

Types of Miniature and Exotic Pet Pigs



VIETNAMESE POTBELLY PIG:

Potbellies have long been shown in zoos around the world. They originated in Vietnam and were brought to the U.S. through Canada in 1985 by Keith Connell with the intention of supplying zoos. Instead people started buying them as pets. The first potbellies were much larger pigs weighing between 150 to 200 lbs. Their general appearance is a swayed

back, pronounced potbelly; erect ears, short turned up nose with a straight tail. The main color is black, but potbellies can also be white, black and white (including pinto and fancy pinto coloring), spotted, collared, and even a silver color. Potbellied pigs reach adult size at about 4 years. Weights vary with averages ranging from 90-150 lbs.

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KUNEKUNE:

KuneKune pigs are thought to have originated in China from an old Polish Breed. They arrived in New Zealand sometime in the late 1700s. In New Zealand they were kept by Maori communities and were unknown to the rest of the world. In the early 1800s they were introduced to Europeans by whalers or traders. They are now widely spread throughout New Zealand with some being exported to the United Kingdom and the United States. They are a relatively small pig with a short-legged, round appearance

with a short upturned nose and curly tail. KuneKune is a Polynesian word for plump. A distinctive appearance on some KuneKunes is their pire pire (tassels) hanging from their lower jaw. Colors range from black, black and white, gold, tan and brown. KuneKunes have a calm, friendly temperament and seem to thrive on human companionship. During summer months they can easily maintain themselves on grazing alone. Therefore, they make excellent lawnmowers and don't typically root.

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GUINEA HOGS (AFRICAN PYGMY):

Guinea Hogs are a breed of pig unique to North America and it is believed they are the descendents of pigs brought over from Africa with the slave trade. The early African pigs were red, large, and bristly. Modern Guineas are a smaller, all black pig. They were common in the South prior to the Civil War as they were small, docile pigs and considered easy keepers. They provided food for the poor in the rural U. S. Over the years they have been called many names such as acorn eaters and yard pigs. Homesteaders would tether them in their yard

because of their great foraging abilities and to catch and eat snakes. They prefer grazing rather than rooting for their meals. Guinea Hogs have a very gentle temperament and small size making them easy to handle. Their weights average from 100 to 300 lbs. They are not sway backed or potbellied. They are a stocky pig with short legs, moderately short snout, medium sized upright ears, and tails with a kink. Their coats are shiny black in color and very bristly. After the Civil War, when farmers went to confinement methods of farming their numbers declined. They are now considered by the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy as critical in need of conservation.

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FERAL PIGS:

Note: Feral pigs and European Wild Boars may not be considered by some to be a mini-pig. However, due to their smallness as compared to a farm hog, I included them in this article. Feral pigs go by many names depending on the part of the country where they reside. Some names include: Razorback, Gulf Pig, Florida Swamp Hog, Pineywoods, Pinewoods Rooter, Choctaw, and Catalina. The most common states where they

can be found are Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Texas, and California. They are shaggy rough-looking pigs with forward-pointed to upright ears, long snouts and very lean bodies. Feral pigs are descended from domesticated pigs that escaped or were released. Some even have some Eurasian Wild Boar in their ancestry. Solid black is the most common color, but you can find almost any color or color pattern.



EUROPEAN WILD BOARS:

European Wild Boars are also called, Eurasian Wild Boars or Russian Wild Boars. They have a long narrow snout with long tusks, pointy ears with a tufted straight tail. They have a very bristly coat with an undercoat in the winter. They range in color from blackish brown to tan to gray with a lighter colored belly. They also have grizzled hairs on their face and

throat which contrast against their dark colored snout. They range in size from 160 to 500 lbs. Piglets have a striped body making them resemble a chipmunk. As the piglet matures it loses its striping. Wild boars have been introduced to a wide variety of places around the world. Since they share the same habitat as feral domesticated pigs, most populations of wild pigs are probably mixed with the wild boar.



OSSABAW ISLAND PIG:

Ossabaw pigs are a feral pig that can be found on Ossabaw Island off the coast of Georgia. They were brought for food by the Spanish when they first came to the New World five centuries ago. Since pigs were a fresh

food supply, the Spanish routinely dropped them off on large islands all over the Caribbean from Cuba to Ossabaw. They come in a wide variety of solid and spotted colors although solid white is rare. They are a lively, friendly pig with a long snout, heavy coat, and prick ears. Ossabaws have a low-grade form of diabetes and have a unique system of fat metabolism. During times when food is sparse, they can live off the fat stored in their bodies. Because of the diabetes and their system of fat metabolism, they are valued highly as laboratory animals to study diabetes, nutrition, and obesity.



JULIANI (PAINTED MINIATURE):

Many older books on mini-pigs mention the Juliani pig. However, while researching this article, I could find no mention of them on the Internet or in books on pig breeds. Therefore, there is some doubt about their true origins and some thought that they might have been a cross for the purpose of marketing them as something different during the height of the pet pig craze. Older mini-pig books state the same information regarding the Juliani pig which I've included in this article.

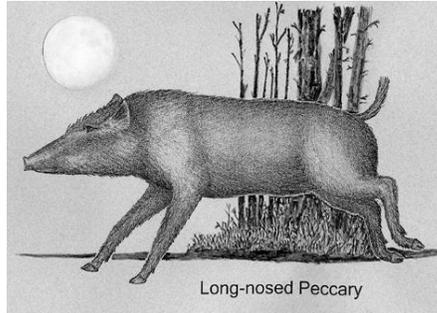
According to the older mini-pig books, Juliani Pigs can be traced back to Europe and were developed through a selective breeding program to enhance their small size. Their colors can be red, red and black, red and white, white, white and black, black, silver and silver and white. They have longer legs than a potbelly and are usually smaller with a slight potbelly. Their ears are small to medium in size and they have a straight tail. Some of our pet pigs might be a mixture of Juliani and potbelly pig.



YUCATAN PIG (MEXICAN HAIRLESS PIG):

Yucatan pigs originated in Mexico and Central America. They are slate gray to black in color with very sparse hair to completely bald. They have straight backs and bellies, short snouts and medium sized ears. Their temperament is very gentle. Because their skin and body systems are similar to humans, they are often the pig of choice for

laboratories. Normally their size can range up to 210 lbs but laboratories have bred them even smaller with weights ranging from 50 to 100 lbs.



PECCARY:

Peccaries or Javelinas as they are sometimes called are not really pigs but are the closest relative to the pig. They differ from pigs in that they have a second navel located on the lower back about a half-foot from the end of the tail. This nipple gives off a musky secretion which is used for marking territories. They also differ in that pigs have four toes on each foot while a

Javelina has four on their forefeet but only two on their hind. Pigs also have six to twenty mammary glands while Javelinas have only four. Javelinas have a complex chambered stomach with no gallbladder. Pigs have a gallbladder and a simple chambered stomach. Peccaries weigh from 35-65 lbs and look like a small bristly pig. Their bristles are dark brown or black-gray with white tips. They also have a white collar which goes from the chest to over the shoulders. Peccaries are native to Southern Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico. Their herds are ruled by a female and can vary from 2 to 50 members.



THE MANGALIZA HOG:

This pig from Hungary has long cream colored curly hair and drooping ears. Its young are born horizontally striped like the Wild Boars. Although widely distributed in the 19th century in its native country, this domestic breed is practically extinct at this time.