

# RAISING CHICKENS

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## Why Raise Chickens?

Egg-laying female hens (often referred to as “chickens”) are a great way to engage students, especially in urban environments like Indianapolis where many students are disengaged with the lifecycle of our food system. Chickens provide students with an opportunity to better understand how to properly care for and establish a positive relationship with animals.

Plus chickens can make great pets just like dogs - although they’re not very good at walking around the block! When chickens are pasture raised and cared for with love, their eggs are fresher and better tasting than what you get from the grocery store. Even their waste (a.k.a. chicken poop) makes for an organic, soil-enriching fertilizer.

## What’s a Day in the Life of a Chicken Farmer?

1. The chickens let themselves out in the morning
2. They put themselves away at night
3. You feed and provide fresh water every day
4. Clean the coop once every 2 weeks
5. Collect the eggs (that’s the fun part)!



## Nap Town Chickens Consultancy

Maybe you’ll be gone for an extended period of time (longer than a week) and need some help feeding and watering? Should a bird get sick, or any other “poultry problems” arise, NTC will be available to take care of any issue you have.

## Essential Tools for Keeping Chickens:

We have a list of what I like to call “15 non-negotiable items every small-scale chicken farmer should have.” These tools are purchased locally through our partnership with Agrarian.

- \*Chicken Coop and Run: 4' wide x 8' deep x 4' high, mobile, custom color scheme - \$750
- \*Chickens: winter hardy, high quality layers - \$25/each
- \*Feed: local, mash form - \$25
- \*Feeder: 11lb. hanging feeder - \$19
- \*Waterer: 1 gallon hanging waterer and 1 gallon heated pet bowl - \$11/\$37
- \*Feed Bin: 20 gallon galvanized steel trash can with lid - \$24
- \*Pine Shavings - \$9
- \*Pine Shavings Bin: 32 Gallon rubber trash can with lid - \$19
- \*Diatomaceous Earth: fine powder used for natural parasite control - \$22
- \*Grit: small pebbles that the birds eat for digestion aid - \$20
- \*Oyster Shell: used for developing egg shells - \$20
- \*Garden Hoe: used for cleaning out coop - \$9
- \*18 Gallon Storage Tote: used for cleaning out coop - \$7
- \*Egg Basket: used for collecting eggs - \$12

### The Girls

The 4 hens (no roosters... who needs 'em anyways) you will receive will be roughly 6 months old (roughly the age that they start laying) and will be “winter hardy”—they will be able to withstand even the coldest Indy temperatures.



### The Eggs

Your hens will lay roughly 1 egg a day. They should be collected once a day but it's not terrible if you can only get around to it every couple days.

### The Feed and Straw

Along with the coop and chickens, you will also receive an initial 50 lb. bag of “layer” feed supplied from Backyard Birds, a local bird feed store. After the initial feed is gone (it should last roughly 2 months), NTC encourages that you feed the chickens scraps from your cafeteria. Chickens will eat almost anything and a one gallon bucket full of scraps

per day will keep them healthy and laying. The scraps can be dumped directly into the run so that the chickens will have to peck for their food, which is also good for them. Should you decide to continue to buy and feed them a “layer” feed, NTC still encourages you to supplement their diets with scraps to cut down on costs and minimize food that would otherwise go to waste.

The feed container is a hanging device that suspends from the frame of the run and can hold up to 7lbs. of feed (enough feed for a week). The water container is a 3-gallon hanging device that also suspends from the frame of the run and is electronically heated so that the water does not freeze. 3 gallons of water is enough to sustain the girls for up to a week at a time.

For bedding in the nesting boxes as well as a litter filter, NTC will provide 1 bail of straw plus a container to keep the unused straw dry. A bail of straw should last you about 6 months and further straw purchases can be bought at any hardware store for roughly \$3.

## The Chicken Coop

The coop is an urban-friendly, predator proof, low-maintenance and professionally built hen house.

- The girls are comfortable in it in all types of weather and with very little space to accommodate for it. Roughly 4’ wide by 10’ long and 4’ high, there is enough space for 6 hens.
- 99.9% predator proof- short of a bear charging it, nothing else can get into it to disturb the girls. You won’t have to worry about a fox in the hen house.
- Low-maintenance. With the coop that you’d get, we have minimized the effort it takes to perform these chores. For example, the coop itself is attached to a completely secured run (predator proof) so the girls can let themselves out in the morning and put themselves away at night. In terms of feeding and watering, you will be supplied with containers that will last long enough to sustain the girls for up to a week at a time and the waterer is electronically heated so that it doesn’t freeze. Cleaning the coop is a breeze, with the specialty tool that you’ll be provided it will be “messy-free.”
- Professionally built- many urban chicken coops are built made up of whatever is lying around the house. However, the coop you will receive is “fancy” and almost resembles a doll house... *yet, these dolls lay eggs!*

