



RED FOOT TORTOISE

# CARE GUIDE

*THE NEW BEGINNING WAY*



# Red Foot Tortoise Care Guide

Red foot tortoises are fascinating creatures that make rewarding pets for reptile enthusiasts. Native to the rainforests and tropical areas of South America, these tortoises are known for their vibrant shell coloration and friendly demeanor. This care guide will provide you with essential information on how to properly care for your red foot tortoise.

## Housing

### Enclosure

- **Size:** Adult red foot tortoises require a large enclosure, ideally at least 4 feet by 8 feet for a single tortoise. Hatchlings can be housed in smaller enclosures, but they will quickly outgrow them.
- **Indoor or Outdoor:** They can be kept indoors or outdoors, but outdoor enclosures should provide plenty of shade and protection from predators.
- **Substrate:** Use a substrate that retains moisture, such as cypress mulch, coconut coir, or a mixture of topsoil and peat moss. Avoid substrates like sand or gravel, which can cause impaction.

### Temperature and Lighting

- **Temperature:** Maintain a temperature gradient in the enclosure with a basking area of 90-95°F and a cooler area around 75-80°F.
- **Humidity:** Red foot tortoises thrive in high humidity environments, ideally between 70% and 80%. Achieve this with regular misting and a humid hide.
- **Lighting:** Provide UVB lighting for indoor enclosures to ensure proper shell and bone development. A 10-12 hour light cycle is recommended.

## Diet

### Feeding

- **Variety:** Red foot tortoises are omnivorous and require a varied diet consisting of leafy greens, fruits, and occasional protein.

### Diet Breakdown:

- **Leafy Greens:** Kale, collard greens, dandelion greens, and mustard greens.
- **Fruits:** Papaya, mango, strawberries, and melon. Limit fruit to about 10% of their diet due to high sugar content.
- **Protein:** Offer small amounts of animal protein like earthworms or cooked chicken once a week.
- **Supplements:** Dust food with calcium and vitamin D3 supplements a few times a week to prevent deficiencies.

# Health and Wellness

## Common Health Issues

- **Shell Rot:** Caused by prolonged exposure to moisture, leading to bacterial or fungal infections. Ensure proper humidity balance and clean, dry conditions.
- **Respiratory Infections:** Often due to low temperatures or poor ventilation. Maintain proper temperature and provide fresh air.
- **Parasites:** Regular vet check-ups are recommended to detect and treat any parasitic infections.

## Regular Care

- **Hydration:** Provide a shallow water dish for soaking and drinking. Change the water daily to maintain cleanliness.
- **Enrichment:** Offer climbing structures, hiding spots, and a variety of textures for mental stimulation.

## Social Behavior

- **Companionship:** Red foot tortoises are generally solitary but can coexist with other tortoises if given enough space. Monitor interactions to prevent aggression.
- **Handling:** Handle your tortoise gently and infrequently to reduce stress. Always wash your hands before and after handling to prevent the spread of bacteria.

By following these guidelines, you can ensure your red foot tortoise remains healthy and happy for many years to come. With proper care, these captivating creatures can live for over 50 years, becoming a long-term companion in your life.

