



Barbs

Care Sheet

Color In Motion

Barbs are active, colorful schooling fish in the family Cyprinidae. They vary in size, from the tiny gracilis barb from West Africa which tops out at less than an inch, to the tinfoil barb that can get over a foot long. Barbs are sometimes unfairly characterized as being fin-nippers, largely due to the behavior of a few types like tiger barbs, rosy barbs and black ruby barbs. While some species can be boisterous, there are a number of peaceful species like cherry barbs, gold, checkerboard and pentazona barbs that make great community tank inhabitants. Males are typically smaller and more colorful, while females tend to be larger and heavier bodied.

Natural Habitat

Barbs are native to Asia and Africa. Most barbs inhabit streams and rivers, but a few species can also be found in swamps and quiet back bays of lakes.

Water Requirements

While many barbs are found in soft, acidic water in the wild, the majority of aquarium species sold today are raised commercially in water that often has a higher pH and alkalinity than their native environments. pH should be between 6.8 and 7.8, alkalinity between 3° and 8° dKH (50 ppm to 140 ppm) and temperature between 75° and 80° F. If the aquarium is kept in rooms below 75°, use an Aqueon[®] aquarium heater to increase the heat. Maintain good filtration and change 10% to 25% of the water using an Aqueon[®] Aquarium Water Changer or Siphon Vacuum Gravel Cleaner once or twice a month. Don't forget to treat tap water with Aqueon[®] Water Conditioner before refilling your tank!

Housing

Small species like cherry and gold barbs can be kept in 10 to 20 gallon aquariums. Tiger, rosy and black ruby barbs require a minimum of 30 gallons, and larger species like denisonii barbs will need a 55 gallon aquarium or larger when full size. Adult tinfoil barbs will eventually require a 125 gallon or larger aquarium. Barbs do best in schools of at least 6 to 10 fish and need plenty of swimming space. They will be less stressed and show their best colors in a well decorated aquarium. Dark substrates and decorations will help accent the bright colors of your barbs. Keep a secure lid on the aquarium to prevent them from jumping out.

Behavior/Compatibility

Barbs are always on the go and should be kept with fish of similar size and activity levels. Some barbs communicate by nipping at each other, so avoid mixing these fish with timid, slow moving or long-finned fish such as neon tetras, angelfish, guppies and bettas. Depending on what type of barbs you keep, serpae, red eye and black skirt tetras, red tail and rainbow sharks, danios and other barb species can be good choices for tankmates. Always consult an aquarium expert before buying any new fish for your aquarium.

Feeding

Most barbs are omnivorous and will thrive on Aqueon[®] Tropical Flakes, Color Flakes, Tropical Granules and Shrimp Pellets. Frozen and live foods can also be fed as treats or to help induce spawning. For best results, rotate their diet daily and feed only what they can consume in 2 to 3 minutes, once or twice a day.

Breeding Level - Intermediate

Barbs can be bred in captivity but some extra care is required to raise fry to adults. Barbs are egg layers and extra effort will be required to separate the adults from the eggs after spawning as many barbs will eat their own eggs. Barbs tend to spawn in groups. Males typically entice females into thick plant growth, where eggs are deposited and fertilized and hatch in a few days.