

Navigating the 5-Gallon Fish Tank in Litres: A Comprehensive Guide for Aquarists

When beginning an aquarium pastime, one of the most typical questions novices deal with revolves around measurements. Particularly, aquarium sizes are often cited in gallons, particularly in North American content. Nevertheless, for those utilizing the metric system, picturing these dimensions can in some [aquarium parameter calculator](#) cases be puzzling.

If you are looking at a compact starter aquarium, you have likely experienced the popular **5-gallon aquarium**. However what does that equate to in the metric system?

In short, a basic **5 United States gallon aquarium is roughly 18.92 litres**.

This detailed guide will check out the exact metric conversions, what a tank of this size indicates for your marine pets, how to set it up, and whether it is the best choice for your area.

1. The Numbers: Converting Gallons to Litres

Before diving into stocking levels and equipment, it is very important to comprehend the specific math. Depending on whether you are referencing US gallons or Imperial gallons (used historically in the UK and Canada), the metric conversion varies somewhat.

Gallon Type US/Imperial Value Exact Conversion in Litres Rounded for Everyday Use **United States Gallons** 5 United States Gal 18.9271 Litres **18.9 Litres Imperial Gallons** 5 Imp Gal 22.7305 Litres **22.7 Litres**

Note: In the aquarium pastime, "gallons" generally refers to United States gallons unless specified otherwise.

Understanding that your 5-gallon tank holds approximately 19 litres of water is crucial. Water weighs roughly 1 kg per litre. This indicates a fully filled 18.9-litre tank-- once you element in substrate, decors, and devices-- will weigh around **20 to 22 kilograms (44 to 48 pounds)**. You should guarantee your furnishings can easily support this weight.

2. Is a 19-Litre Tank Right for You?

A 19-litre (5-gallon) tank falls under the classification of a **nano aquarium**. These compact ecosystems have actually ended up being immensely popular due to their little footprint, making them perfect for workplace desks, dormitory, or small houses.

Nevertheless, before acquiring, it is vital to comprehend the physics of small aquariums.

The Myth of "Easy Maintenance"

Beginners often presume that smaller sized tanks are simpler to keep because there is less water to clean. In reality, **the reverse is typically real**.



- In a 19-litre body of water, chemical changes take place much faster than in a 100-litre tank.
- If a fish eats way too much or a plant rots, the ammonia and nitrate levels can surge alarmingly in a matter of hours.
- Water parameters (temperature and pH) fluctuate more rapidly.

For that reason, running a successful 19-litre aquarium needs diligence, stable regimens, and a dependable water testing package.

3. What Can Live in a 18.9-Litre Aquarium?

Since of the restricted volume, equipping a 19-litre tank needs careful preparation. You can not keep large fish, nor can you keep education fish that require long swimming areas.

Here is what **can** conveniently live in a 5-gallon/ 19-litre tank:

- **A Single Betta Fish (Siamese Fighting Fish):** A 19-litre tank is extensively thought about the *gold requirement* minimum size for a single male or female Betta. It provides them adequate space to explore, particularly if planted largely.
- **Freshwater Shrimp:** Cherry shrimp, Amano shrimp, and crystal shrimp flourish in nano tanks. You can conveniently keep a nest of 10 to 15 shrimp in 19 litres, as their bioload (waste production) is incredibly low.
- **Nerite or Mystery Snails:** Snails make wonderful cleanup crews. A single nerite snail will help keep algae under control.
- **Nano Fish Species:** Very couple of fish species appropriate for a tank this size. Endler's livebearers (males only, to prevent overbreeding) or *Microdevario kubotai* (emerald dwarf rasbora) *can* work, however just if the aquarist is skilled and keeps extensive water quality.

What NOT to Put in a 19-Litre Tank

To make sure animal well-being, avoid keeping the following types in a 5-gallon aquarium:

- **Goldfish:** Goldfish produce enormous quantities of waste and grow far too large. They require at least 75+ litres for a single fancy goldfish.
- **Tetras, Danios, or Barbs:** These are education fish. To be pleased, they need to be kept in groups of 6 or more and need horizontal swimming space (a minimum of a 38-litre/ 10-gallon tank).
- **Plecostomus (Pleco):** Even the smaller sized types (like the Bristlenose Pleco) outgrow a 19-litre tank quickly.

4. Vital Equipment for a 19-Litre Tank

Establishing an 18.9-litre aquarium needs specific gear reduced to nano percentages.

- **Filtration:** You will require a little, adjustable hang-on-back (HOB) filter or a sponge filter ranked for up to 20 or 30 litres. Guarantee the circulation rate isn't too strong, as fish like Bettas resist heavy currents.
- **Heater:** Most tropical fish require a stable temperature level between 24 ° C and 26 ° C (75 ° F-- 78 ° F). A small 25-watt submersible heater is typically enough for a 19-litre volume.
- **Lighting:** Simple LED lights are perfect. If you desire to grow live plants (like Anubias, Java Fern, or Bucephalandra), ensure the light has actually a spectrum suited for plant development.
- **Thermometer:** Crucial for keeping an eye on water stability in a little volume.

5. Step-by-Step: Setting Up Your 19-Litre Aquarium

If you are ready to bring your 5-gallon tank to life, follow this fundamental setup summary:

1. **Rinse and Position:** Place your tank on a strong, level surface area away from direct sunlight (to avoid algae blooms). Wash the glass with warm water-- never ever utilize soap or chemicals.
2. **Add Substrate:** Add 2 to 4 kgs of aquarium gravel or nutrient-rich aqua-soil, sloping it a little towards the back for visual depth.
3. **Install Hardscape & Plants:** Arrange driftwood, rocks, and live or silk plants. Live plants assist absorb nitrates and stabilize the water chemistry.
4. **Fill with Water:** Gently put your 18.9 litres of water into the tank. Using a plate or a plastic bag at the bottom assists prevent troubling your substrate layout.
5. **Include Water Conditioner:** Treat the tap water with a dechlorinator to get rid of hazardous chlorine and chloramines.
6. **Set up Equipment:** Set up your filter and heater, then plug them in.
7. **The Nitrogen Cycle: Crucial Step.** Allow the tank to cycle for 2 to 4 weeks *before* adding any fish. This builds up beneficial bacteria that convert poisonous ammonia into safe nitrates.

Summary Table: 5-Gallon Tank at a Glance

Specification	Metric Value (Litres/ cm/ kg)	Imperial Value (Gallons/ inches/ lbs)	Water Capacity ~ 18.9 Litres
United States Gallons	Total Weight (Full) ~ 20-- 22 kg	~ 44-- 48 lbs	Typical Dimensions (Standard) ~ 40 x 20 x 25 cm
~ 16 x 8 x 10 inches	Suitable Stocking Limit 1 Betta OR 10-- 15 Shrimp	1 Betta OR 10-- 15 Shrimp	Minimum Heater Size 25 Watts

Comprehending that a 5-gallon fish tank equates to **18.9 litres** is the initial step towards developing a prospering marine environment. While compact and best for tight spaces, a 19-litre tank needs respect, persistence, and routine maintenance. By stocking it responsibly-- perhaps with a marvelous Betta fish or a colony of colorful freshwater shrimp-- you can develop a stunning, lively piece of nature right on your desktop.