



New Owner's Guide

A few things to know about your new companion.

First of all, California Kingsnakes make great pets but you have to know what you are getting into and be willing to commit for 15 years or more and provide adequate husbandry, food, and vet care when necessary.

Keep in mind that Kingsnakes are **EXTREMELY** cannibalistic, and should always be house alone.

Description

Scientific name: Lampropeltis Getulus Californiae

Average Size: Hatchlings 8 to 10 inches, adults 3 to 4 feet.

Temperatures

You will need to provide your Kingsnake with a warm side between 82-85 F (28-29.5 C) degrees and a cool side between 72-75 F (22-24 C) degrees.

Humidity

Normal ambient humidity is sufficient for this species; you can however increase the humidity during the shedding period.

Feeding

Feed your Kingsnake an appropriate size meal* every 3 to 5 days (young Kingsnakes) or every 7 days (adults)*

California Kingsnakes can eat mice their entire life, starting with small pinkie mice as hatchlings.

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 Kingsnake for the next 48 hours following feeding. If handle too soon after a meal this could lead to regurgitation.

* An appropriate size prey is a prey item that is equal or slightly bigger than your snake's girth (widest part of your snake's body)

Supply Check list

1 Enclosure

Remember that young California Kingsnake can be subject to stress if the enclosure is too big.

You can use a glass tank.

If you get a baby you will only need a 10 gallons tank to start with and if you chose an adult a 30 gallons tank is all you will ever need.

You can also use plastic tubs (Sterilite or Rubbermaid).

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

- Baby – 6 Quarts (14 1/2"L x 8"W x 4 5/8"H)
- Sub-Adult – 15 Quarts (17"L x 11 1/8"W x 6 3/8"H)
- Adult – 32 Quarts (23 1/2"L x 16 1/4"W x 6 3/8"H)

No matter which enclosure you choose remember to secure the lid as California Kingsnakes 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 Kingsnake will live, you will want to invest in something durable, reliable and safe.

2 Hides

Provide your Kingsnake with at least 2 hiding places, in my opinion the best hides are ESU/Zilla Creature Cubbyholes, they are cozy, affordable and easy to clean.

1 Water Dish

Contrary to what many believe the water dish does not have to be big enough for your California Kingsnake to soak.

1 Thermometer

When it comes to temperatures 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 thermometer.

Substrate

Here are some substrates that can be used in the enclosure: Newspaper - Paper Towel or Aspen work great with Kingsnakes. **DO NOT** use pine or cedar bedding as they contain phenols that can be toxic to your snake.

Purchasing a California Kingsnake:

When buying a California Kingsnake 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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