

Menu Ideas For Your Bird

Cook up some of these healthy menus for your parrot

By Rebecca Sweat

Offer your parrots steamed fresh vegetables as a healthy meal.
Courtesy Marisa Stram, Michigan

Breakfast

California veterinarian, Tia Greenberg, DVM recommends an egg omelet, made with predominately whites rather than yolks, with some fresh vegetables folded in (such as broccoli, mushrooms, tomatoes or green peppers). You could give your birds some of your French toast, pancakes or waffles — especially if it's made with whole wheat or buckwheat — but leave off the maple syrup and butter. Whole-grain cereals that do not have a lot of sugar added to them (like Muselix, Wheaties, Corn Flakes, Cheerios and Cracklin Oat Bran), whole wheat toast and bagels (without butter or jam), and oatmeal (cooled to room temperature) are also good choices.

Dinner

For dinner, you could stir fry some vegetables (such as broccoli, cabbage, carrots, onions (use sparingly), bok choy, water chestnuts, bamboo shoots, snow peas, celery and red bell peppers) in oil, along with some cashews or peanuts or dried red chile peppers, and serve this over brown rice.

Another parrot-friendly entree is pasta (whole wheat or spinach penne, mostaccoli, ziti, angel hair or fettucini) with cooked vegetables (cauliflower, carrots, broccoli, mushrooms (use sparingly) and/or zucchini) and either a marinara/tomato or pesto sauce (made with a little olive oil and spices). If you want to cut down your bird's starch intake but still give it the thrill of slurping down "noodles," cook up some spaghetti squash (sprayed with a very light coating of vegetable oil and cayenne or black pepper) and give that to your bird rather than traditional spaghetti.

Cuban-style black beans and brown rice, cumin-spiced couscous with peas, chili con carne made with ground turkey, freshly cooked ground turkey patties on whole wheat hamburger rolls, grilled vegetable kabobs, chicken noodle soup, and bean burritos in whole wheat flour shells (without the cheese or a very small amount of lowfat cheese) are also healthy, lowfat entrees.

To supplement the main dinner entree, you could offer your parrot steamed fresh vegetables (without butter or salt), tossed salad made of romaine lettuce and other fresh vegetables (without the salad dressing or bacon bits), or a whole-grain dinner roll (again, without the butter!).

Snacks

As an alternative to cheese curls and potato chips, give your birds some of the low-salt or low-fat snacks available on the market. Try substituting fat-free pretzels or the low-fat baked potato chips instead of the higher fat versions. Give your bird a low-sodium cracker rather than the regular crackers, which are typically high in salt. Or offer your parrot of piece of a rice cake or some air-popped popcorn.