

## Caring for your new pet betta Betta Splendens

Bettas are colorful and active fish that are great pets to keep in a bowl on your desk or dresser. To keep things simple, we've put together the following basic care instructions to help you keep your betta happy and healthy in its new home.

### Easy step by step set up

1. Find a place out of direct sunlight and drafts to set up your new betta bowl.
2. Rinse/wipe down the entire bowl (inside and out) and all decorations with clean water (NO, soaps, detergents or other cleaning materials).
3. Place substrate in bottom of the bowl.
4. Fill the bowl with water and then add HBH bowl prep to dechlorinate the water. Allow the water to reach room temperature.
5. Add any desired decorations.
6. Acclimatize your new pet to the tank water temperature by floating its bag in the tank for five to ten minutes.
7. Release your betta into its new home.



### About your Betta

Betta splendens originates from the still waters and slow, shallow rivers of Thailand and Cambodia. In Southeast Asia, bettas have been bred for centuries and have been used as a means of gambling, prestige and to settle business disputes. Nobility were the first to

exploit these fish and help to create some of the strains seen todayName  
origin/Labyrinth:The Siamese fighting fish are known as anabantoids (a sub-order of fish also known as Anabantoidei) and are the smallest of them all. The word "Anabantoidei" derives from the Greek verb "Anabaiano" meaning "to journey up" or "to go up". This is based on observations of the fish regularly going to the surface to breath oxygen. Bettas are able to take in oxygen from the surface via an organ called the labyrinth. In the wild this adaptation allows the betta to survive, for a time, in oxygen depleted water far to hostile for other fish species. I have read that this adaptation also allows them to leave an exhausted or dried up water source and "walk" on their pectoral fins in search of new and viable water locations, although I have never witnessed this behavior. They can and normally do take in oxygen the same as any other fish, filtered through the gill pates.

## **Betta care**

### **Selecting a container**



Pick a container that is big enough for your betta. While some stores will keep bettas in small vases, we strongly advise selecting a bowl that can hold at least one quart of water. Larger bowls will keep your betta happier and require less frequent water changes – that means less work for you! Rinse out the bowl with tap water and no soap.

### **Light and temperature conditions**

Put your bowl in a place where you will see it and appreciate your betta throughout the day. It should be in a room with a fairly constant temperature and natural light, but not in direct sunlight and away from heating or cooling vents. If kept under these conditions your betta bowl will not require any additional heat or light source.

### **Adding substrate**



Add clean substrate, like pebbles or marbles, to line the bottom of the tank. Be sure to thoroughly rinse all substrate in clean water (without soap) before adding them to the bowl.

#### Conditioning the water



Tap water must be conditioned before your betta can live in it. For immediate water conditioning you can simply fill your betta bowl with tap water and then add one capful of **HBH bowl prep** per ½ gallon of water. You can also condition your water simply let it stand in an open container overnight. By "aging" the tap water overnight, harmful chemicals like chlorine will dissolve into the air making the water safe for your betta.

Be sure to leave the water level at least one inch below the lip of the bowl as bettas can and will attempt to jump out of their enclosures. If your betta ever does escape from its bowl, be sure to wet your fingers or fish net before picking him up and returning him to his bowl.

Add any additional decorations at this time, being sure to thoroughly rinse them in fresh water before adding them to the bowl.



### Introducing your betta to its new home



When you bring your betta home do not put him directly into his new bowl. First, make sure that the water in the bowl is room temperature; then, place your betta, in its bag from the pet store, in the prepared bowl for 5 minutes. This will allow your betta to acclimate to the water temperature in the bowl. After the acclimation period you can release your betta into its bowl. This first day is stressful so don't feed him and avoid disturbing him any more than necessary.

### Caring for your betta

#### Feeding

Bettas thrive on **HBH Beta bites**. You can also try **HBH beta bites & betta treat** add variety to your betta's diet or **HBH Beta Colorbright** flake food to enhance your betta's natural pigmentation. Feed your betta six to eight food pellets per day, dropping them gently on the water's surface where your betta will readily eat them. Be sure to remove any uneaten food after about 2 minutes. If your betta refuses to feed due to the stress of moving into a new location or switching to a new diet, be patient, by crushing the pellets between your fingers and then feeding, it will help to stimulate your betta's appetite. It should only take a few days for your betta to begin eating again. In the wild, they may go for more than a week without feeding with few ill effects. Overfeeding can lead to

poor water conditions and disease, a closely monitored diet is the best way to maintain the health of your betta.

### **Bowl maintenance**



Maintain the water quality in your betta's bowl with weekly partial water changes. To minimize the disturbance to your, use a siphon, turkey baster or a cup and gently scoop out 10% of the tank water and then replace it with new, clean, conditioned water. If algae or other debris builds up in the substrate you may be over-feeding your fish. You can use a siphon or vacuum hose (pictured) to clean out debris from the substrate. Avoid total water changes if possible as it is stressful for your betta.

Thoroughly rinse all cleaning equipment (sponges, scrub brushes, hose etc.) in tap water before using them to clean your fish tank. Never use any soaps or solvents on any aquarium equipment.

### **Other fun ideas**

#### **Plants**

You can add live plants, which can be purchased at your local pet store, to your betta's bowl. Before adding any decoration or plant to the tank, be sure to rinse it thoroughly.

#### **Other fish?**

Betta's are very aggressive with each other (which is why they are called 'Siamese Fighting Fish'); do not put more than one betta in the same bowl. Such encounters will often lead to the death of at least one if not both bettas.

If your betta is in a large bowl and you would like to add another pet, African Dwarf frogs are often good companions for a solitary betta. It is important to note that as you add more animals to a fish bowl or tank you will need to be extra diligent about feeding and water clarity. For more information about African Dwarf frogs see the African Dwarf Frogs care sheet.

