AXOLOTL AUTHORITY

Tank Setup Shopping Checklist

A practical shopping and setup list for one adult axolotl

PRINT | CHECK | SET UP

Tank size: _____ **Setup date:** _____ **Target temperature:** _____

Buy the complete setup and prove the cooling plan before arranging for the axolotl to come home.

1. AQUARIUM AND PLACEMENT

- [ ] **Long, wide aquarium**
  29 gallons minimum; 40-gallon breeder or larger preferred
- [ ] **Weight-rated, level stand**
  Support the full filled weight
- [ ] **Secure fitted lid**
  Close animal-sized gaps around cords
- [ ] **Cool, shaded location**
  Away from windows, heaters, and direct sun
- [ ] **Maintenance clearance**
  Room to reach the filter and siphon
- [ ] **Power strip and drip loops**
  Keep connections safely above splashes

2. WATER AND FILTRATION

- [ ] **Gentle aquarium filter**
  Sponge, hang-on-back, or canister style
- [ ] **Reusable biological media**
  Sponge or ceramic media - not disposable only
- [ ] **Flow baffle or spray bar**
  Add if the filter return is too strong
- [ ] **Water conditioner**
  Must treat both chlorine and chloramine
- [ ] **Liquid water test kit**
  Ammonia, nitrite, nitrate, and pH
- [ ] **Aquarium thermometer**
  Leave it in the tank for daily checks
- [ ] **Dedicated siphon and bucket**
  Never use household cleaning chemicals

3. HABITAT AND COOLING

- [ ] **Safe bottom**
  Bare bottom or smooth, very fine aquarium sand
- [ ] **Roomy smooth-edged hide**
  Large enough to enter and turn around
- [ ] **Stable aquarium-safe decor**
  No sharp, trapping, or swallowable pieces
- [ ] **Plants (optional)**
  Choose hardy low-light live or soft artificial plants
- [ ] **Proven cooling plan**
  Test the filled tank during warm days
- [ ] **Fan, room cooling, or chiller**
  Choose only if the room requires it
- [ ] **Low-heat LED light (optional)**
  Keep lighting dim and provide shade

4. CYCLING AND ROUTINE CARE

- [ ] **Aquarium cycling ammonia**
  Use a fishless product with clear directions
- [ ] **Measuring dropper or syringe**
  Reserve it for aquarium products
- [ ] **Cycling log**
  Track date, ammonia, nitrite, nitrate, pH, and temperature
- [ ] **Waste-removal tool**
  Turkey baster or other aquarium-only tool
- [ ] **Aquarium algae pad**
  No soap or household cleaning sprays
- [ ] **Food and feeding tool**
  Buy after confirming the breeder's current diet
- [ ] **Clean temporary tub**
  For safe short-term holding when necessary

BEFORE THE AXOLOTL ARRIVES

- [ ] Tank leak-free
- [ ] Gentle flow
- [ ] Temperature stable
- [ ] Fishless cycle passed