



Axolotl *Ambystoma mexicanum*

- The axolotl is an aquatic salamander native only to lakes Xochimilco and Chalco in Mexico City, Mexico
- They are paedomorphic, meaning their juvenile larvae stage features are retained as adults
- Axolotls are gray, blackish, brown to olive with a finned tail and large feathery gills. Albinos and other morphs are also widely available.
- If provided the proper care, axolotls can attain longevity of 10-15 years or more.

Size

Axolotls typically reach up to 10”.

Housing

Housing must be sealed and escape proof with a secured lid or aquarium hood. Axolotls are fully aquatic and never use dry land. Axolotls require a minimum of a 15-20 gallon aquarium. Use a quality canister filter and conditioner to help maintain cleanliness inside the aquarium but use an outlet. Axolotls do not tolerate distinct water flow as many fish do. Allow aquarium to cycle for at least 2-3 weeks prior to introduction of the axolotl. Provide caves, plants, logs, or other furnishings for added security and hiding opportunities. Substrate is not required, but larger pebbles that cannot be swallowed, or aquarium sand can be used safely with axolotls.

If keeping multiple axolotls within a single tank, provide adequate space and food to prevent them from nipping one another. Do not keep fish with axolotls.

Axolotls do not require any special lighting. Maintain these salamanders within a temperature range of low 60's to low 70 degrees F. Do not exceed 75 degrees F.

Feeding/Diet

The axolotl is carnivorous, and in the wild they will feed on a variety of aquatic insects and other invertebrates, and small fish.

In captivity, feed axolotls nightcrawlers, frozen thawed bloodworms, pieces of lean beef, and cooked shrimp. Pinky mice can be fed to axolotls, but sparingly, if at all.

No additional vitamin, mineral, or nutrient supplements are required to maintain axotols if the above diet is followed.

Handling

Axolotls are very delicate, soft bodied amphibians that are nearly comprised entirely of cartilage rather than true bone. As with all amphibians, their skin is soft and permeable; Wash hands thoroughly and avoid any lotions, creams, or oils before handling any amphibian.

Handling axolotls should be minimized whenever possible and only when absolutely necessary. Use a fine mesh net to move capture and move axolotls and to avoid injuring them.

Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens

