

Uromastyx Lizards (*Uromastyx* species)
Skinks (*Scincidae* family) e.g. Berber Skinks
(*Eumeces algeriensis schneideri*)
Desert Iguanas (*Dipsosaurus dorsalis*)

Origins: Uromastices originate from the deserts of Northern Africa and inhabit rocky areas but also like to climb. They may also be called dab lizards or spiny-tailed lizards. Desert iguanas originate from across southern states of North America. They are mainly herbivorous but will take some insects as well. They are very tameable and can be hand fed, so make good pets. Skinks are very widespread, occupying many habitats from Africa, Asia, Indonesia, Australasia and from Argentina up to southern Canada. Skinks can be a very quick species, especially the smaller individuals, but Berber Skinks can also be easily tamed and are very friendly lizards.

Adult Size and Life Span: Uromastyx species vary in size - some can become around 60cm (24") long adults but some stay smaller at around 20cm (8"). Skinks vary in size from 2.3 – 49cm (1 – 18"). Desert iguanas can reach 30cm (12") when fully grown. All lizards can live to 15 – 20 years in captivity. With careful consideration and selection, individuals of the same species can be kept in colonies, but of a similar size to avoid cannibalism.

Diet and Feeding: In captivity, uromastices and desert iguanas will readily eat brown crickets and mealworms. If you can guarantee the area has not been treated with insecticides, any grassland can be swept for a selection of native insects such as grasshoppers and moths. Natural weeds, fruits and vegetables should also be provided – dandelions, clover, plantains, flowers, apple, carrot, cabbage and peas etc. A mixture of seeds and reptile pellets will be readily taken. Skinks are active foragers and are also

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omnivorous – they will take fruits, flowers and plants along with snails, insects (crickets and mealworms) and when adult, pinkies and fluffs. Ensure these rodents are well defrosted before feeding. All food must be dusted with a calcium and vitamin D₃ supplement such as Nutrobal to ensure healthy development of bones. Fresh, clean water should be supplied daily.

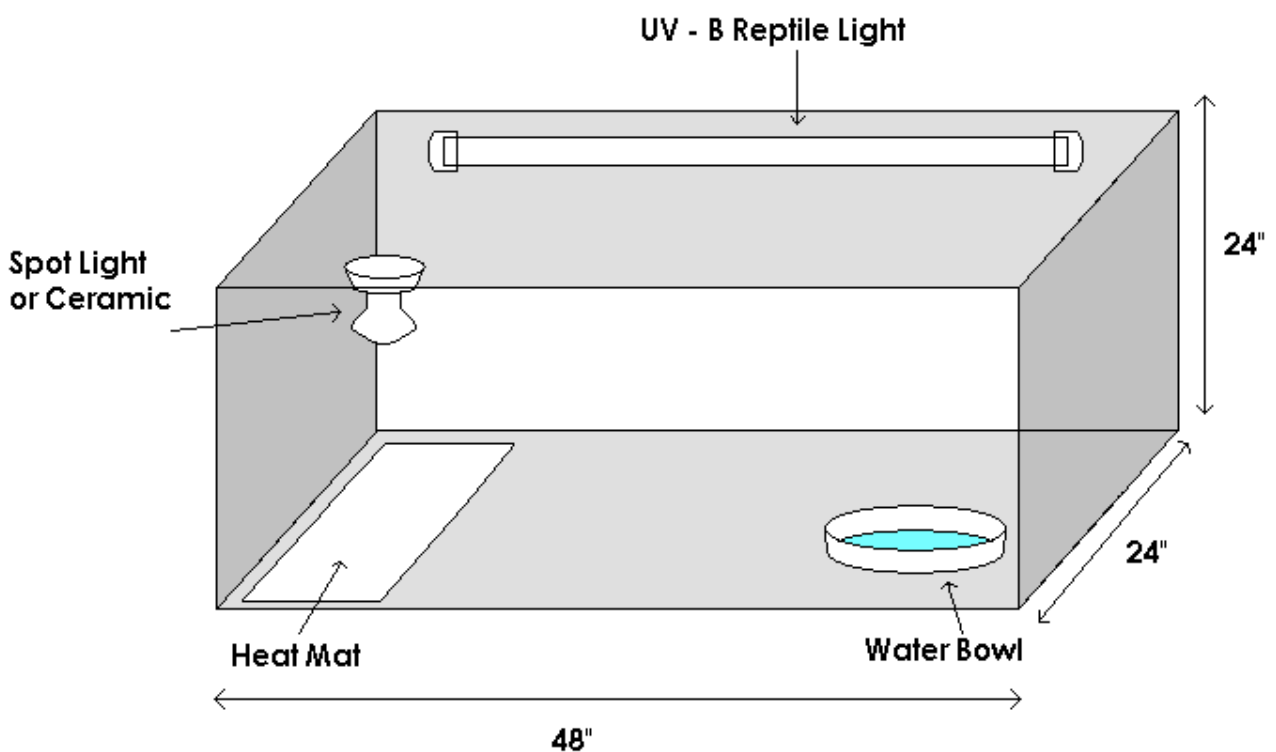
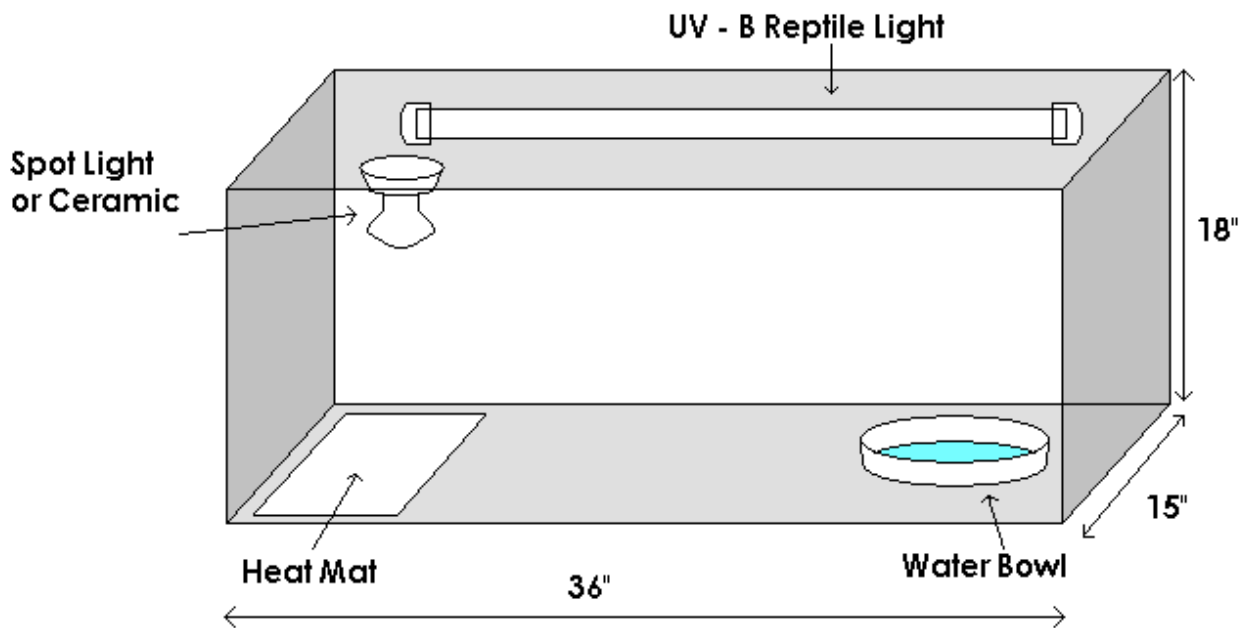
Vivarium Set Up: It is recommended that a 36" x 15" x 18" minimum size vivarium is obtained to house your lizard, but larger species may need a larger set-up, such as 48" x 24" x 24". Basic layouts are shown in the diagrams. Within these set ups, there must be:-

Heating: Daytime temperatures must reach 85 - 90°F (29 - 33 °C) in the hot spots, with cool spots of to 80 - 85°F (26 – 29°C). This is achieved via spot bulbs, heat mats or infra-red ceramic bulbs at the hot-end of the vivarium. Temperatures of 75°F (24 °C) should be maintained at night using one of these methods, and a thermostat may be required for control. The water bowl must be placed in the cooler end of the vivarium.

Lighting: A UV-B bulb is essential to ensure that vitamin D₃ is correctly synthesised and the animal will maintain a strong skeleton. Use a Reptiglo 5.0 bulb, across the back of the vivarium, for 10 -12 hours per day as a simulation of natural daylength.

Substrate and Decoration: All these species require a dry, desert habitat, which can be achieved via beech chip, gravel or sand. Use rocks, wood, branches and cork bark to create caves and interest for climbing. The skink species especially need a deep substrate as they like to bury themselves. Some desert plant species can be used e.g. cacti, succulents and spurges, but be aware that these may be nibbled!

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Further Information and Advice: It is recommended that you read and gain as much information as possible before purchasing your lizard. Books and reliable websites are good sources, or alternatively ask a member of staff. Phone advice is available 9am-6pm, 7 days a week on 01953 718184.