathroom. They will think the most natural place on earth to sleep is snuggled right up in your armpit. The first thing you'll want to teach them is NOT to bite hard, and not to swat hard when it is YOUR body.

Owning an obedient tiger is such a big feat. When you pull it off you can strut the street and be proud of yourself. **You KNOW** you are masterful because a tiger that is nine times stronger than muscle man, pound per pound, will lie down at your feet and purr for your attention.

Every year it is easier to get a tiger of your own. Oh, tigers aren't available in pet shops yet. [The Internet](#) is a good place to begin your search. Tigers are expensive though so be prepared to shell out some big coins to make your dream come true.

One of my friends could not possibly afford a tiger of his own, but he had a rich acquaintance that (after proper indoctrination – of course) just drooled to have HIS own tiger. My friend graciously consented to helping his rich acquaintance buy and take care of the tiger. There it was.. No investment and LOTS OF FUN.

Federal and local laws restrict or at least regulate the ownership of exotic pets like the tigers. Get to know the laws that are in effect in your area first. Violating the law may be more than just losing your pet to the authorities. It could mean paying fines -- and worse!

If you aren't living alone, be sure you get the consent of the entire family before someone gets the cold shoulder. Even after a tiger is fully settled in the household, there will be a lifetime of proper care to dispense.

## 1. Housing

Get a structure to house the tiger. This should be roomy enough for the feline to move around and play around. Ordinary glass windows are totally inadequate for even a juvenile tiger. One careless swipe with a soft paw and that kind of window is gone! The next thing missing is a pet tiger. A tiger roaming the streets – or countryside -- alone will be considered a dangerous nuisance. Before you know it, your pet will be destroyed and the bill will be sent to you. Included in that package will probably be CRIMINAL CHARGES for endangering

the neighborhood. Even if you have a stout, steel cage to keep your tiger in your windows and your doors must be reinforced, just in case the tiger gets loose from you. If you are able to provide an In-Out cage that leads into your back yard where the cat can run and romp, jump and climb the cage itself must be encased with similarly clad strength so that even if the cat gets out of its cage, it is still caught.

## 2. Diet

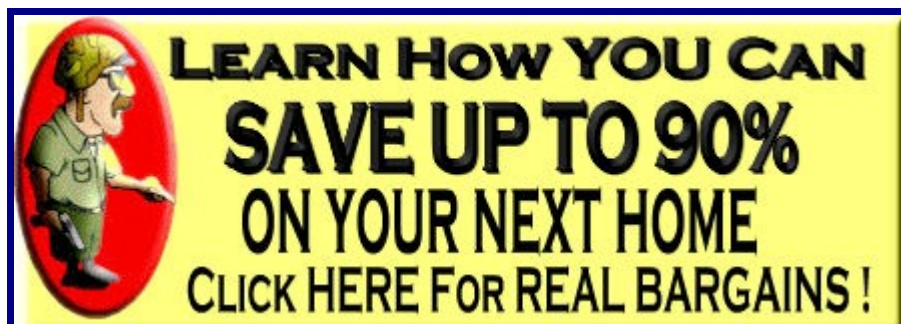
Remember what I said about tigers being heavy and expensive eaters. Keep a good stock of food. If you live in an area prone to tornadoes, hurricane, flood or other natural disasters you need to have a MINIMUM of three days emergency supplies in addition to what you would normally carry, and that MUST include an adequate supply of drinking water. (Which brings up the point that tigers LOVE to swim. You might want to include plans for that in your housing plans.) The food you provide should meet the nutritional requirements of the tiger in its current stage of development.

## 3. Veterinarian

Seek regular veterinary care. This is to ensure that the tiger gets the needed vaccination and other treatments. Make sure there is one available within your vicinity who will be willing and able to attend to the exotic needs of your pet tiger.

## 4. Safety

Make sure the tiger is properly secured in their spot. Put structures that will confine them to avoid unnecessary escapes, for the safety of everyone in the household and neighborhood. NEVER, EVER grow complacent in your relationships with your tiger. S/He may get tired of you at any minute and decide you are not the boss any longer.



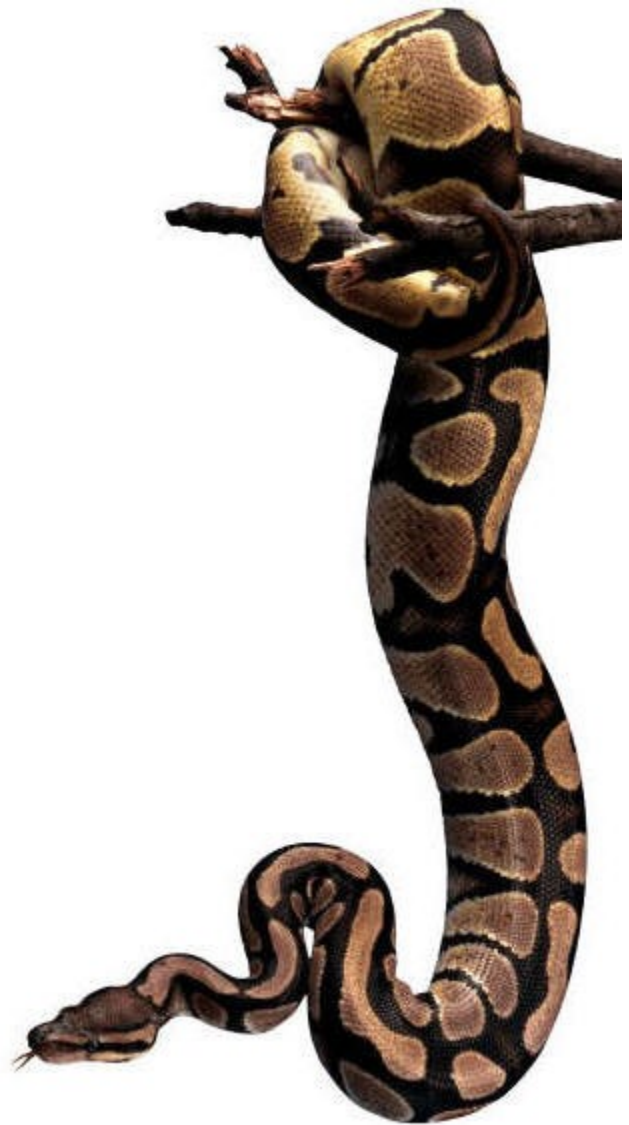
Having an exotic snake as a pet is becoming common nowadays. This is primarily because many people who have been taking care of one assert that snakes are actually tame, contrary to popular belief. Believing that any animal is tame reminds me just how subjective that "tame" assessment is.

One time I went to pick up a "pet" coyote that was – according to the ad – "quite tame." The primary care owner was a beautiful (blonde) teen ager. She showed me how to get a collar around her pet's neck.

"You just put your boot out for him to bite on, and while he is busy doing that you slip the collar around his neck. He never notices what you're doing."

I watched in horror as the coyote savagely attacked her boot. Had it not been for the steel toe inside every bone in her foot would have been crushed and powdered. So, ALWAYS ASK, what do these people mean by the word "tame." Their meaning may not coincide with your meaning, at all!

Snakes may not be for everyone since care can be quite complex. Now a king snake, I have no fear in giving it the full run of the house, once it gets to know me and the rest of the family. With any other kind of snake, including your common garter snake, I adamantly insist that it be contained properly. Before you go rushing in to tell me how safe and cute a garter snake is let me remind you that three times as many people die each year from friendly snakes as from those that are poisonous. Quite simply, snakes do not brush their teeth often enough to maintain proper sanitation.



I went to visit one friend who has more reptiles in captivity than many state zoos. As we sat with his desk between us I kept hearing the slithering of a snake, somewhere near me, but not openly visible. I also noticed that he smiled, smugly, with innocent superiority, every time I tensed up. Finally, I asked where the snake was.

"Under your feet," he responded.

I glanced down, and there, in a glass cage my feet were resting upon, was a live rattlesnake, about four feet long. "It looks like a female," I said. My guess was correct, and my friend felt foiled. The snake was properly enclosed and we went back to discussing our business.

Just like in the case of having other types of exotic animals, commitment is very essential. Thus, prior to acquiring one, it is best to have the right information about them such as behavioral characteristics, dietary and habitat requirements, and other pertinent details of that particular specie. Only after you have digested and properly evaluated your ability to provide a proper environment should you decide if you really are capable of having a snake.

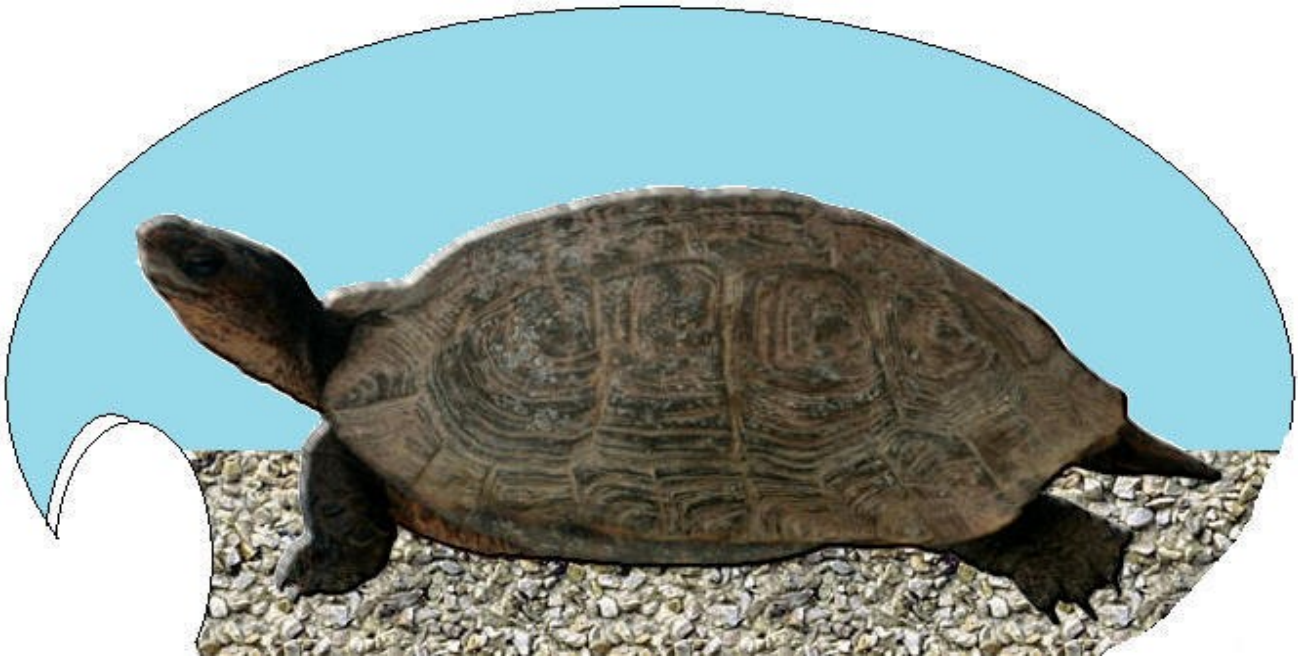
Virtually any species of exotic snakes may be considered as pets but the most common are garter snakes and pythons. For first-time owners, corn snakes, king snakes, and ball pythons are, in fact, most suitable as these are gentle and not very sensitive to food and the type of habitat they are in.

On the other hand, if you are a beginner, don't think about acquiring Burmese pythons, red-tailed boas, tree boas or pythons, water snakes, anacondas, reticulated pythons and other wild snakes as they can really be dangerous especially when not handled properly. A rash movement in your approach affects their temperament negatively.

The appropriate diet and living area vary with different species. Generally, though, in creating an artificial environment for them, take note of security as they tend to get out of any enclosure. Check for gaps and the strength of the habitat itself. Otherwise, you shall be putting others in danger as well as incurring liabilities.

Also, check if there is enough space for them to move around, and that there is room for expansion as your pet grows. The size of the space must correspond well to the size of your pet now, and in the future.

As all snakes are carnivorous, mice and rats are the best food for them. It is better to give them pre-killed ones so as to protect them from possible injuries caused by their prey when alive. This usually happens when the prey is given to them while the snakes are not yet hungry and unwilling to attack. YOU can be hurt by live mice and rats too. It would likewise be more convenient to have these killed rodents in a freezer than trying to keep another habitat just for them.



Pet Turtles

The first turtle I ever saw with my own two eyes was a terrapin, as much at home in the desert as I was. He knew I was there and waited patiently to see if I was one of the good guys, or one of the bad. There are people out there who will kill any living thing, just for the fun of it. I studied that terrapin for over five minutes, so much I'd know him today if he crossed my path. He was going through a cholla garden with the same diffidence a coyote minces through sparse grass. I watched him move on, and wondered how he survived out there where I found it difficult.

Scientists say that turtles have been around for millions of years. There are sea turtles so big that sharks leave them alone. There are freshwater turtles that some people think taste delicious. Then there are turtles that prefer solid ground beneath their feet. Terrapins love solid ground even when it's a powder likely to blow away any second.

Can you turn a turtle into a pet? Thousands of people have publicly declared that you can, and love it. One example of easy-to-keep exotic pets are box turtles. When buying box turtles it is best to avoid doing it during the cold seasons as box turtles hibernate during such times. Box turtles tend to be stressed during the winter due to the dehydration and starvation that comes with hibernation.

A good box turtle would feel solid and weighty when you pick it up. Check for its strong reflexes by gently tugging its hind leg and seeing if it quickly and strongly pulls its legs away. The face and limbs should have no swellings, the eyes should be alert and clear. There should be no discolorations or slime on the shell. There should be no secretions coming from the mouth and nose. There should be no breaks, cracks, or overgrowths in the beak. Common sense would usually help one find the tell-tale signs of bad condition.

Boxed turtles live well both indoors and outdoors. They just need an enclosure that allows them enough space to live in. The enclosure should be at least 36 by 12 inches and have a wall high enough to keep the turtle from climbing out. Box turtles prefer living on slightly moistened potting soil that have no coarse substrates that may damage their shells. There should be enough water for the turtle to dip in and climb out as it wants. For cold areas, there should be a heat source such as a heating pad to regulate the temperature.

Box turtles need only to be fed once every morning for youngsters, and every other day for adults. Box turtles need a balanced diet that contains both animal and plant materials. Varied vegetables are good when combined with canned dog food are usually recommended for the turtles. Other owners feed box turtles with mashed chicken liver, earthworms, slugs and small insects.

Keeping box turtles as exotic pets may be a good decision for many. They are easy to live with and easy to maintain. It is also very enjoyable to witness these creatures grow and live. When we moved to Arkansas one year every child still at home fell in love with a turtle, or two. Box turtles were their favorites. Then there were the red ears. Meanwhile I was doing battle with the snapping turtles that came oozing up from the mud at unexpected times when I was traversing their territory. Can you turn these monsters into pets?

One friend of mine had a hundred pound snapper. He could hold out a foot long fish and let the turtle have one bite before the whole fish was gone. That was a pet! That was a pet I never petted very much. His shell was like cured concrete. He looked dirty even after you washed him. He looked like a pet Hollywood would drool over.

I prefer my turtles free to do their own thing. I like to see waves of turtles coming in to lay eggs and thousands of turtles coming out of the eggs, hurrying for the water before some monster scoops them up. Maybe they aren't even safe in the water, but I like to dream that when they hit the water they are pretty safe. I must be right at least part of the time because there are always more turtles coming back.

When winter comes turtle hunters will use long, steel spikes to probe the mud. Ka-Thunk.. I found one. No wonder turtles are becoming extinct. They can't even get a good night's sleep without someone thumping on their backs. What's a turtle to do in the face of such human meanness?

When a dry summer hits you'll see turtles crossing the highway, hoping to find a deeper body of water somewhere. Turtle lovers swerve to avoid them. Turtle haters swerve to hit them. Turtle hunters scoop them up by the bucketful. When you go out canoeing there will be hundreds sitting on logs. They love to catch the sun's warmth, but they are ready to plunge back into their murky water on a second's notice.

If you live in turtle country, and who doesn't, you can trap them with wire mesh traps baited with watermelon. Raw chicken and raw duck works great too. Give the turtles a way up and in, but deny them the right to leave. A pivot board works best. They crawl up the board to roost in the sun and their weight triggers the pivot and dunks them into the trap. Pet shops catch them by the hundreds, or buy them wholesale from people who do. Pets, oh they make great pets, and all the better if you dream a little bit that they are just passing through and won't be keeping them for long.

1. Turtles need the right temperature in order to live. You should maintain a 77 to 96 degrees F temperature on the aquarium. You should probably install an aquarium heater to provide the needed temperature regulation for your turtle. Turtles tend to become sluggish and lose their appetite when the temperature is low, but I have seen them crawl out of ice water and disappear into banks of melting snow.

2. You should keep your aquarium clean. Prevent the aquarium from becoming too soiled. In this way, you will insulate your turtle from health problems. Use a filtration system to maintain clear and clean water. That's so YOU can see what they are doing.

3. Supply your turtle with sufficient food such as algae, crustaceans, mouse pups, earthworms and small fish. Turtles also love foods like fruits and green vegetables. Your terrapins prefer the green veggies but they will settle for twigs, cactus and other what have yous. Your big problem will be knowing when to QUIT feeding the little critters. Put too much in there and your water will turn sour in a hurry and you'll be left a lone ranger in the garden.

4. Hardly ever will you need to feed turtles more than two or three times a week. They don't have good teeth so you must adjust the size of food you distribute so they can gulp it down. Let a few live earthworm drop into the water and watch your turtles scoop them up before they hit bottom. Their little paddle feet make the search and destroy missions a fascinating event. When they let a worm make it

more than three fourths of the way to the bottom, QUIT dropping in more worms. You can use a small holding container to keep the left overs from dropping down into the aquarium.

5. At least twice a month you should clean the whole aquarium and its filtration system. Remove the dirt from the ponds until you are ready to let your turtles dig down and sleep.

6. Allot 75 percent of water in the aquarium for swimming and the remaining space for your turtle's basking. Basking is essential for a turtle's well being. As your turtle becomes accustomed to your presence you can reach in (slowly) and pet them. Some of them even like to be scratched behind the ears with a slender stick, but most turtles just want to be left alone, fed frequently and provided with all the luxuries of life that turtles crave.

7. If you're serious about keeping your pet happy be sure to schedule regular check ups with your community veterinarian, you know, the one who specializes in turtles and other reptiles.

If you aren't the kind of guy that automatically gives the best of care to turtles, please release them soon and let them go back into the wild because they are probably friends of mine.

## **The Tale Wins Eagle Mart Helps You**

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What pet could be more exotic than an Emperor Penguin? Even though he is a bird he would rather swim than fly. In fact he gave up on the art of flying so long ago that he never asks how far it is as the crow flies any more. His wings are like flippers. His feet are like stubs. On land, on snow or ice his fastest pace is a shuffle, but he just loves to lay down on his belly to go speed sledding downhill.

Exotic birds are among the most popular pets to keep. Not only are most of them absolutely beautiful with their brilliantly colored feathers, but many pet owners find them easier to take care of than, a fuzzy cat or a rowdy dog.

Here is a short list of some of the most popular exotic pet birds:



Sun Conures – these birds are the medium-sized variety. They only grow to about 12 inches in length, thus requiring less living space than large parrots. Conures are known for their sweet dispositions and playfulness. They range over most of South and Central America. Other species of conures are found in the West Indies and Mexico. Even in the wild sun conures are friendly, peaceful birds and seldom fight with each other. They live together amicably in groups of twenty or more birds. Sun canures

definitely have a mind of their own and are willing to drown you out so they can give you a piece of it.

Conures love to take baths. Some of them will let you mist them down, and even raise one wing after the other for you to dampen their feathers. Conures feed on various seeds, fruits, and insects.

The feathers of Sun Conures are tinted with brilliant hues of orange, yellow, red, green, and blue.

Like parrots, Sun Conures can learn how to speak, however they can also become quite vocal and noisy. They tend towards screaming and screeching and therefore may not be ideal for those living in apartments buildings. Sun Conures have been known to live 35 years or more.

Other varieties of conures include the sharp-tailed Conure, the Blue-crowned Conure, Slender-billed Conure, Green-Cheeked Conure, Blue-Throated Conure, Black-Capped Conure and the Maroon-bellied Conure and any one of these can make you a wonderful pet.

African Grays – these loquacious parrots can acquire a vocabulary of up to 2,000 words. Because these parrots are so intelligent they can get bored easily and become demanding. However, African Greys can also be quite affectionate. That makes them perfect for owners who want sensible companions. Many of them live 70 years or more.

Budgerigars – Colorful, attractive, and lively are just some of the great attributes of the Budgerigar. With their warm and inquisitive personalities, they make a great pet for both the beginner or an experienced bird keeper. They can serve as a good introduction to owning feathered pets. Budgerigars are quite hardy, they are inexpensive and easy to care for.



Budgies can be good pets for children and are quite attractive with a great variety of colors. They also require a relatively small space, while being quite easy to maintain. Though they can typically learn only few words, they are intelligent enough to be able to sing and whistle tunes. Budgerigars may live from 12 to 14 years. Up to the time they become fledglings the cere nostrils of the hen are white, while the cock's is a dainty pink. After that it is usually anyone's guess when just looking.

Parrotlets – these are rather quiet compared to other exotic birds and thus they are ideal for owners who live in apartments or duplexes. They are among the smallest varieties of parrots. While parrotlets may be feisty they are quite intelligent just like their giant cousins. The average parrotlet is only about 5 inches long and tend to live about 20 years.

Cockatiels – many find the medium-sized cockatiel to be delightful pets. They also belong to the parrot family, and are known to be intelligent. Cockatiels usually just whistle or mimic random sounds, but they can also learn how to talk. They come in different combinations of color and can be quite attractive members of a home. Cockatiels have a life span up to 20 years long.

Okay, now let's dive into the briny deeps and consider mollusks as exotic pets. Mollusks? Doesn't that sound like something you must be careful not to step on? Mollusks may sound like something rare but they are really common creatures of the sea that are protected with shells. At least eight thousand species of mollusks are known including those belonging to mollusk groups like mussels, limpets, periwinkles, top shells and chitons.

The most common mollusks that are often seen by mankind are perhaps the snails and octopus. These creatures are often depicted in various cartoons books and movies. Snails can move around by foot, half an inch at a gallop while an octopus can move around by siphoning water in and squirting it out.

Also known as the 'Devil-Fish' due to the terror their strange appearance caused our early sea-farers the Octopus are Mollusca. Characterized by having eight "legs" which are more accurately referred to as arms, a lack of skeletal structure and unique locomotion capabilities the Octopus is an often misunderstood and much maligned creature.



Most Octopi have a globe-shaped 'head' that contains all the vital organs and mouth which hold a sharp beak which is used to kill and shred its prey. Their skin is smooth and ranges in color most normally from a tan to light brown with some controlled coloration changes that allows it to hide when hunting for prey. The best weapon in their self defense arsenal is the ability to squirt an ink like substance at an attacker to mask their getaway.

Each of the octopus's arms have two rows of suction cups each of which has 'taste sensors' to allow it to identify food. Octopus are born with the ability to regenerate severed arms. Even though Octopi are deaf they are hardy predators with unique self defense mechanisms and very good eyesight.



Now, if you go in for a [pet snail](#) or two you should prepare a home for them that is safe for the snail and is well ventilated – for your comfort. Avoid overcrowding snails because it can lead to illness and even death. While a small bottle container can be their temporary home, it would be best to transfer them to a larger area like a small aquarium with a lid to keep the snails from getting bitten by predators.

Snails can be found in gardens, in ponds and even in the sea. They belong to a group of animals with a soft body called molluscs (mollusks) which are related to oysters, clams, and other shellfish. They have soft, unsegmented bodies that are protected by a hard shell. The garden snail is known as a gastropod which in Latin means, gastro -- for stomach -- and pod for foot or in other words it is just "a belly footed animal". The body of the snail is long, moist and slimy. It has a shell to protect its soft body.

Snails have different shaped shells. It can be a single shell that is rounded, spiral high and pointed -- or it can be flat. When the snail is disturbed, it simply withdraws or pulls itself back into its shell. The snail also retreats into its shell and seals the entrance in dry weather to protect its body from drying up. A snail is most active at night and on cloudy days. It does not like the sunshine very much. During very cold weather or winter, it hibernates in the ground.

Make sure to imitate the natural habitat of the snails to keep them happy and healthy. Place some foliage and rocks to allow the pet snail to believe it is going somewhere as it moves around.

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Spiders like to make sure nothing gets away from them. Note the top hind foot pulling a web strand out of its abdomen.

Spiders are well known for their feats of derring-do. One specie can actually spin its web beneath the surface of the water, and hold the water back from closing in on its home and trap.

Spiders can be really be amusing to observe. Back when I was a young cowboy all dressed in white linen – I was lying in a line shack and staring at the ceiling, wishing I had a good book to read. Suddenly a fly flew into a spider web over my head.

For a few seconds the fly struggled to escape. Then here came the spider trailing clouds of shimmering glory in my flickering lamp light as the spider web bounced and jounced in tune with the antagonists.

Spiders have eight legs and they can use their feet just like we use our hands. My spider spun strands of web and s/he used all eight legs to hogtie that fly. Within 60 seconds that fly was wrapped up like a mummy; there was no way on earth that fly would ever escape.

Over and over again that spider bounced out to make his hogtying exhibition for me that night. Later I learned that not only do spiders keep the populations of flies from flying off the charts, they also keep scorpions from ranging at will. For some strange reason scorpions love to climb up a wall, then explore the ceiling. That wouldn't be so bad, but inevitably they will lose touch with reality and drop off the ceiling. Quite often they don't hit the floor, they hit the bed.

Scorpions make strange bedfellows and I prefer to sleep with cuddlier companions. So, that's the reason I prefer to let sleeping spiders lie and protect their webs in my home rather than strike them down.

Today I went outside and a slight movement in one of our trees caught my eye. On going over to investigate I saw a spider busy at work. What fascinating creatures Heavenly Father has given us to share our world. I watched this one for a long time. One thing I noticed this morning that I have never noticed before is how far away the spiders can see us. This one today began reacting to my presence while I was yet four feet away, proving she had already registered my approach and was simply waiting to see if I came any closer before running for shelter. Once she determined that I was no threat she came out and began working as if basking in my attention. She must have been kin to Charlotte, huh?

Out in a hay field on the morning after picking up the hay you can see the sunlight glinting off of hundreds of sparkling new spider webs. Every spider out there is busy hogtying aphids and what have you. It is one of the most beautiful sights I've ever seen.

I've often wondered how spiders build a web from a tall tree to the top of a house. One day I saw it being done and wondered no more. Your little spider waits for the wind to blow just so, so, then s/he begins spinning a web and lets the wind carry her to and fro. As soon as s/he contacts the house s/he runs up higher and anchors that tiny strand to the house. Using the house as a base s/he then weaves a knotted web from one structure to the other. When finished this web will be too stout for most winds to destroy.

Spiders move about quietly and are known to cope well in many different types of environments, thus being prime suspects for becoming your exotic pet. Maintenance is likewise not very difficult as they are generally clean and don't leave much clutter. These attributes account for the growing popularity of keeping spiders as exotic pets.

However, in spite of being low-maintenance pets, owners at times fail to recognize that taking care of them is, in fact, not all that straightforward. If you are a first-time owner, it would be wise to choose those specie which are neither fragile nor treacherous.

Tarantulas like Chilean Rose, Mexican Redleg, and Costa Rican Zebra belong in this category. Their venom isn't very harmful but is instead similar in toxicity to that of the bees. Strength of venom is one of the important things that you have to check at the very start of your search for an exotic pet spider. Mild venom may cause significant pain while the venom of a brown recluse can cause HUGE holes to appear in the skin if not taken care of immediately.

Hairs on the abdomen of spiders are equally harmful as they may shed it in moments of threat and stress and may cause irritation and great hazard when they get into the eyes. You have several options but, in general, prior to acquiring any type, you have to check with your local government to see if there are policies regulating such.

To maintain their suitability to become pets, you have to create a habitat that closely mimics their natural living environment. This need not be expensive or spacious as a simple terrarium may be enough. You also don't have to worry about giving them companions of the same species as they are usually not after socialization. By nature, they are also predatory thus they may just end up eating their companion even if it is a fellow spider. What you have to check is the enclosure as spiders are good climbers and they can easily pass through small holes or crevices. They may escape you if their habitat isn't secure enough.

Taking care of spiders indeed isn't that easy. They deserve respect and places of refuge -- just like any other animal. At the same time, you also have to protect yourself from possible harm that they may inflict.

Tarantulas are spider-like species but are relatively bigger in size. Big as tarantulas are, if you drop one on top of a red ant hill they will immediately curl up and wait for the ants to put them out of their misery. They are usually found in the jungles and some species are supposed to have deadly venoms. They could also come in different colors and varieties.

1. Get the species that is just right in size for you. The size of the tarantula also corresponds to its care and maintenance. A bigger tarantula requires a larger space. It also needs more food and more care.
2. Get the spider good enough for beginners. The list includes the Chilean Rose, the Costa Rican Zebra, or the Mexican Redknee, among others. These are the types of tarantulas that are mostly ground dwellers or burrowers. They also tend to move slowly.
3. Get the tarantulas that isn't much or not entirely poisonous. Again, there are some species that can cause injuries, even to its owners. If you aren't an expert about the tarantulas just yet, maybe you can ask the pet store you are going to buy it from which types are not venomous and go for it.

4. For pets, I prefer the female ones. Female tarantulas are supposed to live longer than their male counterparts. Here is an example, the female Chilean Rose tarantula could live for 20 years or more. The male tarantula of the same kind is expected to live for only two years.

5. Get the younger tarantula. Some exotic pet shops know how old the pets are that they sell. Try to ask how old the tarantula is you like. If they are old enough, their lifespan may be nearing its end. And that isn't a good choice, definitely.

Since it is quite difficult to catch these creatures, the best place to get them is from an exotic pet supply shop.

Here are the basic things that you should know when you intend to get tarantulas for a pet. Be careful not to buy too many, especially if you are just starting out. Try to buy one species at a time and then know everything about it. Get a feel on how it is being taken care of. Practice with it for some time, until you are sure you are ready to handle more of them.

The tarantula loves to eat fresh meat. Unlike other spiders that usually eat whatever gets trapped in the web, this one waits in a certain spot and ambushes the prey. The victims are usually insects, other spiders, birds and amphibians.

The first thing any owner must provide is shelter for the pet. The tarantula should be placed in a glass aquarium with some rocks or old wood to make it feel comfortable in its environment. This will cost an average of \$40 and is very easy for anyone to set up.

Some jell should also be purchased to give the spider some liquids together with live insects such as crickets or worms as part of its diet. This doesn't hurt the wallet that much since the tarantula is only fed once a week.

Tarantulas are nocturnal animals so having a small lamp installed will be just right to give it some warmth in its home. The owner should make sure that it doesn't exceed 30 degrees, which could be too much for the spider to handle.

Aquarium and fish, they say, are the best additions to the household that can contribute to having a serene and calm atmosphere. This consideration makes owning a fish a good decision. Sometimes though, it is better to get something more than a google eyed goldfish. Sometimes, it pays to get exotic fish as pets, better yet, make it exotic freshwater fish.

Exotic fish refer to the water creatures that aren't found in your own locality or country. (The algae is always greener on the other side of the fence!) At one time carp were considered such a delicacy that the United States Government invested a huge sum of money to bring them over the fence to America. Some got away, inevitably, and before you could shake a stick carp had infested our rivers, streams and lakes to such a degree that bounties were placed on their head. Kill one, earn money. These days the Government takes great pains to insure that all carp released into the waters of our nation are triploid carp. Triploid means that they have an extra chromosome and are therefore sterile.

It is ALWAYS easier to maintain a school of freshwater fish than a saltwater school. Some of the most precious freshwater pets come typically from Africa, Asia or South America. Consequently the Government insists on regulating their importation. These fish could belong to the carnivorous species and introducing them on waters will be a big danger. Even if they are kept in the aquarium, they aren't allowed to be in the custody of -- or under the control of ordinary citizens.

Some exotic fish, although not carnivorous, are also considered threats to the water ecosystem. They could materially alter the balance of the population. This isn't good for the local environment.

Consequently, they must be kept in aquariums that are large enough for the kind of fish you are keeping. As with all other exotic pets, owning an exotic freshwater fish also entails commitment. They have to be maintained and taken care of. Even if they get too numerous or difficult to handle, they must be properly treated. I remember one very beautiful Chinese White Catfish that died because the electricity was turned off for a few hours to make a repair. When I saw the owner again about five years later he was still mourning his loss.

Remember this: It is actually illegal to introduce exotic fish into local waters. When you can no longer provide proper care for your fish, it is best to ask for assistance from a local aquarium shop or from the animal control authorities.

There are hundreds of exotic freshwater fishes to choose from. Pick one according to their color or look. Take note also of other features like the specific habitat requirements and their feeding habits. Be wary also of the age and growth factors. These should properly suit the needs and capabilities of your household.

People have different reasons to own a pet fish, particularly the exotic freshwater type. Some are mesmerized by the beauty. Some like the exotic factor. Many reasons can be had. Just be responsible owners for the safety and benefit of the community.

Some pets are called Exotic because they aren't commonly domesticated and tamed and are most often found only in the wild. However, the popularity of exotic animals as pets has encouraged pet stores to stock up on exotic pets to meet the rising demand in the market.

Reptiles are one of the most favored exotic pets especially people who have a love for the outdoors. I knew one iguana that was so popular he had his own web page up for his admirers to keep track of his exploits and travels. There are different kinds of reptiles but the mere sound of their names can evoke fear from people who don't know an iota about their nature.

Among the common reptiles that have been purchased or adopted as exotic pets are snakes, crocodiles, turtles and iguanas. The frightening lead character in the legend of the Loch Ness is said to be a reptile. No one can of course validate this belief and scientists are still at a loss as to the truth behind claims of people who have seen the monster.

But not all reptiles are scary. The misconceptions people have about the basic nature of reptiles originated from ignorance and fear. Once we know the truth about ANYTHING we can deal with it in a more rational and loving manner. For instance, at an early age my mother had instilled in me a great horror of the preying mantis. She called them DEVIL HORSES and said the devil would get me if I played with them. The natural question of why the devil would choose to ride such a small mount never occurred to me, and I did indeed begin to fear, and hate all Devil Horses.



One night a BIG preying mantis did get on me. In horror I swatted it and it crumpled to the floor, writhing in agony. I was so afraid of it that I didn't even want to step on it. Just then my boss came in. He had been a cowboy so I had great respect for him. At once he noticed the preying mantis and immediately went to its rescue.

Very carefully he helped it straighten out its wings. He made it as comfortable as possible then fashioned a nest for it over in one corner where it could remain out of sight, but come out to dine when it wished. Just seeing the love and attention he gave this creature finally broke the terrified response I had in seeing one. Gradually I worked my way into loving them just as much as any other creature God has given us to admire and respect. Today I too can let them roam about me just as my boss did. When I hear one called a Devil Horse I just laugh and give it an extra pat on the head.

A person who is planning to buy a reptile as an exotic pet should bear in mind that most reptiles eat meat but there are a few reptiles that eat plants. Make sure that you know everything about the chosen reptile because there are reptiles that can be considered venomous.

There are people who believe that keeping snakes as exotic pets will bring them luck. Some prefer to keep snakes because they are a natural deterrent to the thousands of rodents living in the neighborhood.

There are plenty of reptiles to choose from and anyone with a penchant for these strange and eerie creatures can choose from a variety of reptiles that can be found roaming in the environment or being sold in pet stores all over the world.

Usually you need a special license to buy an alligator. That's because so many people will buy the baby because they love it, but when it grows into a monster, they dump it. Down in Lake Conroe (near Houston) one alligator grew to be twenty three feet long, able to take down full grown deer and carry them off. For this reason, people who wish to buy an alligator shouldn't just be licensed. They should also have to prove they know exactly what they are doing.

Taking an alligator from its natural habitat isn't even allowed in some States. Before you go to the wild and get an alligator, check the local laws of the state first. There are states that don't allow it entirely. And some even control the feeding and harassing of alligators.

Alligators require a large habitat. An alligator can grow to be as long as 23 feet, but 12 feet long is about average. That being the case, you have to make an alligator pen for them, maybe in your backyard, as big as thrice its size.

Alligators can be dangerous. Everybody knows this. So just because you wanted to have something exotic as a pet shouldn't be the only

reason why you get an alligator. You should be ready for all the things it can do to you and the rest of the people that it can come in contact with it accidentally or intentionally. If you don't have any experience in controlling a full-grown brusque alligator think, twice in getting one for yourself.

Most alligators are used to a subtropical wetland climate. If you live in a rather cold state, please, don't get an alligator. It will not be comfortable in that environment and your alligator is going to be harmed by your environment.

Two things may happen when taming an exotic pet. Either you, as the owner, feels great when you succeed in doing so or you may be harmed when something otherwise happens.

Many veterinarians believe that most exotic pets are simply born not to become one and are, by nature, dangerous. On top of that, they carry diseases with them and behave not in synchrony with human beings. Their behaviors are likewise generally unpredictable which further makes taming extremely difficult.

At times, even if they were tamed as babies, in the long run, they still end up as wild animals. If you are already an exotic pet owner or are planning to be one, it would be wise to know the animal's background. Ask the pet shop owner when it was born, where it came from, what it usually eats, and things like these. Ask if it came from the wild or if it was bred in captivity. This type of information will help you in identifying the best way of approaching your pet.

Try to dig out as well if it has previously manifested a negative behaviour. If there were already several instances of aggression in the past, then taking it home may not be a good idea. The bottom line here is that you have to be choosy at the very start since such will be the beginning of a long-term complex relationship.

As soon as you have chosen the best pet for you, the next challenge will be to tame it. Apparently, one good way of taming exotic animals is by exposing them more. Confinement in very small enclosures often triggers negative behaviors as it causes them stress.

However, it isn't advised to touch them immediately when they are still new to you as they need some time to get used to their new environment. After which, you may begin by touching them little by little everyday. In this way, they will be conditioned that you will not hurt them and thus avoid exhibiting aggressive behaviors.

There are still several other ways by which you can successfully tame exotic pets. Generally, it really depends on the type of pet that you have and its background. Expect that it will be a very a challenging task that requires great caution. Identify what is most suitable for your pet while guarding your own welfare.

Aside from making the home similar to the habitat of the pet, the most important thing is providing the right diet. If the animal is a frog, insects such as mosquitoes or flies, which are difficult to breed at home, can be purchased from the store.

Those who decide to have a snake at home will make the creature happy by feeding it a live mouse. If watching how the rodent dies sickens the individual, it can be killed and frozen then just warmed in hot water before giving it to the pet.

The reason the mouse should be placed in warm water first is because snakes won't eat anything cold. This is considered to be a waste of money since the creature will just spit it out after.

If the owner finds buying insects or mice expensive, it will be a good idea to raise them at home. This is very challenging but with proper care, this will surely save you money in the long term.

The only risk this poses is the possibility that these might escape and do damage to the home. Some people who wanted to raise crickets gave up after realizing how inconvenient it was because of the noise.

The best advice is to perhaps only buy a sufficient number so that there wouldn't be any problems caused by raising the exotic animal in the comforts of your home. The animal lover can compare the price of the pet store and those offered online before making an order. The customer should keep in mind that some retailers give discounts for bulk orders.

Some exotic animals are herbivores. Instead of buying their natural food from the supermarket or the pet store, the person can try planting these in the backyard. There might be too much for the pet to consume so some of it can also be used when preparing dishes at home.

Loving an exotic animal will come naturally to those who are attracted to the wild. These creatures have their unique charm and traits that make them very desirable to be owned.

Still, keeping an exotic pet doesn't have to entail making a jungle out of the household. It doesn't mean that the whole household shall conspire to give the animal everything. At this point, domesticating the exotic animal is a big necessity.

Owning an exotic pet can entail wild encounters and hardships in maintenance. This is so because exotic pets, by their very nature, aren't accustomed to living with people, even more in the urban setting. They aren't like dogs and cats that have been tamed to live with people for thousands of years already.

This makes domesticating the exotic pets an imperative consideration. Here are some tips to properly domesticate the animal:

## 1. Research

If keeping a trained animal is important for you, better research first on the type of exotic creature to bring in the household. Some are high maintenance. Some are easy to tame. The ferret, for example, isn't a common household pet but it is easy to tame and very predictable.

There are also specific behavior patterns that can be learned. These can very well make the animal more predictable. Even fierce snakes and big cats can be appeased and kept from their wild nature by understanding peculiar traits.

Just the purpose of knowing everything about the exotic animal will help the task go more smoothly.

## 2. Tamed Breeds

There are exotic pets that are already bred and raised by humans. They are more familiar with people. Thus, domesticating them isn't difficult. Most of them too are trained already. They can be acquired through the proper pet trade.

## 3. Young Animals

Some animals too become tame to people who raised them. There can be some sort of familiarity and some amount of domestication when the exotic pet grows with the actual owners.

This can be done by bonding with the pet. Sometimes, even the behavior of the exotic pets will depend on how they are raised and cared for by the owners.

There will always be responsibilities and hardships, no matter what type of animal will be adopted into the household. It just requires willingness and dedication from the owner.

There are so many exotic pets that can be raised at home. Given the

many possibilities, a friend of mine decided to get something that didn't require that much maintenance. After examining what was available in the pet store, the decision came down to an Oriental Fire Bellied Toad. He was named ERNIE. The name is derived from its physical features, which can only be found in certain parts of Southeast Asia.

What is the key to make exotic animals like this toad happy? In simple words, tender loving care. Since this is easier said than done, I will offer here a few pointers;

1. The first will be to find an appropriate home for the pet. Since toads love the water, getting an aquarium will be best. This is because this is the most ideal environment resembling the swamp.

Water should only be filled between two to four inches from the bottom of the tank so that rocks can also be placed for the toad to get some warmth from artificial light or the sun.

The water should be dechlorinated for at least a day before putting the toad in. This is because the acidity could affect the health of the pet less than a day after it is brought home from the store.

2. The aquarium will get dirty after a few days. Part of the responsibility of owning a pet is cleaning up the mess. The owner can install a filter to suck dirt but changing the water is still the best way to make sure it is safe for the toad.

3. Toads love to eat worms, insects or small fishes. The owner can get these from the pet store and offer them on a regular basis dyed with multivitamins to make it always feel healthy and strong.

Toads don't have to be fed daily. This should be done only two to three times a week since giving too much can make the pet overweight.

Exotic animals need a lot of attention just like having a dog or a cat. It will be a good idea to read up and do some research first instead of doing it through trial and error.

The average life span of this kind a toad is between 10 to 15 years. This just goes to show that with proper care, you can make your frog happy and in return you will spend a long time together.

Having your exotic pet on a regular check up with a veterinarian is an important part on your exotic pet's health. There could be important things that you would like to know in order to maintain the quality of health of your exotic pet.

Make sure that you develop good communication with your veterinarian so that it would be easier for you to contact him in case your pet needs a check up or treatment. You may find your exotic pets having problems with their health. The most common illness for most exotic pets like snakes is anorexia. This is caused by factors like the husbandry where low temperature may cause exotic pets to lose their appetite. Snakes have the tendency to lessen metabolism when it is fall.

Anorexia among snakes is also caused by the low quality of food fed to them. Another reason could be the wrong way you present food to the pet. It is important that you should know the right way on how to serve the right food for your pets to make them eat well.

If anorexia isn't properly treated, this may lead to other diseases for your exotic pet. It is important that you should have knowledge on how to give your pet good health. Here are some tips in order to keep your exotic pet healthy.

1. Make sure that you bring your snake to your community veterinarian if symptoms of lost appetite is seen.

2. Observe the snake whether there are changes in his eating habits and if it can eat the same amount of food that you usually give.
3. Make sure that you supply heat in its cage by setting up a heating system that will provide the needed temperature for its body metabolism. Low temperature is the common reason why snakes lose their appetite. Their body metabolism tends to fall.
4. You should know the proper manner of serving food to your exotic pet. You should also pay attention to the quality of food that you serve.
5. Make sure that your husbandry is properly maintained and you have to keep it clean.

Exotic pets like snakes should be examined if there is no progress in its appetite. Your veterinarian may reevaluate his findings and make new clinical diagnosis to check if there are parasites affecting the health of your exotic pet. If necessary, x-rays and ultrasounds may be conducted to determine the real health problem of your exotic pet.

There will definitely be those unpredictable moments when your exotic pet suddenly needs rescuing. Here are some few items on how to safely rescue some of your exotic pets.

Never rescue with aggression. This will threaten your exotic pet and may most likely worsen the situation. No matter how long you have trained your exotic pet, never underestimate the old nature of your pet. There was this one incident of a man from India who trained a tiger cub. It grew old and tasted blood, and unleashed its old nature and had to be killed. The better way is to be very gentle. Try to calm yourself down before trying to rescue your pet. You might be the one in need of rescuing if you don't!

Assess the situation properly when performing a rescue operation for your exotic pet. If you feel iffy about the situation, trust your instincts and don't go for it. There are clearly some situations which would require you to not get overly emotional and think rationally. This is one of those times. Sometimes, an effort to save an exotic pet who doesn't want to be saved may pose a greater risk for you. So make sure you can gauge the situation properly before you take any action. Make sure that in every attempt to rescue a pet, especially an exotic type, you have already counted the cost of saving the animal. It might distress you in the long run to have saved an exotic pet and will have done you more harm. One can never underestimate the importance of this.

In many instances the exotic pet will be brand new and you haven't acquired the skill to predict its moods in threatening situations. Or maybe you don't exactly own a pet but you saw an exotic-looking animal walking along your backyard. Of course, in this case, the very best thing to do is to call the nearest exotic pet rescue group. A library wouldn't be the most practical answer given the potential urgency of the situation.

Many owners of exotic pets are fascinated with the work part of it and they acquire an intensive knowledge of animals and have dug into the aspect of breeding it. If you discover a similar taste developing, you can consider being an exotic pet breeder. There are many advantages you can get from it.

1. It could be an added source of income for you. Imagine earning from your hobby. You can get profits from something you like doing. You can choose to sell the breed of animals that you produce to other people.

2. Breeding can save you on buying pets. Even if you don't intend to sell your pets, you can save a lot from breeding, because you don't have to buy the animals to add to your existing collection, if you are really a pet lover.

3. You have ready gifts to friends. If there are equally pet lover people you know of, you can give a pet to them as a gift. You can very well do that as a breeder. No need to find an expensive and interesting present, as you have the right one at your disposal.

4. You can help in preserving the species. Although it is illegal to take an endangered animal as a pet, you can help the environment by taking care and expanding the breed of the ones you own. That way, they will be further away from the possibility of extinction.

5. You will be able to enrich your animal knowledge. Being a breeder gives you the chance to know many things about animals, even if you didn't take zoology in college. Paying close attention to your pets will surely teach you a different thing or two everyday.

6. You can contribute to nature. Being a breeder enables you to contribute to the environment by propagating the species, or even experimenting on new breeds when applicable. These are really good roles to take on.

Being a breeder isn't simple. You can't become a breeder overnight. It takes knowledge, experience, and patience. You also may need to consult with an expert breeder or a veterinarian to help you out.

And it also entails responsibility. You might need to apply for a permit especially for that reason too. Of course, you have to follow all the legalities surrounding the transport of exotic pets for breeding purposes.

If you have dreams of becoming an exotic pet breeder, start training and preparing today. Gather all relevant information about your pet. And learn everything you have to learn. Soon enough, you might just realize your goals.

If you are a practicing local veterinarian, you might want to consider taking in exotic pets as patients too. Regular pets like dogs and cats maybe a common thing for you, but are you ready to take on the challenge of being an exotic pet veterinarian?

Since you are in this field for quite sometime you might think of becoming one. Being an exotic pet veterinarian has a lot of advantages. And here are just some of them.

1. You will have a broader range of clients. Imagine more people consulting you for all their pets, no matter what kind it is. That also means you will be able to earn more by being able to expand your clinic or office.
2. You will become more famous. There are just a few exotic pet veterinarians in your area, for sure. A regular veterinarian may be one too many, but an exotic veterinarian isn't. You may even have customers coming from other states, just to consult you regarding their pets.
3. You will widen your knowledge about animals. Being confined to dogs, cats, and other regular pets could be less challenging after being in the field for too long. Maybe it's time to take your expertise to another level and take on skunks, turtles, and snakes as patients.
4. You will be able to help the environment. Being a veterinarian of exotic pets would enable you to help injured and very sick animals out of danger. You can lengthen their lives and add to the preservation of their species in the process.
5. You will be able to inform other people. As you attend to sick exotic pets, you can enlighten its owners as to the proper care these types of animals need. And you will also be able to give them tips to prevent the same illness from happening again.

6. You can use your knowledge and expertise in reaching out to more people. Once you have become an exotic pet veterinarian and have done well in it, you will be able to use all the things you have learned in making informed decisions people wanting to get exotic pets. You can join an advocate protecting exotic animals or other similar organizations according to your personal beliefs and principles.

Being an exotic pet veterinarian could mean lots of things to learn and lots of information to digest, even if you are a practicing veterinarian already. You might even go back to school again for that purpose alone. But think of the things it can give you. Being an exotic pet vet can become really fulfilling so just go for it.

The End

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