



## BALL PYTHON

*Python regius*

**ORIGIN:** Ball pythons are native to central and western Africa, specifically Benin, Togo, and Ghana. They inhabit the savannahs, an area which combines dense grass and trees in which they are equally comfortable. They are frequently found in rodent burrows and termite mounds.

**SIZE:** Ball pythons reach an average adult length of 4 feet, though exceptional specimens may be larger. They are a relatively heavy-bodied snake.

**CAGING:** Ball pythons will thrive in a variety of plastic and glass cages. The cage must be equipped with a secure, tight fitting lid that provides ventilation. A 20-gallon aquarium with a screen lid is large enough to house an adult ball python. The cage should include a hide box in which the snake will fit snugly.

**SUBSTRATE:** Ball pythons will thrive on a variety of substrates including newspaper, mulch, pine shavings, and bark. Do not use cedar shavings because they are toxic to the snake.

**TEMPERATURE:** Ball pythons should be provided with a thermal gradient ranging from 80°F at one end of the cage to 95°F at the other. This is easily achieved by placing a heat mat at one end of the enclosure.

**LIGHT:** Ball Pythons do not require any special lighting because they are nocturnal and consume whole vertebrates.

**WATER:** Ball pythons should be provided with fresh, clean water at all times. A water dish which allows the snake to submerge its entire body is preferable, but not a necessity. Ball pythons should be misted to increase the humidity level when they are preparing to shed

**DIET:** Ball pythons feed on appropriately sized mice and rats. Feeder rodents may be purchased live or frozen. Live rodents should not be left in the snake's cage unattended. Frozen rodents should be thawed to room temperature prior to feeding. Ball pythons should be fed 1-2 times per week.

### RECOMMENDED SUPPLIES

- Glass or plastic enclosure
- Secure lid for enclosure
- Heat mat approximately half size of enclosure
- Thermometer with probe to monitor temperature
- Substrate as detailed above
- Literature about ball pythons husbandry
- Hiding area such as cork bark or imitation rock
- Water dish

### OPTIONAL ACCESSORIES

- Fluorescent light
- Basking light
- Silk plants and branches
- Decorative cage background
- Moist hide area

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**NOTE:** The information contained in this caresheet solely represents the opinions of the author. It is not intended as a complete guide to captive husbandry.