



Tetras at a Glance

Difficulty of care: **Beginner**

Average lifespan: **2–4 years with proper care**

Average adult size: **1–3" (most common species)**

Diet: **Omnivorous tropical fish diet**

Minimum habitat size: **10 gallons (20+ gallons for larger species)**

Temperature: **76–80 F**

Fun fact ↻ Dark substrate helps tetras' colors stand out.



Enclosure Setup & Maintenance

- Start with at least a 10-gallon tank for small species like neon tetras. Larger species, such as Congo tetras, need at least 20 gallons. Tetras need open swimming space along with plants, driftwood, or décor for hiding and visual barriers.
- Add 1–2 inches of gravel, pebbles, or sand. Use about 1.5 pounds of substrate per gallon of water.
- Choose a filter that processes the tank's water at least five times per hour. Test water regularly for ammonia, nitrate, and pH.
- Keep water temperature between 76–80 F. Avoid changes greater than 2 degrees in 24 hours. Use a heater rated at 3–5 watts per gallon.
- Replace 10–25% of the water every two to four weeks. Never fully drain the tank.

Supply Checklist

- Appropriately sized aquarium
- Aquarium hood or cover
- Freshwater substrate
- Filter and media
- Heater and thermometer
- Dechlorinator and beneficial bacteria starter
- Water test kit
- Aquarium light
- Live plants and/or décor
- Net
- Tropical fish food (dry and frozen)



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Species Overview

Tetras are small, active freshwater fish that are popular in community tanks. There are thousands of species in the tetra family, but most common aquarium types are peaceful and easy to care for.

Popular species include:

• Neon • Cardinal • Black skirt • Serpae • Glowlight • Congo • Rummy-nose • Diamond • Bleeding heart

Many come in color varieties such as albino or gold.

Most tetras are calm and social. However, some species—like black skirts, serpaes, and bloodfins—can nip fins.

Fun fact ↻ In mixed tanks, each species needs their own school.

Diet

Feed small amounts once or twice daily. Offer flakes, pellets, and frozen or freeze-dried foods made for tropical freshwater fish.

Only feed what your fish can eat within 1–2 minutes. Fully thaw frozen food before feeding.

Health

Healthy tetras have bright colors, good appetites, and normal swimming behavior. Watch for color fading, appetite loss, lethargy, growths, or spots.

Contact an aquatics expert if you notice changes. Regular water testing and stable conditions help prevent health problems.

Fun fact

↻ All common tetras are schooling fish. Keep them in groups of at least six.

