



Gouramis

Care Guide

Air Breathers

Gouramis are a group of fish in the families Osphronemidae, Helostomatidae and Anabantidae. They have a labyrinth organ that acts sort of like a lung, which allows them to breathe air at the surface. In nature, this adaptation enables them to live in shallow, stagnant, oxygen-poor water. Some gouramis are mouthbrooders, and some make bubble nests at the surface to incubate their eggs until they hatch. Males are usually larger and have brighter colors and longer fins than females. Several species have been selectively bred for different colors and fancier fins.

Natural Habitat

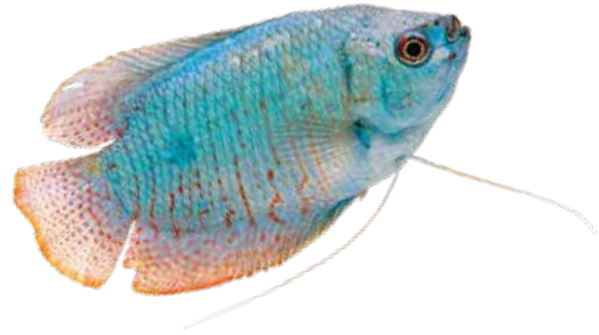
Gouramis are found throughout eastern and southern Asia, from Pakistan through Thailand, Vietnam, the Malaysian Archipelago, China and as far north and east as Korea and Japan. They live in slow-moving rivers, swamps, marshes, canals, wetlands and temporary pools.

Water Requirements

Many gouramis are found in soft, acidic water in the wild. However, the majority of aquarium species sold today are raised commercially in water that has a higher pH and alkalinity than their native environments, so they are very adaptable. pH should be between 6.8 and 7.8, alkalinity between 3° and 8° dKH (50 ppm to 140 ppm) and water temperature should remain between 75° and 80° F. If the aquarium is kept in rooms below 75°, use an Aqueon® Aquarium Heater to maintain the correct temperature. Maintain good filtration and change 10% of the water weekly or 25% every 2 weeks using an Aqueon® Aquarium Water Changer or Siphon Vacuum Gravel Cleaner. Do not forget to treat tap water with Aqueon® Water Conditioner before refilling your tank.

Housing

The size aquarium you need will depend on which species of gourami you want to keep. Sparkling, croaking, honey and dwarf gouramis can be kept in tanks as small as 10 gallons, while a 30-gallon aquarium or larger is recommended for pearl, blue, gold, opaline and moonlight gouramis, as well as paradise fish. Kissing gouramis get to



be quite large and will need a 55-gallon tank or larger when full size. Osphronemus goramy, the “True” or Giant gourami, can grow to 24” and adults require an aquarium of 250 gallons or larger. Most gouramis are surface oriented, so having tall plants or ones that float at the surface help make them feel at home. They will be less stressed and show their best colors in a well decorated aquarium. Keep a secure lid on the aquarium to prevent them from jumping out.

Behavior/Compatibility

Male gouramis have a tendency to be aggressive towards each other, so they should typically be kept individually. Female gouramis usually tolerate each other well. Mixing different species or color varieties of gouramis should only be done in larger, well decorated tanks. Remember that blue, three spot, opaline, gold and lavender gouramis are all the same fish – they have just been bred for different colors! Gouramis are slow moving and are best kept with similar sized fish that are not fin nippers or too active. Larger tetras, livebearers other than fancy guppies, peaceful barbs, most danios and angelfish, can all be good choices. Always consult an aquarium expert before buying any new fish for your aquarium.

Feeding

Most gouramis are omnivorous and will thrive on Aqueon® Tropical Flakes, Color Flakes, Tropical Granules and Shrimp Pellets. Kissing gouramis are more herbivorous and should be fed Aqueon® Spirulina Flakes and Algae Rounds. 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 under 2 minutes, once or twice a day.

Breeding Level - Intermediate

Many species of gouramis can be bred in captivity, but some effort is required to raise the fry to adulthood. Most species of gouramis sold in stores are bubble nest builders. After building a suitable nest at the surface, the male courts the female and a spawning ritual begins. As eggs are laid, the male retrieves them and deposits them in the nest, which he guards until they hatch. Males can become aggressive towards the females after spawning in an effort to guard the eggs from being eaten, and females may need to be removed.