

SMALL TORTOISES

(Russian, Greek, Marginated, and Hermann's Tortoises)

(*Testudo*)

ZILLA
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FAST FACTS

- Live a very long time (50-100 years)
- Originate from dry areas around the Mediterranean Sea
- Must have escape-proof housing
- Require a thermal gradient and basking area
- Herbivores that need supplementation
- Handle gently and deliberately

FRIENDS FOR LIFE

Tortoises are fascinating and gentle reptiles known for their intelligence. When choosing a tortoise as a pet, the biggest factor to remember is that their lifespan can average anywhere between 50 to 100 years! Ensure you're prepared to provide a forever home through life's changes and you'll have a lifelong companion.

Russian, Greek, Marginated, and Hermann's tortoises are four closely related species of tortoises that are part of the *Testudo* genus. This care sheet will focus on these species as they are among the most commonly owned pet turtles and share plenty in common. They will stay relatively small compared to other species, making them suitable for any home size.



NATIVE HABITAT

The *Testudo* genus of tortoises originate from northern Africa, western Asia, and parts of Europe. They are used to dry, arid environments and can be found in various places like rocky hillsides, Mediterranean scrub, fields and meadows, and dry forests. *Testudo* tortoises are daytime animals. You'll often see them out in the daylight, munching on grasses and other plants.



FEEDING AND DIET

Testudo tortoises are herbivores and will graze upon a variety of **grasses**, flowers, and other plant matter. They can be fed [Zilla® Munchies Vegetable Mix](#), [Zilla® Herbivore Medley](#), and other fresh veggies. When feeding, spray the veggies with [Zilla® Vitamin Supplement Spray](#) and [Zilla® Calcium Supplement Spray](#) for additional calcium and vitamin D3, along with other essential nutrients. For hydration, soak your tortoise in lukewarm water once a week and provide a shallow water dish or pan within the enclosure.

Check the [Zilla® Feeding Guide](#) for a list of appropriate food options.



RECOMMENDED HOUSING AND ACCESSORIES

Testudo tortoises require escape-proof housing. If housed indoors, a **36" Zilla® QuickBuild Terrarium** makes a great, convenient home. Substrates that enable burrowing such as a [Zilla® Lizard Litter](#), [Zilla® Bark Blend](#), and [Zilla® Jungle Mix](#) are good choices to help them feel at home.

Outdoor pens can be a great option in temperate climates. They provide ample access to the natural sunlight these tortoises love. Tortoises love digging, so the pen's outer perimeter should be at least 9-12" deep underground, with a height of at least 12". Be sure that the enclosure is sealed to keep out predators. The enclosure should aim to be at least be 8 x 4 feet in total size, or 32 square feet.

Spot clean the enclosure for urates, feces, or uneaten food at least twice per week, and every 2 months, remove all substrate and clean and disinfect the tank and décor with products like [Zilla® Terrarium Cleaner](#).



TEMPERATURE AND LIGHTING

Tortoises require a thermal gradient – a warm side and a cool side. Ideal temperatures range from 75-85°F on the cool side and 80-85°F on the warm side. Provide a basking area on the warm side around 95-100°F.

All tortoises require UVB lighting. A [Zilla® Heat & UVB Basking Fixture](#) with a [Zilla® 50W Mini Halogen Bulb](#) and a Zilla Desert Series 50 UVB Bulb will provide the correct heat and UVB needed for your tortoise to thrive.



HANDLING

Hatchling tortoises may be shy and hide in their shells at first. As you begin to handle, feed, and be around them more, they will become accustomed to you. Over time they can even learn their name and will associate you with food and activities. Handle your tortoise gently and deliberately. As they grow with you, they will become more and more personable and interactive.



**BE SURE TO WASH YOUR HANDS
AFTER HANDLING ANY REPTILES**

