

FREE PRINTABLE

Degu Food List

High in fiber. Low in sugar. Practical for every day.

A quick guide to a varied, plant-based diet, based on veterinary and animal-welfare sources.



THE THREE BASIC RULES

What matters every day

1 Always

Fresh, good-quality hay and clean drinking water must be available at all times.

2 Plant-based

Introduce suitable leafy greens, herbs and grasses gradually and offer a varied selection.

3 Low in sugar

Fruit, dried fruit, molasses and sugary rodent treats should not be fed.

A simple daily routine

Morning

Check and replace the water, top up fresh hay and observe eating behavior.

Throughout the day

Keep high-fiber forage available and divide suitable fresh greens into small portions.

Evening

Remove wilted or spoiled leftovers; check the drinking bottle or bowl for leaks and blockages.

Weekly

Weigh each degu and check weight trends, teeth, coat, chin and eyes.



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The degu food traffic light

The food itself is only part of the picture: quantity, frequency and gradual introduction matter too. Introduce new foods one at a time and slowly.

GREEN

Core diet & rotation

Unlimited hay and water, varied plants

- Good-quality hay: fresh, dry and free from dust and mold; available at all times.
- Clean drinking water: available at all times; replace daily and check the bottle, nozzle or bowl.
- Suitable leafy greens, fresh grasses, wild herbs and flowers - correctly identified and pesticide-free.
- Bitter and leafy salads: chicory, endive, radicchio, lamb's lettuce (corn salad), oak leaf lettuce and rocket (arugula).
- Herbs such as dandelion, parsley and chamomile.
- A small, varied selection of vegetables: cucumber, fennel, kohlrabi, broccoli or bell pepper.
- Safe thin twigs and leaves, for example hazel, willow, birch, hornbeam, apple or pear.

AMBER

Occasionally & sparingly

Small measured amounts, not every day

- Carrot and other sweeter root vegetables only occasionally, in very small pieces.
- One nut, pumpkin seed or sunflower seed at a time as an occasional treat; these are very energy-dense.
- Measure seeds and concentrated feed. The TVT specifies 1 teaspoon of a suitable seed mixture per animal per day.
- Do not offer commercial complete feed as an unlimited extra. Check the ingredients for added sugar, molasses and dried fruit.
- For overweight animals, dental problems, suspected diabetes, young animals or illness, ask a veterinarian to tailor the ration.

RED

Do not feed

Unnecessary or avoidable risk

- Fruit and dried fruit - whether fresh, dried or included in a mix.
- Sugar, honey, syrup, molasses, sugary drops, snack sticks and yogurt treats.
- Plain grain or muesli mixes and uncontrolled energy-dense feed.
- Rabbit, hamster or gerbil food, and chinchilla mixes containing dried fruit.
- Bread, baked goods, breakfast cereals, seasoned foods and other table scraps.
- Salt or mineral licks.
- Unknown or pesticide-treated plants, and spoiled, fermenting or moldy food.

IMPORTANT

Low in sugar does not mean dry food only

Degus need fiber and suitable fresh plant material. According to the TVT, a dry-only ration does not adequately support healthy tooth wear.

How to keep fresh food safe

- Use only correctly identified, pesticide-free plants and wash them thoroughly.
- Introduce one new food at a time, starting with a small amount and increasing it over several days.
- Remove leftovers daily. If stools become soft or your degu seems unwell, stop the new food and seek veterinary advice.

Change slowly, observe, act

A good list only helps if the digestive system has time to adjust and changes are noticed early.

4 STEPS

- 1 Start with only one new food.
- 2 Begin with one small leaf or piece.
- 3 Monitor stools, appetite and behavior for several days.
- 4 Increase slowly only if it is well tolerated.

PELLETS & NUGGETS

Sources take different approaches. The German TVT (2023) considers compressed pellets unsuitable and recommends a plant-based ration with measured seeds. The RSPCA and PDSA, by contrast, allow a small measured portion of degu nuggets without added sugar or molasses.

In practice: do not combine several concentrated-feed systems freely.

If in doubt, ask a veterinarian experienced with rodents to tailor the ration.

WARNING SIGNS

Do not wait if a degu stops eating

A degu that stops eating needs urgent veterinary attention. Contact a veterinarian experienced with rodents immediately.

- marked weight loss or a sudden change in food intake
- drooling, a wet chin, difficulty chewing or dropping food
- unusual or loose stools, a bloated abdomen or a marked change in behavior
- drinking or urinating much more than usual, or cloudy eyes

Evidence base

- Tierärztliche Vereinigung für Tierschutz (TVT): Merkblatt Nr. 154 - Degus, June 2023. [tierschutz-tvt.de](https://www.tierschutz-tvt.de)
- Ewringmann A., Glöckner B.: Leitsymptome bei Meerschweinchen, Chinchilla und Degu. Thieme, 2nd ed.; overview: [tiermedizin.thieme.de](https://www.tiermedizin.thieme.de)
- RSPCA: What To Feed a Pet Degu. [rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/rodents/degus/diet](https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/rodents/degus/diet)
- PDSA: Degus as pets - What do degus eat? [pdsa.org.uk/pet-help-and-advice](https://www.pdsa.org.uk/pet-help-and-advice)
- Schweizer Tierschutz STS: Merkblatt Gewöhnlicher Degu, 2019. [tierschutz.com](https://www.tierschutz.com)
- Edwards M. S. (2009): Nutrition and behavior of degus. *Vet Clin North Am Exot Anim Pract* 12(2), 237-253. DOI: 10.1016/j.cvex.2009.01.003
- Maekawa Y., Suzuki K. (2017): Preferred diets and postprandial blood glucose in degus. DOI: 10.11266/jpan.20.1_7

This guide provides general information only. It is not a substitute for veterinary examination, diagnosis or individual dietary advice. Sources last reviewed in August 2026.



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