

Caring for your Bengalese finches

**How to keep pet Bengalese
finches healthy and happy**



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Are Bengalese finches right for me?

Bengalese finches are one of the most charming and interesting birds to keep as a pet and are easy to care for. There are many colour variations to choose from although you won't see Bengalese finches in the wild, they are solely bred in captivity.

These birds make wonderful companions and can live up to 8 years if well looked after. Bengalese finches don't require as much attention as other birds so they are ideal for busy families and adults. Finches don't really like to be handled so may not be suitable for children who are looking for a pet they can interact with physically.

Choosing a new pet Bengalese finch

When selecting your finch, check these signs that he is healthy:

- Bright and alert
- Clear eyes and nostrils
- Clean vent
- Feathers flush to the body
- Steady breathing
- Active, free movement
- Firm beak with no cracks
- Healthy claws and feet

The first few days

Your new bird's cage should be set up before you bring him home.

When you get home, carefully place your finch in the cage and then leave him alone to adjust to his new surroundings.

Speak to him gently so that he becomes accustomed to your voice and feeding times. You will need to replace his food and water and clean the cage liner during this time but do so slowly and calmly.

Finches joining an established group of birds should be added in pairs. Your new birds will need a period of quarantine in a separate but nearby cage. This gives time for the birds to get used to each other. After a week, bring the cage closer and monitor the birds' behaviour.

When introducing your new bird for the first time in its permanent home, put food stations at both sides of the cage so that the birds can feed separately.

There may be some bickering and flapping at first but this is normal. If the birds fight each other you may need to keep them apart for longer and try re-introducing them in a week or so.

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Creating a happy home

Bengalese finches are happy in an outdoor aviary or an indoor cage.

If you're keeping your finches in a cage, it should be as large as possible to allow space for free flight.

When choosing where your cage should go, a draught-free position where there is a constant temperature is ideal. Avoid window sills as they can become very hot in the afternoon and cold at night. Kitchens are generally unsuitable because they can become hot or smoky.

In the evening, cover the cage with a thin sheet/towel as this will make your bird feel safe at night and protect him from draughts.

Perches should have slightly different diameters (5-10mm) to exercise your bird's feet. Place them close to food and water with another one higher up for roosting.

Aviaries should be in a sheltered position with adequate shade. As well as having a range of perches, your aviary should have a nestbox where birds can shelter and roost. A bird bath should also be provided.

A healthy diet and treats

Finches need plenty of fresh water and it should be changed daily - twice a day in hot weather.

A healthy, varied diet would be:

- Foreign finch seed mix will form the basis of their diet. Grit must also be available to help proper digestion of the seed.
- Fresh fruit and vegetables such as apple and carrot along with meadow grass. Always remove any fresh items from the cage after a few hours to prevent the cage becoming soiled. Never feed avocado or chocolate as these are poisonous to birds.
- A piece of cuttlefish bone will provide vital calcium and keep their beak well-trimmed.
- A mineral block will also supply necessary minerals.

Treat them now and then with millet sprays.

Getting to know you

If you need to pick your finch up, try removing the perches to allow more room to catch him. Gently enclose him in your hand with his head between your first and second finger.



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Exercise your Bengalese finch needs

Your finch gets all the exercise he needs from flying which is why it is essential that his cage is big enough to allow freedom to fly.

Bengalese finches and other pets

Bengalese finches are sociable little birds which can be kept in pairs, or as part of a mixed collection of birds with other species of finch, waxbills and canaries.

Bengalese finch gender

There is no visual distinction between male and female Bengalese finches. The only way to tell is to watch their behaviour. The male will sing and display to the female. Please ask a member of our team whether they can confirm the sex of your finch before buying.

Potential health issues with Bengalese finches

Salmonellosis

This is more common in birds kept in an aviary where your bird could be exposed to rodents. This disease thrives in a dirty environment so cleaning and disinfecting their cage or aviary is essential. An affected bird will have greenish blood-stained diarrhoea and if discovered, your finch should be taken to a vet straight away.

Feather plucking

This is not usually a problem but overcrowding or lack of nesting materials can cause it.

Egg binding

Occasionally eggs can become stuck in the egg tract and you may see the hen straining as she tries to lay the egg, your finch should be taken to a vet straight away.

Mites

Birds with feather mites will appear restless, more so at night when the mites are most active. They can also suffer from anemia due to the blood loss.

Treat the bird, cage and any nest boxes with a suitable mite spray but if the problem persists, seek veterinary advice.

Your new pet checklist

- Cage
- Sand sheets
- Bird bath
- Finch seed
- Grit
- Cuttlefish bone
- Disinfectant
- Millet sprays
- Vitamins
- Mineral block

Help and further advice

If you have any questions about caring for your pet, our fully trained team are happy to help if they can, or advise on where to find more specialist information.

Whilst there is a wealth of information available online, only a professional will be able to correctly answer your query. If in doubt, call your local vet for an appointment.

It is against the law to release, or allow to escape, non-native animals or birds. If you have trouble caring for any animals contact our team for advice.



Share your experiences of your new pet with us on social media.



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