



The Good Vet Guide

The most common items fed to ducks and waterfowl are also the least nutritious and most unhealthy: bread, crackers, popcorn and similar bread-type products and scraps.

Bread has little nutritional value and can harm ducklings' growth, pollute waterways and attract rodents and other pests.

Similarly, ducks should not be fed any products that are spoiled or moldy; different types of mold can be fatal to waterfowl. Fortunately, there are many other types of food that can be offered to ducks, geese and swans as part of a healthy and nutritious diet.

As omnivorous birds, ducks will eat a great deal of different foods, and the best foods to offer ducks include:

- Oats (uncooked; rolled or quick)
- Rice (cooked)
- Birdseed (any type or mix)
- Peas or corn (defrosted, no need to cook)
- Duck feed pellets can be purchased from farming or agricultural supply stores.
- Earthworms
- Mealworms (fresh or dried)
- Chopped lettuce or other greens or salad mixes
- Vegetable trimmings or peels (chopped)

Other tips for feeding ducks, geese and swans include:

- Stop feeding if the birds appear uninterested or are leaving the food uneaten, and avoid feeding the birds if other visitors are already offering treats.
- No matter what foods you provide, only offer foods in bite-sized pieces the birds can easily consume without choking or struggling.
- Be wary of birds that approach closely and remember that they can still be aggressive, particularly larger waterfowl such as swans and geese.
- Litter can hurt birds in many ways, so be sure to dispose of all trash properly, including bags, twist ties and unsuitable scraps.
- Do not allow pets or children to chase or disturb the birds, particularly young birds or families that could become stressed or injured more easily.

By knowing what to feed ducks as part of a nutritious and responsible diet, anyone can enjoy this activity without inadvertently harming their favorite waterfowl.

source: <http://birding.about.com/od/birdfeeders/a/whatduckseat.htm>