

AMBER WAVES



GREAT
PYRENEES

Despite his regal and majestic appearance, the Great Pyrenees is a keen worker, faithfully guarding his flocks no matter the weather or terrain. With his intelligence, scenting ability and excellent sight, he is an invaluable companion to the shepherd. The breed possesses a beautifully thick, weather resistant white coat that may contain markings of badger, gray, or various shades of tan.



GREAT PYRENEES

Place of origin: Southern France - Northern Spain

Average weight: 80 – 120 pounds

Lifespan: 10 - 12 years

History: The Great Pyrenees is a very old breed that has been used for hundreds of years by shepherds, including those of the Basque people, who inhabit parts of the region in and around the Pyrenees Mountains of southern France and northern Spain. One of the first descriptions of the breed dates from 1407, and from 1675 the breed was a favorite of The Grand Dauphin and other members of the French aristocracy. By the early nineteenth century there was a thriving market for the dogs in mountain towns, from where they would be taken to other parts of France. The breed was developed to be agile in order to guard sheep on steep, mountainous slopes.

Behavior / Temperament / Activity level: The Great Pyrenees is confident, gentle (especially with children), and affectionate. While territorial and protective of its flock or family when necessary, its general demeanor is that of composure, patience and loyalty. It is a strong willed, independent and reserved breed. It is also attentive, quite fearless and loyal to its duties. The Great Pyrenees' size makes it an imposing guardian and a dog that will patrol its perimeter.

Appearance: The main coat color is white and can have varying shades of gray, rust, or tan around the face, ears and sometimes on the body and tail. As Great Pyrenees mature, their coats grow thicker and the longer colored hair of the coat often fades. Sometimes a little light tan or lemon will appear later in life around the ears and face. Being a double-coated breed, the undercoat and skin can also have color. The color of the nose and eye rims should be jet black. Grey or tan markings that remain lend the French name, "blaireau", (badger) which is a similar grizzled mixture color seen in the European badger.



Males grow to 110–120 pounds and 27–32 inches, while females reach 80–90 pounds and 25–29 inches. The weather resistant double coat consists of a long, flat, thick, outer coat of coarse hair, straight or slightly undulating, and lying over a dense, fine, woolly undercoat. The coat is more profuse about the neck and shoulders where it forms a ruff or mane, which is more pronounced in males to fend off wolf attacks. The longer hair on the tail forms a plume. There is also feathering along the back of the front legs and along the back of the thighs, giving a "pantaloons" effect. The hair on the face and ears is both shorter and of finer texture.

Grooming: The Great Pyrenees' coat needs brushing once or twice weekly. It needs moderate exercise but tends to be somewhat lazy in warm weather.

Diet: Dogs prefer consistency. Quality, commercial foods insure nutritional balance. You should not supplement by providing additional additives to their already correct mixture. Give hard, chewing dog biscuits (not bones) for cleaning the teeth.

Health issues: Great Pyrenees have a low metabolism. Always caution your veterinarian about weighing your Pyr before giving any anesthetic to the dog, and only give "to effect." Check the ears periodically for mites, dampness and excess wax. Keep ears dry and free of fungus and mites. A swab of cotton on the finger, dampened with alcohol, can be used to clean the exterior ear canals. Dry ear powder may also be used to keep ears dry.

Clip toenails and dewclaws regularly. Never remove the dewclaws. They are a part of the breed, one of its several identifying characteristics and thought to have a "snow-shoe" effect. Check eyebrows at least monthly to make sure they do not curl downward and possibly into the eyes. Never clip a Great Pyrenees in the summer as they need their coat for sun protection.

Housing: Never allow your Great Pyrenees to roam at will. A well fenced yard is a must for safety. Never tie a dog outside unsupervised. It promotes aggressiveness or other personality changes.

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