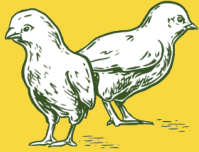




Appenzeller

Chicken Breed

Also known as Appenzeller Spitzhauben, these birds are known for their special crest.



Breed type

Ornamental and
egg

Egg color

White

**Pen or free-
range?**

Free-range
preferred

Temperament

Active

Appenzeller quick facts

Lifespan: 6-8 years

Weight: Females (Hens) - ~4 lbs; Males (Roosters) - ~5 lbs.

Appearance: Various colors, but can be silver, black or gold. Many are known for their pale blue feet as well as their deep red combs and pointed crests

Egg Production: Approx. 150 to 180 eggs per year

Good for Beginners: No, they are not as docile as some other breeds

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Appenzeller history

The Appenzeller, also known as the Appenzeller Spitzhauben, is a rare, crested breed with origins in the monastery coops of Switzerland. Still finding its foothold as a breed in the United States, the Appenzeller wows onlookers through its active temperament and special forward-pointing crest. After being on the verge of extinction during World War 2, the Appenzeller is making a strong comeback in both its native Switzerland and the rest of the world. To this day it stays a niche breed in the United States, only recently gaining popularity. They are reliable egg producers with ornamental appeal for those who have the space to keep them happy.

Temperment and good-to-knows

A characteristic feature of the Appenzeller poultry breed is their active nature. They are flighty, alert birds who love space to roam. For this reason, they are not recommended for confinement or for owners without the means to allow their chickens plenty of space to free-range. Their strong foraging ability usually keeps them entertained. Appenzellers are good fliers, and their predator-savvy, alert nature keeps them safe while they enjoy their freedom. They are not as docile as more popular breeds, but many Appenzellers have been described as friendly birds, even a bit talkative. They lack aggressiveness due to their small size and may find themselves low on the pecking order. Those with small children may wish to look towards calmer, less flighty breeds. The most important thing for prospective owners of the Appenzeller is to make sure your chickens will have ample space to roam.

The Appenzeller Spitzhauben chicken breed is a reliable producer of medium white eggs, anywhere from 150 to 180 per year. Though they are smaller chickens at 3 to 4 pounds, their eggs stay the size of other, larger breeds. They are not known for broodiness, either. They are not seen as particularly good **chickens for meat**, so most owners keep them for egg laying or simply for ornamental value.

Visual characteristics of Appenzeller birds

The appearance of the Appenzeller is its calling card. What at once stands out at first glance is their unique, pointed crest, especially when viewed in tandem with their angular combs. Part of their name, 'Spitzhauben', translates to 'pointed hat'. Unlike other crested breeds, like the Polish, the crest of an Appenzeller does not restrict the bird's peripheral vision. The feathers on some Appenzellers jut forwards, a bit like a spiky pompadour. They come in many different color varieties, but only a handful are officially recognized by breeder's associations across the world. The most common coloration is a silver spangled Appenzeller, which is a striking mix of silvery white and black accent feathers. This coloration certainly works to their advantage, making their unique crests pop against almost any background. Appenzellers have pale blue feet and deep red combs.

Health and care

The Appenzeller, being from Switzerland, is seen as a cold-hardy breed. As with most crested chickens, in extreme cold or unusually wet conditions, keeping their crests dry will help prevent frostbite or cold damage. Appenzellers handle heat well, too, but are less adapted to **extreme heat** than other breeds. They may need help cooling off if the weather is too hot. In terms of general health concerns, Appenzellers keep the same **care needs** as all chickens, such as keeping them clean and free of parasites. Though still rare, they are seen as a healthy breed with no outstanding health issues to speak of.

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Frequently asked questions about Appenzeller Spitzhauben chickens

What are the physical characteristics of Appenzeller chickens?

Appenzeller chickens are medium-sized birds with a well-proportioned body and an upright carriage. They have a distinctive V-shaped comb and wattles, and their feathers come in two varieties: spangled (black and white) and mottled (silver and gold).

Can Appenzeller chickens tolerate cold climates?

Yes, Appenzeller chickens are generally hardy and can tolerate colder climates well. Their dense feathering helps supply insulation, but it's still important to offer them a sheltered coop during harsh winters.

Do Appenzeller chickens require special housing or fencing?

While Appenzeller chickens don't have specific housing requirements, it's important to provide them with a secure and well-ventilated coop that protects them from predators. If including them in a backyard flock, owners should make sure they have a secure and predator-proof coop with ample space to roam.

Are Appenzeller chickens good for free-ranging?

Yes, Appenzeller chickens are generally good for free-ranging. They are active foragers and enjoy exploring their surroundings. However, it's essential to supervise them during free-ranging to ensure their safety and protect them from potential dangers like predators or traffic.

Do Appenzeller chickens require special feeding requirements?

Appenzeller chickens have similar dietary needs to other chicken breeds. They should be fed a balanced diet of commercial chicken feed right for their age and supplemented with kitchen scraps, grains, and fresh greens. Providing access to grit and oyster shell can also aid in digestion and eggshell formation.

Can Appenzeller chickens fly?

Appenzeller chickens are not known for their strong flying abilities. While they may be capable of short flights to escape danger or reach roosting spots, they are generally more inclined to stay on the ground and explore their surroundings.