



# FINCH CARE

## BACKGROUND

**Average Size:** 4 inches

**Average Lifespan:** 4 - 8 years

Finches are big on color and low on maintenance. These small, hardy birds are relatively inexpensive. They are not as social with their human caretakers as other species are—so if you're looking for a bird to be your good buddy, they may not be right for you. Finches do need company of their own kind, however, so you must keep at least a pair. If you are going to keep an odd number of finches together there should be more females than males.

## COST

When you first get your bird, you'll need to spend about \$75 for a cage. Food runs about \$75 a year, plus \$30 annually for toys and treats.

## DIET

- A high-quality pelleted food that's formulated for your bird's species should be available to your pet at all times.
- Seed mixes can also be provided for variety.
- Fresh, cold water should be available at all times. Make sure to provide both an open water dish and a side hanging water bottle. Change it at least once a day, preferably twice.
- Offer fresh veggies and fruits to your bird every day.
  - **Recommended:** Dark, leafy greens, carrots, broccoli, apples, pears, melon and kiwi. *Take care to remove any uneaten food after a couple of hours.*
  - **Avoid:** avocado, cherry pits, rhubarb and apple seeds and anything that's old or spoiled.

## DAILY CARE

- Remove and replace the paper lining the bottom of the cage every day.
- Clean and refill the water bottle and water bowl every day.
- Clean cage completely once a week by replacing dirty bedding and scrubbing down the cage with warm, soapy water.

## GENERAL CARE

- A thorough cleaning of your pet's cage is required once weekly. Remove and wash the cage tray and perches, and wash the area around the cage. Make sure all toys are clean and damage-free, without loose or broken parts that could hurt your pet. You'll want to clean the entire cage with a disinfectant solution. Rinse well, and dry everything before returning your bird to his cage.
- You can help keep your pet's plumage looking perfect with a bath as often as he likes it. You can use a spray bottle filled with water and give your bird a shower or you can put a shallow dish at the bottom of the cage and see what happens.

## CAGE & ENVIRONMENT

- Line the bottom of the cage with plain paper, newspaper, paper towels or paper bags cut to size.
- Offer both high and low perching locations – making sure that one is level with the food dishes.
- Two finches should be kept in a cage no less than 24" wide, 24" deep and 24" tall. The height of a cage should be proportional to its width and length.
- To prevent escape or injury, the bars on the cage should only be .25 inches apart—a little larger than the tips of your fingers.
- 3-4 square feet of floor space is required per pair of finches.
- Make sure to provide a nesting area for your finches to rest in.
- Place the cage off the floor in a warm, bright part of the house, close to where the action is but away from all drafts and direct sunlight.
  - *Avoid setting up the cage in or near the kitchen at all costs - Birds are extremely sensitive to fumes and those from self-cleaning ovens and Teflon-coated cookware, if overheated, can be fatal.*

## EXERCISE & TOYS

- Even though finches and canaries do not take to handling and do not need time out every day, they will appreciate a revolving selection of toys.
- Small birds may enjoy ladders, swings and mirrors with bells, and wooden chew toys are great for keeping beaks trimmed.
- Check out what's available at the pet supply store, and just make sure that the toys you select are safe and appropriate for your bird's size and species. They should be labeled accordingly, but don't hesitate to ask if you are unsure.
  - *Be sure the toys you get/hang up do not obstruct your finch's flight since they get their exercise by flying.*

## SIGNS OF ILLNESS

- Take your birds to the veterinarian annually for check-ups. Please don't wait to schedule an appointment if you think your pet is sick. A bird who is not feeling well may fluff out his feathers or sit quietly on the floor of his cage with his eyes closed. Other symptoms that something's not right with your pet include a change in the consistency, frequency or color of droppings, weight loss or gain, sneezing, coughing, blocked nostrils, labored breathing and a crusty beak or eyes.





## FINCH SUPPLY CHECKLIST

- Well-constructed cage, at least 24" wide, 24" deep and 24" tall, with several perches
- High-quality finch pellet food
- Plain paper, newspaper, paper towels or paper bags cut to size
- Species-appropriate safe toys (lots of 'em!)
- Attachable water bottle
- Water bowl for cage floor

