

# Questions about the Chicken Life Cycle

## Answers

1. How many different varieties and breeds of chickens are there? Name a breed of chicken.

**There are around 175 different varieties and about 60 different breeds of chicken. One popular breed is the Rhode Island Red.**

2. How do chickens eat and grind their food?

**Chickens don't have teeth; they swallow their food whole into a part of their stomach called the gizzard that has tiny stones in it which help to grind up food.**

3. What can humans make with eggs?

**The unfertilized eggs are what humans bake cakes and other foods with and eat cooked as boiled, fried, poached or scrambled eggs.**

4. Why do only some eggs become chicks?

**Only some eggs become chicks because it's only if the egg is fertilized by a cockerel that it can become a chick.**

5. How long is the incubation period? How does the hen incubate the egg?

**The hen incubates the eggs by sitting on them to keep them warm. The incubation period for a chicken egg is about 21 days.**

6. How do chicks begin life? How do they get out of the egg?

**The chick starts its life by hatching from an egg when it is ready. You may see cracks appear on the egg before the chick emerges. It pecks a hole in the shell with a bump on its beak called an egg tooth.**

7. What is different about the chicken's feathers compared to the chick's?

**When the chicks first hatch they are covered with tiny, soft, fluffy feathers called down, but they are wet at first. Chickens have contour feathers to keep them warm and flight feathers on their wings and tail.**

8. How do cockerels look and behave?

**Cockerels are bigger and more colourful than the hens. They do a little dance to impress the hens. Cockerels protect the hens. Cockerels have a comb on their head and two wattles under their neck.**

9. What are hens ready to do at 6 months old? How does the life cycle start again?

**Hens are ready to lay their first eggs when they are around 6 months old. When the hen lays and incubates an egg, the chicken life cycle starts all over again!**