

Top Chicken Breeds for Egg Production

Having the Right Chicken Breeds for Eggs Makes All the Difference



Australorp. Photo by Pam Freeman.

By PAM FREEMAN

What criteria lands a breed on the best chickens for eggs list? First, laying habits are crucial. Does your breed have the capacity to lay an egg a day or is it more like two to three eggs a week? From there, egg color and size are must-know pieces of information. After that, breed size and temperament are less crucial but important facts to know. This way you can provide adequate coop/run space and maybe accommodate your kids that may be helping with the eggs chores and wouldn't appreciate a mean chicken. In this article, you'll find some great choices.

AUSTRALORP

This breed holds the record for egg-laying capacity. A hen once laid 364 eggs in 365 days!

Laying Habits: 5+ eggs per week

Egg Size: Large

Egg Color: Brown

Temperament: Gentle

Color: Black

More Online: backyardpoultry.iamcountryside.com/chickens-101/blue-and-black-australorp-chicken-a-prolific-egg-layer/

LEGHORN

Laying Habits: 5+ eggs per week (can vary by color)

Egg Size: Large

Egg Color: White

Temperament: Active. Females are non-sitters.

Popular Colors: White, Light Brown, Exchequer

More Online: backyardpoultry.iamcountryside.com/chickens-101/all-about-leghorn-chickens/



Leghorn. Photo by Pam Freeman.



Sussex. Photo by Pam Freeman.

SUSSEX

Laying Habits: 4-5 eggs per week

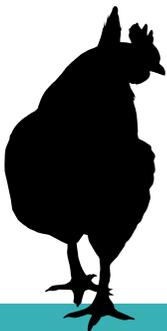
Egg Size: Large

Egg Color: Brown

Temperament: Calm

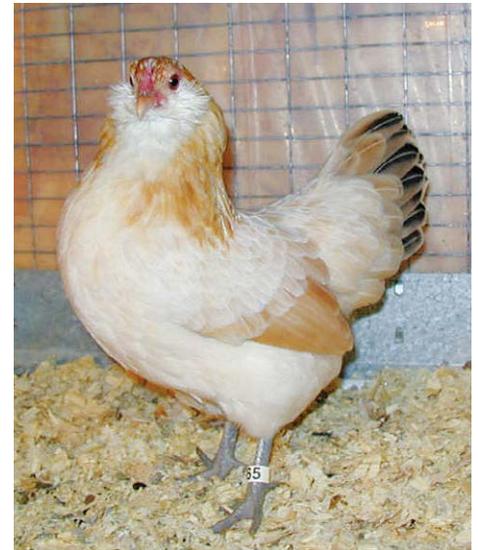
Popular Colors: Speckled, Red, Light

More Online: backyardpoultry.iamcountryside.com/chickens-101/sussex-chicken/



Easter Egger.
Photo by Pam Freeman.

Ameraucana. Photo by John W. Blehm.



AMERAUCANA/EASTER EGGER/OLIVE EGGER

Laying Habits: 3+ eggs per week (Ameraucana)

Egg Size: Large

Egg Color: Blue (Laid by Ameraucana), Blue, Green, or Pinkish/Cream (Laid by Easter Egger), Olive green (Laid by Olive Egger)

Temperament: Docile (Ameraucana), Friendly (Easter Egger), Varies (Olive Egger)

**It's important to note that Easter Egger and Olive Egger chickens are not a true breed. They are of mixed lineage and are not officially recognized breeds. If you have questions when ordering these birds, make sure to ask the hatchery before you make a purchase. Also, individual Easter Egger chickens will not lay multiple egg colors. For example, if a hen starts out laying green eggs, that will continue through her lifetime.*

More Online:

backyardpoultry.iamcountryside.com/chickens-101/ameraucana-chicken-august-breed-of-the-month/

backyardpoultry.iamcountryside.com/chickens-101/easter-egger-chicken/

backyardpoultry.iamcountryside.com/chickens-101/getting-to-know-olive-egger-chickens/

Fancy Colored Egg Breeds	Blue Eggs	Green Eggs	Pinkish/Cream Eggs	Docile/Friendly	Variable Temperament	Large Egg Size
Ameraucana	X			X		X
Easter Egger	X	X	X	X		X
Olive Egger		X			X	X



WYANDOTTE

Laying Habits: 4-5 eggs per week

Egg Size: Large

Egg Color: Brown, tan

Temperament: Calm

Popular Colors: Silver Laced, Golden Laced, Whiter, Black, Partridge, Silver Penciled, Columbian, Blue

More Online: backyardpoultry.iamcountryside.com/chickens-101/wyandotte-chicken-june-breed-of-the-month/



MARANS

Laying Habits: 3-4 eggs per week

Egg Size: Large

Egg Color: Russet brown

Temperament: Docile, tidy

Colors: Black Cooper, Wheaten, White (Other color varieties are not recognized by the APA)

More Online: backyardpoultry.iamcountryside.com/chickens-101/marans-chicken-april-breed-of-the-month/



ORPINGTON

Laying Habits: 3-4 eggs per week

Egg Size: Large to extra large

Egg Color: Light brown to dark brown eggs

Temperament: Generally friendly, easily handled and calm

Popular Colors: Black, Blue, Buff, White

More Online: backyardpoultry.iamcountryside.com/chickens-101/all-about-orpington-chickens/



Rhode Island Red

RHODE ISLAND RED

Laying Habits: 5+ eggs per week (can vary by color)

Egg Size: Large to Extra Large

Egg Color: Brown

Temperament: Docile, but can be aggressive

More Online: backyardpoultry.iamcountryside.com/chickens-101/rhode-island-red-chicken/



Matching Chicken Breeds to Egg Color

BY LISA STEELE

There are more than 60 breeds of chickens recognized by the American Poultry Association and hundreds of other chicken breeds that have been developed worldwide — many of whom lay gorgeous eggs in a rainbow of hues ranging from white to cream, green, pink, blue, and even chocolate brown. While the color of the eggshell doesn't determine egg nutrient value or taste, if you want to put some color in your egg basket, consider the following breeds. Increasingly, these fairly rare breeds are becoming more widely available.

EGG COLOR BY BREED

	White	Blue	Green	Dark Brown	Pinkish/Cream
Ameraucana		X			
Araucana		X			
Cream Legbar		X			
Easter Egger		X	X		X
Olive Egger			X		
Favaucana			X		
Sussex					X
Java					X
Australorp					x
Silkie					X
Orpington					X
Faverolles					X
Welsummer				X	
Barnevelder				X	
Marans				X	
Penedesenca				X	
Leghorn	X				
Andalusian	X				
Ancona	X				
Lakenvelder	X				
Polish	X				
Hamburg	X				



Blue Eggs

Ever since Martha Stewart shared photos a couple of years ago in her magazine of her egg baskets bursting to the brim with beautiful blue eggs laid by her own flock, azure eggs have been coveted by backyard chicken keepers everywhere. Ameraucanas, Araucanas, and Cream Legbars all lay blue eggs.



Green Eggs

To add a few green eggs in your basket, consider raising some aptly named Easter Eggers. (In fact, a flock of this mixed breed of chickens can lay a rainbow of egg colors on their own including bluish, green, pinkish, or cream!), Olive Eggers or Favaucanas. Several other breeds lay varying shades of green eggs. Olive Egger chickens (half Marans chickens and half Ameraucana chickens) lay olive green eggs, while a breed developed by My Pet Chicken, the Favaucana (half Faverolle and half Ameraucana), lays a pale sage green egg. Isbars also lay a range of greenish-colored eggs from mossy to mint green.



White Eggs

White eggs add a gorgeous contrast to colored eggs. Leghorns are the most common breed of white egg layer, but several other Mediterranean breeds of chickens including Andalusians and Anconas also lay white eggs, as do Lakenvelders, Polish, and Hamburg hens.



Dark Brown Eggs

Brown eggs are pretty common, but gorgeous dark chocolate brown eggs lend a pop of rich color to your egg basket. Try raising some Welsummers, Barnevelders, Penedescencas, or Marans.



Cream/Pinkish Eggs

A nice change from ordinary brown or tan eggs, cream or pale pink eggs will add subtle variety to your egg basket. Light Sussex, Mottled Javas, Australorps, Buff Orpingtons, Silkies, and Faverolles all lay a pinkish-cream egg. As noted above, some Easter Eggers will also lay cream or pink eggs, while others will lay green or bluish eggs.

Once you have added some colorful egg layers to your flock, you might have friends and egg customers say they think that brown eggs taste better than white eggs. You might also have others look at your blue and green eggs and ask how they taste — if they taste different than white or brown eggs. So if you're wondering how to respond to the question: Do different chicken egg colors taste different? The short answer is no. All chicken eggs are the same on the inside. Egg taste is dictated by what a hen eats. While a single food won't change the taste of an egg, a diet high in grasses, seeds, vegetables, and herbs will result in a better tasting egg overall. And of course, the freshness of the egg matters the most. ●