

----- Breeding

You should not let birds breed until they have matured. They are very likely to compromise their own health because they devote their energy to laying eggs & raising babies rather than finishing their own growth. Females should be at least 18 months old & males at least a year. Cockatiels will breed at any time of year given favorable conditions.

Simple cardboard or wood boxes can be placed in a cage & will be adopted as a nest. The box should be approximately 1 cubic foot to allow for parents & chicks. Fill the box with several inches of pine shavings or shredded paper to keep the eggs from rolling around. It is recommended to only allow your bird to produce no more than two clutches per year. Males will become the primary life-giver should the female not be present & they play an active part in feeding & raising the young. During a breeding period, cockatiels will become defensive of the nest & likely become less tame towards you.

Seek veterinary attention if your pet changes behavior or becomes inactive; this may indicate the pet has an illness.

As a pet owner, you are responsible for proper pet practices. Be prepared to take an ill pet to a Veterinarian & know which Veterinarian in your area can treat your pet.



check-list ✓

Your pet Cockatiel requires...

- Cage of appropriate size & wire size
- Perches of assorted sizes (must have)
- A variety of play & health conditioning toys
- Food / Seed dish(s)
- Daily water source
- Bathing dish or bowl
- Fruits & Veg ' dish (separate from seed)
- Cuttle bone or Mineral Block (supplement)
- Cockatiel (appropriate) Seed
- Millet sprays (seed)
- Clips for doors & food treats



Cockatiels

A sizeable bird, 36-46 cm long

Life Span: 15 - 30 years on average in captivity, may live longer, if well cared for.

They are attractive as well as friendly, gentle & easy to tame.



----- Personality

Cockatiels are popular household pets in many parts of the world simply because they are gentle, elegant & do well in most home environments. The breed is naturally social & this trait extends to humans, as well other pets or birds. They are highly intelligent & easily engaged. The breed is not destructive in a home environment & many issues associated with problem birds, like loud noise or chewing are very minimal with cockatiels. They can be shy, but regular visiting will draw them out as they tend to be naturally friendly & curious.

The cockatiel is a "pet", in the truest sense of the word. Many actually love to be tickled behind the ears or under the chin. Cockatiels will often enjoy close physical interaction with their owners & will come looking for this affection. Males tend to be social to most they meet, while the females tend to be more reserved in their judgement towards new people & tend to be more selective with their company. As with all birds, couples will tend to be less interested in you than their partner, unless you give them both the attention they need as a pair.

Hand-raised cockatiels or early adoptions make for great pets & can be trained easily. Any hand-raised bird requires extra attention & you should be prepared to for this added responsibility. Females are far less likely to be "talkers", so if you are interested in teaching your bird to speak, a male will be the better candidate (not always though - some females can be quite vocal & some males may not talk or sing). Males usually have dark cheek patches, while the females patches are often lighter & more faded in appearance.

----- Feeding



Cockatiels require a variety of foods, including vegetables, seeds, & fruits. There are many parrot diets on the market, some better than others. You can feed pellets up to 80-85%, but supplement with vegetables & other foods. Offer calcium in the form of a mineral block or cuttle bone placed in the cage. Always keep the water bowls clean.

Human foods unsuitable or poisonous for them include dairy products, chocolate, sugared food, avocado, rhubarb, strawberries & no food that is spoiled, salty, greasy, alcoholic or candy. Avoid giving them cheese, yogurt or icecream, even if that is what they want to try. Birds are lactose intolerant & may get diarrhea from any dairy product. For most parrots, nuts & peanuts are too high in fat & should only be given as a treat(rarely).

Any vegetable that is meaty, dark green, orange, or yellow (high in vitamin A) such as: carrots; sweet potatoes; beets; broccoli; legumes; frozen mixed vegetables; kale; greens (not iceberg lettuce); green peppers; zucchini & other squashes; asparagus; ripe tomatoes; dried hot peppers; sprouts-bean or alfalfa; spinach; Brussels sprouts. Fruits like apples; pears; peaches; bananas; berries; kiwi; citrus; pomegranate; grapes; raisins & other dried fruit can be diced & spinked over a pellet mix. Unsweetened breakfast cereals, puffed rice or wheat; dry or cooked pasta; corn on the cob, cooked rice, barley, corn, or oatmeal; wheat bread; taco shells; corn chips; popcorn; unsalted crackers; are all nice treats that will be willingly accepted. Give seed mixtures only as a partial carbohydrate source.

----- Care, Training & Behavior

Cockatiels are easily trained & often learn to speak. Males have great vocal abilities & females are usually fairly quiet. Whistling & mimicking other bird calls comes natural to them so picking up a tune comes easy. "Cat Calls" or simple songs are a favorite game for you to teach your bird. They have a loud, shrill call sometimes, but mostly the cockatiel is fairly calm & not regarded as a "noisy" breed. Like all vocal birds, they tend to sing or talk at different periods throughout the day. Mid to late evening is a great time for you to engage your bird for talking, singing or whistling lessons. Most social birds enjoy being intimate late afternoon or late evening, the quiet times before nap time. Cockatiels can be very endearing & will enjoy spending time with you throughout your day.

Cockatiels love water & bathing so don't be shocked if your buddy wants to join you for a shower or play under a sink tap. A fine mist bath with a plant sprayer is a great favorite. They are also likely to try to join you for a sample of your meal if they get the chance. They are a curious bird that will tend to investigate what it is that you are up to by joining in. Cockatiels rarely bite (small beak-gentle bite) & will be more likely to hiss or flee if confronted with a situation they don't care for. The mild temperament makes them ideal for homes with children. Even if they try to bite, it will likely be more like a fit than an attack & rarely will you be hurt.

* Big beak = big hurt! - Ever heard the term "pecking order"? A bird's weapon is their beak - the biggest 'peck' goes first! Small beak = small bite.

Cockatiels, as with all pet birds, should get flying time everyday to keep them exercised & healthy! If you desire a bird for your home that is free of a cage & allowed to roam, then a cockatiel is a good choice. Be aware that birds behave much like pet dogs - if the bird is free about the house - make sure your home is secure (window screens) & that you enter & leave quickly. Your pet may be upset that you are leaving & want to come(they can tell). Your bird may have been waiting for you to get home & will hurry to see you & simply dart past you out the door without meaning to leave you. Once outside, birds panic because of the unknown environment & fly! Most pet birds are lost simply because they got out the door trying to be with you!

Cockatiels are ground feeders in the wild & tend to spend lot of time on the cage floor so a wide cage is better than a tall one. When it comes to cages, the biggest one that you can afford & fit through your door is best. Cockatiels are medium sized birds & made for 'tiel cages usually have a moderately thick wire and a 5/8 - 3/4 inch bar spacing. They can also be kept safely in big budgie cages as the finer wire & smaller spacing doesn't cause any problems. Wider bar spacing can be a safety hazard though. They can get their heads through, turn a little & find themselves caught with no idea how to get back out. Cockatiel cages are on the larger size & will be regarded as 'home' even if the bird is allowed out all day.

Furnish your cage with toys, food & water bowls as you would a house for a cage dweller. Many roaming cockatiels will tend to stay near their home base & will loiter on top of the cage as much as in it. Cages need perches of approximately 1/2" in diameter & should be varied. Best perches are natural wood branches from species such as apple, alder, beech, maple, eucalyptus or citrus trees (do not use cherry or oak - toxic)

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