



Feeding Your Bird Table Foods



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That people share some of their food with their pet bird seems natural. Sharing food can help build a stronger bond between bird and owner and can be a source of joy and happiness for the bird.

A bird's ability to taste and smell food becomes apparent after they have been observed eating table food. Taste preferences are obvious and distinct choices are made. Most birds, but not all, seem to prefer eggs, sharp cheese, spicy spaghetti sauce, poultry and sweet grapes. Some birds will even display excitement when they smell their favorite food cooking in the kitchen.

The question immediately arises as to which foods are harmful to birds. The answer is very simple – birds can eat any wholesome food. Pet birds, being omnivorous, digest most table foods well, allowing them to eat the same foods found on our table.

However, some precautions need to be taken. A bird's gastro-intestinal tract is designed to handle compact, concentrated foods. Bulky, or high fiber food, overloads the system, is poorly digested and may deprive the bird of nutrients. Foods in this group include greens, fruits and raw vegetables. Small amounts do no harm, but feeding these as more than 10-15% of your bird's diet may cause problems.

Many birds have been on all table food diets and do well for a year or two. Then, the bird begins to choose his own diet. That is, he indirectly "coerces" the owner into feeding him only food he enjoys while avoiding all others. Most of the time a diet high in fruit and raw vegetables results and the bird appears happy and in good shape. However, after a period of time blood tests reveal development of a protein deficiency. This deficiency can be corrected by feeding the bird a balanced diet. In general, pets not fed a regulated diet will develop nutritional problems which may manifest themselves in a variety of ways.

CONCLUSION: HEALTHWISE, BIRDS ARE AT AN ADVANTAGE WHEN 80% OF THEIR DIET CONSISTS OF A BALANCED DIET FOOD AND 20% AS TREATS OFF THE DINNER TABLE – BREAD, CEREALS, NUTS, FRUITS, GREENS, VEGETABLES, MEAT, FISH OR DAIRY FOOD.

Table foods should be treated as a sidelight to a well-balanced diet. They add interest, flavor and freshness to a bird's diet.