

Kinkajou Care Sheet



Description

Kinkajous come in 14 subspecies and various sizes. The larger varieties of Kinkajous can reach a weight of up to 18 pounds, and attain a body length of about 25 inches. Kinkajous have fully prehensile grasping tails, which can be used like an extra "hand" when climbing. The tail can be almost as long as the body (up to 45 cm). In nature they are primarily arboreal, but in captivity anything goes. Kinkajous can turn their hind feet backwards, so that the clawed toes can be used when descending head-first. Their front paws are very sensitive and the palms are bare-skinned. They often dip their front paws in water or small openings and lick the food or juice off their paws. Kinkajou's vision is poor, and they can't sense differences in color, so Kinkajous rely primarily on their highly developed senses of touch and smell. Although they have scent glands they have no noticeable odor to humans. They also have a wide range of signal calls, from soft chitters to barks and shrill quavering screams. Kinkajous can live up to 30 years of age.

Characteristics

One of the most important considerations about kinkajous: THEY DO NOT RE-HOME WELL. Their bond with you is for their lifetime, and many never establish any kind of bond with humans again once they are re-homed.

Good Characteristics

Kinkajous are beautiful animals and can make wonderful pets, since their personalities are often playful, yet docile and sweet. They are not destructive animals and have been known to be kept in some houses without a cage. Because they are slow and languid, especially just after being wakened from a nap, they do not particularly like quick sudden movements. When first awakened kinkajous love to be stroked on their backs and will stay very still for several moments while you do this. As a rule, Kinkajous are gentle and non-aggressive most of the time, although they can get wound up and become quite playful, and like to "dive bomb" and pounce on you from high places!

Bad Characteristics

Being nocturnal, Kinkajous are primarily active at night, with peak activity between about 7:00pm and midnight, and again an hour before dawn. There is no guarantee they will sleep at night so finding an appropriate spot for their cage is required. Since Kinkajous can climb, your entire house is subject to their curiosity.

Diet

Staple diet is ZuPreem Primate Dry Diet, softened in warm water, then drained. This diet is supplemented lavishly with a variety of fruits, veggies, and grains. Since they are classified as a carnivore, occasionally add various other protein sources for them such as a small handful of dog or cat food, and small amounts of meat like chicken, ham, and eggs. While bananas are their absolute favorite fruit, most any fruits can be added.

Housing

It is recommended that you have some sort of area or enclosure where you can be assured of your baby's safety as well as the safety of your home. How much time is actually spent in this can somewhat determine what size it needs to be. When designing your enclosure, please use common sense and always keep safety in mind. If you have an outdoor enclosure, it needs to be very secure with both a top and a bottom on it, as kinkajous are very clever escape artists. A cement floor makes for easy clean up. Nest boxes are essential for your kinkajou to sleep in. Rubbermaid's five gallon boxes can be used. Simply cut a

round hole in the side of it and hang it from a wall. Bigger is always better for the size of your enclosure. Outdoor enclosures also require a heat source when the weather is below 60 degrees.

For inside the home you can successfully keep your kinkajou in a large Macaw cage or something similar.

Proofing your home:

Being arboreal and intelligent and playful, kinkajous will wander anywhere and climb anything that looks interesting. This includes your unsteady lamp, shelves...anything. They want to know what's up on your counter tops and tables so if you usually keep some fruit or a wine bottle on counters, expect your kinkajou to help himself. You'll want to go through your home and stabilize any furniture and secure shelving, anything that can topple over on them. Plants are also fair game, find out what is and isn't toxic. Anything can be deemed a great play-toy including your breakables and keepsakes. Use common sense and "proof" accordingly.

Enrichment and Toys:

Since kinkajous are arboreal by nature, enrich the enclosure with ropes, shelves, and play stations. Hide food in toys with holes to encourage your kinkajou's keen sense of smell and that long tongue to be put to use. Kinkajous are very playful and will pounce a cat's fishing rod type toy. Use your imagination to create fun games for both human and kinkajou and enjoy.

Litter box

Most Kinkajou owners do not have much luck in getting their Kinkajous litter trained. Generally, Kinkajous climb to a high place and "let go"; However, they seem to get into a habit of going in the same locations, so after a while, you learn where to place mats to catch the droppings. Some people place a piece of vinyl flooring under the inside and outside of the cage for easier cleanup.

Children

It is recommended kinkajous in homes with children under 6. This is for both the kinkajou's sake and the children's sake. Young children do not always play well with exotic animals resulting in them being scratched or bitten, and the kinkajou could be hurt or escape. Avoiding any potential problems by waiting till your children are at least 6 is best.

Other Pets

When raised together from a young age, kinkajous generally get along with other pets. Use common sense and proper introductory supervision as well as proper play supervision and all should go well. However, kinkajous love to chase and pounce and your older pet may not be too fond of enduring this. If for whatever reason your kinkajou does not get along with your other pets, have a plan to deal with this and still provide a great home for all your pets.

De-clawing

There is no reason that I can tell or know of to de-claw or de-fang your kinkajou. Babies can bite fairly hard during play behavior but can be taught to be gentle and claws can easily be trimmed.

If you have questions, please consult your veterinarian directly if the health and welfare of your animal is in question. This care sheet is just a beginning and is not intended to be your entire education about kinkajous.