

# **CHICKENS 101:**

## **A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO RAISING BACKYARD CHICKENS**



**MORNING  
CHORES**



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# What Do You Need to Raise Chickens?

## 1. Housing

Your chicken needs a house to live, we call it a “coop”. A chicken requires at least 3–4 square feet of space. So, if you’re planning to raise 4 chickens, you need to build/buy a 12-square foot chicken coop. If you need ideas for chicken coop, go to this page:

<http://morningchores.com/chicken-coop-plans/>

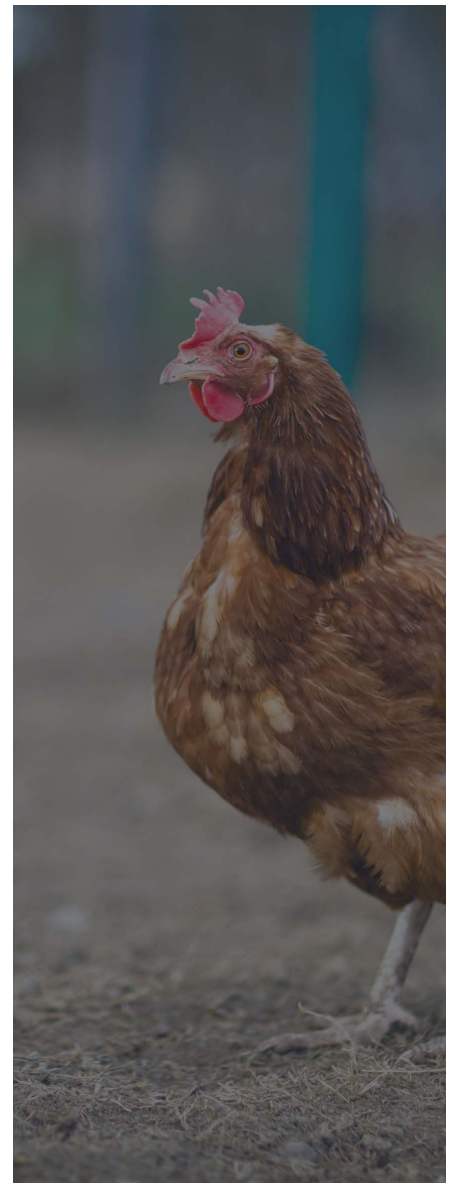
The coop must have a good air circulation and lighting. So, make sure you have enough ventilation and place it where the natural sunlight is sufficient.

Inside the coop, you need to have two things:

1. Nest boxes: for every 2 chickens you raise, you need 1 nest box at the minimum size of 12’ x 12’ x 12’. This is where your hens will lay their eggs.
2. Perches: Chickens don’t sleep on the floor; they sleep on a perch (also called roost).

**Note:** get everything you need to raise chickens on this page:

<http://morningchores.com/store/chicken-supplies/>



## 2. Fenced area

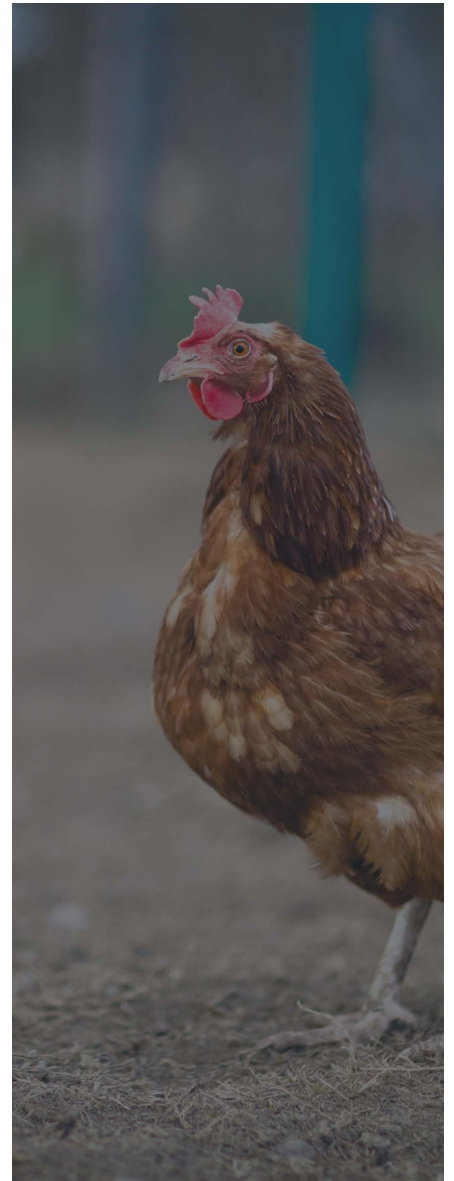
As I mentioned above, a chicken needs at least 3–4 square feet of space. But, this is not entirely true. In reality, they need 10 square feet of space **if** they spent most of the time indoor.

If you're not planning to do that, then you need to have an outdoor fenced area for your chicken where they'll spend most of the time (other than sleeping). This outdoor area (or a "run") should be at least 3 square feet per chicken.

## 3. Waterer

You can't use a bowl to water your chicken. They'll flip it over. Use a chicken waterer instead.

You need to provide 1 quart of water per 4 chickens you raise. So if you only raise 2 chickens, then you need only 0.5 quarts.



#### **4. Feed**

For starters, it's better to buy commercial pre-mix from local feed store to feed your chicken instead of mixing your own. You can mix your own feed later when you're used to it.

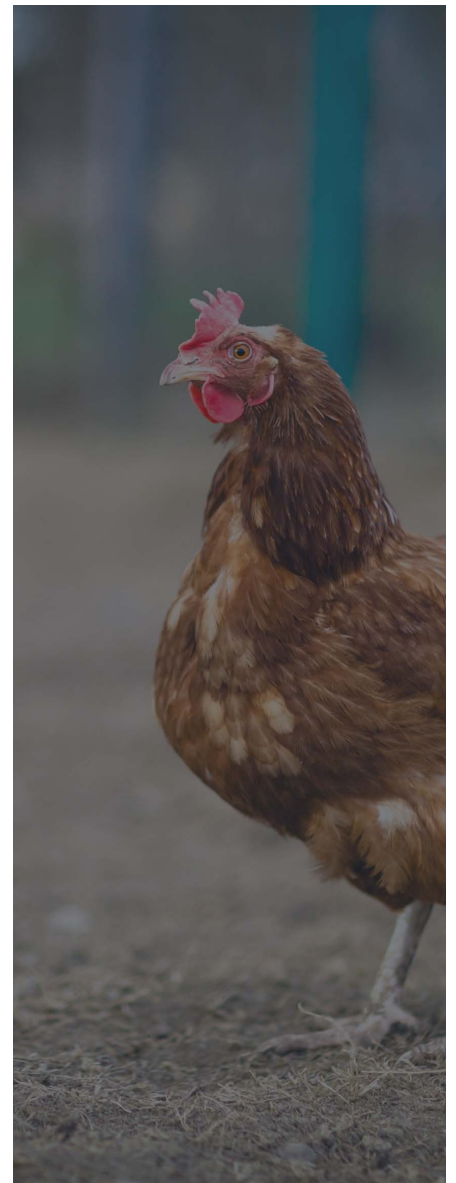
Avoid medicated feed, it does make your chickens bigger faster, but it's for industrial chicken farming. If you want to raise your chicken naturally, you don't need it.

#### **5. Feeder**

There are 2 types of feeder: grain feeder for grain feeds and feed pans for liquid feeds. They must be large enough to hold a day's ration, which is  $\frac{1}{4}$  -  $\frac{1}{3}$  pound per day per chicken.

#### **6. Grit**

Chickens don't have teeth; they can't chew their food. To help them break down and digest food easily, provide your chicken with grit.



## 7. Dust Bath

To clean themselves from mites and bacteria, chickens don't bath in water. They do it in dust. Make sure to provide a dust bath, an open box at the size of 2' x 2' x 16" filled with dust.

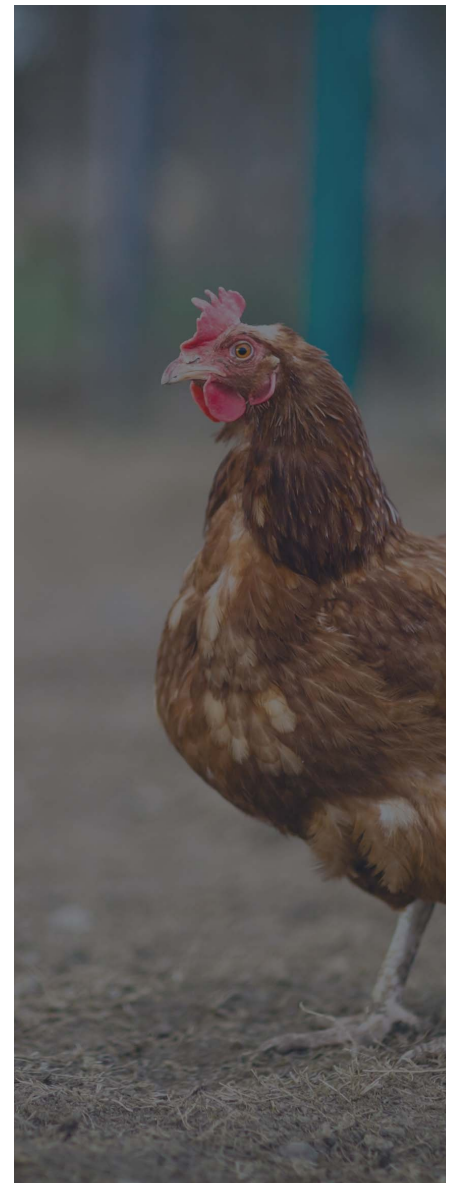
## 8. Calcium

Egg shells are made of calcium. If your chickens don't get enough of it, the shell will get broken easily (or the eggs will stuck inside!).

The easiest way to provide calcium is by crushing their own egg shell and add it to their feeder. Also, add more calcium with oyster shell from time to time. Make sure to have 1 pound of crushed shells or per 100 pounds of feed.

## 9. Brooder & Incubator

This is necessary if you're planning to hatch the chicks.



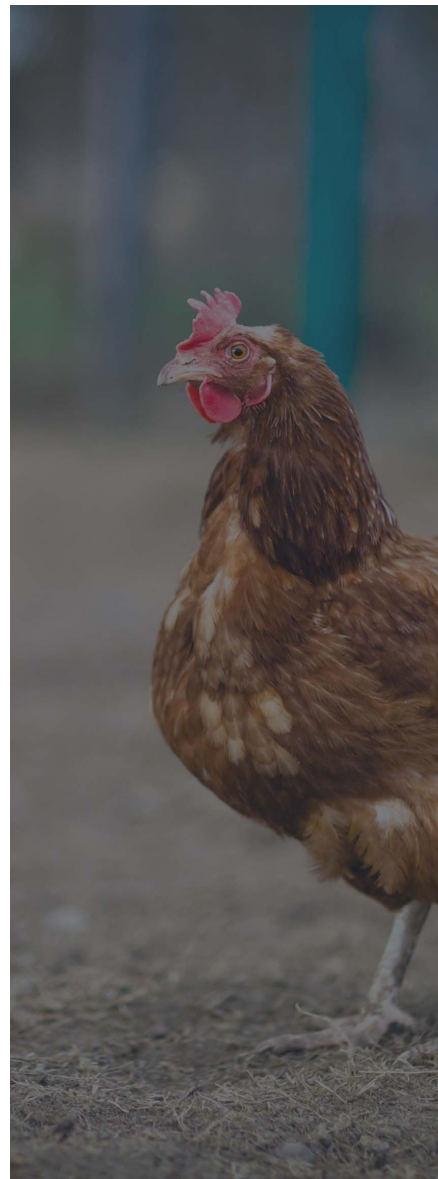


## 10. Bedding for nest boxes

The best materials for bedding are wood shavings, straw, or paper shredding.

**Note:** get everything you need to raise chickens on this page:

<http://morningchores.com/store/chicken-supplies/>





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## How Much Do Raising Chicken Cost?



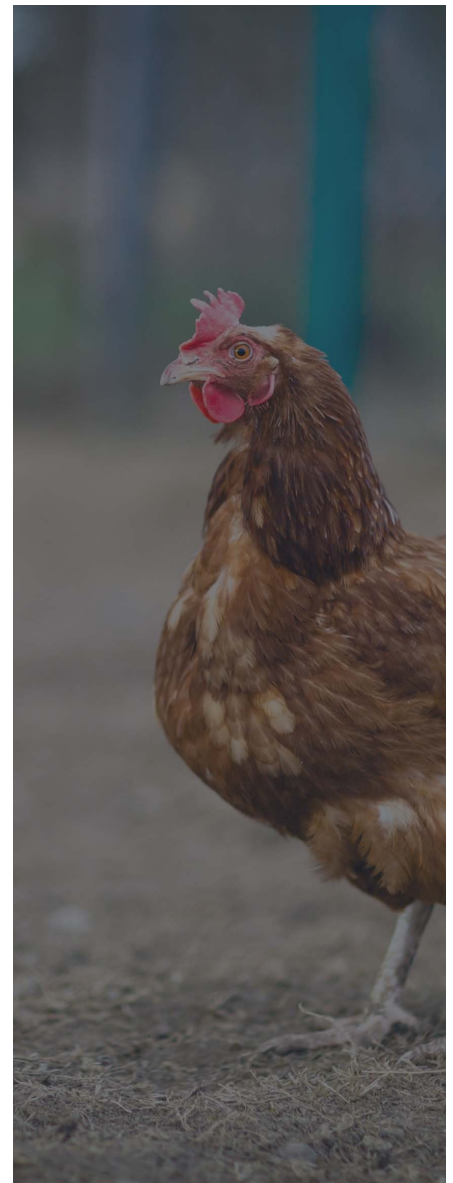
There are 2 types of cost in raising chickens: startup cost and monthly cost. Startup cost is the money you spend once in the beginning. Monthly cost, like its name, is the money you spend monthly for recurring needs like food and supplies.

Here's the startup cost:

1. Chicken coop: If you decide to DIY with recycled materials, a chicken coop can be free. If you buy a prefabricated coop, the cost ranges from \$200 to \$2000.
2. Fencing: An electric fencing costs around \$170, and a galvanized wire mesh costs around \$70 for the same size.
3. Waterers and feeders: You can use bucket if you don't want to spend money. The best waterer option in the market is available for around \$40, and a feeder would cost you \$xx

And here is the monthly cost (assuming you're raising 3 hens):

1. Feed: \$15
2. Supplements etc.: \$10



So, to get started in raising chickens, you'd spend around \$350 to \$2250 plus \$25 per month per 3 chickens.

But what about the profits or savings?

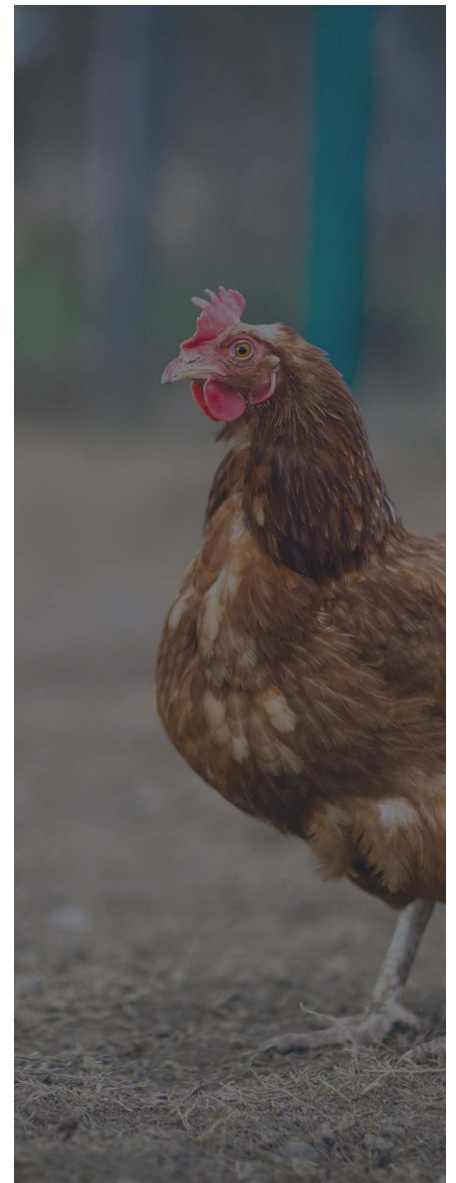
Your chickens will produce eggs, compost, and manure. If you decide to sell all of them, here's your possible income for 3 hens:

1. Eggs: \$30–45 (60–90 eggs @ \$0.05)
2. Compost: \$10
3. Manure: \$6

If you have a garden and not selling them, you can count the profit as savings. This means, after the first month you'd get a profit of \$5 to \$20 per chicken (excluding compost and manure).

**Note:** get everything you need to raise chickens on this page:

<http://morningchores.com/store/chicken-supplies/>





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## Daily, Weekly, Monthly, & Seasonally Chores

To give you an idea of what it takes to raise chickens, here's the list of tasks you need to do on a daily, weekly, monthly, and seasonally basis.

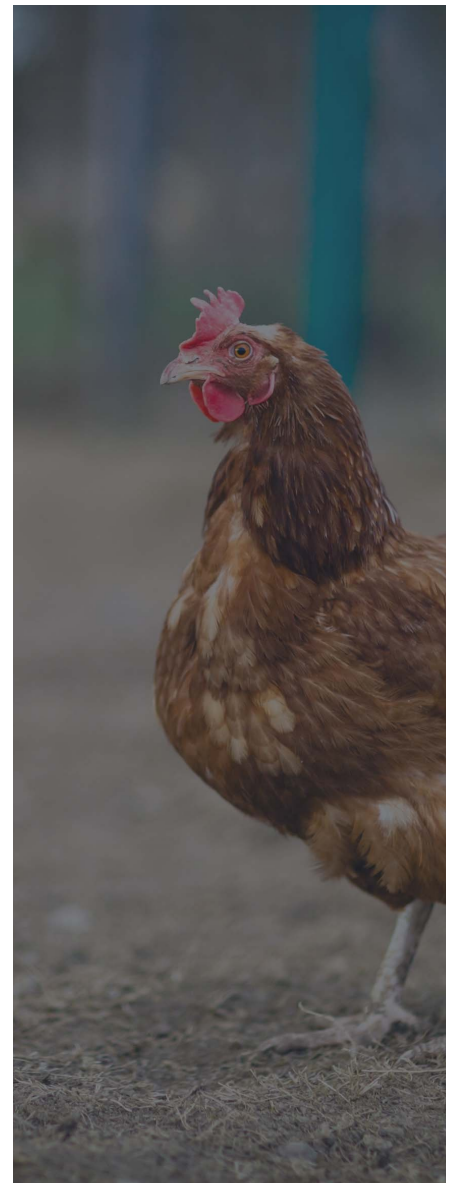
## Daily Chores

### Morning:

- Feed chickens
- Wash up and fill waterer
- Let chickens out of their coop
- Check the weather
- Check chicken's health
- Lightly clean the coop

### Afternoon:

- Collect eggs
- Add nest box shavings if necessary
- Give treats to your chickens



Evening:

- Close up the chicken in the coop

### **Weekly Chores**

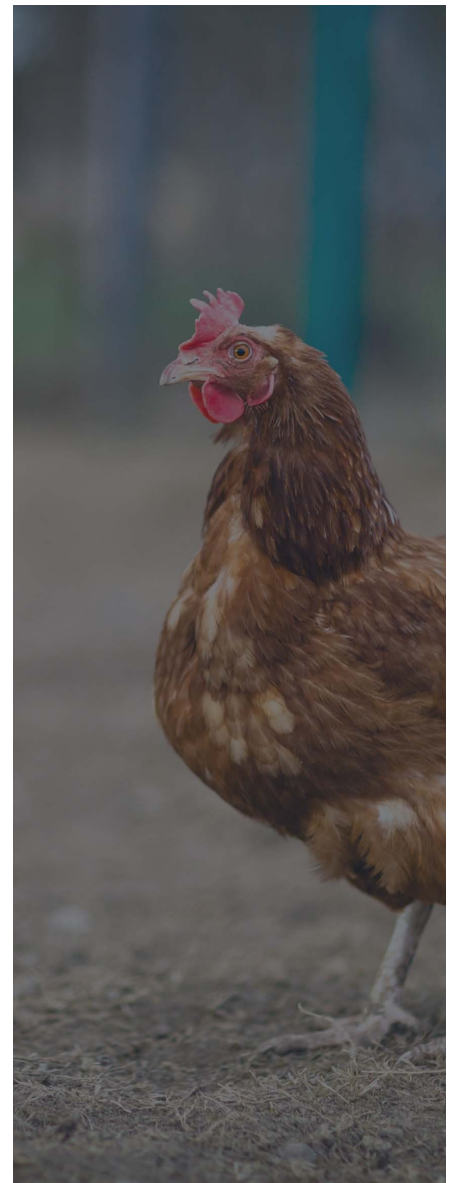
- Clean the coop
- Replace wood shavings
- Refill supplements (oyster/egg shells, grit)
- Clean the run
- Move your chickens to a different spot (if mobile coop)

### **Monthly Chores**

- Stock up on supplies, take a trip to local stores (or purchase from Amazon)

### **Seasonally Chores**

- Inspect and repair the coop
- Prepare of changes in temperature
- Deep clean your coop





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## How Many Chickens Should I Get?



It depends on *why* you're raising chickens in the first place.

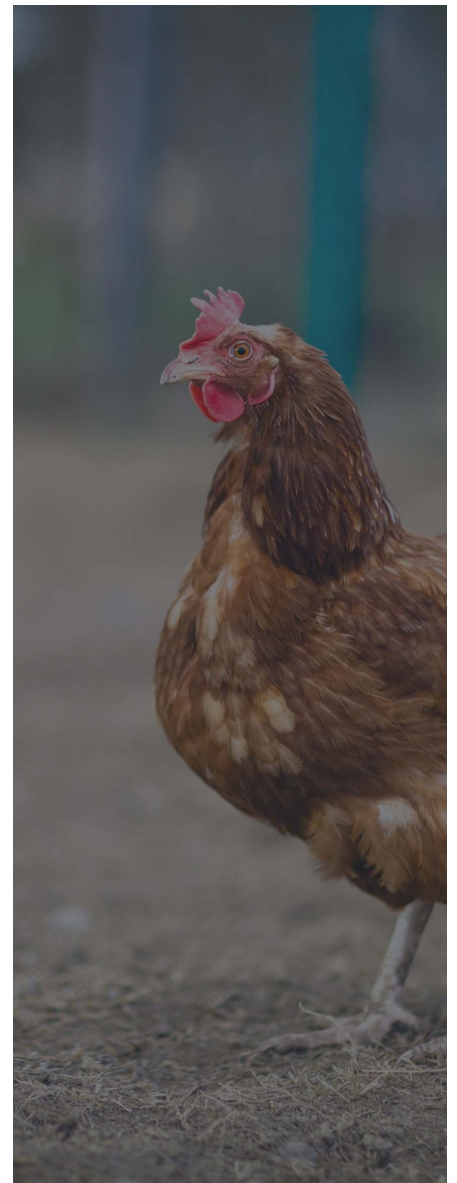
If you're going to sell the eggs or meat, more chickens is better, obviously, because more chickens means more profit. But if you're raising chickens to save money on food, then you have to make sure the hens produce optimum amount of eggs for the family.

A heavy layer chicken will give you around 4–6 eggs per week. With this number, you can calculate how many chickens you need.

Let's say you're a family of 4 who eat egg-based food every day. This means you'll need to raise 4–5 hens.

It's better to start with fewer chickens and see if you can handle more. If so, then you can get more chickens. This is better than getting a lot of chickens at once and having to get rid of it later.

Also, it's important to know that a chicken will start laying at around five months old and stop laying at 2.5 years old.





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**Which Breed Should I  
Get?**

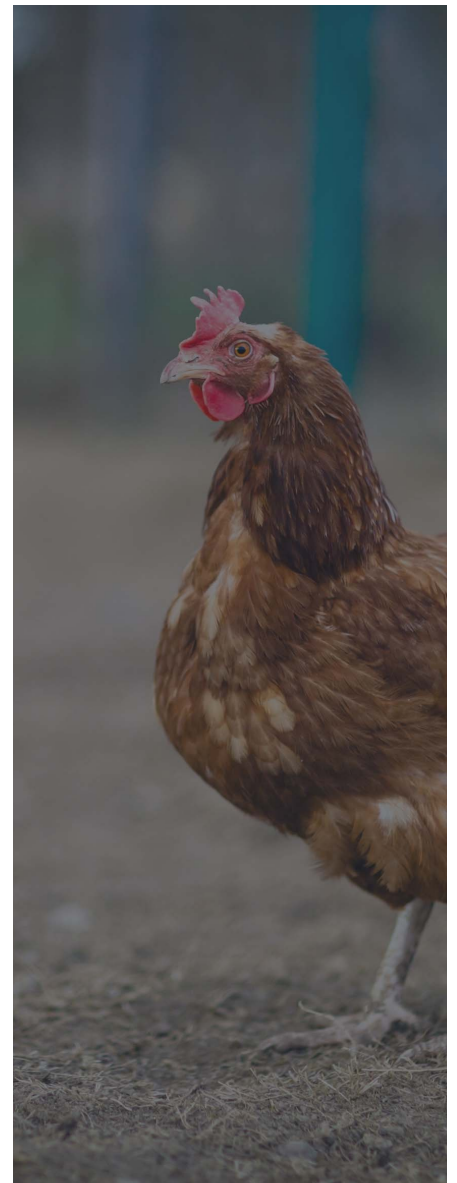
Everyone has their favorites, and that can't be denied when it comes to choosing chicken breeds. However, every breed is different when we're talking egg productions.

If you want your chickens to lay eggs (almost) every day, here are the 5 breeds you might want to consider:

1. White Leghorns: up to 280 eggs per year
2. Rhode Island Red: up to 260 eggs per year
3. Golden Comet: 250–300 eggs per year
4. Ameraucana: up to 250 eggs per year
5. Barred Plymouth Rock: up to 280 eggs per year

On the other hand, if you're raising chickens for meat, these are the best breeds:

1. Cornish Cross: 8–12 lbs
2. Jersey Giant: 10–13 lbs
3. Bresse: 5–7 lbs
4. Orpington: 8–10 lbs
5. Freedom Rangers: 5–6 lbs



If you prefer both meat and eggs, then “dual-purpose” chicken breeds are your friend. Rhode Island Red and Orpington are two of the most popular dual-purpose breeds.

Read these articles to find out more popular breeds:

1. Egg Breeds: <http://morningchores.com/egg-laying-chickens/>
2. Meat Breeds: <http://morningchores.com/meat-chickens/>

There you have it. Now you know everything you need to know about raising chickens.

