**DISCUS**

Discus fish are one of the most beautiful freshwater fish in the hobby, known for their spectacular colours and large, circular shape. Discus fish are named after their disc shape appearance and are the member of Cichlids family. Discus are found in floodplain lakes and flooded forests of the lowland Amazon River basin Due to their distinctive shape, behaviour, and bright colours and patterns; Discus is one of the most popular freshwater aquarium fish in the hobby.

They can grow up to 8 inches in diameter and live up to 10-15 years. There are many colour variations and patterns of discus through selected breeding. Wild caught discus can be challenging to keep, due to their specialized water chemistry and dietary needs, however, most discus sold today are captive bred and are much easier to keep. That said, they are not for beginners for a variety of reasons.

Discus fish are very peaceful schooling fish and prefer to be in a group. Although like all Cichlids, there can be some competition in shoal and a pecking order will be established. Most of the aggression arise only during establishment of hierarchy between them and during breeding. They tend to stay in the mid-levels but will rise to the top and dip to the bottom to forage.

**KEEPING DISCUS**

Discus is considered a difficult fish to keep. It might be true in the past due to fish requiring certain condition such as PH, and GH however that is not the case anymore as these fish are being breed at local water and have adapted to live in our local water condition. It is not recommended as beginner fish but if you know the basic of fish keeping such as water changes, feeding appropriately etc than it is no different than keeping any other fish.

Some of the key points of keeping Discus are

* Keep them in clean water (same as all other fish)
* Keep them in group of 6 or more.
* Keep them in hot temperature (80 degree Celsius).
* Do not mix the Discus from different source (shops and breeder).
* Do not keep them with aggressive fish or fast-moving fish.

What Size Tank Do You Need for Discus?

Generally, it is recommended 25-30 per discus in the tank. As you need to keep them in group 6 or more Its is recommended to keep them in tank of 180 litres or more. Bigger is always better as if you try to overstock your aquarium, you’re forced to do a lot of water changes. As these fish get big, usually 5 to 7 inches in diameter if you’re doing things right. Also, by heating up the tank, their metabolism goes up, you must feed them more, and then more waste is created. (That’s why people recommend doing all those frequent water changes.

What Is the Ideal Temperature for Discus Fish?

The easiest trick for keeping happy discus is to raise the water temperature. The recommended temperature is 30 degree Celsius. The reason is because the discus is breaded and kept at these temperatures, and when we try to force them to cool down, it becomes a source of discomfort. When the heat is kept high, your discus become more active, their metabolisms run well, they grow faster, and they show off better colours.

What Fish Can Be Kept with Discus?

- Cardinal Tetra  
- Lemon Tetra  
- Black Neon Tetra  
- Bleeding Heart Tetra  
- Bentosi White Fin Tetra  
- Sterbai Corydora  
- Bristlenose Pleco  
- Tiger Pleco  
- Rams

Tank mates must meet two criteria: they should be able to live in high temperatures and they cannot outcompete the discus for food. In general, discus are slow feeders, so if you put them with speedy, bullet-shaped fish (like barbs or even huge schools of tetras), the discus will tend to lose that race.

What Is the Best Food for Discus Fish?

Discus need meaty food as they require lots of protein in their diet. People usually feed them beef heart mix as it is used by most breeder and shop, so they are used to it. They can also be fed normal pellets however some discus might take to get used to pellet food as they grew up on beef heart.

Most people feed them foods that are way too big, not realizing that discus mouths are quite small. Therefore, if you see them eating the food, spitting it out, and then mouthing it again, you may have a problem with the size of the food.

Why Are Discus Fish So Expensive?

Discus need clean and stable water for breeding and raising fry. It’s very time and labour-intensive work, especially since discus take longer to reach full adult size compared to other cheaper fish like guppies. You can buy discus from trusted local breeders, fish stores, or even online, but if you’ve never kept discus before, keep away from the price extremes (normally for Show Quality Discus). In other words, don’t buy the cheapest one from unknown source they might have quality issues. Just remember to purchase a group of them from the same source and at same size to minimize bullying.

Discus from different sources?

This is one of the main reasons for people lose discus fish when they keep them first time giving them label of hard fish to keep.

The so called "Discus Plague" is 100% avoidable - don't mix Discus from different sources.

Fish from different hatcheries or different sources may have different strains of bacteria and it really is good advice not to keep them together, or "mix" them. Therefore, it is in your interest and more importantly the Discus's that before adding Discus to your aquarium you decide to keep Wild Discus, Asian captive bred Discus or Stendker Discus. Then, stick to your chosen supplier.

The worst part of this Plague is that its effects is slow which means discus start dyeing after few weeks or months,

How Do You Keep Discus Fish Happy?

The main takeaway from this care guide is to reduce stress. Raise the heat, keep the water clean and stable, and feed them correctly. Don’t let kids tap on the glass and limit the amount of traffic near their tank. Also, don’t put their aquarium right next to the TV with lots of loud noises and flashing lights. Anything you can do to help these shy creatures feel safe will go a long way in enhancing their health and quality of life. Also, sometimes you might need to rehome some rowdy male Discus who is causing havoc in the tank.

Finally, don’t forget to reduce your own stress! A lot of beginner discus owners spend too much time worrying that they’ll accidentally harm their discus, instead of relaxing and appreciating their majestic beauty. With these simple guidelines, you’re on your way to having a successful, enjoyable discus tank for many years to come.

**WILD DISCUS**

The beautifully coloured varieties of Discus that we have grown to love are a result of highly selective breeding. Wild Discus Fish however are typically brown with turquoise stripes on their fins, amber coloured eyes dark vertical bars across their bodies. There are 4 variations of the wild Discus fish that are the forefathers of all tank bred species which have been selectively bred to enhance their colours, shape and temperament usually with vivid red eyes and all manner of pattens.

Found in the Amazon river and its subsidiary’s the wild discus does have some distinctions. The Royal Blue Discus which unlike the typical Wild brown discus have far more colour over their entire bodies instead of being limited to just the outer edges.

Image w1

Wild Discus caught in the Rio Tefe are green in colourWild Green Discus Fish they can be found in the wild with an almost solid coloured green on the posterior half of the body. Red spots on a green discus can also indicate a provenance from the Tefe region. Wild caught green Discus are typically weakly marked but when found fully striped, they are considered as Royal Green Discus.

Image w2

The Heckel Discus are found in the Rio Negro. These particularly lively discus fish and are typically more demanding to keep in an aquarium due to being used to a black water with an acidity of about pH 4.0. Very rarely found in the wild with red eye colouration the Heckel Discus have amber coloured eyes and a heavier vertical central stripe.

Image w3

Symphysodon Discus are found in the Rio Abacaxis and are considered the most desirable of Discus fish due to their intense red colouration and blue head. These Wild Discus fish are responsible for the larger portion of the new tank breeds.

Image w4

Wild Discus is uncommon in the hobby however there are people keeping them in their aquarium successfully. You need to be experienced Discus keeper to have success with wild Discus as they will require certain water parameter (PH level) and treatments (for parasite/worm). However, if you can provide those requirements, they are no different than regular Discus.

<http://discusfishaquarium.com/wild-discus-fish/>