

How Old Is The World's Oldest Great Dane?

Beloved by dog owners the world over, the Great Dane is famous for its large size, unique build, and gentle demeanor. Unfortunately, its physical characteristics are accompanied by quite a few health issues that don't affect many smaller dogs. The unfortunate result is that these gentle giants have an average lifespan of about seven years.

However, there are many Great Danes that become outliers and live longer than expected, especially when given a healthy diet, enough exercise, and a happy, healthy environment. Read on to learn more about some of the longest-lived Great Danes.

About Great Danes

[Great Danes](#) are among the biggest of the big dogs, typically weighing between 100-175 pounds and standing between 30-40 inches tall. Originating in Germany, they were originally bred as boarhounds by the German nobility. Despite their origins and imposing size, these dogs are incredibly gentle and friendly, and are considered terrific companions for people of all ages.

Great Dane Lifespans

Sadly, Great Danes have a lifespan far shorter than most smaller dogs: [about seven years](#), on average. This is a trend among large breeds, but it can also be attributed to a lack of genetic diversity.

A Great Dane's size and shape put increased stress on its joints, bones, and heart, which can lead to conditions such as hip dysplasia and heart failure. However, the most common cause of death in Great Danes is bloat, which is the twisting of the stomach after it fills with gas.

On the bright side, Great Danes have at least one thing in common with humans: their lives can potentially be extended by eating healthy. A diet consisting of high-quality ingredients is a common trait among the longest-lived Great Danes.

In addition, even though their shape prevents them from being the most active dogs, they still benefit from a moderate amount of exercise. Finally, many believe that these gentle animals live longer in happy homes with lots of comfort, affection, and love!

The Oldest Great Danes On Record

So who are the oldest Great Danes to ever live? Unfortunately, that may be an impossible question to answer. A Google search can give you reports of Great Danes that lived for 13, 15, or even 17 years, but these reports are extremely difficult to verify due to a lack of documentation.

However, a few [Great Danes](#) have had proof of their age and received worldwide recognition for living longer than expected. Let's meet some of them now:

Gibson

The oldest of 12 pups, [Gibson](#) the Harlequin Great Dane (named for their black and white coats), was born on April 26, 2002, and lived with his owner Sandy in Grass Valley, California. A certified therapy dog, Gibson was actually quite famous, and appeared on television with numerous celebrities, including Jay Leno, Ellen Degeneres, and Oprah Winfrey. A beloved dog, even overseas, Gibson died on August 7, 2009, at age 7 after a battle with cancer.

Giant George

Standing at 3'7", the aptly named [Giant George](#) was born on November 17, 2005. Though he was so strong he once dented a wall by wagging on it, George was famous for his gentle nature and his friendliness around children. According to owners Dave and Christine, George quickly bonded with their newborn children and kept a watchful eye over them. Unfortunately, George eventually passed away on October 17, 2013, a month shy of his eighth birthday.

Freddy

Born in 2012, [Freddy](#) was actually recognized by Guinness World Records for being the oldest and the biggest Great Dane alive. Pretty impressive for the runt of the litter! The 3'4" gentle giant lived in Norfolk, UK, surrounded by friends and family: owner Claire, dog sister Fleur (born a few minutes after Freddy), and even seven-year-old human neighbor Erin, whose voice Freddy [recognized](#) over the phone. The beloved Freddy [lived to be 8 ½ years old](#) before passing away in January 2021.

Fun fact: Freddy, George, and Gibson all held the Guinness record for "World's Tallest Dog" in their lifetimes!

Pirate

The longest-lived Great Dane on this list so far, [Pirate](#) lived to be a whopping 11 ½ years old. This adopted dog lived with owners Sarah and Laurence for over a decade, outliving his older brother, Digby, by a few years. Sarah attributed his long life to a custom diet consisting mostly of chicken, along with a loving, happy environment. Though Pirate passed away in November 2020, his long life is a testament to the power of a healthy diet.

Today's Oldest Living Great Danes

So who is the oldest living Great Dane today? This is also a challenging question for the same reasons as the last. Furthermore, the answer is constantly changing due to the short life expectancy of the Great Dane. That being said, several long-lived canines may have a claim to the title of the oldest Great Dane alive. Let's introduce a few of the contenders:

Stella

Adopted by owners Jeffrey and Becky in 2008, this Hixson, Tennessee resident might be the oldest living Great Dane in the US at an impressive 13 years old. Along with diet and exercise, her owners took an extra step: having her stomach attached to her abdomen to prevent bloat. Since bloat is the number one Great Dane killer, this procedure appears to have paid off for [Stella](#).

Millie

The now 14-year-old [Millie](#) may be the oldest Dane in the UK. This still-active Dane lives in Sunderland, UK, with her owner Craig, his daughter Jess, and chihuahua Tilly.

Maggie Mae

Lisa of Florida claims that her Dane, [Maggie Mae](#), is a whopping 16 years old. She attributes her exceptional longevity to a lifetime of love... and chicken. Sound familiar? If all of these and the above accounts are true, Maggie might be the oldest Great Dane alive today, or ever for that matter.

The Oldest Great Danes Around

As you can see, the dogs in the second list have less fanfare than those in the first. It may be surprising that the media recognizes an 8-year-old Great Dane for its age, but one that's 13 years old or more has received little attention. This could be due to a lack of documented proof, or because the owner prefers an anonymous life for themselves and their pet. There may even be Great Danes older than any of these that haven't received any recognition at all.

As mentioned before, identifying legitimate claims to the title of oldest Great Dane in the world is a challenging task. However, there is one thing we can learn from what we know: with a healthy diet, just enough exercise, and a life of love, Great Danes can live far longer than expected and bring joy to their families for years to come.