

## Finch

Average Size: approximately 4-6" in length

Life Span: approximately 5 years with proper care

### Diet and Feeding:

**Staple diet:** Feed your finch 1-2 teaspoons of a seed-based or pellet, fortified finch diet every day. Also, finches only eat off the top layer of the food dish, so if feeding seeds, be sure to check the food daily and remove empty seed hulls.

**Fruits & vegetables:**\* About 5-10% of a finch's diet should be bite-sized fruits and veggies like apples, oranges, melon, sweet potatoes, broccoli, spinach, mustard greens and shredded carrots. Offer daily or every 2-3 days.

***DO NOT give your Finch the following items: avocados, fruit seeds, chocolate, alcohol or caffeine, as these can cause serious medical problems.***

**Supplements:** Be sure to provide a cuttlebone in your finch's cage at all times.

**Water:** Finches should always have access to clean, fresh water in a bottle or bowl.

\*Remember that fresh food (fruits and veggies) requires its own dish and should be removed from the habitat within four hours to avoid spoilage. Also, canaries are messy eaters, and will drop an abundance of food while eating, so be sure to remove dropped food scraps as well.

### Housing/Habitat:

Finches like to fly, so when selecting a cage, remember that length is better than height. Your finch's cage must be large enough for her to comfortably stretch her wings and fly from perch to perch. The bigger the cage, the better. Minimum cage size is 12"W x 12"L x 15"H. More than two finches require a correspondingly larger cage.

**Perches:** Place two perches at different heights, so your finch will be unable to soil her food bowls. Provide perches of differing widths, diameters and textures to help keep her feet healthy.

**Cage placement:** Place your bird's cage off the floor, away from drafts, open windows and the kitchen. Be aware that finches are sensitive to smoke and strong odors. Cover the cage at night to prevent drafts.

**Wicker nests:** Finches like to sleep in wicker nests. You can place clean grass hay or straw inside the cage and they will use it to line their nests. To avoid fights, there should be several more nests than birds inside the cage.

**Baths:** Provide a birdbath 2-3 times per week. Offer a warm water bath or gently mist her with warm water from a clean spray bottle.

**Food & water containers:** It is important to clean you bird's containers every day, even if the bowl or bottle looks full.

### Habitat Care Tips:

- PetZoo recommends a variety of appropriate perch sizes to exercise feet and help prevent arthritis.
- A metal grate placed over the droppings will keep the bird away from droppings. Line the droppings tray with paper or appropriate substrate for easier cleaning. To avoid contamination, do not place food or water containers under perches.
- Clean and disinfect the habitat and perches regularly, and replace substrate or habitat liner weekly or more often if needed. **Replace food and water daily.**
- Replace perches, dishes and toys when worn or damaged, and rotate new toys into the bird's habitat regularly. Make sure there are no habitat parts or toys with lead, zinc or lead-based paint or galvanized parts, as these can cause serious medical issues if ingested.
- Bird owners should avoid non-stick cookware and appliances as they can release fumes, which are hazardous to your bird's health. Remember, birds are sensitive to smoke and strong odors, so should not be kept near the kitchen.

### Normal Behavior and Social Interaction:

**Handling:** Finches love to have visual contact with people, however, typically do not like to be handled. Talking and whistling to your bird will provide them the interaction and socialization they need. The soothing sounds of the male bird make the finch an entertaining pet.

***Because a finch's metabolism is very active, starvation can occur in as little as 24 hours. Food should be available at all times.***

There are multiple species of finches and some do not get along. Larger species of finches should not be housed in the same cage as smaller species.

### Safety and Cleanliness:

Please remember that all pets may bite or scratch, and may transmit disease to humans. Keep your pet's home clean and wash your hands before and after handling your pet or cleaning his home. Infants, young children, pregnant women, people with compromised immune systems, and the infirm or elderly are at greater risk of infections and should use caution when in contact with the pet or its habitat. Consult your doctor for more information.

**The information on this care sheet is NOT a substitute for veterinary care.**