Lionfish at a Glance

Fun fact Lionfish have striking zebra-like stripes and venomous dorsal spines



Difficulty of care: **Advanced**

Average lifespan: **10 years or longer with proper care**

Average adult size: **6–18 inches, depending on species**

Diet: **Carnivorous**

Minimum habitat size: **20 gallons for dwarf species; 75+ gallons for larger species**

Temperature: **74–80 F**

Enclosure Setup & Maintenance

- Provide a dedicated marine aquarium sized for your lionfish species. Dwarf species can thrive in a 20-gallon tank, while larger species require at least 75 gallons.
- Use a strong filter with mechanical, biological, and chemical filtration that circulates the tank's water about 10 times per hour. Maintain a water temperature of 74–80 F, pH between 8.2–8.4, and keep ammonia and nitrite at zero with nitrate below 40 ppm.
- Add 1–2 inches of marine substrate, such as crushed coral or aragonite, and include rocks, caves, or live rock for hiding places. Perform 10–25% water changes every two to four weeks, top off evaporated water with distilled or reverse-osmosis water, and clean filter media according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

Supply Checklist

- Appropriately sized marine aquarium with hood
- Marine substrate
- Marine aquarium salt
- Hydrometer or refractometer
- Strong filter
- Heater and thermometer
- Water conditioner
- Water test kit
- Rocks and hiding places
- Net
- Marine carnivore pellets and frozen or freeze-dried foods

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Health

Healthy lionfish have bright coloration, active fin movement, and a strong appetite. Contact a fish expert if you notice color changes, white spots or growths, lethargy, rapid breathing, decreased appetite lasting more than a day, or any lumps or masses.

Use extra caution when working in the aquarium, as lionfish have venomous dorsal spines.

Fun fact They are predators that will eat fish or invertebrates small enough to fit in their mouths.

Diet

Feed marine carnivore pellets as the primary diet, along with frozen or freeze-dried shrimp, krill, and silversides. Smaller lionfish should be fed daily, while larger species can eat every day or every other day. If a lionfish refuses food after water quality and care have been checked, live ghost shrimp may encourage feeding.



Fun fact They are invasive in Florida, along the U.S. East Coast, and throughout the Caribbean.