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TORTOISES AND TURTLES

Egyptian Tortoise

Testudo kleinmanni

Testudo kleinmanni is the smallest tortoise of the genus: a pale, high-domed desert tortoise of 10-13 cm from the coastal areas of Libya, Egypt and southern Israel. It is diurnal, a pure herbivore and critically endangered in the wild. Its care requires dry, warm conditions all year, no hibernation and complete separation from other tortoises.

Family: Testudinidae Former name: *Testudo werneri* Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**10-13 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**150-300 g**
Lifespan	**20-50 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Desert and semi-desert**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**105 × 50 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**20-28 °C**
Basking spot	**32-36 °C**
Temperature, night	**15-20 °C**
Humidity	**40-60%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Plants**
Kept	**Singly, in pairs or in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**60-120 months**
Clutch size	**1-4 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-3**
Incubation	**80-120 days** at 30-33 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix I**
EU annex	**Annex A**
IUCN	**Critically Endangered (CR)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	*Testudo kleinmanni* is a small tortoise with great demands on its conditions.
TEMPERATURE	Figures given for the air temperature range from 17-24 °C to 30-35 °C by day. Higher is not better: above 30 °C activity falls, and in the wild the animal digs in to escape the heat.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The humidity is not documented for the species. 40-60 % suits a dry coastal climate with humid winters, and the table should have a dry end and a slightly dampened end. Keep the soil dry, not wet, and replace damp material often.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*T. kleinmanni* is diurnal and needs strong, white light and a warm basking spot. Recommendations range from a weak full-spectrum tube combined with D3 in the food to strong UVB as for other desert species.
FEEDING	*T. kleinmanni* is herbivorous. The diet must be high in fibre, low in protein and rich in calcium and consist of wild herbs, grasses, leaves and flowers. Dandelion and clover are the best.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The species is diurnal and calm and likes to dig into the substrate. It is unusually vocal for a tortoise: both sexes make sounds, and the male coos during mating like a dove.
NATIVE RANGE	Libya, Egypt and Israel.