

# **THE TORTOISE HUT**

## **Indian Star Tortoise Care Sheet**

**Breed:** Indian Star Tortoise

**Scientific name:** *Geochelone elegans*

The Indian Star Tortoise is a beautiful species that requires appropriate heating, UVB lighting, humidity and a varied, high fibre diet to remain healthy. Please follow the guidance below to help your tortoise settle into its new home.

### **1. Housing**

- Provide a minimum enclosure size of 4ft, either a tortoise table or suitable vivarium. We find vivariums are better suited to this species.
- Ensure there is sufficient space to explore, exercise and have access to different temperature zones.
- The enclosure must have suitable heating and lighting.
- Provide hides and areas where your tortoise can feel secure.

### **2. Lighting and heating**

- Use a T5 12% UVB light.
- Provide a basking bulb connected to a dimming thermostat.
- UVB and basking lights should be on for approximately 12 hours daily.
- Switch daytime lighting off at night.
- Provide additional night-time heating using a deep heat projector or ceramic heat emitter if required.
- Monitor temperatures regularly using digital thermometers.

### **3. Temperature requirements**

| <b>Area</b>  | <b>Target temperature</b> |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| Cool end     | 25°C                      |
| Hot end      | 35°C                      |
| Basking area | Approximately 35–38°C     |

Ensure your tortoise can move freely between warmer and cooler areas.

### **4. Diet and feeding**

Feed once daily, offering a varied, high-fibre diet.

Recommended weeds and plants:

- Dandelions
- Plantain
- Clover
- Teasel
- Campanula
- Other suitable edible weeds

When weeds are scarce:

You can offer a variety of:

- Crispy Florette salad leaves
- Lamb's lettuce
- Romaine lettuce

Always ensure food is fresh, clean and free from pesticides.

## 5. Supplements

- Sprinkle a small pinch of calcium and vitamin D3 powder over food daily, following appropriate veterinary guidance.
- Ensure your UVB lighting is appropriate and replaced according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

## 6. Water

- Provide fresh, clean drinking water every day.
- Use a shallow water dish that your tortoise can easily climb into and out of.
- Ensure the water is shallow enough to prevent the risk of drowning.

## 7. Bathing

Bathing helps maintain hydration.

- For the first week, place your tortoise in a shallow container of comfortably warm water every morning for 5–10 minutes.
- After the first week, bathe once or twice weekly.
- Never leave your tortoise unattended while bathing.
- Ensure the water is shallow and does not cover the nostrils.

Important Never use anything other than plain water on your tortoise's shell. Do not apply oils, creams etc.

## 8. Cleaning and hygiene

- Spot-clean dirty areas every couple of days.
- Remove uneaten food and waste regularly.
- Carry out a full enclosure clean every 4–6 weeks, or as necessary.
- Always ensure the enclosure is clean, dry where appropriate and hygienic.

## 9. Health and wellbeing

Keep an eye on your tortoise's:

- Appetite and feeding habits.
- Activity levels and general behaviour.
- Eyes, nose and breathing.
- Shell condition and growth.

- Weight and hydration.

Contact a reptile specialist veterinarian if you notice any changes in behaviour, loss of appetite, nasal discharge, wheezing, swollen eyes or unusual shell changes.

Arrange routine health checks with an experienced tortoise veterinarian.

## 10. Useful websites

For further information and advice, we recommend:

- [The Tortoise Trust](http://www.tortoisetrust.com) [www.tortoisetrust.com](http://www.tortoisetrust.com)
- [The Tortoise Table](http://www.thetortoisetable.org.uk) [www.thetortoisetable.org.uk](http://www.thetortoisetable.org.uk)
- [The Tortoise Hut](http://www.tortoisehut.co.uk) [www.tortoisehut.co.uk](http://www.tortoisehut.co.uk)

## Need help or advice?

If you experience any problems or have questions about your tortoise's care, please get in touch.

The Tortoise Hut

07827 224894

[torthut@gmail.com](mailto:torthut@gmail.com)

[www.tortoisehut.co.uk](http://www.tortoisehut.co.uk)

A final reminder: Indian Star Tortoises need consistent, specialist care. Good heating, UVB lighting, suitable humidity, hydration and a varied diet are essential for a healthy, happy tortoise.