

Common Breed

The name Axolotl is derived from the Aztec Language of Nahuatl. There are a few different translations of the name Axolotl, but some of the most popular translations are 'Water Dog', 'Water Doll', 'Water Slave' and 'Servant of the water'. The name also has connections with the Aztec God Xolotl, who is believed to have turned into an Axolotl in Aztec mythology.

Axolotls are part of the Ambystoma family, which means they are closely related to Tiger Salamanders and in the Caudata classification of amphibians.

Description: There are 5 different colour variations in Axolotls. The wild types are either olive green to dark grey or brown, whilst the black, albino and leucistic (golden coloured) Axolotls are more typically found in the pet trade.

All Axolotls keep their larval appearance throughout their lives and have 3 noticeable gills branching out from either side of their neck area. These gills have a feathery appearance. Axolotls also have four lizard like legs and a long, flat tail.

All amphibians require somewhere to hide and may become stressed if this is not provided.



Supply list

Here's a list of the necessities you'll need to take home to help your new Axolotl stay healthy and happy. Please ask one of our pet experts to help you choose these items.

Home: 20 gallon glass aquarium with tight fitting lid to prevent escapes

Thermometer

Food: Frozen blood worms, daphnia and live prey insects.

Filter: A typical aquarium filter system with a gentle flow

Substrate: Large size aquarium gravel, pebbles or stones.

Decorations: Bogwood, logs, stones and cork bark aquarium decorations. Live plants can be used in your aquarium, but Axolotls are known to sometimes get their gills entangled in some plants so care should be taken when choosing plants for the aquarium

Extras

- ❖ Books and magazines
- ❖ Cage cleaner and disinfectant (Read and follow label instructions)

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AXOLOTL



Scientific Name: *Ambystoma mexicanum*

Also called the Mexican Walking Fish or Water Dog

Experience Level: Intermediate

Pet lifespan: up to 10 years

Pet Size: 10 to 12 inches

Traits & Behavior

Origin: Mexico. The only place that they can be found in the wild is in the canals of the former Xochimilcho Lake, where they are now considered to be an endangered species. They were originally also found in Lake Chalco in Mexico, but this lake has since been drained and Axolotls can no longer be found there.

Habitat: Axolotls are a fully aquatic species that appreciate heavily vegetated waters and freshwater lakes at high altitudes. They prefer cool water, as the water from the lake of their origin is glacier fed and cool throughout the year.

Temperament: The only thing to worry about with Axolotls is their predatory tendencies. They will generally eat smaller tank mates, and will even eat the limbs of other Axolotls even if similar sized. It is advised to keep your Axolotl singly to avoid this, even if the limbs will grow back eventually.

Some people may say that it is ok to keep Axolotls with aquarium fish, but this is not advised. Not only is there a chance that the Axolotl may eat the fish, the fish may also try to eat your Axolotl's gills causing damage to your Axolotl.



Nutrition

Axolotls are carnivorous and should be fed every 3-4 days with a varied diet of appropriately sized prey items, such as bloodworms, earthworms, crickets, blackworms, whiteworms, and lean meat, small pieces of shrimp, daphnia, mosquito larvae, very small snails and appropriately sized fish pellets. Feed just as much as they can comfortably eat within 10 minutes.

Interesting Fact

Axolotls were once a part of the staple diet of the ancient Aztec people and can still be bought in modern Mexico as a food item. They were also used in some Aztec medicines.

Health

Axolotls are great first amphibians for beginners, because they are relatively easy to care for. They are also a very hardy species, so it is unlikely that your pet will become ill.

Axolotls are not adapted to live on land, so will dehydrate and die quickly if they escape and are not placed back in the water in time.

Prolonged exposure to temperatures above 23°C can cause your Axolotl to suffer from heat stress, so measures need to be taken if you cannot maintain temperatures below this.

Habitat

Housing: Minimum 20 gallon

Substrate: large aquarium gravel, pebbles, marbles and large rocks can be used.

Cage placement: Out of direct sunlight.

Temperatures: 10-20°C (50-68°F) about room temperature

PH level: around 7

Water: Tap water must be de-chlorinated to remove harmful chemicals. Axolotl's need at least 12" of water to swim in.

Things to remember

Lifting & Handling: Axolotls do not like being handled and handling should be avoided. An aquarium net can be used to move your Axolotls safely to another tank during cleaning, but care must be taken to ensure that you do not damage their delicate gills whilst doing so.

Lighting: Axolotl should be kept out of direct sunlight as they have sensitive eyes and do not like bright lights. Aquarium lights are also not recommended. Natural sunlight should suffice.

Safety & Cleanliness: Please remember that all pets may bite or scratch, and may transmit a disease to humans. Keep your pet's home clean and wash your hands before and after cleaning their home.