

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

When starting an aquarium pastime, among the most common concerns newbies deal with revolves around measurements. Specifically, aquarium sizes are often mentioned in gallons, especially in North American material. Nevertheless, for those using the metric system, envisioning these measurements can in some cases be confusing.

If you are taking a look at a compact starter aquarium, you have likely encountered the popular **5-gallon fish tank**. However what does that equate to in the [aquarium size calculator](#) metric system?

In other words, a standard **5 US gallon aquarium is approximately 18.92 litres**.

This comprehensive guide will check out the specific metric conversions, what a tank of this size implies for your aquatic family pets, how to set it up, and whether it is the best option for your area.

1. The Numbers: Converting Gallons to Litres

Before diving into stocking levels and devices, it is necessary to comprehend the precise math. Depending upon whether you are referencing US gallons or Imperial gallons (used historically in the UK and Canada), the metric conversion varies a little.

Gallon Type US/Imperial Value Specific Conversion in Litres Rounded for Everyday Use **US 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" usually describes US gallons unless mentioned otherwise.

Understanding that your 5-gallon tank holds approximately 19 litres of water is vital. Water weighs approximately 1 kilogram per litre. This implies a totally filled 18.9-litre tank-- as soon as you aspect in substrate, decorations, and equipment-- will weigh around **20 to 22 kgs (44 to 48 lbs)**. You need to ensure your furniture can comfortably 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 communities have ended up being exceptionally popular due to their little footprint, making them ideal for office desks, dormitory, or small homes.

However, before acquiring, it is vital to understand the physics of small fish tanks.

The Myth of "Easy Maintenance"

Beginners typically presume that smaller tanks are easier to keep due to the fact that there is less water to clean. In reality, **the opposite is often real**.

- In a 19-litre body of water, chemical modifications occur much faster than in a 100-litre tank.
- If a fish eats way too much or a plant decomposes, the ammonia and nitrate levels can surge alarmingly in a matter of hours.
- Water specifications (temperature and pH) change more quickly.

Therefore, running an effective 19-litre aquarium requires diligence, stable routines, and a trusted water testing package.

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

Since of the minimal volume, stocking a 19-litre tank requires careful preparation. You can not keep large fish, nor can you keep schooling fish that require long swimming areas.

Here is what **can** comfortably reside in a 5-gallon/ 19-litre tank:

- **A Single Betta Fish (Siamese Fighting Fish):** A 19-litre tank is commonly thought about the *gold standard* minimum size for a single male or female Betta. It provides adequate room to explore, specifically if planted largely.
- **Freshwater Shrimp:** Cherry shrimp, Amano shrimp, and crystal shrimp grow in nano tanks. You can conveniently keep a colony of 10 to 15 shrimp in 19 litres, as their bioload (waste production) is extremely low.
- **Nerite or Mystery Snails:** Snails make great cleanup crews. A single nerite snail will assist keep algae under control.
- **Nano Fish Species:** Very couple of fish types appropriate for a tank this size. Endler's livebearers (males only, to prevent overbreeding) or *Microdevario kubotai* (emerald dwarf rasbora) *can* work, however only if the aquarist is skilled and preserves strenuous water quality.

What NOT to Put in a 19-Litre Tank

To guarantee animal welfare, prevent keeping the following types in a 5-gallon aquarium:

- **Goldfish:** Goldfish produce huge amounts of waste and grow far too large. They need a minimum of 75+ litres for a single elegant 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 (Plecos):** Even the smaller types (like the Bristlenose Pleco) outgrow a 19-litre tank rapidly.

4. Necessary Equipment for a 19-Litre Tank

Establishing an 18.9-litre aquarium requires specific equipment reduced to nano proportions.

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

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

If you are all set to bring your 5-gallon tank to life, follow this fundamental setup overview:

1. **Rinse and Position:** Place your tank on a durable, level surface far from direct sunlight (to avoid algae blooms). Wash the glass with warm water-- never utilize soap or chemicals.
2. **Include Substrate:** Add 2 to 4 kilograms of aquarium gravel or nutrient-rich aqua-soil, sloping it slightly towards the back for visual depth.
3. **Install Hardscape & Plants:** Arrange driftwood, rocks, and live or silk plants. Live plants assist soak up 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 avoid troubling your substrate design.

- 5. **Include Water Conditioner:** Treat the tap water with a dechlorinator to remove hazardous chlorine and chloramines.
- 6. **Set up Equipment:** Set up your filter and heater, then plug them in.
- 7. **The Nitrogen Cycle: Crucial Step.** Enable the tank to cycle for 2 to 4 weeks *before* including any fish. This constructs up advantageous bacteria that transform toxic ammonia into safe nitrates.

Summary Table: 5-Gallon Tank at a Glance

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

Understanding that a 5-gallon aquarium translates to **18.9 litres** is the initial step towards developing a flourishing marine environment. While compact and perfect for tight areas, a 19-litre tank demands regard, perseverance, and routine upkeep. By equipping it responsibly-- possibly with a magnificent Betta fish or a colony of vibrant freshwater shrimp-- you can develop a spectacular, vibrant slice of nature right on your desktop.