

Top 10 Birds for Raising Backyard Chickens

(According to Chickenreview.com)

When you're picking your first flock, there are a few key things to look for:

1. The breed should be a recognized breed, and should be easy to find in most hatcheries.
2. The breed should have a reputation for docility, friendliness, and general tameness.
3. The breed should be fairly low-maintenance without too many care issues.

You should decide whether you're raising chickens for table meat or just eggs. If you want eggs, choose a breed that excels at laying. If you want meat, make sure to pick birds that gain weight quickly.

The great thing about chickens is there are a few breeds that meet these criteria, making them excellent birds for the average backyard flock. Some of these birds are good layers and some are good layers and meat birds also! We've put together a list of our ten favorite chicken breeds for Urban or backyard flocks. Each of the breeds on our list meets most of the items to look for we've mentioned, and are very good birds for a beginner.



1: Rhode Island Red: The Best Dual-Purpose Bird: Easy to care for and a good layer! They are a popular choice for backyard flocks because of their egg laying abilities and hardiness. Although they can sometimes be stubborn, healthy hens can lay up to 5–6 eggs per week depending on their care and treatment. Rhode Island Red hens lay many more eggs than an average hen if provided plenty of quality feed



2: Buff Orpington: The Best Pet Chicken: The one caution on this breed is that their docile nature will often make them a target for bullying from other birds. Bred to be an excellent layer with good meat quality. They can go broody very often, and make great mothers. Due to their build they do well in very cold climates. If you choose to raise a Buff Orpington, be careful not to add aggressive breeds to your flock.



3: Leghorn: The Best Egg-Layer: They're generally friendly, though they can be noisy and a bit aggressive at times. Leghorns are good layers of white eggs, laying an average of 280 per year and sometimes reaching 300–320. Better egg layer than brooder.



4: Delaware: The Meaty Bird: Delaware's are inquisitive and friendly, and generally low-maintenance birds. They do tend to have tough molts though, and while most have mild dispositions, some can be a bit cranky. Delawares are hardy birds that mature quickly. Hens are good layers of large to jumbo brown eggs and will go broody. Not the friendliest bird in the yard but a good layer.



5: Ameraucana (sometimes mis-spelled Americana): **AKA the Easter-Egger:** This breed makes wonderful backyard chickens. They will thrive well either in confinement or free-ranging. They have a calm, non-aggressive disposition, and are very easy to handle. This is possibly the best bird for a family with kids.



6: The Wyandotte is a docile, dual-purpose breed kept for their large brown eggs and for meat. Wyandotte hens are devoted mothers. The Wyandotte is a versatile chicken and can adapt to different temperatures. These chickens do fine on free range or in a fenced in yard. The hens will lay around 200 eggs a year. The Wyandotte is a hen that will need her vent checked regularly because of the thickness of her tail feathers she is prone to become clogged if not kept clean.



7: The Australorp is a large, soft-feathered bird. The Australorp is hardy, docile, and a good egg-layer, as well as a meat bird. Well looked after Australorps lay approximately 250 light-brown eggs per year. They are also known to be good nest sitters and mothers, making them one of the most exceptional large, heritage utility breeds of chicken.



8: Welssummer, the most common example of this would be the Kelloggs Cornflakes rooster. Its eggs are dark-brown and spotty. Welssummer hens lay about 160 eggs per year, making these birds a good dual purpose breed for the small flock keeper. Welssummers are not very docile but they are intelligent and friendly. They are also quite active, and one of the best free range breeds available.



9: The Cochin. The most distinctive feature of the Cochin is the excessive plumage that covers leg and foot. The eggs are medium in size. Cochins are well known as good mothers and foster mothers for other breeds, and they can lay many eggs, but usually not for extended periods of time. Cochins are also known to be good pet hens for the garden, as they are tame and regarded as one of the most 'friendly' chicken breeds.



10: Campine Chickens: The energetic Campine chicken is a dependable layer of medium-sized white eggs. In North America, the Campine is prized as an ornamental chicken breed, as well. The Campine chicken is capable of foraging for most of its food requirements.