New Owner's Guide

A few things to know about your new companion.

First of all, Ball Pythons make great pets but you have to know what you are getting into and be willing to commit for 30 years or more and provide adequate husbandry, food, and vet care when necessary.

Average Size: Hatchlings 10+ inches, adults 3 to 5 feet. (6 feet is not impossible but rare).

Temperatures

You will need to provide your Ball Python with a warm side between 90-94 F (32.5-34.5 C) degrees and a cool side between 80-84 F (27-29 C) degrees.

Humidity

You should provide your Ball Python with a constant 50%-60% humidity level. This level can be increased to 70% during the shedding period if necessary.

Feeding

Young BP can be fed a prey slightly smaller than the girth size once every 5 to 7 days.

Adults can be fed a small rat (4 weeks old 55-85 grams) or 3 to 5 mice (whichever work best and/or is more convenient for the keeper) once a week.

Remember if you chose to feed live you must always supervise feeding and never leave a prey unattended with your snake.

Do not handle your Ball Python for the next 48 hours following feeding. If handle to soon after a meal this could lead to regurgitation.

Supply Check list

1 Enclosure

Your enclosure should not be too big, the bigger the enclosure the more stress you will cause to your Ball Python, remember that in their natural environment they spend 70 to 80 % of their time in a tight termite mount.

You can use a glass tank; keep in mind that is you do it will be harder to control temperatures and humidity.

If you get a baby you will only need a 10 gallons tank to start with and if you chose an adult a 30/40 gallons tank is all you will ever need. Use the rule of thumb: The enclosure should be 2/3 of the length of your Ball Python.

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A lot of people choose plastic tubs (Sterilite or Rubbermaid), which allow an easier control of the temperatures and humidity and make Ball Pythons feel secure.

When it comes to plastic tubs here are the sizes you will need according to your Ball Python's size (Remember you will need a drill or soldering wand to make holes for airflow)

No matter which enclosure you choose remember to secure the lid as Ball Pythons are real escape artists.

1 UTH (Under Tank Heater)

Here are some products that will allow you to provide belly heat and achieve the required gradient temperatures in your enclosure: Ultratherm Heat Pads, T Rex Cobra Pads and Flexwatt Heat Tape (Unlike some others they do not stick permanently to the enclosure).

1 Thermostat

Regardless of the device you choose to provide heat you will need a thermostat, this will allow you to maintain proper temperatures and avoid over-heating.

I would highly recommend you to invest in a digital thermostat such as Ranco ETC-111000 or Johnson on the lower end, or Herpstat Digital Proportional Thermostat or Helix on the higher end, they might seem expensive but they are worth it. Keep in mind that if you get a cheap thermostat like the ESU 1 outlet or 3 outlets starting at 25 dollars you will get what you paid for, considering how long your BP will live, you will want to invest in something durable, reliable and safe.

2 Hides

Provide one hide on each side of the enclosure. Ideal hides must be dark, tight (All sides touching your Ball Python's body) and identical so your Ball Python does not choose between security and thermo-regulation. In my opinion the best hides are ESU/Zilla Creature Cubbyholes.

1 Water Dish

Contrary to what many believe the water dish does not have to be big enough for your Ball Python to soak (Healthy, mite free BP rarely soak).

1 Thermometer/Hygrometer

When it comes to temperatures and humidity you cannot guess, you MUST know. (Avoid stick and dial devices as they are not accurate). To get an accurate reading I would recommend a digital device such as Acu-Rite Hygrometer/Thermometer that can be found at Walmart for 12$ or Zilla Terrarium_Hygrometer/Thermometer.

Substrate

Here are some substrates that can be used in your BP's enclosure: Newspaper - Paper Towel – Aspen - Repti-bark - Cypress Mulch etc. DO NOT use pine or cedar bedding as they contain phenols that can be toxic to your snake.

New owner FAQ

I just purchased a Ball Python, now what?

Since BP are shy by nature it will take some time for your new companion to adjust to his new environment.

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Set him up in his enclosure and leave him alone for a wee, do not handle your snake during that week unless it is absolutely necessary.

Once a week has passed offer food, if you are successful you will be able to handle your new companion 48 hours after his first meal, if you are not try again a week later keeping handling to a minimum.

Why is my baby nippy?

Remember that young BP can sometime be a little nippy; remember that they see you as predator.

Younger BP might need a little time to adjust to their new surrounding as well as their new owner.

Prior to handle your new snake make sure to observe his body language; if your new companion is in a striking position do not attempt to handle him.

Always make him aware of your presence prior to handle him.

Make sure your husbandry is optimum, establish a good feeding routine, feed your new BP in his enclosure and not outside, do not over handle your new companion and be patient.

My ball python will not eat what should I do?

First know that, as long as your BP does not lose too much weight he will be fine, second try to proceed by elimination to find out if there is anything that can be done so your BP resumes feeding.

Check your temperature and make sure they are 80-84 on the cool side, 90-94 on the warm side; of course this means you must have an accurate reading provided by a digital thermometer/hygrometer.

Check your humidity and make sure it is between 50%-60%

Make sure that the enclosure is in a low traffic area.

Make sure your enclosure is the appropriated size, an enclosure that is too big can be overwhelming, and can cause stress over time.

Make sure your hides are tight enough so your Ball Python can snug in, all sides must be touching your BP's body (Avoid log hides as they do not really provide enough security for a Ball Python).

If you handle your Ball Python often, try to limit handling (Too much handling can cause stress)

Ball Pythons will also fast, to catch up if the prey they have eaten in the past were too big or if you fed them too often. Try feeding your Ball Python a prey slightly smaller than the girth size, once a week, and nothing bigger than a small rat (4 weeks old) for an adult BP. This will allow your Ball Python to feed with more consistency.

Important:

Keep in mind that Ball Pythons are not social creatures and do better when house individually.

Purchasing a Ball Python:

www.SteveWiRepTiles.com

When buying a Ball Python from a pet store you have to ask the right questions and examine the snake carefully, check for mites, or any other possible issues.

My advice, rather than getting your animal from a pet store, buy from a breeder, whether it is online or at a reptile expo, buying from a breeder is the guaranty that the animal has been well started and properly cared for, and remember to do your homework and check the Breeder's reputation with the Board Of Inquiry.

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