

10 Reasons to Raise Ducks Instead of Chickens



The days when chickens were the thing everyone raised for meat and eggs are long gone. These days, many preppers are opting to raise ducks instead. If you don't already have a flock of ducks waddling around in your backyard, here are a few reasons why you should.

Most Ducks are Healthier than Chickens

There are a several issues that can impact the health of chickens, including mites, which don't bother ducks due to the amount of time they spend in water. The lack of external parasites, combined with the naturally stronger immune system makes it easier to keep your flock healthier. As an added bonus, ducks tend to be better when it comes to avoiding predators.

Cold Doesn't Bother Ducks

Chickens hate the cold. When the temp cools down they tend to stay in their coop and their egg production decreases. Ducks are different. The same waterproofing that lets them spend hours in the water also protects them from the cold, making them a good choice for preppers in the north. The fact that they stay active even during cold weather is another thing that helps make them healthier animals than chickens.

Great Pest Control

When you have a small flock of ducks, you won't have to worry about insects in your garden. There's not a grasshopper, spider, or slug that ducks don't like, and they usually eat a bug as soon as they spot it. Unlike chickens, which will pick at your produce, ducks leave vegetables alone, so you can place them directly in your garden. Some ducks will even attack and sometimes eat small snakes.

They Don't Mind the Heat

As long as you provide them with a place to swim, the hot summer days won't bother your ducks. You won't even have to worry about setting up a fan in their coop like you do with your chickens. If you don't have a pond on your property, set up a few plastic wading pools, sit back, and watch your ducks have a great time.

They Don't Destroy your Landscape

Free range chickens can be brutal on your landscape. They dig, peck, and defecate all over the place. Ducks are much gentler on your yard. They don't eat your shrubs and flowers and as long as you provide them with a place to swim, they won't take the kind of dust baths that chickens enjoy.

They're Quiet

If you have more than a couple of chickens, you'll notice that they're quite loud. While you might not mind the ruckus, your neighbors may object. Raising a small flock of ducks is a great way to enjoy fresh eggs and also keep the peace with your community. As long as your ducks aren't agitated, they generally remain quiet.

The good news is that if there is something amiss in your yard, such as stray dog or a prowler it will upset your flock of ducks enough that they'll quack, alerting you to the potential danger.

They're Not Territorial

If you've ever had a rooster, and in some cases hens, you know they can be quite territorial. More than one prepper has been surprised when one of their roosters launched a stealth attack on them while they were doing yard work. This generally led to the rooster being turned into a lovely dinner while the prepper debated whether or not they really wanted to continue raising chickens.

Although there can be some exceptions, as a rule ducks aren't territorial, in fact as long as you handle them from time to time, they're quite friendly and will greet you. As a rule, they don't establish the same rigid pecking order that chickens do, so your flock won't fight as much and you won't have to treat injuries on a daily basis.

You'll Have Fantastic Baked Good

Once you start using duck eggs in your baking, you'll never want to use another chicken egg in your cakes or cookies ever again. Just make sure you adapt the recipe to account for the larger size.

Enjoy Eggs Year Round

Chickens generally go through phases where they stop laying, even though you have to keep feeding them. Setting up lights in their coop helps them continue laying, but it also means a higher electric bill. As a rule, ducks don't go broody, allowing you to continue to enjoy eggs year-round.

Enjoy Great Meat

Chickens bred to produce eggs tend to have slim bodies and don't produce much meat when butchered, but even egg laying ducks can also be used for meat production, making them a great choice for preppers.

Two breeds of ducks that are well suited for beginners are Cayuga Blue Ducks and Pekin Ducks. Take some time to talk to other preppers in your area that raise ducks and you'll soon see that they are great choice!

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