

## FROM THE STORE TO YOUR HOME...THE NECESSITIES!

**Cage:** At least 14" x 24" x 12" high but bigger is better. Get the largest cage you can invest in. Wire cages are preferred over aquariums because of better ventilation, but avoid wire floors made of 1" x 1/2" mesh which can trap and injure legs.

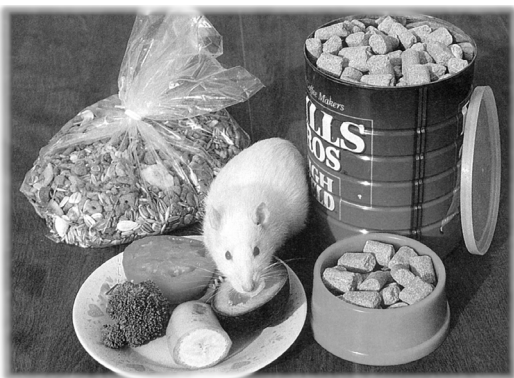
**Toys:** A necessity, not an option! A large solid plastic exercise wheel is highly recommended, plus tubes, ladders, branches, boxes, ropes and chew toys.

**Food:** Rat blocks are the best basic diet and can be offered in a special dispenser to keep them off the cage floor. Supplement with fresh foods such as fruits, broccoli, kale, bok choy, and tomato, as well as cooked sweet potato and beans.

**Bed:** Rats need a cozy place to sleep. Choose from a box, grass ball, hammock or plastic house. Hanging these in the cage saves floor space.

**Litter and Bedding:** Avoid pine & cedar shavings which are toxic. Choose from aspen, recycled newspaper, grain, or alfalfa pellets (even rabbit food!)

**Water Bottle:** A glass or hard plastic bottle and a bottle brush for cleaning will help keep the water clean.



## ABOUT DEBBIE "THE RAT LADY"



Debbie Ducommun has been "The Rat Lady" since 1985 and is internationally recognized as an expert on domestic rats, especially on rat health. She has appeared on *The Tonight Show*, *Ripley's Believe It Or Not*, *To Tell the Truth* and *Nigel's Wild Wild World*. She was a consultant on the movie *Ratatouille*.

Ducommun founded The Rat Fan Club in 1992 to educate rat owners, and the non-profit Rat Assistance & Teaching Society in 2003 to educate pet care professionals.

In addition to her care book *Rats*, Debbie has also written *The Complete Guide To Training Rats*. She also writes and publishes the booklet *Rat Health Care*, the most detailed guide available to keeping your rats healthy. If it saves just one trip to the vet it will more than pay for itself.

### FOR ADVICE OR TO ORDER BOOKS OR OTHER MERCHANDISE:

Debbie "The Rat Lady"  
The Rat Fan Club  
857 Lindo Lane  
Chico CA 95973  
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[www.ratfanclub.org](http://www.ratfanclub.org)

# RATS!



## MORE THAN JUST PETS... FRIENDS!

Rats are the most intelligent of all the pocket pets. Just like little dogs, they bond to their owners. They learn their names, come when you call, and can even learn tricks. You'll have endless hours of fun playing with your wonderful rat friends.

## WHY RATS ARE GOOD FRIENDS

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Rats are friendly affectionate animals who love interacting with people. Pet rats are as different from wild rats as puppies are from timber wolves. Pet rats rarely bite and have very little odor, keeping themselves clean with frequent grooming.

Rats are curious and active, and love to play games with people, from hide-n-seek and peek-a-boo to hand wrestling.




### "TWO IS COMPANY..."


Your rats will need lots of interaction with you. They need time out of their cage to play and cuddle with you. At least 30 minutes every day is best.


Rats are extremely social animals and do best with at least one other rat friend so they can play and cuddle when you can't. No amount of human attention can replace the company of another rat. But don't worry, your rats will still be eager to come out and play with you!


## ARE RATS RIGHT FOR YOU?


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 The average lifespan for rats is 2-3 years, but some well-cared for rats can live 4+ years.

 Male rats tend to be bigger than females and less active, making better lap pets. Females are more prone to tumors, although spaying will help prevent these tumors.

 Rats reach sexual maturity at just 5 weeks of age, so females older than this who are housed with males will likely be pregnant.

 Because they are rodents, rats have a tendency to chew on things. Your rats' play area should be "rat-proofed." Remove items you don't want chewed. Some rats also have a tendency to urine-mark, leaving small drops of urine where they walk. (Spaying or neutering reduces this.) Furniture is easily protected with a throw cover.

 Owning rats, just like owning other pets, is a responsibility. Your rats may need veterinary treatment sometime in their lives and this costs the same as for other pets. Health insurance is now available from [www.petinsurance.com](http://www.petinsurance.com).

 Not all vets are knowledgeable about rats. Check with The Rat Fan Club for a referral, and order the *Rat Health Care* booklet for help.

## ADVICE FROM THE EXPERT

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The right information about how to care for your pets can save you money and insure an enjoyable experience. *Rats, Practical, Accurate Advice from the Expert* by Debbie "The Rat Lady" Ducommun, is the most accurate and complete rat care book available.

### The book includes...

- Basic care information including housing, feeding and cleaning.
- How to choose your rats.
- How to teach your rats tricks and games that will provide hours of fun.
- Other fun activities to do with your rats.
- Tips on communicating with your rats.
- How to introduce new rats to each other, as well as to other animals.
- Basic health care information.
- 100 color photos showing rat varieties and the joy of rats!