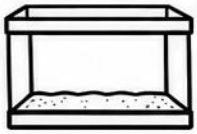
Hermit Crab Tank Setup Checklist

A Quick Guide for a Proper & Healthy Enclosure

☐ Tank & Size



- ☐ Minimum of 20 gallons (even for one crab).
- ☐ 10 gallons per small/medium crab.
- ☐ 15 gallons per large/jumbo crab.
- ☐ Bigger is always better!

☐ Heat & Humidity



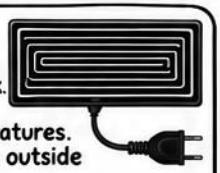
- ☐ **Tropical hermit crabs**: aim for 80°F and 80% humidity (safe range 80–85°F).
- ☐ **Exotic hermit crabs**: aim for 83–85°F and 83–85% humidity.
- ☐ Use a digital thermostat and calibrated digital hygrometer (salt test for accuracy).

☐ Substrate



- ☐ Mix: 5 parts play sand : 1 part coco fiber.
- ☐ At least 3x the height of your largest crab (8–10 inches preferred).

☐ Heat Mat (UTH)



- ☐ Use an under-tank heater (UTH) or heat mat.
- ☐ Cover the full length of the back wall of the tank.
- ☐ Place 1 inch above the substrate line.
- ☐ Use a thermostat for safety and stable temperatures.
- ☐ Add reflective insulation (non-adhesive) on the outside of the tank to help retain heat.

☐ Pools (Fresh & Saltwater)



- ☐ Provide two pools: one fresh water and one marine grade saltwater.
- ☐ Deep enough for a full submerge.
- ☐ Add bubblers for circulation.
- ☐ Use a water conditioner (e.g., Prime).

☐ Lighting & Day/Night Cycle



- ☐ Use an overhead aquarium light (no heat lamps).
- ☐ Provide a 12-hour light / 12-hour dark cycle.
- ☐ Follow a consistent day/night schedule (helps maintain their natural circadian rhythm).

☐ Gauges & Monitoring



- ☐ Use a calibrated digital hygrometer (salt test) placed in the center of the tank, about 4 inches above the substrate.
- ☐ Place the thermostat probe at the same level (center, ~4 inches above the substrate).

☐ Feeding & Nutrition



- ☐ Aim for 50% total protein daily. (40% animal protein + 10% plant protein).
- ☐ **Ecuadorians**: aim for 75% total protein daily.
- ☐ Always provide calcium 24/7 (cuttlebone, eggshell, oyster shell, organic worm castings, and greensand).
- ☐ Include safe oils & fats and rotate weekly (Lipid Line Up).

☐ Handling



- ☐ Hands-off care. Observe and enjoy without handling.
- ☐ They have modified gills and are sensitive to dry air and oils on our skin.
- ☐ A naked crab is an emergency and needs immediate attention.

☐ Forage (Safe Seasonal Forage)



- ☐ Always offer a variety of pesticide-free forage items (leaves, flowers, twigs, seed heads, etc.).
- ☐ Freeze for 72 hours to eliminate pests.
- ☐ Bake at 200°F for 30 minutes or until dry.
- ☐ Keep foraged items stored properly (cool, dry, and in sealed containers).

☐ Species

- ☐ Exotic hermit crabs: aim for 83–85°F and 83–85% humidity.
- ☐ Species with high protein and enrichment.

☐ Unsafe Items (Do Not Use)



- ☐ Pellets (toxic can make crabs sick).
- ☐ Preserved moss.
- ☐ Painted shells (toxic and unsafe).
- ☐ Most herbs and misters.

Quick Reference: Heat & Humidity

Tropical Hermit Crabs	Heat: 80–85°F | Humidity: 80–85%
Exotic Hermit Crabs	Heat: 83–85°F | Humidity: 83–85%

Final Reminder:

A proper setup gives your hermit crabs the right space, stable heat and humidity, balanced nutrition, enrichment, and a variety of shells to thrive.