

Top 10 Chicken FAQs

1. Do I need a rooster in order for my hens to lay eggs?

No, you only need a rooster if you would like the eggs to be fertilized so that you can have baby chicks.

2. Do white chickens produce white eggs and brown chickens produce brown eggs?

The color of eggs is actually tied to the breed of chicken and not the color of the chicken's feathers.

3. Do chickens make good pets?

We think so. Chickens can be very tame and many enjoy being petted and held. They can easily be taught to come for treats and many will eat from your hand. They also do not need to be walked and will not tear up your couch.

4. I know that roosters crow, but do hens also make noise?

Chickens are mostly quiet but they will announce any signs of danger, such as when a neighboring cat enters the yard, or when a hawk flies over. They also may cluck loudly when they lay an egg (and really, who can blame them?)

5. What is the difference between a hen house and a run, and do I need both?

A hen house, also called a coop, is where the chickens sleep and lay their eggs. A run is a roofed outdoor area attached to the coop to allow the chickens time outside. Some people build a fenced enclosure around their hen house and others just let the chickens range freely about their yard. A run or fenced enclosure is recommended to keep your chickens secure from predators when you cannot be there to protect them.

6. How many eggs does a hen lay each week?

A hen starts laying eggs at about 6 months of age and will lay one egg approximately every 25 hours. Laying decreases as hens get older but it can be very individual and many hens will continue laying well for years.

7. What is a 'broody' hen?

Depending upon the breed and sometimes the individual chicken, each hen at one time or another will want to stay on her eggs to hatch them. This is called 'brooding'. The concern with letting a chicken brood is that she will not eat and may become very weak or die. You should monitor and you might consider isolating her in a well-ventilated cage or box with adequate food and water and without a nesting box for a few days to 'break' her broodiness.

8. What is a bantam?

A bantam, also called a banty, is a smaller version of full-sized chicken breeds.

9. Is it true that chickens actually "come home to roost"?

One of the many great things about chickens is that you do not need to herd them in every evening. Once they know where they live, chickens will return to their hen house around dusk. You merely need to shut the door to secure them from any unwanted raccoon –or other chicken eating - burglars at night.

10. Is it true that there is a "pecking order"?

Yes, especially when you first get your chickens or when you introduce a new chicken to your flock, you will seem some pecking and hear some disgruntled clucks. This is how the flock establishes their hierarchy and determines who gets the most scrumptious bugs, access to the best nesting box and the other privileges associated with ruling the roost.