

Spice Finch

Lonchura punctulata



CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

Finches are among the most popular birds. Spice finches come from India, China, and Malaysia. They are easy to care for and peaceful. They are soft singers and like to keep active.



Is a Spice finch the right companion animal for you?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Check "Yes" or "No" after reading the following statements:

- I have an appropriate location and space for two or more of these birds.
- I will provide a safe environment for these birds.
- I understand that these birds do not require handling or time outside a cage.
- The natural sounds of these birds will be acceptable to family members and neighbors.
- A mature person will provide responsible and primary care for these companion animals.

If you answered, "Yes" to these statements, a spice finch may be the right choice for you! Continue reading about how to care for a Spice and consult with a PETCO associate to learn more. PETCO is committed to responsible companion animal care.

Average Size 4 inches long

Life Span 6 to 8 years with proper care

Diet Specialized pelleted diets are highly recommended and should consist of 60-70% of the diet; use fortified seeds in moderation as they are higher in fat and less nutritious than pellets

Fresh, dark leafy greens several times a week, plus slices of raw apples and oranges, grated carrots and sweet potato

Clean, fresh, filtered and chlorine-free water changed daily

Do not feed birds avocados, fruit seeds, chocolate, alcohol, or caffeine as these can cause serious medical problems

Feeding If your bird is used to a seed diet, convert to pellets gradually; fresh pellets or seeds and fresh, clean, chlorine-free water should always be available

Fresh fruits and vegetables should be given daily and discarded when not eaten within 24 hours; finches appreciate quality and variety in their food

Housing Birds acclimate well to average household temperatures; be cautious of extreme temperature change; cage should be placed off the floor in an area that is well-lit and away from drafts

A rectangular flight cage, approximately 24" W x14" D x18" H, with metal bars spaced no greater than 3/8" apart, makes a good home for up to 3 finches; as with all animals, it is best to provide the largest habitat possible

A variety of appropriate perch sizes to exercise feet and help prevent arthritis is recommended

A metal grate over the droppings tray will keep the bird away from droppings; line the droppings tray with cage paper or appropriate substrate for easier cleaning; to avoid contamination, do not place food or water containers under perches

Bird owners should avoid non-stick cookware and appliances as they can release fumes hazardous to your birds health

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|--|
| Recommended Supplies | <input type="checkbox"/> Cage and cage cover | <input type="checkbox"/> Treats and grit | <input type="checkbox"/> Vitamin supplements |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Cage paper or substrate | <input type="checkbox"/> Bird bath | <input type="checkbox"/> Variety of perches |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Pellets and fortified seed | <input type="checkbox"/> Grooming spray | <input type="checkbox"/> Variety of branches |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Millet spray and holder | <input type="checkbox"/> Nail clippers | <input type="checkbox"/> Book about finches |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Food and water dishes | <input type="checkbox"/> Styptic gel | <input type="checkbox"/> Book about finches |

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Normal Behavior and Interaction Finches like company and should be kept in pairs
Spice finches sleep at night in sleeping nests and climb on reeds or tall grass during the day
Need plenty of room in their cage to fly

Habitat Maintenance Clean and disinfect the cage and perches; replace substrate or cage liner weekly or more often if needed; replace food and water daily
Replace perches, dishes, and toys when worn or damaged
Ensure that there are no cage parts or toys with lead, zinc or lead and lead-based paints or galvanized parts as these can cause serious medical issues if ingested by your bird

Grooming and Hygiene Provide filtered, chlorine-free, lukewarm water regularly for bathing; remove the water when done; as an alternative, mist the bird with water or a grooming spray
Nails should be trimmed by a qualified person to prevent injury to the bird
Clipping of flight feathers is not necessary; consult an avian veterinarian on what is best for your bird
Always wash your hands after touching your bird or cage

Signs of a Healthy Bird

- Active, alert, and sociable
- Dry nostrils and bright, dry eyes
- Clean, dry vent
- Eats and drinks throughout the day
- Beak, legs, and feet normal in appearance
- Smooth, well-groomed feathers

Common Health Issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Diarrhea	Fecal portion of stool not formed. Multiple causes, from change in diet to internal parasites	Seek veterinary attention; ensure correct diet; reduce fruit intake
Feather Plucking	Bird plucks own feathers	Seek veterinary attention; provide stimulation/new toys
Mites (Scaly Face and Leg Disease)	White deposits on eyes, beak, legs, and feet	Seek treatment from veterinarian
Psittacosis	Appetite loss, fluffed feathers, nasal discharge	Seek immediate veterinary attention

Red Flags

- Beak swelling or accumulations
- Wheezing or coughing
- Eye or nasal discharge
- Fluffed, plucked, or soiled feathers
- Runny or discolored stools
- Red or swollen eyes
- Sitting on floor of habitat
- Favoring one foot
- Loss of appetite

If you notice any of these signs, please contact your avian veterinarian.

Sources *Simon and Schuster's Guide to Pet Birds* by Matthew M. Vriends
The Complete Bird Owner's Handbook by Gary A. Gallerstein, D.V.M.
The New Finch Handbook by Christa Koepff

Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please refer to the above sources or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.