



Fun fact ↻ Chickens help control ticks and garden pests.

Backyard Chickens at a Glance

Difficulty of care: **Beginner to Intermediate**

Average lifespan: **7+ years with proper care**

Diet: **High-quality layer feed (about 90%) plus fruits and vegetables as treats**

Minimum habitat size: **5 square feet of coop space per hen, plus a shared run**

Temperature: **55–85 F (varies by breed)**



Enclosure Setup & Maintenance

- Provide a fully enclosed coop and run with a roof and secure fencing or netting. Each hen needs at least 5 square feet of coop space and 8–10 inches of roosting space. Add one nesting box for every two to three hens. Include perches in different sizes and materials.
- Line the coop and nesting boxes with about 8 inches of pine shavings, hemp, or corn cob bedding. Avoid wet soil, which can cause bacterial problems. Provide a dust bath area with sand, wood ash, and fine dirt.
- Install a full-spectrum UV light for 12–14 hours daily if birds are indoors.
- Clean feeders and waterers daily with soap. Deep-clean the coop weekly and refresh bedding.

Supply Checklist

- Appropriately sized coop and run
- Fencing or netting
- Nesting boxes
- Bedding material
- Elevated feeders and waterers
- High-quality layer feed
- Crushed oyster shells
- Dust bath materials
- UV light (if indoors)
- Heaters and fans



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Diet

Feed adult hens a high-quality layer feed as 90% of their diet. Offer fruits and vegetables as occasional treats. Grass, bugs, and weeds are not complete nutrition. Provide extra calcium for egg-laying hens through crushed oyster shells or crushed eggshells. Avoid onions, raw potatoes, and processed foods. Keep feeders and waterers slightly elevated and sized appropriately per bird.



Fun fact ↪ Chicken manure adds nitrogen to soil and supports plant growth.

Health

Schedule annual veterinary visits with a poultry-experienced vet. Healthy chickens have clean eyes, feathers, feet, nostrils, consistent droppings, and normal movement.

Call a vet if you notice discharge, limping, appetite loss, wheezing, sneezing, vomiting, feather plucking, or constant fluffing of feathers.

Fun fact

↪ Chickens take dust baths to keep feathers clean and free of parasites.

