

# 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
- ✓ Heat Source
- ✓ Hides (2+)
- ✓ Fake Plants/Clutter
- ✓ Thermostat
- ✓ Digital Temp and Humidity gauges
- ✓ 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 grams	28 – 32 qt	24-30" x 12-18"	20-gallon long
500 – 1,999 g	32 – 45 qt	36" x 18-24"	40-gallon breeder
1,000 g +	41 – 54 qt	48" x 18-30"	75-90 gal or 55-gal breeder

*\*We do not recommend 120-gallon enclosures or 2' tall enclosures as they are difficult to heat at ground level and the extra height is unnecessary.*

**\*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 any screen top enclosure or 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. Modifications are needed to ensure your enclosure is appropriate for your pet. Three sides of the glass should be insulated with black foam board on the outside. A screen top should have 90% of the screen covered with HVAC foil tape or a silicone mat to keep heat and humidity in the enclosure. Leave a \*square\* around the heat source for ventilation and to avoid hazards.

## SUBSTRATE

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

1<sup>st</sup> choice: Coconut Husk, the bigger chunky type such as Reptichip or Pro Coco.

2<sup>nd</sup> choice: Cypress, such as Forest Floor or No Float Cypress Mulch from a garden 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 SMALL 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 2x 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 near the hot side of the enclosure, but not directly over/over your heat sources to avoid excess bacteria growth in the water.

## 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.

**AVOID white basking heat lights for ball pythons.** They are stressful and unnecessary. Ball Pythons are NOT a basking species.

- ✓ Dome with a ceramic socket rated for at least 150 watts
- ✓ CHE (75 – 150 watt) or DHP (80 – 100 watt)
- ✓ Thermostat to control the dome/heat (*not optional!*)
- ✓ 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 (85-89 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>

