

Ultimate Chicken Breeds Handbook



Top 20 Chicken Breeds for Your Backyard Coop

Looking to start your own flock of backyard chickens? Or perhaps you are wondering which chicken breed you should add to your established chicken coop? Look no further! Read on for our comprehensive list of the top 20 chicken breeds for backyard chicken keepers to love. From the popular to the rare, we have the inside scoop on all the breeds that will make your flock the envy of all the neighbourhood coops!



1. ISA Brown

The [ISA Brown](#) is a humble chook. The name ISA Brown is not actually a breed name, but a copyrighted brand name. The breed was developed and patented by a French company in 1978 for optimum egg production and since then their popularity has grown to great heights. They are a well-known choice for backyard chicken coop keepers and farmers alike, and these gorgeous girls are a renowned favourite for a bunch of reasons. We love the ISA

Brown for her gentle nature, her resilience and her egg-straordinary egg laying talents that leave all other hens in the dust-bath! Have a sticky beak at the five reasons we love the humble ISA Brown and coo her praises daily [here](#).



2. Plymouth Rock

The [Plymouth Rock](#) chicken is a wonderful breed of chook for [first time keepers](#) and seasoned [Chicken Ladies](#) and Lads alike. They are relaxed, resplendent and responsive and make any coop a more loving and fun place to be. Introduced in the late 1900s, the breed was named after the town of its origin and quickly rose in popularity across America due to their egg-cellent egg laying skills and their laid back look on life. Plymouth Rock hens make great additions to backyard chicken coops and our egg-sperts just love their chilled out vibe and kid-friendly nature. Have a little peck at just five reasons why it's easy to adore these happy-go-clucky hens [here](#).



3. Barnevelder

The Dutch bred [barnevelder breed](#) has to be one of the most popular, distinctive and attractive types of backyard chickens in Australia. Though breeds like [ISA Browns](#), [Australorps](#) and [Orpingtons](#) are of course intensely popular due to their high egg yield, barnevelders are still a standout breed due to its unique plumage, quirky personality and of course those pretty and peculiar eggs that they lay. But, for most [Chicken Ladies](#), it will be love at first sight when they see the iridescent green tinge in the feathers of a barnevelder chook. Now, any sensible person knows that looks aren't everything, so it's essential that you find out more about the other qualities that make barnevelder chickens so uniquely loveable by having a stickybeak [here](#).



4. Australorp

Aussie, Aussie, Aussie – cluck, cluck, cluck! That's the response you'll get if you have a coop full of frisky, friendly and fabulous [australorps](#)! The locally bred australorps are a favourite in many Australian backyards due to their brilliant black, white or blue plumage, exceptional egg laying talents and their characteristic happy-go-clucky Aussie attitude. Though we absolutely love chickens from all over the world, from the elegant English [orpingtons](#) to the alluring American [Rhode Island Reds](#), there is something special about a homebred lady. For coop and country make sure you have a squiz at the top 5 reasons that we love the Aussie australorp by clicking [here](#).



5. Naked Neck

Most [Chicken Ladies](#) will never forget the first time they their lay eyes upon a distinctive, quirky and downright bizarre naked neck chicken. When animal lovers first see a naked neck chicken most, without meaning to cause offense, say, “what’s wrong with that chicken?” Yes, these girls sure look peculiar, but it’s the way nature made them. Originating from Transylvania, naked neck chickens are famous for having featherless necks, which sort of make them look like turkeys. There has been some rabble that naked necks are in fact a cross between a turkey and a chicken, however this conspiracy theory has long since been debunked by scientists. Naked neck chickens are undeniably different on their own terms, like Cyndi Lauper or Freddy Mercury, which only makes this exceptional breed all the more loveable. Have a peck at why we love them [here](#).



6. Orpington

The cute, courteous and courtly orpington chicken might very well be one of the best mother's in all of the animal kingdom. Created by British poultry breeders at the turn of the 20th century, the orpington chicken was designed to be a hardy breed that can endure England's most bitter winters, whilst still laying at an unstoppable rate. These heavy-set, fluffy and cuddly ladies will be a figure of grace and dignity in any coop. [Orpington chickens](#) may seem homely and commonplace however these powerhouse egg laying wonders will make an eggstraordinary addition to any chicken lovers flock. Stick your beak into the top 5 reasons we have fallen absolutely head over heels in love with orpington chickens [here](#).



7. Silkie

Silkie chickens have a reputation for standing out due to their fluffy and puffy plumage! Some of you may be imagining a brown or black mess of feathers, but silkie chickens have style in spades compared to some of their cousins, like [ISA browns](#) and [australorps](#). Silkies may be small in stature, only weighing approximately 1.5 to 2 kilos, but they always leave a big impression because of their discrete resemblance to celebrities like Lady Gaga, Jimmy Hendrix and Vivienne Westwood. Silkie chickens are such a remarkable breed that the great merchant and traveller Marco Polo, after encountering them in China, felt compelled to bring some back to the west with him. What would other visionaries like Albert Einstein, Andy Warhol and Coco Chanel have made of silkie chickens? One can only assume that they would have been humbled by the brilliance of these unique birds. Want to know more? Have a sticky beak at why we love them [here](#).



8. New Hampshire Red

The [New Hampshire chicken breed](#) is a reliable and robust hen that doesn't disappoint when it comes to producing delicious eggs or forming wonderful feathered friendships. These girls are gentle and warm, make egg-cellent mums and are quietly beautiful. Think of the New Hampshire chook as the hen-next-door, an unassuming chicken that is definitely more worthy of your attention than her looks let on. The breed was developed in the early 1900s by New Hampshire farmers who wanted to improve on the existing Rhode Island Reds and have a chicken breed to call their very own. The farmers focused on breeding hens that were fast growing, early to lay and hardy in the bitterly cold winters of the north-eastern US state. The resulting delightful bird was officially coined the New Hampshire in 1935. Have a look at why we love them [here](#).



9. Frizzle

The dramatic and stunning [Frizzle chicken](#) is a curious looking chook with a warm temperament and a surprising amount of grit for someone so glamorous! These girls come in standard and [bantam](#) sizes and have unique feathers that curl outwards instead of lying flat. To the untrained eye, these Frizzle feathers give them the appearance of someone who has had an unfortunate blow dry, but these girls are ahead of the times! They know they are setting trends with their uncommon looks and wear their frazzled and fluffy feathers with pride. These ladies can usually be found parading around a show ring, taking home ribbons for their frizzle factor, but they aren't just the next starlet in line to fall from grace! The Frizzle chicken is not above joining the common backyard flock and makes a wonderful choice of pet for your family and a great addition to your coop. Need to know more? Check them out [here](#).



10. Belgian d'Uccle

The Belgian d'Uccle chicken is one of the sweetest, loveliest and cuddliest pets in the whole wide world. Originating from Uccle in Belgium these vibrant ladies come in many different shapes, colours and sizes. Whether you're looking for a chicken that looks as stunning and stylish as a casino dancer or if you are simply looking for a chook that's sleek, elegant and classic, you'll surely be able to find a Belgian d'Uccle that suits your unique taste. If these European cuddly cuties have piqued your poultry curiosity, have a stickybeak [here](#) to find out the top 5 reasons we absolutely love Belgian d'Uccles.



11. Rhode Island Red

[Rhode Island Reds](#) are the go-to chicken breed for backyard chook keepers who want a laidback layer to add to their flock. These hens are renowned for their hardiness in any type of environment. Rain or shine, snow or summer sun, the Rhode Island Red is happy-go-clucky in any type of backyard! They are a girl with grit, but don't let that robust demeanour fool you, these ruby red ladies also possess a lot of heart! They make the perfect companion pet for any [Chicken Lady](#) or Lad and a great friend for kids, both big and small. Developed on the poultry farms in Little Compton, Rhode Island in the late 1800s, the Rhode Island Red breed grew in popularity throughout the United States, eventually becoming the state bird of... you guessed it – Rhode Island! A well-deserved honour for such a friendly and [easy to care](#) for chook! Have a little look [here](#) to see why we love them so much!



12. Polish

Love may be blind but style has twenty-twenty vision and Polish chickens have exceptional senses when it comes to fashion! Beauty may only be only skin deep but these glamorous girls are gorgeous inside and out. Stunning looks, sweet personality, mysterious history, polish chickens are a real catch when it comes to backyard chooks. If you're looking for a glamorous chicken to love than look no further than these fabulously feathered friends. If you're looking for a classy chicken that leaves other chooks in the dust bath when it comes to clucky-couture then you simply must have a look at the top 5 reasons we love polish chicken [here](#).



13. Cochin

It might be hard for modern day [chicken ladies](#) and lads to believe, but there was a time when people weren't as crazy for chickens as we are today! YES! In fact, prior to the 1800s, chickens were seen as part of the farming landscape, existing to provide eggs and Sunday dinner and not much else. Definitely not the adored and spoiled backyard girls we raise today! Cochins played a big part in starting the modern day craze of keeping chickens and their friendly nature and unique looks still inspire chicken keepers today. What is it about Cochin chickens that inspired a new movement in [keeping chooks as pets](#)? Delve into the 5 reasons we love Cochin chickens [here](#)!



14. Leghorn

[Leghorn chickens](#) are adventurous, spirited, friendly and wondrous egg-layers. First developed in Livorno (Italian for “Leghorn”) in Tuscany and brought to Britain in the late 1800s, they became a popular purebred chicken in America and later Australia. The Leghorn chickens’ egg laying prowess, savvy attitudes and bold personalities made them the most common purebred fowl in Australia in the early to mid 1900s. We love Leghorn chickens, and not just for their ability to lay generously sized, bright white eggs on a regular basis. Have a sticky beak at 5 reasons to love Leghorn chickens [here](#).



15. Sussex

[Sussex chickens](#) are a brilliant addition to any backyard chicken coop looking for a chook with grace, a friendly nature and a little grit. Their long and distinguished family background and kind and curious nature make Sussex chickens perfect for novice chicken keepers and those wanting a friendly hen to add to their growing backyard menagerie. You'll never be alone with a Sussex chicken, these girls make wonderful companion birds. They enjoy the spoils of being part of their beloved family, foraging alongside you and taking a turn about the garden grounds, but are just as content when mingling with their fellow splendid fowls in the garden, the coop or the chicken run and finding their place in the [pecking order](#) of society. Why do we love them so? Have a read [here](#).



16. Araucana

Araucanas are eye-catching chickens that always leave an impression in or outside the coop. These uniquely feathered blue egg laying beauties sure know how to stand out in a world cluck-full of all kinds of pretty poultry. From their energetic personalities to their distinctive featherings, there is simply nothing ordinary about Araucana chickens – these girls were made to stand out! Stick your beak into the five reasons we absolutely love these outstanding athletic Araucana chickens [here](#).



17. Wyandotte

[Wyandotte chickens](#) are bold, beautiful and brassy birds both inside and out. The Wyandotte breed was first established in 1883 in North America. Having admired the perfect plumage of the British Sebright chicken, American breeders set out to create a practical, but no less pretty, version to suit the new world. Popularity was slow growing, but eventually Wyandotte chickens became main players on the dual purpose scene, providing meat and eggs for a fast moving America. Their bold temperaments and stunning array of plumage colours make them a great choice for backyard chicken keepers who want an easy going and easy on the eye chook to add to their flock. Fall in love with these all round beauties by reading our reasons to adore Wyandotte chickens [here](#).



18. Minorca

Minorca chickens are graceful and energetic senioritas that share their name with a beautiful island off the west coast of Spain. Adopted by the British in the late 18th century these sleek ladies with spicy personalities were hugely popular for approximately 100 years before being trumped by hybrid breeds and other more [prolific laying hens](#) in the later 20th century. Now on the verge of extinction, these truly remarkable ladies deserve to have their names up in lights in backyard coops all over the world! Though Minorca chooks really need no explanation, please read the top 5 reasons we love these eggceptionally enticing egg-laying wonders [here](#).



19. Faverolles

Developed in Northern France at the turn of the 20th century, Faverolles are a fluffy and feathery breed famous for their genial nature and good looks. Faverolles is a composite breed created from a combination of [Cochins](#), Houdans and Dorkings that is big, strong and healthy in size, as well as being regular and reliable layers. Other popular composite breeds from this period include [Rhode Island Reds](#), [Plymouth Rock](#), [Wyandotte](#) and [Barnevelders](#). However, Faverolles are definitely one of the most fabulous. It will only take a matter of moments for these friendly french ladies to soar into your hearts and minds. True love may be indescribable however [click here](#) if you'd like to discover the 5 reasons we are totally besotted with Faverolles chickens.



20. Sebright

[Sebright chickens](#) are unique and exotic looking ladies with sweet temperaments and a penchant for curiosity. In the early 1800s Sir John Sebright – a member of the British Parliament and avid animal keeper – set out to create his vision of the perfect chicken. The resulting fantastically feathered fowl was the Sebright bantam and these small but perfectly formed birds became popular with highfalutin poultry fanciers across the British isles and beyond. Sir John took the formula for creating the Sebright breed to his grave, but it is rumored that they were developed from a mix of the [Polish](#), Nankin and [Hamburg](#) breeds of chicken. These [rare](#) and individual birds can be hard to find, but once you've owned a Sebright chicken, you'll forever be changed. Curious to know why we find Sebrights so alluring? [Click here](#) for our 5 reasons to love these unique and uncompromising hens.

No matter the chicken you choose for your backyard buddies, you'll need a safe and sturdy coop to keep them happy. Looking for a hen home? Have a peck at our marvellous [Mansion](#), our perfect [Penthouse](#) and our terrific [Taj Mahal](#).

Top 5 Chicken Breeds for Warm Climates

If you're situated at the top end of Australia where sweating is the everyday norm, and are considering becoming a backyard chicken keeper, then there are certain chicken breeds that will fare better than others in your climate.

Chickens are a creature that prefer the cold to the hot, so it's important for any keeper living in the warm weather to carefully consider which of the chicken breeds is best for their climate. Otherwise they may have some overheating hens on their hands!



What constitutes a 'hot climate'?

Any temperatures that regularly rise above 32 degrees celcius – that level is where your chickens will feel a bit hot under the feather – so if you're in the tropics or a location where it

may get a bit steamy from time to time, these chicken breeds are most likely the best option for your backyard.

What features do these chickens have that help them with warm weather?

Warm weather suits chicken breeds that don't have heavy feathering – some poor fowls are covered from their head to their feathered feet, and might get a little too fried in the hotter climates. After all – chickens' feathers basically act as a warm blanket over their entire body, so heat can be an uncomfortable experience!

Also, its best to opt for the bantam chicken breeds (that don't have feathered feet) – the smaller the bird, the less heat they will generate, the better they'll cope with warm weather.

Chicken breeds that are the most suited to warm climates

(according to Keeping Chickens, 1st Edition).

Leghorn

The Leghorn is a splendid, strong bird that is renown for being one of the best chicken breeds for heat hardiness. They have successfully been raised in quite hot temperatures, and are a multi-purpose breed great for egg production or as a meat bird.

The young hens start laying quite early – so you can expect fresh eggs fast (extra large ones to boot)! Also, they are intelligent and active birds that require a decent amount of space to roam around in order to live happy, healthy lives.

Rhode Island Red

The Rhode Island Red is a beautiful, rich coloured bird that not only is great for climates on the warmer side, but is one of the best egg-layers in the business! They are one of the most productive egg-laying chicken breeds, and you can expect 250-300 glorious shells of deliciousness to grace your kitchen table each year.

They are a great bird for beginners, or those who simply can't make up their minds – as they are a great all-rounder in temperament, eggs and climate hardiness aspects.

Fayoumi

The Fayoumi is one of the heat-hardy chicken breeds more suited to those living on acreage, or more experienced chicken keepers. They definitely thrive in warm climates, but can be a bit flighty and do require more room than average chicken breeds.

It has a unique, upright appearance, and require a large amount of space to roam with high fences (they are unfortunately good fliers!). They do lay eggs, around 2 p/week, but their primary use is as an exhibition bird.

The Fayoumi is one of those great chicken breeds that function well independently – they'll forage to their hearts content, they are alert and conscious of their surroundings, and good at keeping themselves away from any potential predators!

New Hampshire Red

This breed is derived from the aforementioned Rhode Island Red – so it's no surprise that they are a heat hardy breed.

The New Hampshire Red suits backyard flocks as they are happy to forage around smaller spaces. They are one of the chicken breeds bred for a dual purpose – they are fair egg-layers (around 3 eggs p/week) but have more meat than the Rhode Island Red.

They're fast developers, so if you purchase young chicks, you might be surprised how quickly they reach their full size!

Brahma

The Brahma is a sweet, quiet bird that has a beautifully profuse coat of feathers and equally lovely temperament! They love a good cuddle, and don't need a huge amount of space to roam in, so are perfect for backyard chicken keepers and families.

You can expect around 3 eggs p/week, or they can be used as a meat bird as they are a relatively heavy breed. Opt for the bantam chicken breeds so your flock fares better in the heat.



Ways you can help cool your flock down

If your flock are looking fried, (droopy, not eating, looking lethargic), then there are measures you can take to stop them from overheating. Our How to Help Your Chickens Beat the Elements article goes into detail about techniques you can use to keep all your backyard chicken breeds happy, and how to identify an overheating hen – here’s a quick recap:

- ensuring your hens have access to fresh, clean water is absolutely essential to their wellbeing – and to them staying cool, calm and collected! If they are looking a little toasty, you can even lightly sprinkle them with fresh water, to give them a little relief from the high temperatures.
- you can purchase some electrolytes to add to the chickens water trough if they are starting to look droopy and sluggish.

- freeze some sweet treats like watermelon for them to peck at! They'll love the refreshing taste, and the cool temperature.

There are chicken breeds that can flourish in warmer temperatures, all it takes on your part is pre-planning about which type of chicken will suit your lifestyle and climate the best.

One of the most successful ways to keep your hens healthy and cool is by ensuring they have a well ventilated coop to live in. A good coop must block all drafts and be well ventilated – so your chicks stay cool in summer, and warm in winter. Our entire Backyard Chicken Coops range is designed specifically for optimum ventilation, so your flock can nest in comfort!

Top 5 Chicken Breeds for Cold Climates

You may be well accustomed to chilly temperatures, but will your prospective chickens be able to withstand the harsh elements of your climate?

If you're thinking about becoming a chicken keeper and live in an area where freezing is a way of life, rather than a momentary feeling, there are certain chicken breeds that would suit your backyard better than others. Certain chicken breeds can be very temperature sensitive – so having the right flock for your climate and researching your breed beforehand is crucial to ensure your feathered friends stay healthy and happy!

What do we mean by 'cold climate'?

One person's definition of cold can be very different to someone whose situated further down south. We're sure most Tasmanians would disagree with what North Queenslanders consider a blistering winter!

Some chicken breeds are hardy creatures, and can comfortably live in environments where the temperature reaches almost freezing temperatures. Chicken keepers in Canada and the colder areas of America have noted that their flocks have even fared well in temperatures as low as -20 degrees, with certain chicken breeds seeming to cope even better than humans!

What features do chickens have that help them with cold weather?

Certain chicken breeds are born with features that help them combat the cold weather – so if you look out for these physical attributes when choosing your prospective flock, it should

give you a good indication as to which chicken breeds will fare well in winter – and who may not!

Some of these features include:

- chicken breeds with small combs: the comb is the large piece of flesh on the top of the chickens head. Generally, the larger the comb, the more susceptible the chicken is to frostbite – something that can be potentially fatal.
- chicken breeds with heavy feathering: breeds with feathered feet or a thick coat fare better in cold weather than those who don't – the feathers are essentially like wearing a comfortable duvet all day long! This acts as a jacket to protect them from the cold weather.

So, without further adieu, here are some of the best chicken breeds for those in colder climates.

Chicken breeds that are most suited to cold climates.

1. Australorp

The Australorp is a great breed for the cold, as they have a thick plume of heavy feathers perfect for shielding them against the harsh winter breeze. In addition, they are brilliant egg layers – so you can expect a steady supply of large brown eggs! They're very gentle creatures, and are a delight to have in any backyard flock – regardless of being a temperature hardy breed!



2. [Silkie](#)

They aren't super strong egg-layers, and are mostly kept as an ornamental breed, but any chicken keeper who has Silkies in their backyard is a happy one! The Silkie is a gorgeous, furiously feathered breed with a coat from their head to their feet! Also, instead of a comb, they have a nice pom-pom of feathers – therefore will not be as prone to frostbite as other breeds who do. Not only are they winter hardy, but they are one of the sweetest, tamest chicken breeds you could ever come across. They'll even snuggle up in your lap, so you can keep each other warm!

3. [Plymouth Rock](#)

The Plymouth Rock has a beautiful coat of patterned feathers perfect for warmth, and also has a track record of being raised in some typically cold areas of the world – including England and parts of North America. They are also one of the lovely chicken breeds that

have a beautiful temperament that will keep you entertained for hours. With the Plymouth Rock, you can expect a lovely lot of large brown eggs to grace your breakfast table.



4. Dorking

If you can get your hands on a Dorking, you'll have a bird that not only does well in cold conditions, but makes an amazing mother should you wish to hatch little chicks into the world! They are a truly lovely, relatively heavy breed that will lay you a decent amount of eggs, and be a true companion to your family.

5. Cochin

You could mistake the Cochin for a walking ball of puffy feathers, such is their unique appearance! The Cochin's incredibly feathered coat and heavy weight keeps the winter chill

at bay, and makes them an intriguing animal to look at. They aren't great egg layers, but are very peaceful animals who can be handled with ease.



Is there anything I can do to help keep my chickens warm?

Yes! There are little tips and tricks you can do to give your chosen chicken breeds a helping hand to stay warm. We've outlined some ways in detail in our [Top 5 Ways to Keep Your Chicken Warm in Winter](#) and [How To Help Your Chickens Beat the Elements](#) articles, but here's a quick recap of ways you can help!

- ensure your chickens' coop isn't letting excess moisture inside, and is well ventilated.
- add a heat lamp to the inside of the coop to make the temperature inside more comfortable. Don't make it too hot, otherwise the hens will sense the change is unnatural, and become stressed.

- if you're an avid knitter, maybe you could knit your flock a stylish range of chicken jumpers! Suits all chicken breeds, looks great and will keep your feathered friends warm and toasty.

Most chicken breeds are hardy creatures, often tolerating cold weather better than their human owners! If you do live in chilly climates and are considering entering the rewarding world of backyard chicken keeping, then the breeds listed above will adapt to your environment with ease.

The best way to ensure your chosen chicken breeds fare well in the weather is through them having a well ventilated coop, that protects them from any drafts and excess moisture. Every one of the Backyard Chicken Coops enclosures are designed to keep chickens warm in the winter and cool in the hotter months – and are all egg-ceptionally ventilated!

What Chicken Breeds Lay Large Eggs?

If you're an egg fanatic, we can almost bet that you love your eggs large and plentiful! So, if you're thinking of keeping chickens as a [sustainable](#) way to fuel your love of your favourite breakfast staple, you're probably dying to know the chicken breeds that will give you the biggest and best produce possible!

Keep in mind that the difference between a large egg and a medium egg can be a matter of grams (makes all the difference when baking that delicious pavlova – we know!).

These chickens will lay large eggs weighing approximately 50 grams. According to the Australian Egg Corporation, the approximate sizes of different sized eggs are: 42 grams for medium eggs, 50 grams for large eggs, and 59 grams for extra large. As you can see, the difference between egg sizes isn't huge.

Here are some chicken breeds that are renowned for laying large eggs- the perfect size for any egg addicts!



Rhode Island Red

[Rhode Island Reds](#) are renowned for their plentiful produce. You can expect between 250-300 large brown eggs from these lucrative layers- as well as a sweet, friendly family pet! They are very easygoing, are a hardy bird that can withstand cold winters and are just lovely to have around! Want to know more? Check out our [5 reasons to love Rhode Island Reds here!](#)

Isa Browns

[Isa Browns](#) are egg laying machines! They will keep your tummies full – laying between 300-350 large brown eggs per year. They definitely earn their keep! Isa Browns are a friendly breed for all ages and have made delightful additions to families worldwide. Because Isa Browns are such incredible egg layers, they do need a bit more protein in their diet than other breeds. Check out our [Essential Nutrients for Happy Healthy Hens](#) article for

what to use as egg-stra protein sources! Hungry for more? Have a look at the [5 reasons we love ISA Browns here!](#)

Orpington

[Orpingtons](#) are beautiful, soft feathered chickens that make calm and docile family pets, as well as producing decent sized fresh eggs! You can expect 175-200 large, light brown eggs each year from your lovely Orpington chickens.

Orpingtons are great for urban backyards, families with children, egg production...they are just egg-cellent all round! Check out the [5 reasons we love Orpingtons](#) here!

Welsummer

The Welsummer lays large, dark brown eggs that actually fade in colour the more eggs they lay! Don't worry – this doesn't affect the delicious taste. Like its eggs, the Welsummer is a large sized bird – which means it needs more space and loves to roam around, therefore it will require a large run or open area to free range comfortably.

Barred Plymouth Rocks

The [Barred Plymouth Rock](#) is one of the most popular breeds for families – and rightly so! They have a gentle and calm temperament, which makes them perfect for children – and get along well with other family pets. The Barred Plymouth Rock lays approximately 200 large brown eggs per year – and will lay all year long (decreasing slightly in winter and when moulting as most do). There are som any reasons to love Plymouth Rocks, [here's 5 of the best!](#)

So if you're after large eggs for breakfast, lunch, dinner and dessert, you can't beat these chicken breeds!

The best way to ensure your flock keeps producing their famed large eggs, is keeping them comfortable with a decent sized coop. The less stressed your hens are, the more consistently they'll lay! Our [Taj Mahal](#), [Penthouse](#) and [Mansion](#) coops are proven winners for these chicken breeds, with the former two having runs already attached, and the Mansion having a separate run available for extra room to roam around (great for breeds like the Welsummer who need to forage and be active).

The Top 8 Best Laying Hens For Backyard Chickens

One of the most popular questions first time chicken owners ask is, “which breed of chooks are the best laying hens?” Some first time owners are surprised to hear that there are different breeds of chickens, let alone particular breeds that lay eggs more prolifically than other varieties. Though it might seem as though there is a lot of learn, it’s all actually pretty simple stuff. Here is an essential rundown for poultry keepers who are looking for the most productive laying hens available.

But first...

No matter what breed of laying hens you get, quantity and quality of eggs all depend on your chickens leading happy lives with excellent nutrition. Have a read about everything you can do to ensure your laying hens produce lots of eggs [here](#).



Isa Brown

[Isa browns](#) are adorable and affectionate little feathered friends that can produce up to a whopping 300-350 eggs per year! These American bred girls are really in a league of their own when it comes to egg production, and many of them start to lay as soon as 16 weeks! They weigh approximately 4.5-5.8 kg, which is quite heavy for your standard laying hen. Perhaps it is their robust size that attribute to their strong egg-laying ability? They're reasonably low-maintenance and adapt easily to all kinds of climates, be it cool, warm or otherwise, so you can be sure they will make themselves right at home in your backyard. Want to know more? Check out our [5 reasons to love Isa Browns here!](#)



Rhode Island Red

The [Rhode Island Red](#) is one of the world's most famous breeds of laying hens. The breed was designed specifically to suit the needs of humans in a farm out in the Compton district, Rhode Island. The breed quickly became a popular staple in many farms due to their attractive appearance and superior laying ability, producing approximately 250-300 eggs per year. They're known for their attractive deep red plumage, which should have a slightly salmon colour when inspecting the under-fluff. These chickens are especially easy-going and are suitable for anyone who is looking for a non-fuss kind of laying hen. Want to know more? Check out our [5 reasons to love Rhode Island Reds here!](#)



Australorp

The Australian bred [Australorp](#) has been adapted from the British black Orpington to be a more productive and practical poultry breed. Originally, the Australorp was very practically titled 'Australian Utility Black Orpington', however the name was quickly abbreviated to what we know today. Australorps are great layers, averaging 250-300 eggs per year, of a light brown variety. These beautiful and docile black poultry birds with a beetle green tinge, weigh between 3-4 kg and prefer environments in which they have more space to free-range. Want to know more? Check out our [5 reasons to love Australorps here!](#)



Leghorn

The [Leghorn](#) takes its name from a port in Italy, also known as Leghorn. For many hundreds of years the Leghorn was renowned for being one of the best laying hens available. When exported out to the Californian town Petaluma, the town made huge profits from their egg industry built on the backbone of Leghorns and they declared their first Annual Egg Day in 1916 to celebrate this fabulous bird. These active and seldom broody birds weigh approximately 2.5-3.5 kg and produce between 280-320 eggs per year. There are many different varieties of Leghorn available with an assortment of different coloured plumage.



Plymouth Rock

[Plymouth Rock](#) is an American breed of chicken, which began its life in infamy, before becoming a worldwide popular choice of laying hens. Originally the breed was considered a tacky mongrel, as its genetic code comprises of a wide variety of breeds, however their heavy productivity (200-250 eggs per year), and their ability to lay throughout winter has made them a popular choice for many poultry keepers. They come in a range of different varieties, from barred, to white, buff, silver pencilled, partridge, blue and black. Want to know more? Check out our [5 reasons to love Plymouth Rocks here!](#)



Sussex

The [Sussex](#) is a famous British breed of chicken that nearly died out in the early 20th century, if it were not for one farmer, who had the last remaining flock of Sussex chickens, which he had been breeding for ten years. These beautiful birds weigh approximately 3-4 kg and produce between 200-350 eggs annually. They are confident, curious and friendly laying hens that come in a vast array of spectacular varieties, such as buff, speckled and white, just to name a few.



Welssummer

The [Welssummer](#) is a remarkably attractive breed of laying hen that was created in the Netherlands at the beginning of the 20th century in a town known as Welsum- which is of course where it borrows its name from. Many poultry aficionados refer to it as the “perfect looking chicken”. This is in large part due to its glossy feathers, high tail and attractive shape. Additionally, these in-demand birds also produce upwards of 160 terracotta coloured eggs each year. They are active and alert foragers that need plenty of stimulation otherwise their energies will turn towards more destructive behaviours.



Wyandotte

The [Wyandotte](#) is a hardy, robust, no-nonsense kind of laying hen. They were bred by Americans in the 19th century to be an attractive and sturdy yet practical bird and they have become just that. The Wyandotte laying hen is both popular with backyard poultry keepers, as well as those chicken gurus who partake in the competitive world of poultry shows. These birds come in a range of different colours, weigh between 2.7-3.8 kg and produce around 200 eggs per year.

There are so many unique qualities that each different breed of laying hens possess. Many owners find themselves keeping a wide range of chickens, and not just laying hens- some people like oddball combinations like Isa Browns, with [Silkie](#) chickens and maybe a [Jersey Giant](#) and Australorp thrown into the mix as well. Don't feel limited to just one type of

chicken, be it a good laying hen or otherwise. Diversify your [Taj Mahal](#), [Penthouse](#) or [Mansion](#) coop with the most interesting varieties of chooks available.

If you're ever worried that your hens may have stopped laying, be sure to read this very informative article [here](#).

Can I Keep More Than One Chicken Breed in my Flock?



Keeping chickens is a wonderful adventure imprinted with a flap of activity, a medley of clucky conversations and an egg basket overflowing with fresh bounty. Now while you may start out with just a trio of feathery friends – all look-a-likes and gifts from an enthusiastic friend or neighbour, chicken keeping is so addicting that you'll soon find yourself becoming more and more inquisitive. Curiosity *breeds* interest in other chicken breeds. So, can you add new breeds to your flock? Yes. Should you add a new breed or two or more to your flock? Un-egg-quivocally!

A Mixed Breed Flock Mixes Well

Raising and keeping a flock of chickens need not be limited to a single breed. Variety is the spice that creates a flavorful vibrant flock. So many chicken breeds, so little time. In fact,

there are more than 400 different breeds in existence. Feeling just a tad overwhelmed? Add into the mix all the mixed-breeds that happen by happenstance. When love is in the air, predictability flaps out the window. So, sometimes there's no telling what's going to hatch out of your eggs. Enter a wonderful new chicken breed for your humble little backyard flock.

Seriously though, a diverse backyard chicken flock is not only a delight, but is quite advantageous in several ways. So, let's take a peck at the beauty and practicality of this one of a kind flap-happy flock:

- A beautiful sight to behold with colourful and varied feathers and feather patterns, feathery legs and clean legs, a myriad of differently shaped combs, bearded chins and big hair crests, fluffy round breeds and taller thin breeds. Yes, a mixed up flock is a unique and beautiful sight!
- A one of a kind egg basket overflowing with eggs of varying colours and shades.
- Personality varies among breeds, but also varies from bird to bird within a particular breed. This is both helpful and delightful. A flock full of interesting and distinct temperaments translates into a successfully functioning pecking order. Every chook has its place and there's a place for every chook. Can you imagine a flock of **all Noisy Nellies? All Shy Sadies?**

And, your chicken's individual personalities help encourage others to see that chickens are loving creatures capable of feeling, learning and understanding and not just egg producing machines or meat for your table. Plus, it's just great fun to interact with a flock chock full of character!

- Who's Who – being able to distinguish one chook from another is key to raising a happy healthy chicken flock. By knowing who's who you can more

easily monitor behavior and illness, you can keep track of egg production which helps in recognizing and identifying potential health issues and you can help to establish a bond with individual birds by calling them by name when you visit the chicken coop each day. Also, this helps you to know how to approach each chook whether they be shy or more friendly and social.

- Egg production through the seasons – different breeds lay better during different seasons.

Bantams + Large Fowl Breeds = A Fabulous Flock

When raising a flock of mixed breed chickens, one would have to wonder about the significance of mixing smaller [bantam size chooks](#) with larger fowl birds. Due to the fact that a bantam chicken is considerably smaller than larger breeds, weighing in at about one fourth or one fifth the size of large fowl birds, you may be concerned. Will they all get along well together? Will there be an increase in squabbles between siblings? Will the bigger birds rule and peck on the smaller birds? All valid questions, yes. And the answer is...all chooks, no matter what their body size should get along flappingly together.

That's not to say that you won't ever encounter some feathery sibling rivalry. All siblings, feathery or otherwise, squabble from time to time. That's natural. In fact, one of your smaller chooks could very well be the top chook in the pecking order. Have feathers, can be feisty.

Integrating New Chooks

Ideally, it's best to raise a flock of chickens all together from day one. As hatchlings or even pullets at Point of Lay, your birds will grow up together and bond as siblings and as a flock on the whole. However, that's not to say that you cannot add new birds from time to time. Anytime is the right time to add a new breed or two. As long as you [follow proper integration guidelines](#), any new chooks should be happily clucking along with their older and wiser feathery siblings in the flap of a wing.

Even with excellent care and regular monitoring of your flock, chickens do die.

Unfortunately, chickens can contract diseases that show no overt symptoms until the disease has progressed to the point where it's too late to treat the bird or there simply is no treatment. So, you may choose to add some new birds or breeds to your existing flock.

The most important thing to remember when integrating new birds into an existing flock is this:

Always isolate or quarantine all new birds for at least 30 days. This gives you ample time to observe all new birds for symptoms of disease and/or signs of external parasites and to treat them if necessary. Then once the 30 day isolation period is completed, [introduce new chickens](#).

And, remember to **always** monitor the interactions between old and new chooks up close and personal until you're sure that all is well. When you feel comfortable that your feathery siblings are getting along amicably, a simple daily check-up will do fine. Allowing all chickens to free range and mingle together helps them to get acquainted.



A Recipe for Success

Creating a happy healthy mixed breed chicken flock is like following a recipe. So, what is the recipe? Simple...add a mixture of breeds – bantam and large fowl if it tickles your feathery fancy – into [a large chicken coop](#), mix well until all are happily interacting with one another and enjoy.

Of course, there are several factors to consider when putting together your mixed breed flock:

- Climate – some breeds tolerate extreme [heat](#) or [cold](#) temperatures better than others
- Amount of Chickens/Size of Coop – on average a single large fowl bird requires approximately 1.5 square metres of space and a bantam chicken will need about 1 square metre of space. This allows your chooks to roam freely

and not feel too “cooped” up which can lead to stress. If; however, your chooks will be confined to their coop and run for the majority of the time, please allow for about 3 square metres per chicken.

- Life Expectancy – Bantams live for approximately 4-8 years; Large Fowl live for approximately 8-15 years.
- Personality and Compatibility – some breeds are just more active and flighty and some are more docile and calm. Theoretically, all should mix well together, interacting and roaming about; however, always be sure to monitor your flock daily as it’s always better to err on the side of caution.
- [Eggshell color](#) – you can literally create a rainbow of eggshells for your egg basket.
- [Your personal preferences](#)

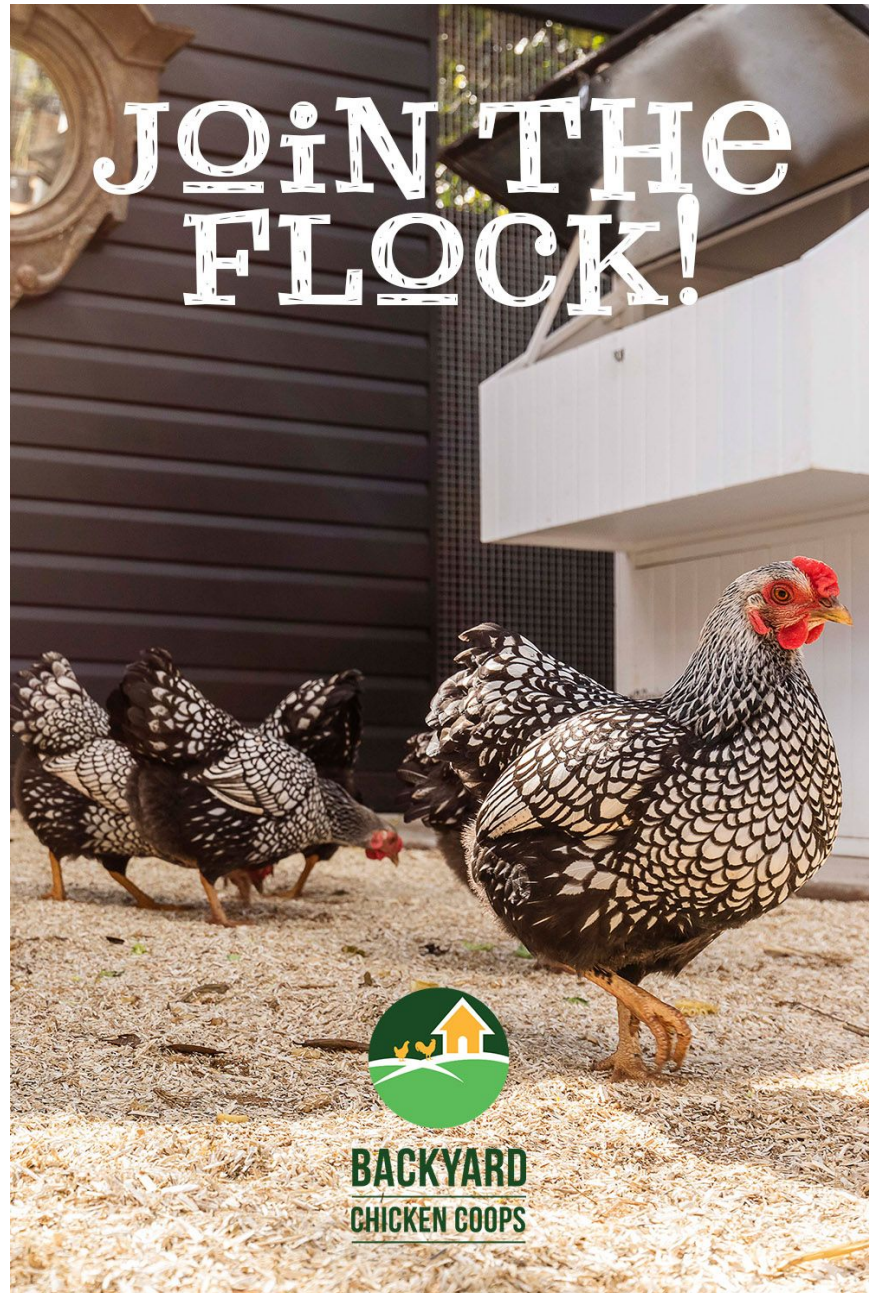
The Mixed Breed Chicken Flock – A Success Story

The mixed breed flock that clucks together stays together! We’ve always had a mixed breed chicken flock. It’s such a treat to visit their coop each day and watch the colourful show – black glossy feathers flap-happily dusting the afternoon away, bright white feathers leaping awkwardly in an attempt to capture a flying insect, brown pheasant tipped feathers wandering and puttering...Uh oh, Phoebe’s headed for my song bird garden again, yellow golden feathers keeping a motherly eye open for potential dangers and reddish chestnut coloured feathers sprawled out in the warm sunshine. Ahhhh, life is good!

The **best** thing about a mixed breed chicken flock is that it is uniquely your own – a homemade flock for your hen home. Enjoy!

And, the **best** place to house your diverse backyard chicken flock is in one of our innovative and stylish coops: The [perfect Penthouse](#), the terrific [Taj Mahal](#) and the magnificent

Mansion coops are anxiously awaiting an ideal ISA Brown, an amazing Australorp, an Oh so motherly Orpington, a boldly beautiful Barred Plymouth Rock, a robust red-headed Rhode Island Red and more to transform them from coop to coop sweet coop.



Keep on cluckin' about chicken breeds with our [Top 20 Chicken Breeds for Your Backyard Coop here](#). Or if you know what you want, have a peck at our [suggested breeder list](#). After some more cheeky chook action? Of course you are! Join the flock on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Pinterest](#)!