

# Speckled Sussex Chicken Breed Guide



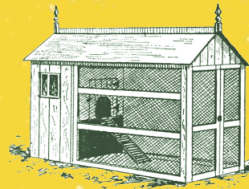
## **Breed type**

Egg, meat,  
exhibition



## **Egg color**

Light to medium  
brown



## **Pen or free-range?**

Both



## **Temperament**

Mostly calm and  
friendly, sometimes  
broody

## **Speckled Sussex quick facts**

**Lifespan:** 5-8 years

**Weight:** Females (hens): 6-7 lbs.; Males (roosters): 8-9 lbs.

**Appearance:** Brown w/ white speckled patterns

**Egg Production:** 200-250 eggs/year (4-5 eggs/week)

**Good for Beginners:** Yes

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With the perfect balance between visual appeal and utility, **Speckled Sussex chickens** are popular among keepers worldwide. Discover the characteristics and egg-laying capabilities of this breed from Tractor Supply, America's largest rural lifestyle retailer and provider of many **poultry breeds**.

### **History of Speckled Sussex Chickens**

As the name suggests, Sussex chickens originated in the county of Sussex in southeastern England. This breed has a long history, with records indicating Sussex chickens have been around since the Roman invasion of Britain in 43 A.D. This makes the Sussex one of the oldest known chicken breeds.

To develop the Sussex, breeders crossed multiple breeds, such as the **Cochin**, Dorking and Malay. They wanted a hardy bird that could withstand the area's changing climate and serve a dual purpose for meat and eggs.

Alongside Kent and Surrey, Sussex had a reputation for producing delicious-tasting poultry. Additionally, during the Victorian age, these three counties were considered the best areas for raising egg-laying chickens. The Sussex chicken was seen as superior to chickens from the other two counties.

Sussex chickens reached the U.S. in around 1912. In 1914, the American Poultry Association (APA) recognized the Speckled and Red variety. In 1929, the Light Sussex became standardized. This breed appears in other colors, including Brown, Buff, Coronation, Silver and White.

### **Temperament and Good-to-Knows**

If you're just **starting your flock**, you might consider the Speckled Sussex. This breed has a friendly, calm personality, which makes them easy for beginners to handle. Other good things to know about this breed include:

- **Ideal for young families:** If you want to get your kids involved in chicken keeping, Speckled Sussex chickens have the gentle personality you need to introduce young ones to the birds.
- **Broodiness:** Hens often display strong maternal instincts, which makes them great brooders for keepers who want chicks hatched and raised naturally.
- **Natural explorers:** Speckled Sussex chickens like to forage and be active. They scratch around looking for insects and seeds. Although they thrive as free-range birds, these chickens aren't opposed to confinement. Placing **swings, perches and toys** in the coop or run helps this active breed stay entertained.
- **Place in the pecking order:** Although confident, Speckled Sussex chickens aren't aggressive with other breeds. It's wise to observe initial encounters when **introducing new chickens** to your flock, especially if there are already more aggressive breeds.
- **Cold hardiness:** Intended to thrive in the variable climate of the Sussex region, this breed is known for hardiness in cold environments. It can thrive in some warm conditions but is less resilient in the heat.

### **Visual and Egg Characteristics**

It's in the name – a speckled appearance separates this breed from others visually. Yet, it's not just their color or pattern that makes Speckled Sussex chickens highly sought after. Keepers also appreciate them for their egg-laying abilities. Discover this breed's physical and egg characteristics:

#### ***Physical Characteristics of Speckled Sussex***

Speckled Sussex chickens stand out for their beautiful plumage. Their close-fitting feathers have a reddish-brown base color that may appear in different shades of brown, such as chestnut or mahogany. White speckles cover their feathers, and no two chickens have the same pattern. This breed has medium-sized, five-pointed red combs, red wattles and four-toed feet.

Intended for meat production, Speckled Sussex chickens are a medium-sized breed with broad bodies, wide shoulders and white skin. They feature slightly curved backs and short tails. This breed puts on weight easily, with hens weighing between six and seven pounds and roosters weighing between eight and nine pounds.

#### ***Speckled Sussex Egg Production***

Keepers can expect Speckled Sussex to lay many eggs. They lay between 200 and 250 a year, or four to five per week. However, various factors can impact egg production, including age, diet and time of year. For instance, Speckled Sussex chickens might not lay as well if they get too fat. Eggs vary slightly in color but are usually light to medium brown.

## **Health and Care**

Another benefit of the Sussex breed is that it's a low-maintenance bird without too many special health considerations. Still, keepers want to ensure their chickens receive well-balanced diets, secure housing and ways to stay entertained. This will ensure their comfort and well-being. **Health and wellness** tips for your Speckled Sussex chickens include:

### ***Diet***

Like other breeds, Speckled Sussex chickens are susceptible to common diseases like lice and mites. However, the main concern is them getting overly fat. Overweight hens may experience **egg binding** or oviduct prolapse. To protect your chickens against obesity, provide them with quality **poultry feed** and limit their foraging time to avoid too much snacking.

### ***Housing***

Speckled Sussex chickens have no specific housing needs outside what's standard for chickens. Provide them with a predator-proof **coop and pen**, as well as the necessary accommodations in the coop, such as **nesting boxes, bedding, feeders and waterers**. Proper ventilation ensures comfort and **containment parts** can offer added security.

### ***Activity and Mental Stimulation***

You may notice that your Speckled Sussex chickens are more active than other breeds in your flock. It's true; unless these chickens stay entertained, they risk becoming bored. Some ways to keep these birds engaged include:

- Keeping fresh straw in the coop and run for chickens to scratch
- Placing swings and perches in the coop
- Teaching these intelligent birds to follow commands and perform tricks (follow when called, sit on your lap, etc.)

### ***Heat Tolerance***

Made to tolerate cold weather, Speckled Sussex chickens have dense feathering that can make them less resilient in the heat. You want to monitor these birds more when the weather gets warmer. Be sure there is enough shade in the run, and consider placing extra **waterers** in the coop and run.

## **Poultry Keepers Find What They Need at Tractor Supply**

Want a chicken that provides a consistent supply of eggs all year? Need a good meat bird? Or maybe you want a chicken for exhibition? The Speckled Sussex checks all these boxes. Beginners and experienced keepers find many reasons to add this breed to their flocks. For **live chickens** and poultry supplies, trust Tractor Supply. We have over 85 years of experience and share our expertise on **how to care for poultry** and more in **The Coop**. Shop Speckled Sussex chickens online or **visit your local Tractor Supply store**.