



Russian Tortoises at a Glance

Difficulty of care: **Beginner to experienced**

Average lifespan: **50+ years with proper care**

Average adult size: **5-10 inches; 1-3 pounds**

Diet: **Mostly leafy greens and hay**

Minimum habitat size: **36" L x 24" W x 16" H (one adult indoors); 48" x 48" x 24"+ outdoors**

Temperature: **85-95 F (warm side); 70-75 F (cool side)**

Humidity: **Around 60%**

Fun fact ↪ They may hibernate if temperatures drop too low.



Enclosure Setup & Maintenance

- Indoor enclosures should be at least 36" x 24" x 16" for one adult. Outdoor habitats should measure at least 48" x 48" x 24"+ and be buried 12 inches into the ground to prevent escape. Provide shade and secure with a sturdy lid if outdoors.
- Use thick, digestible substrate such as coconut fiber, hay, or alfalfa pellets. Avoid sand or gravel. Provide at least one hide per tortoise and add flat rocks to help wear down nails.
- Maintain a warm side of 85-95 F and a cool side of 70-75 F. Provide 10-12 hours of UV light daily, placed 12-18 inches above your tortoise. Monitor humidity around 60%.
- Spot-clean daily. Clean indoor habitats weekly and outdoor habitats monthly.

Supply Checklist

- Properly sized enclosure
- Digestible substrate
- Timothy or alfalfa hay
- Dark leafy greens
- Commercial tortoise pellets (limited)
- Calcium supplement (no D3)
- Multivitamin (weekly)
- Heat lamp or ceramic heater
- UVB light and fixture
- Thermometers and humidity gauge
- Hideouts
- Large shallow soaking bowl



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Species Overview

Russian tortoises are friendly desert tortoises native to dry climates. They reach adult size within 3–4 years. These tortoises can live indoors, or outdoors in warm, dry climates.

If they get too cold, they may burrow and begin hibernating. They are not suited for extremely humid environments.

Fun fact ↪ Russian tortoises are natural burrowers.

Diet

Feed a diet made up of 80–90% dark leafy greens and grass hay, like romaine, collard greens, mustard greens, endive, dandelion, and kale. Offer limited vegetables like carrots, celery, beans, pumpkin, or corn. Fruit should be rare treats. Pellets may make up to 25% of a young tortoise's diet, only two to three times per week. Sprinkle food with calcium (no D3)—young tortoises daily; adults every other day. Add a multivitamin once weekly.

Provide a shallow water bowl large enough for soaking and clean it daily.

Health

Schedule annual veterinary checkups. Healthy tortoises have clear eyes and nostrils, smooth skin, good appetite, and steady activity.

Contact your vet if you notice appetite loss, swollen eyes, discharge, or lumps.

Fun fact

↪ They thrive in dry, desert-like conditions.

