

# Why choose FERRETS AS PETS?

**A**re you looking for an energetic pet who fits in small spaces? Then a ferret just may be the perfect pal for you. She'll sleep the day away in a small cage while you're at work—and be ready to play the second you hit the door.

There are more than 7 million pet ferrets in the United States. They're much smaller than the average dog or cat, but they make up for it with their big personalities. Friendly, comical, curious, and affectionate, you might find this pet inspecting your clean laundry basket or curled up on the couch catching some shut-eye.

## Vital statistics

### Size

Your ferret is quite comfortable in a small enclosure in your apartment or home—as long as you offer her plenty of playtime outside the cage. Although males are larger than females, ferrets usually weigh less than 5 pounds.

### Noise level

Your neighbors won't mind this soft-spoken pet. Ferrets don't bark, chirp, or yowl, but they will hiss and chuckle during playtime and squeal or scream if they're frightened or in pain.

### Personality

Ferrets are notoriously curious and outgoing. They love to leap, climb, and explore—the world is their playground. Their fearless nature means they may jump from high places or run into objects—behavior that can get your ferret into a bundle

of trouble. These pets play hard for short periods and then take lengthy naps. But once they wake up, they're ready to play again.

Ready to learn more about these petite dynamos? Check out these questions to see if a ferret will suit your lifestyle:

### Will a ferret fit into your furred family?

If your family includes dogs or cats, your friendly ferret's ready to jump right into the fray—just remember to supervise your pets closely at first. Introduce dogs and cats to your ferret through the cage so they can see and smell your new pet without touching. Then let them interact while you supervise. Why? Dogs, especially terriers or hunting breeds, may mistake your furry friend for a between-meals snack. And even the laziest house-cat may pounce when this lively pet scampers by. In addition, ferrets' playful teasing and nipping may frighten or antagonize other furred family members.

Some pets will never accept a ferret, so you may need to permanently separate them. Ferrets may tussle with each other when introduced, but most ferrets enjoy the companionship of their own species.

One warning: Birds, rabbits, and rodents may trigger your ferret's hunting instincts, so keep your carnivorous friend away from these pets.

### Are you ready to play?

Ferrets love to snuggle down into

your arms or play a rousing game of jump and run—your pint-sized pet may even follow you around the house and “help” with the housework. Ferrets get very excited when you come home, and some may even dazzle you with a tumbling floor-show.

Although they enjoy people, you can leave ferrets alone for long periods of time, which makes them good pets for working people. Most ferrets are quite content in their cage if you provide plenty of fresh food and water and a cozy place to hunker down and nap.

### Does your city or state allow ferrets?

Before you adopt a ferret, check local regulations. Some cities and states forbid ferret ownership, and some areas require a license. Because

states don't list these pets as domestic animals, wildlife or conservation departments often will enforce local regulations.

