

Box Turtle Diet

Adult box turtles do quite well when fed about 3 times a week. Overfeeding may cause serious organ damage. Vary the diet and include some harder foods to help prevent beak overgrowth. Don't just feed them a few favorite foods, vary the diet using the suggestions below. Healthy turtles should have good appetites but can become finicky eaters if overfed, making a balanced diet difficult.

Vitamin and mineral supplements are unnecessary if the diet is varied, and could be harmful. Too much calcium can mineralize vital organs and blood vessels and excesses of any one vitamin can cause a deficiency in others. The percentages in reptile vitamins sold may not be correct. Two drops of cod liver oil twice a week is a natural source of vitamin A and can be safely used to supplement diet at that dosage. Egg shells can provide additional calcium if needed.

Too much fruit can alter the gut flora as well as setting the turtle up for nutritional imbalances.

Turtles housed outdoors in garden type habitats will feed naturally on snails, earthworms, insects, animal droppings, plants, etc. and are likely to get a good diet. Soil contains minerals a turtle may need, so allowing the turtle to feed naturally on the ground is preferable to using a plate.

Protein Based Foods:

(well over 50% of diet)

worms	bugs
cooked egg with shell	pinkie mice
whole feeder fish cut in half	slugs
earth worms	snails
flies	cicadas
crickets	roaches

beetles	grasshoppers
tadpoles	

Fruits and Vegetables

(Fruit should be about 10% of diet)

(Vegetables should be about 30% of diet)

peaches	figs	tomatoes
nectarines	mangoes	bell pepper
apricots	grapes	peas
strawberries	grapefruit	squash
other berries	oranges	zucchini
prickly pear pads (no spines)		plum
other melons*	carrots	asparagus
cherries	cantelope*	kale
apple*	banana	endive
pear*	dandelions	okra
greens - varied	mushrooms	mulberries
persimmons	cherries	blackberries
blueberries		

* - no seeds

The following occasional treats must be limited to less than 5% of the diet due to a high phosphorus to calcium ratio or excessive vitamin D content:

corn on the cob	chicken	dog/cat food (low fat, moistened)
liver	turtle food	meat
monkey chow	trout chow	

Avoid the following foods that contain oxalic acid (can bind calcium) or which bind iodine (important for thyroid function): spinach, beets, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, kale, broccali.