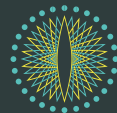


# Margined Tortoise

All Reptiles, all the time.



## Introduction

Margined Tortoises (*Testudo marginata*) are a medium sized, hardy Mediterranean tortoise with a high tolerance for cooler climates. They have active personalities that are not shy and are often out exploring and foraging in their habitats. They thrive in environments that mimic their natural habitat and make excellent long-term pets with proper care.

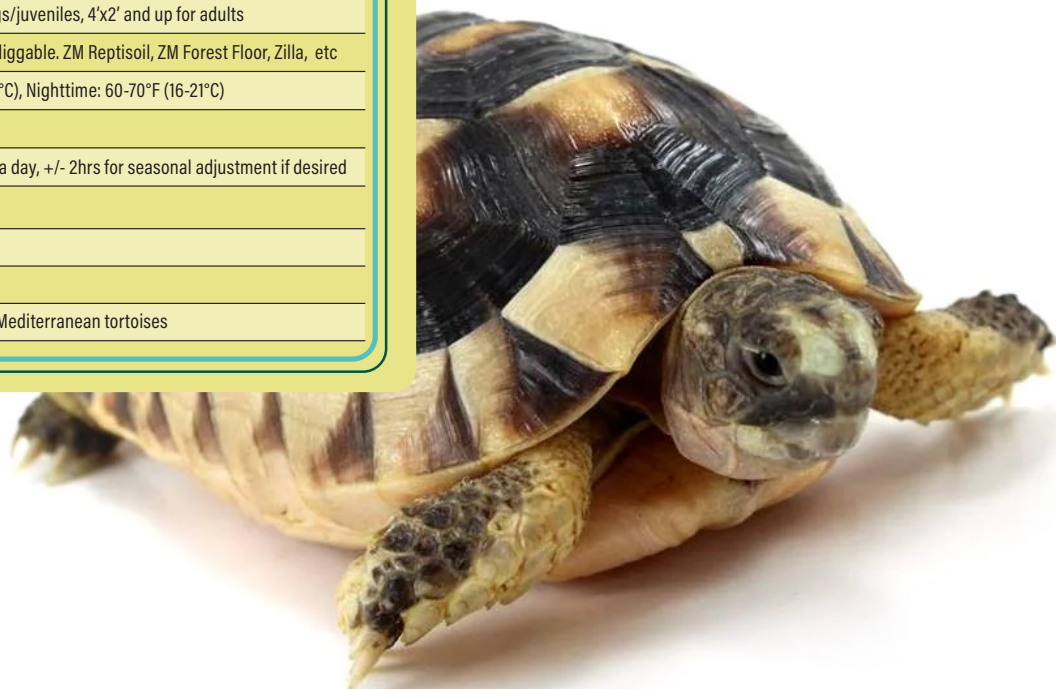
**Care sheets are only to be taken as guidelines.** Just as with all animals, each reptile will have unique traits & personalities special to the individual animal that may require adaptation in their husbandry & care. The following care sheet will address basic requirements but as the primary caretaker of your pet, we encourage you to take notice of your pet's behaviours and preferences and make adjustments as they grow with you & your family. Please also keep in mind that unlike mammals, most reptiles change their behaviour according to the weather seasons even if you keep them indoors all year round.



### CHEAT SHEET

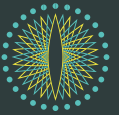
## Margined Tortoise

COMMON NAME	Margined Tortoise
SCIENTIFIC NAME	<i>Testudo marginata</i>
NATURAL LOCATION	Southern Greece, Albania
HABITAT (WILD)	Cooler Grasslands, Shrublands, Alpine Meadows
CAPTIVE ENCLOSURE	20-40gal for hatchlings/juveniles, 4'x2' and up for adults
SUBSTRATE	Moisture retaining & diggable. ZM Reptisoil, ZM Forest Floor, Zilla, etc
TEMPERATURE TOLERANCE	Cooler: 70-80°F (21-27°C), Nighttime: 60-70°F (16-21°C)
BASKING TEMPERATURE	90-95°F (32-35°C)
UVB LIGHTING	Essential. 10-12 hours a day, +/- 2hrs for seasonal adjustment if desired
HUMIDITY	40-60%
AVERAGE ADULT SIZE	12-15 inches
CAPTIVE LIFESPAN	60 years +
FUN FACT	The most social of all Mediterranean tortoises



# Marginated Tortoise

All Reptiles, all the time.



## Housing

**Enclosure:** Ample space to roam is essential to accommodate their activity level. Marginated Tortoises are roamers and grazers, they need lots of space to explore and have high activity levels. A 20-40gal terrarium is adequate when they are young but eventually, they will need a custom space ideally measuring at least 4' x 2' and up. Marginateds are very long living which means they have a relatively slow growth rate and take 12-15 years before they reach full size. They also benefit from plenty of hiding spots and opportunities to dig and forage in their habitat.

**Substrate:** Marginated Tortoises thrive in environments that closely resemble their natural and diverse dry shrublands, alpine meadows, and rocky hillside habitats. We prefer to recommend ZM Forest Floor as the beginner substrate for this species but if done right, a wide myriad of substrates mixtures can be safely used to mimic the balance of semi arid shrublands and alpine meadows.

**Temperature & Humidity:** Marginated Tortoises are well-adapted to cooler climates with mild to hot humid summers. In captivity, it is best to provide them with consistent areas of humidity so that they do not have to struggle for it even if they can. The basking area should be heated to 90-95°F (32-35°C) to allow the tortoise to regulate its body temperature, while the ambient temperature of the enclosure should remain between 75-85°F (24-29°C) during the day. Marginateds have a high tolerance to cooler temperatures and at night, the temperature can safely drop to 60-70°F (16-21°C). Marginated require moderate humidity between 40-60%, which helps prevent dehydration. To achieve this, misting the enclosure regularly, using moisture-retaining substrates like soil or cypress mulch, and possibly using a humid hide are all helpful. They also need a shallow dish of water for them to drink from and sometimes sit in to cool off. Monitoring both temperature and humidity levels with thermometers and hygrometers ensures a comfortable, healthy environment for your tortoise.

**Lighting:** Provide UVB lighting for 10-14 hours a day to support proper calcium and vitamin D3 metabolism and overall health. Use a full-spectrum UVB bulb specifically designed for reptiles. UVB lighting can be provided in the form of linear fluorescent, compact fluorescent, mercury vapour, and more recent technology provides UVB lighting in LED form as well. Heating bulbs can be provided by basking heat bulbs, heat emitters, or deep heat projectors. The amount of lighting you need will depend on the size of your setup and temperature of the room the enclosure stays in. Typically, the larger the enclosure, the more lighting you will need.

**Decor:** Marginated Tortoises will likely try to trample anything you place into its terrarium due to its high activity levels and bulldozer like personalities. Provide some shaded areas in the enclosure and anything else should be strong and sturdy to withstand your tortoise's movements. Otherwise, provide lots of open space for roaming and foraging.



## Diet

**Feeding:** Marginated Tortoises are herbivores, requiring a high-fiber, calcium-rich diet. Feed dandelion greens, collard greens, clover, endive, bok choy, kale, and swiss chard as staples, with occasional treats like hibiscus flowers or small amounts of fruit (10% or less). Avoid foods high in protein, sugar, or oxalates.

**Supplementation:** Provide calcium supplements to support shell health in the form of calcium blocks or cuttlebones. We advise against D3 supplements as long as you are using the correct UVB lighting. Calcium powders and liquid calciums are also acceptable.

**Water:** Provide fresh water daily in a dish that is easily accessible to drink safely from and soak in.



## Health & Maintenance

**Hygiene:** Spot clean your enclosure on a daily basis to prevent bacteria build up and general cleanliness. Marginateds often defecate in their clean water and it is essential to change this water frequently. We recommend a full substrate change once per year. Wood and plant décor can be washed monthly or bi monthly with hot water and dish soap and put back into place. Large pieces of wood can be disinfected by strong direct sunlight on very clear hot sunny days for 3 days.

**Handling:** Marginated Tortoises are generally docile and tolerant of handling, though excessive handling can cause stress especially when they are very young. Over time, they will 100% recognize their owners and family members. Wash your hands before and after handling to prevent the spread of bacteria.

**Behavioral observation:** They are curious and active during the day so making a well structured environment is essential. While not highly social, they can coexist peacefully with other Margianted Tortoises if given enough space. Monitor your tortoise's behaviour for signs of illness or stress, such as changes in appetite, lethargy, or abnormal stool. Other common ailments include pyramiding, respiratory infections, shell rot, and metabolic bone disease, all of which is easy avoided if given consistent proper care. Keep in mind that it is normal for healthy adults to go into brumation during the winter season where they will eat less and move less.

**Quarantine:** Quarantine any new additions to your reptile collection to prevent the spread of diseases.