



Betta Care



Betta Splendens, also known as "Bettas" or "Siamese Fighting Fish", are very popular pets. They are recognized for their friendliness and relatively low cost for maintenance and care.

They can live up to three or more years. By following some simple steps your new friend will have a happy and healthy stay with you.

General care

Bettas are a member of the Anabantoid Family (Gouramis are also in this family) and have a back-up breathing system that allows them to breathe surface air, so they do not need an air pump in their tanks, however for ease of cleaning and water quality a filter is very beneficial.

Remember a very gentle filtration system suits Bettas swimming ability and long fins.

If your fish gets sick treat it with an anti-fungal or anti-parasitic medication available at Boylans Garden and Pet. Avoid netting the fish when possible, this can damage their fins, try a small cup (detergent free) instead. Male Bettas cannot live together. They are called Siamese Fighting Fish for a reason! In an aquarium they will fight to the death to protect their living space regardless of the size of the tank.

If you have a large tank, consider having other fish, some Bettas will tolerate tank mates. Avoid getting other fish that are brightly colored, or fish with long flowing fins (Guppies, Goldfish etc) he could mistake them for another Betta! Also avoid other fin rippers such as Barbs, Danios, some Tetras and most Rasboras will work. Bottom feeders such as Corydoras are a good choice, having said that caution should be taken, and we cannot guarantee happy tank mates!

Don't use distilled water because it has all minerals and nutrients removed. Bettas do not naturally live in distilled water and it will harm their health.

A larger tank size is better for a few reasons. If the tank is of a reasonable size your fish has more to do, more room to move, and gets more exercise. You will enjoy watching him more if he can move around and play a bit, also maintaining the tank is less time consuming, the temperature is easier to keep even and it's less stressful for the Betta.

Checklist

- Tank
- Filter (if tank is large enough)
- Heater for winter, temperature ideally needs to be 26-28 degrees Celsius
- Thermometer
- Water Conditioner which removes
- Chlorine and Chloramines
- Bacteria
- Cover for the tank so he won't jump out
- Betta Fish Food (it is high protein)
- Smooth stones or gravel to cover the bottom
- Ornament to decorate your tank, your Betta can rest on it and not drag fins on the gravel when resting

Instead of using liquid bacteria that needs mixing try NEW Active Betta Bio-Active Live Aqueous Solution (it is pre-mixed) or Active Betta Bio-Active Gravel for an easy and trouble free start for your fish.

Choosing Your Betta

A healthy Betta should be:

Color: Is the Betta's color bright and vivid, or very dull and pale. Bettas come in a range of colors, but blues and reds are most common.

Receptiveness: Does the Betta respond to your movements at all. Don't tap the glass, try moving your finger in front of them. Don't be afraid to buy a docile Betta they have many encounters with people during their day, and may be resting.

Health: Are his fins in good condition or are they torn and damaged? Are his eyes in good shape and are there any odd lumps (parasites) on his body. If you see anything odd consider another Betta.

The One: Sometimes the fish chooses you. Get the one that appeals to you.

Feeding

Feed your Betta once a day.

Don't over feed your Betta, no matter how hungry or cute he seems!

Remember your Betta's stomach is about the size of his eyeball. A diet high in protein yet varied is important, (but they should mostly eat pellets) Flake, live food, freeze dried, pellets whatever works best for you, but vary it.

Without variety he may get constipated, which resembles swim bladder disease, (the Betta can't keep his balance). All is not lost. Cook a pea until squishy, peel it, and break it up into betta-bite-sized pieces. Feed the pea 3 times for one day and then nothing for 1-2 days, it should clear up the problem.

Live food may be exciting to watch, but freeze dried products are safer because they are free of potential parasites.

Clean up any food that isn't eaten (in smaller tanks you could use a meat baster to suck up the waste).

Housing

In the wild, Bettas inhabit Thai rice fields, living in shallow, still but relatively spacious environments. Consider giving him a decent sized tank to help prolong his life, since waste can build up very quickly, naturally more water is better, a tank around 18 liters is good, and with other fish a tank size of at least 36 liters.



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Set Up

1. **Wash** the inside of the tank, ornaments and gravel (make sure the gravel is very clean) with warm water (no detergents).
2. **Place the tank on a level surface** with a sheet of Styrofoam under it (for larger tanks).
3. **Carefully tip the gravel** into the bottom of the tank.
4. **Gently pour tap or tank water into tank** (don't use distilled water). If your tank is without a lid fill the tank about 8cm lower than the lip, Bettas can jump!
5. **Decorate.** Arrange ornaments and plastic plants (smooth ornaments and silk plants are best they won't tear fins), or live plants in the tank.
6. **Turn on filter and air pump** if you are using them (make sure the filter is very gentle as Bettas cannot cope with turbulent water).
7. **Prepare the water.** Measure the correct amount of water conditioner and tip into the water (Chlorine and Chloramines harm fish, some people may suggest standing ageing the water for a while but it is best to use water conditioner as "aged water" removes Chlorine but not Chloramines and Heavy Metals).
8. **Check the water temperature.** Your tank needs to keep at a constant 26-28 degrees Celsius. A small heater is smart, as the water temperature is often much cooler than room temperature.
9. **Go to Boylans Garden and Pet to get your Betta.**
10. **Take your Betta straight home** with no detours for shopping. This is to minimize temperature fluctuations that will cause stress.
11. **Float the sealed bag with the Betta** in it in the tank water for 5 minutes. This is so the bag water and the tank water become the same temperature. Then pour some tank water into the bag every 5 minutes, 3 times.
12. **Bacteria** needs to be put in the water for your fish's health. Measure the correct amount and tip it into the water 5 minutes before the fish goes in.
13. **Finally!** After 20 minutes use a net to put the Betta in his new home. Remember not to pour the pet shop water into your nice clean tank.

Water Changes

Small Tanks. The smaller your tank, the more often a water change will be needed. Tanks under 4 liters may need a full water change once a week. Have ready a clean bucket of water that is at the same temperature as the tank water, and prepared with **Water Conditioner**, put **Bacteria** in the water a couple of minutes before the fish goes in the water. Scoop your Betta out of his tank with a cup and put aside. tip all the water out of the tank. Clean the tank with warm water only. Clean the gravel and ornaments with warm water only and put back in the tank. Use a net to put the Betta back in his home, discarding the cup of water. If you are organised the water change will only take a few minutes.

Larger Tanks. Do a partial water change.

Replace 1/4 to 1/3rd of the water, add a measured amount of **Water Conditioner and Bacteria** for the replaced water. Use a gravel siphon to clean the gravel, and magnet cleaner or glass scourer to clean a glass tank.