

# Feeding Ball Pythons

## Feeding Equipment

I use and recommend the steaming method when feeding Ball Python's particularly if you have a fussy feeder!

Here is what you will need:

Electric Kettle

Feeding tongs of an appropriate size for the snake you are feeding.



I recommend 18inch Tongs (Hemostats) for feeding sub adult and adult Ball Pythons.



I recommend 12 inch tweezers for feeding hatchling and growing on Ball Pythons.

I offer both of these sizes (as shown in the photos) for sale on my website <https://livingartballpythons.co.uk/shop?olsPage=products>

## The Steaming method

Allow the frozen rodent to defrost at room temperature. Once the rodent has completely thawed I then use an electric kettle which is located closely to where my snakes are kept. The kettle needs to be in the same room as where your snake is housed and as close as possible to the tank/tub/rub.

Begin to boil the kettle and as the kettle begins to heat the water and steam is present, using feeding tongs, hold the rodents skin around the

middle of its back and place the head of the rodent into the spout of the kettle.



Hold it in the direct steam for approx. 10 seconds, allowing the steam to heat the rodents' head. Offer the rodent as quickly as possible to the snake placing it in front of the snake quietly and steadily so that it can smell the rodent and sense the heat.

For less confident snakes try holding the rodent around the middle of its back as holding the rodent by the base of the tail can intimidate the snake and put them off feeding. For keener feeders it may be better to hold the rodent at the base of the tail to avoid the risk of the snake grabbing the feeding tongs when they strike for the rodent.



*Super keen feeder coming out of his Rub for his mouse!*

If the snake does not grab the rodent but its tongue is flicking and the snake is looking interested if it is possible to leave your tub/tank/rub open slightly without the risk of escape, repeat with the kettle steaming again and as soon as you re-offer the rodent and the snake senses it's heat they will then usually grab. Try this up to three times.

If the snake has still not taken the rodent after three attempts using the steaming method, try leaving the rodent in the tub/rub/tank overnight, just in case that they eat once left alone. Check them in the morning to

see if they have eaten, if not then dispose of the rodent and try again in seven days' time.

### **Problem Feeders – tips to try:**

Try feeding at night or very early morning this can make a big difference

Make sure your Royal is kept in a room which is quiet.

Try a different food source; Ball Pythons are notoriously fussy feeders so finding the right food source for them is important.

### **Other considerations**

If you are experiencing difficulties in getting your ball python to eat here are somethings to consider;

\*Is it the environment? Is the rub/tub/tank too big?

Ball Pythons like smaller spaces; this is discussed in more detail in my housing guidance.

\*Does your snake have a hide?

If not, get one. This needs to be only slightly bigger than what the snake can fit into otherwise it defeats the object. If the snake is in the hide when you are offering food do not remove the hide as this can cause stress and the snake may refuse to feed, instead use the kettle steaming method and place the head of the rodent into the opening of the hide allowing the snake time to sense the heat and pick up the scent of the rodent, and then try to lure the snake from the hide using the rodent and it should grab. I have some Ball Pythons that will only grab their food from inside their hides where they feel secure.

\*Are your temperatures right?

This is something basic, but it can be the basics we forget to check. I recommend purchasing a digital temperature gun which makes monitoring your temperatures very quick and easy and you can purchase these for under £10 from places such as eBay.



Click the link to take you straight to this item on eBay

<https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/Handheld-LCD-Digital-Laser-Thermometer-Temperature-Infrared-Non-Contact-IR-Gun/142456227542?hash=item212b0d86d6:g:rQ0AAOSwQPtdURyL>

\*Are you feeding your snake the right size and type of rodent?

If you are offering a rodent too large for your snake this can intimidate the snake and it will refuse the feed. Ball Pythons can be fussy feeders in my collection I have snakes which will eat Rats some will only take Multi's (African Furred Rats), some will only eat Mice or even Gerbils. I do not recommend that you switch the food regularly, however if after around four weeks of refusing meals using the steaming method and you are confident that the housing, temperature and rodent size are correct then try to offer the snake a different type of rodent.