



Aquatic Turtle at a Glance

Difficulty of care: **Intermediate**

Average lifespan: **20–60+ years**

Average adult size: **12–14” or larger (varies by species)**

Diet: **Mix of protein and vegetables; needs shift with age**

Minimum habitat size: **Varies by species (tank should fit adult size)**

Temperature: **Basking 85–95 F; air 75–85 F; water 72–82 F**

Fun fact  Turtles can see colors and have excellent hearing.

Enclosure Setup & Maintenance

- Choose a tank large enough for your turtle at full adult size. The tank should be long, wide, and deep enough for comfortable swimming and turning.
- Substrate is optional. If used, stick to turtle-safe soil or large river rocks. Avoid gravel. Provide a dry basking area with a ramp so your turtle can fully dry out.
- Install UVB lighting for 12 hours daily and add a basking bulb. Keep basking areas at 85–95 F and air temperature at 75–85 F.
- Use a submersible heater if needed to maintain water at 72–82 F. A filtration system helps keep the water clean and healthy.

Supply Checklist

- Appropriate tank or enclosure
- UVB and basking lights
- Basking dock
- Water heater and thermometer
- Canister filter and siphon
- Tank substrate (optional)
- Water conditioner and test kit
- Screened lid
- Turtle food



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Diet

Young turtles need about 50% protein and 50% vegetables, while adults shift to more vegetables and less protein. Feed juveniles daily; feed adults every two to three days. Provide as much as they will eat in five to 10 minutes, then remove any leftovers.

Protein options include worms, crickets, shrimp, snails, or live fish. Acceptable vegetables include mustard greens, carrot tops, romaine, collards, and dandelion greens. Avoid avocados, onions, garlic, and fireflies.

Supplement with turtle pellets weekly for balanced nutrition.



Health

Schedule yearly checkups with a reptile vet. A healthy turtle is alert, active, and has clear eyes, a clear nose, and a firm shell.

Watch for swollen eyes, soft shell, diarrhea, uneven floating, lethargy, or appetite loss.

Limit handling; it can stress many turtles. If needed, lift your turtle slowly with two hands and keep them upright.

Fun fact

They are agile swimmers and faster than many people think.

