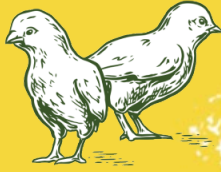


Rhode Island Red Chicken Breed Guide





Breed type

Dual-purpose (egg and meat)

Egg color

Brown

Pen or free-range?

Both

Temperament

Confident and curious, with males sometimes being aggressive

Rhode Island Red quick facts

Lifespan: Up to 8 years

Weight: Females (hens): 6.5 lbs.; Males (roosters): 8.5 lbs.

Appearance: Reddish-brown

Egg Production: 200-300 eggs/year (4-6 eggs/week)

Good for Beginners: Yes

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When people think about chickens, they likely picture one resembling the **Rhode Island Red**. This iconic breed is arguably the most well-recognized in the United States and perhaps the world. Learn more about this breed from Tractor Supply, America's largest rural lifestyle retailer and provider of various **chicken breeds**.

History of Rhode Island Red Chickens

As the name suggests, Rhode Island Reds were created in Rhode Island and Massachusetts in the mid to late 1800s. Breeders wanted to develop a chicken for dual purpose – egg production and meat. Rhode Island Reds are a cross between Malay, Brown Leghorn and several Asian breeds. The American Poultry Association admitted the single-combed Rhode Island Red in 1904 and the rose-combed variety the following year. This breed is so iconic it serves as the state bird in Rhode Island.

Today, Rhode Island Reds are classified as Near Threatened and are closely monitored by The Livestock Conservancy. There are fewer than 10,000 of this breed in the world, and only about 2,500 are registered in the U.S.

Temperament and Good-to-Knows

It's not for nothing that Rhode Island Red chickens have gained such popularity. Their personality is in large part what differentiates them from other breeds. Key aspects of their temperament include:

- **Dominant breed:** Rhode Island Reds have varying personalities, with some being more docile and others more confident. In general, this is a dominant bird that leans toward the top – if not at the top – of the pecking order.
- **Differences in temperament between sexes:** The hens are typically calm. It's the roosters that have a reputation for being aggressive. Although not all Rhode Island Red roosters display this behavior, it's best to take caution when **introducing new chickens** to a mixed flock. Additionally, these roosters can be unpredictable around children, so families with young kids shouldn't get one.
- **Sometimes noisy:** Rhode Island Reds can be very energetic and loud. Keep this in mind if you have a backyard flock and neighbors close by.
- **Curious and independent:** This breed loves exploring and foraging. They'll eat seeds and go after bugs – even mice.
- **Not usually broody:** Selective breeding has made Rhode Island Red hens less inclined to brood, although they might sometimes exhibit broodiness. When they become broody, they're very protective of their eggs.
- **Suitability in different climates:** This hearty chicken breed often thrives in more intense climates, hot or cold. Despite the Rhode Island Red's hardiness, you still want to provide proper housing to ensure their comfort all year round.

Visual and Egg Characteristics

The pictures of images used for chickens in books and other media are often a Rhode Island Red. Why? Part of it is their striking appearance. Learn more about the physical characteristics of Rhode Island Reds and their eggs.

Physical Characteristics of Rhode Island Reds

This breed is medium-to-large, with hens weighing about 6.5 pounds and roosters weighing about 8.5 pounds. Their feathers have a deep, reddish-brown color and are stiff due to Malay and Java ancestry. Plumage coloration is consistent across their bodies. These birds have rectangular bodies with broad chests. Along with a straight back, this body type gives Rhode Island Reds a strong stance.

Rhode Island Reds have yellow skin, as indicated by the feet and legs. These chickens have four toes on each foot. They feature yellow beaks and red combs, earlobes and wattles. Most Rhode Island Reds have single, upright combs, but in rare cases, they have rose combs. Their eyes are typically reddish-brown.

Rhode Island Red Egg Production

Bred for laying eggs, Rhode Island Reds are known for their egg-laying abilities. They begin laying around five to six months and continue for several years, with peak laying happening in the first two to three years. Healthy Rhode Island Reds may lay between 200-300 eggs per year, or four to six a week. Certain factors, like the chicken's diet and environment, may impact egg quantity. Rhode Island Red

chicken eggs are usually a medium brown color, but hues vary slightly from hen to hen. These eggs are large to extra-large.

Health and Care

Proper care is crucial for the **health and wellness** of Rhode Island Reds and any chicken breed. Caring for Rhode Island Reds is easy, compared to some other breeds, making it a great choice for new and experienced keepers. Consider these tips when caring for your chickens:

Housing

Rhode Island Reds are highly adaptable and thrive in coops and as free-range chickens. They are aware of their predators, which may differ depending on geographical location. As with other breeds, Rhode Island Reds need secure **coops** with the proper ventilation. Provide enough space in the coop for each chicken, as well as **nesting boxes**, perches and other accessories to ensure comfort.

Diet

Since they're great foragers, Rhode Island Reds may feed themselves. They'll chase after prey like worms, caterpillars, mice and frogs. If you're raising them for eggs, provide a high-quality, 16% layer **poultry feed** to ensure they get the right nutrients. Incorporating fresh fruits and vegetables also helps Rhode Island Reds maintain a well-balanced diet. Refill **waterers** regularly so your chickens drink clean water.

Environment

Rhode Island Reds need adequate space for foraging and exercise. What's more, they like to socialize with other chickens but remember that roosters can get aggressive. Monitor initial interactions to avoid more docile chickens getting picked on. This breed also appreciates time with their human keepers, which can help reinforce the friendly side of their personalities.

Although Rhode Island Reds are hardy chickens, they aren't invulnerable in harsher weather conditions. For instance, in colder climates or during the winter, they might get frostbite without proper care. Their combs are especially prone to frostbite. In the summer or dry, arid climates, they might experience heat exhaustion. Consider accessories, such as **coop heaters** in the winter, to prevent the adverse effects weather can have on chickens.

Provide for Your Flock with Tractor Supply

An iconic breed relied on for meat and egg production, the Rhode Island Red is a visually appealing chicken with distinct features and a curious spirit. If you want to learn more about this and other **poultry breeds**, turn to Tractor Supply. With 85+ years of experience, we offer key insights into chicken breeds and care in **The Coop**. We also have **live chickens** and supplies you need for managing your flock. To shop for Rhode Island Reds and poultry products, place an order online or **visit your local Tractor Supply store**.