

The GNC Chinchillas

General Chinchilla Information

Scientific Name

Chinchilla lanigera

Size/Weight/Life Span

Under 1 foot in length, with females being larger than males. They weigh less than a pound in the wild and up to 2 pounds in captivity. Chinchillas live 8 years in the wild and up to 20 years in captivity.



Range

The Andes mountains in Chile.

Diet

Chinchillas eat plants, fruits, and seeds.

Breeding

Chinchillas have a gestation period of around 111 days and usually have a litter size of 2. This gestation period is extremely long for a rodent. A rat's gestation period is only 21 days by comparison. Due to the long gestation period of chinchillas, the babies are born with a full coat of fur and their eyes opened. Within one hour of being born they are able to start walking.

Population Status

Wild chinchillas have been hunted nearly to extinction to support the fur trade. It takes 100-200 chinchillas to make a fur coat. The chinchilla has a conservation status of vulnerable, meaning that there is a high risk of them becoming extinct in the wild. The total wild population is estimated at 2,500-12,000 individuals. Chinchillas are now raised on farms to support the fur industry.

The Softest Fur

Chinchillas are known to have the softest fur of any living animal. Where humans might have 1 or 2 hairs growing from each follicle on their bodies, chinchillas have more than 50 hairs growing from each follicle, giving them the densest fur of any land mammal. Due to the extremely cold climates in which they live, chinchillas don't bath in water. To remove the oils and moisture that gather in their fur, they clean themselves by rolling in dust or volcanic ash.

About the GNC Chinchillas

Our chinchillas have all been born here. Chinchillas like large social groups so all our chinchillas live together in one big family. They eat a commercial chinchilla food and love to munch on hay. Being nocturnal, it's typical to find them all sleeping in a large pile together during the day. Due to their cute faces, gentle disposition, and soft fur, they are one of our most popular attractions.



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