

Poultry Breeds and Characteristics

Poultry Breeds & Their Key Characteristics

(A quick-reference guide for students, hobbyists, and small-scale producers)

1. Why Breed Choice Matters

Factor	Impact on Production
Egg size & frequency	Determines market niche (e.g., table-egg vs. specialty)
Meat yield & growth rate	Influences feed conversion and processing time
Climate tolerance	Affects mortality and productivity in hot, cold, or humid zones
Temperament	Important for free-range systems, backyard flocks, or intensive housing
Disease resistance	Some breeds carry innate resistance to specific parasites or viruses

2. Major Egg-Laying Breeds

Breed	Origin	Egg Color	Average Annual Production*	Body Weight (males/females)	Notable Traits
Leghorn	Italy	White	280–300	2.5?kg / 1.7?kg	Excellent feed-to-egg conversion, very active, strong foragers
Rhode Island Red	USA	Brown	250–280	3.4?kg / 2.5?kg	Hardy, good for both eggs and meat (dual-purpose)
Sussex	England	Light brown	250–270	3.2?kg / 2.4?kg	Calm, good mothers, tolerant of cold
Wyandotte	USA	Brown	230–260	3.6?kg / 2.7?kg	Attractive plumage, good winter layer

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Breed	Origin	Egg Color	Average Annual Production*	Body Weight (males/females)	Notable Traits
Ameraucana	USA	Blue/green	200–230	3.2?kg / 2.4?kg	Unique blue?green eggs, friendly disposition
Marans	France	Dark chocolate brown	180–210	3.5?kg / 2.6?kg	Very dark eggs, slower but consistent layers
Easter Egger (mixed)	USA	Various (blue, pink, olive)	200–240	3.0?kg / 2.2?kg	Hobbyist favorite, unpredictable colors

*Production figures assume optimal nutrition, lighting (14–16?h/day), and health management.

3. Major Meat (Broiler) Breeds

Breed	Primary Use	Growth Rate (to market weight)	Typical Market Weight	Feed Conversion Ratio (FCR)	Key Advantages
Cornish Cross	Broiler	6–7?weeks to 2.5?kg	2.2–2.8?kg	1.6–1.8	Fastest growth, high breast yield
Red Ranger (heritage)	Free?range broiler	10–12?weeks to 2.5?kg	2.5?kg	2.0–2.2	Better for pasture, robust health
Jersey Giant	Dual? purpose (meat)	12–14?weeks to 4.5?kg	4–5?kg	2.4–2.6	Very large, good for niche markets
Orpington	Dual? purpose	12–14?weeks to 3?kg	2		