

Ball Python Shopping List



The following information is intended as a basic shopping guide for online and retail purchases. KP Exotics does not offer any guarantees on the safety of any of these product recommendations.

Ball Pythons (*Python regius*) are one of the most commonly kept pet snakes. They are usually calm and they don't get very large, making them a great choice for a pet. Here are some products to look for when shopping for your new pet.

- ✓ Enclosure
- ✓ Substrate
- ✓ Water Bowl
- ✓ Hides (2+)
- ✓ Fake Plants/Clutter
- ✓ Heat Source
- ✓ Thermostat
- ✓ Digital Temperature and Humidity gages
- ✓ IR Temp Gun

ENCLOSURE

The enclosure needed depends on the size of your snake. Use the chart below to determine which is best for your animal. Bigger is NOT better and size matters! Do not put a baby ball python in a 4' enclosure... PVC is best. Front opening glass terrariums are our second choice. Top opening glass terrariums or converted fish tanks can work, especially as baby enclosures, but upgrading to something better should be your goal.

ENCLOSURE SIZE RECOMMENDATION

Snake Size	Tub/Rack Size	Enclosure Size (L x W)	Glass Tank Equivalent
80 – 999 g	28 – 32 qt	24-30" x 12-18"	20 gallon long
1,000 – 1,999 g	32 – 42 qt	36" x 18-24"	40 gallon breeder
2,000 g +	42 – 54 qt	48" x 18-30"	75 gal or 55 gal breeder

*NOTE: If you use a converted fish tank with an add-on screen top, don't forget to use quality cage clips to keep the lid securely fastened. Do NOT use books or other heavy items on the top of the cage. Not only can it be a fire hazard with your heat sources, but you may be surprised at how strong your snake is.

*NOTE #2: If you use a glass enclosure, please see the website for a modification guide. Glass with a screen top is very difficult to maintain the proper temps and humidity for your Ball Python. Mods are needed to ensure your enclosure is appropriate for your pet.

<http://kpexotics.com/Main/2020/10/12/modifying-a-glass-tank-for-a-ball-python>

SUBSTRATE

In most climates, you need a substrate that will hold humidity well.

1st choice: Coconut Husk, the bigger chunky type such as Coco Blox or Pro Coco.

2nd choice: Cypress, such as Forest Floor or No Float Cypress Mulch from a home store.

NEVER use Aspen unless you struggle with humidity that is too high. Aspen molds quickly and does not retain moisture if you mist or add water to it to keep your humidity levels appropriate.

HIDES & DECORATIONS

Your snake needs at least 2 hides that he can fully fit into. These hides need to have just one single opening or entrance. Clutter and decorations should be free of sharp edges and loops/holes that your snake can crawl through. Any holes in rigid decoration (like skulls) should be at least 2.5x the widest part of your snake so there is no possible way they can get stuck.

Dollar and discount stores are great places to buy fake greenery and creative hides. Just wash everything in hot soapy water before putting it in your snake's enclosure.

Ball Pythons do not need a water bowl big enough to soak in, but a large dish can help with humidity, especially placed on the hot side of the enclosure.

HEATING

For an enclosure with a screen top, you want to use a dome with a ceramic heat emitter (CHE) bulb. **DO NOT** get red lights... Your snake can see the light and it is not good for them at night. A ceramic heat bulb or a deep heat projector (DHP) gives off heat with zero light. Dial gauges are not accurate, do not use them.

- ✓ Dome with a ceramic socket rated for at least 150 watts
- ✓ CHE (75 – 100 watt) or DHP (50 – 80 watt)
- ✓ Thermostat to control the dome/heat
- ✓ Digital temp gauges, on hot and cool sides
- ✓ Infrared Temperature Gun to check hot spot surface temps
- ✓ Heat Mat (*optional*) with a second thermostat (*not optional!*)

Ball Pythons do not need belly heat IF ground-level temps are high enough (85-88 degrees on the hot side). A heat mat can be beneficial for digestion if you struggle with your ambient temperatures. ALL heat sources need their own thermostat to regulate them. The thermostat probe needs to be placed between the heat mat and the bottom of your enclosure to keep your snake from getting burned should they decide to burrow down to the heat. A setting of 90-92 degrees for the heat mat will keep your snake safe. Check all probes and thermostats regularly to ensure they are placed and working properly.

If your snake has enough hides and your husbandry is spot-on, he will spend 90% of his life hiding. If your young BP roams the enclosure daily or climbs a lot, then he's likely stressed and unhappy with his environment. **A happy BP is a hidey BP!**

Visit our website for more tips, tricks, and information on Ball Pythons and other reptile species.

<http://kpexotics.com>

