

5 Top Reasons Why Your Guinea Pig Is A Picky Eater

It's pretty baffling when your guinea pig is a picky eater. After all, we often assume that guinea pigs have a large appetite considering their tendency to nibble on anything.

However, if your guinea pigs are only eating some food and leaving out the others, it could be a cause of concern. For one, they might not get enough nutrients, affecting their health.

Then there's the likelihood of teeth overgrowth. Guinea pigs do not just eat for nutrition. They must constantly chew on something to ensure their teeth are not growing too much.

So, the best thing to do is know why your guinea pigs are becoming picky with their food. It could be part of their nature as guinea pigs, but their past and present living environment could also influence it.

If you're wondering why your guinea pig is selective when it comes to food, there's a chance it could be one of these reasons.

1. Naturally Picky: They're Foragers

When guinea pigs are picky eaters, it might not be because of the food per se. But it could be due to their nature as food foragers.

Guinea pigs in the wild would scavenge for food in their environment and choose ones they like. In short, they are not the kind of animals that just eat whatever they want.

They gather fruits and vegetables familiar to their palate. With that, they might leave some nutritious foods that go against their taste. Likewise, it is far more fulfilling for guinea pigs to gather or eat their food than just have them handed over.

Simply put, when you get a guinea pig, you should expect that at some point, they can be picky eaters since it is embedded in their DNA as foragers.

However, even though this behavior is innate, it doesn't mean that you should just turn a blind eye. One thing you can do is set up an environment where they can practice their foraging skills.

2. They Are Not Used to Different Types of Veggies

If your guinea pig was rehomed, naturally, they were already exposed to a particular way of living. But, of course, that includes their diet.

So, if your guinea pig is a picky eater, there's a high chance that they are simply unfamiliar with the type of vegetable you're serving.

In some cases, they never had other foods apart from pellets and hay, probably because their previous owner never introduced variety in their diets.

Moreover, it could also have something to do about quantity. Guinea pigs can tolerate small portions of veggies, but some may find it unappealing when there's a lot in their bowl.

If your guinea pig is a bit older, it could be more challenging to introduce new fruits and vegetables as they develop food preferences early in their lives. Nonetheless, it's not an impossible task.

With that, younger guinea pigs are more likely to get over their selective attitude towards these vegetables.

3. They Just Don't Like Them.

Sometimes there is no special reason as to why your guinea pig is picky with certain types of food. Perhaps they simply don't like it, and that's okay.

After researching about the guinea pig diet and providing fruits and veggies that most experts recommend, learning that your guinea pig doesn't like them can be frustrating.

For example, you decided to introduce bell peppers to your cavy. You've read that they are nutritious, and most guinea pigs like them. However, your cavy seemed to be repulsed by bell pepper. This could just be because bell pepper does not match your guinea pig's taste.

It's the same with us humans. You may love to eat tuna sandwiches while others are not fans of it. It all boils down to your personal taste or preference.

4. They Didn't Have an Older Guinea Pig Around to Tell Them That the Food Is "Safe."

Guinea pigs are not meant to live on their own.

Part of the reason is that if they are alone, especially in their growing years, they might experience difficulties behaving as guinea pigs. Naturally, this includes understanding which foods are safe to eat and which ones should be set aside.

In the wild, guinea pigs always move in herds for protection. Since they are considered prey, it is innate for guinea pigs to take extra precautions in everything they do.

For example, in terms of assessing food, guinea pigs prioritize their protection over a delicious eating experience. Hence, if guinea pigs cannot judge if food is safe, they would probably leave it out.

Having an older guinea pig around will give confidence to the young ones to eat certain foods. It's a principle of modeling that is also pretty common among humans.

5. The Conditions Allow Them To be Picky Eaters.

A guinea pig that is selective regarding food may have something to do with the type of living setup imposed by the current or previous owner.

However, if the last owner has been very keen with their diet and all of the sudden your cavy became picky eaters, it could be due to some changes you introduced.

For example, if you have been feeding your piggy junk foods, they may refuse to eat other foods, especially healthy ones.

Feeding your cavy these types of foods can alter their palate. In some cases, they will stop eating their usual diet of hay, pellet, and organic fruits and vegetables. Instead, they will simply go for the unhealthy snacks you give them.

What Should You Do To Get Your Guinea Pig To Stop Being So Picky?

If being selective with food goes beyond a phase, it can be alarming for your guinea pig.

So, it's only fitting to look into practical ways to address these feeding issues. So, here are things you can do to stop your guinea pigs from being picky eaters.

1. Create a forage box.

A forage box will not only improve your guinea pig's appetite but will allow them to exercise food gathering, which is an innate instinct for cavy.

Just grab a small box and fill it with hay, flowers, and other natural items. Then, hide the foods under the haystack and let them do some foraging.

2. Introduce a variety of foods in their diet.

If you introduce more than one type of food, you might get more information about which ones get the approval of your cavy. However, schedule a day for this technique and avoid doing it regularly as your guinea pig might have higher expectations during their meal.

3. Limit or remove certain foods to push them to try healthy ones.

If you have been used to feeding junk foods to your cavy, it's high time you stop doing so. Likewise, try to limit other types of foods that are high in sugar to regulate your cavy's diet.

4. Give food in small portions.

Feed your cavy small portions of fruits and veggies. You can chop them up or slice them into tiny pieces to help your cavy with the food consumption.

Which Foods Should I Try To Give To A Picky Guinea Pig?

If a guinea pig is a picky eater, experts recommend sticking to pellets first. This is because pellets are fortified with vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients. Hence, if you can secure their diet consisting of pellets, you don't have to worry about your cavy's nutritional intake.

Conclusion

To wrap it up, your guinea pig might be a picky eater because of the following reasons:

1. They have foraging tendencies that make them crave specific foods.
2. They were not exposed to different veggies.
3. They simply don't like them.
4. They don't have an older guinea pig that teaches them about food.
5. They were given unhealthy foods first.

However, the good news is that there are several ways to correct a guinea pig's selective attitude towards food. Just remember always to be patient and understanding of your cavy's ordeal.