

Buff Orpington Chicken Breed Guide



**Breed type**

Dual-purpose (egg and meat)

**Egg color**

Light brown

**Pen or free-range?**

Pen

**Temperament**

Mostly calm and friendly, sometimes broody

Buff Orpington quick facts

Lifespan: 5-8 years

Weight: Females (hens): 7-8 lbs.; Males (roosters): 10-11 lbs.

Appearance: Golden buff

Egg Production: 200-280 eggs/year (4 eggs/week)

Good for Beginners: Yes

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Finding a chicken breed that meets virtually any keeper's needs can be difficult, but the **Buff Orpington** is a strong contender. Whether you want a chicken that's a great egg layer, provides meat or simply to keep as a pet, the Buff Orpington is your bird. Offering **live chickens**, Tractor Supply details what you need to know about this breed.

History of Buff Orpington Chickens

The story of Buff Orpingtons begins with William Cook, a well-known poultry breeder and coachman during the 1880s. He developed this breed by crossing several other breeds, including Buff Cochins, Dark Dorkings and Golden Spangled Hamburgs. Cook's goal was to have a chicken that could provide meat and eggs that could withstand the weather conditions in England.

The name Buff Orpington combines two ideas. Buff refers to the chicken's golden buff color. Orpington in Kent, England, is where Cook lived and worked.

Buff Orpingtons aren't the only type of Orpingtons – they aren't even the first. That would be the Black Orpington, which Cook also developed by mixing breeds. Other varieties include the Chocolate and Lavender Orpington.

This is one story of the Buff Orpington's origins. There's some contention about how this breed began, with many British poultrymen and historians claiming it came from the rare Buff Lincolnshire, discovered in the 1850s. This breed went extinct in the 1920s but was revived by breeders in the 1980s.

The Buff Orpington first arrived in the U.S. in 1903, with the American Poultry Association admitting the buff, black, white and blue color varieties by the 1920s. The breed's popularity dropped in the 20th century with the emphasis on factory farm chickens. Today, there is renewed interest in the Buff Orpington, so much so it was removed from The Livestock's Conservancy's endangered species list in 2016.

Temperament and Good-to-Knows

From experienced farmers and homesteaders to novice backyard chicken keepers, many find Buff Orpington chickens a great breed for different applications. A docile and friendly personality means Buff Orpingtons also make good pets and are suitable for families with young children. Here's more about a Buff Orpington's temperament:

Broodiness

Buff Orpington hens are typically very broody. They will often raise chicks of any breed, sometimes the young of other poultry breeds. However, this trait isn't present in all Buff Orpingtons. If broodiness matters to you – or if you'd rather hens not be broody – ask the breeder or hatchery about the strain before buying. Another important consideration is that when Buff Orpington hens become broody, they focus solely on hatching eggs and won't lay new ones.

Interaction with Other Breeds

A Buff Orpington's friendliness doesn't just extend to their human keepers but also to other chicken breeds. They're great for mixed flocks, especially among other docile breeds. Understand that Buff Orpingtons might not be able to defend themselves against dominant breeds, so monitor initial interactions when **introducing new chickens** to your flock.

Cold-Hardiness

Thick feathers mean Buff Orpingtons are often more resilient in colder climates than other breeds. These chickens can thrive in many environments, provided they have adequate housing and proper care. Of course, you'll need to implement the same precautions as with other breeds to ensure their well-being in different climates and at different times of the year.

Visual and Egg Characteristics

Whether you want a Buff Orpington for eggs, meat or to show, these chickens have the physical characteristics and egg-laying capabilities that allow for all three.

Physical Characteristics of Buff Orpingtons

A Buff Orpington's defining feature is its golden buff-colored feathers. Colors may range from very light to deep golden hues, and heavy feathering makes these chickens appear fluffy. Weather conditions can affect a Buff Orpington's golden buff plumage. For instance, colors may fade from exposure to the sun or rain. However, Buff Orpingtons also molt annually, and their feathers often grow back with an even richer buff color.

These medium to large-sized chickens have stocky bodies and full, round breasts, ideal for meat production. On average, a Buff Orpington hen weighs 7-8 pounds, while roosters weigh 10-11 pounds. Buff Orpingtons have short, curved backs and short legs. It's typical to see only a little bit of leg from underneath their heavy feathering. These chickens have single combs and bright red wattles and earlobes.

Buff Orpington Egg Production

Buff Orpington hens begin laying at around three to six months and can produce between 200-280 eggs a year. That's four eggs a month. These light brown eggs range from large to extra-large. Since Buff Orpingtons are dual-purpose, they may not lay as many eggs as those breeds created specifically for egg laying.

Health and Care

Proper care is essential to maintain the **health and wellness** of your Buff Orpington chickens. Additionally, it can maximize their egg or meat production. Consider these care tips:

Housing

Like most chickens, Buff Orpingtons require proper housing for protection from predators and inclement weather. The **coop** should have 4 to 5 square feet of space per chicken, and the pen should be at least 10 square feet.

Although Buff Orpingtons are more suitable than other breeds in cold climates, they're still susceptible to frostbite, so consider **coop heaters** during the winter. Conversely, heavy bodies and feathering can put stress on these chickens during the summer. Ensure coops have ventilation and pens have shade to avoid heat-related concerns.

Diet

A well-balanced diet is crucial for chickens with big appetites like Buff Orpingtons. They require high-protein **poultry feed** and fresh water. Grit also helps with digestion. Supplementing their diet with fruits and vegetables or occasional **treats** ensures these birds stay content with their diet. A healthy diet is important for the chicken and egg and meat production.

Health

Any chicken breed is vulnerable to illnesses such as respiratory issues or parasites. Regular health checks are vital for noticing signs and symptoms of illness or injury before they become more significant issues. Contact a veterinarian if you're unsure about the health of your chickens.

Monitoring weight gain is key, especially if raising Buff Orpingtons for meat. You want these chickens to grow steadily and healthily. Significant weight changes may indicate illness or an unbalanced diet.

Environment

Ensure your Buff Orpingtons' comfort by regularly cleaning the coop. A dry coop is especially important for preventing frostbite and other adverse effects during the winter. Proper ventilation can prevent respiratory concerns, and dust baths promote cleanliness and calmness. To keep Buff Orpingtons entertained in their pens, consider [swings, perches and toys](#) so they can stay entertained and mentally stimulated.

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Whether you're just beginning your flock or an experienced keeper looking to add a new breed to your flock, consider the docile and dual-purpose Buff Orpington. To learn more about this and other [poultry breeds](#), trust America's largest rural lifestyle retailer – Tractor Supply. In addition to offering live chickens, we also deliver tips on raising birds in [The Coop](#). Shop online or [visit your local Tractor Supply store](#).