**What do birds eat?**

There are lots of different bird foods available, including mixes for bird feeders and bird tables, as well as for ground feeding:

* [Blackbirds](https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/blackbird/) mostly feed on the ground and will eat anything – from fatty nibbles to mealworms
* [Blue tits](https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/blue-tit/) and [great tits](https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/great-tit/) use a feeder, eating seeds as well as suet and peanuts
* Finches, including [chaffinches](https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/chaffinch/) and [greenfinches](https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/greenfinch/), use both a feeder and a bird table, and they love sunflower hearts
* Look for good quality bird food – those that don’t include ‘fillers’ such as dried peas and beans that birds rarely eat. You’ll find some great mixes in [our shop](https://shopping.rspb.org.uk/seed-mixes/?utm_source=feeding_and_attracting_birds_page&utm_medium=rspbweb&utm_campaign=birdwatch2020)
* You can put out leftovers such as some bread, fruit cake, dried fruit, unsalted nuts, or fruit such as apples and pears. Don’t use anything mouldy or salty though, and if you have a dog don’t put out dried fruit – vine fruits such as raisins can be toxic to them.

**Where to put bird feeders and tables**

You can put your bird feeder in all sorts of places, but aim for somewhere:

* Quiet – where birds won't be disturbed
* Safe – not too close to bushes where cats could hide in wait, but close enough to cover that birds can easily dart to and from
* Sheltered from harsh winds.

Wherever you place your feeder, make sure you can see it when you’re indoors so you can get the most pleasure from it!

Bear in mind, it can take a little bit of time for the birds to get used to a new feeder, so don’t be disappointed if not many birds visit at first.

**Remember the water**

Birds like a drink too. You don't even need a traditional bird bath:

* Try a dinner plate or breakfast bowl – anything shallow that holds water will do
* Large plant pot trays work well
* Add a shallow or sloping area to a pond
* Use a water feature or fountain.

And remember to:

* Keep it clean
* Put out fresh water every day
* Pour warm water onto any ice that forms in the winter, birds need water all year round.

**Keep it clean**

It’s very important to keep bird feeders clean to stop a build-up of bacteria that can spread [diseases and infections](https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/how-you-can-help-birds/disease-and-garden-wildlife/diseases-in-garden-birds/) among garden birds.

* Wear gloves and use warm soapy water
* Scrub feeders inside and out using a strong, long bristled brush. Do this in a bucket, not in your kitchen sink
* Use a mild, non-toxic disinfectant
* Make sure the feeder is thoroughly dry before refilling it with food