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Introduction

Proper and adequate diet is the single most notable aspect in shaping the health, vitality, and permanence of your Macaw. Because we have engaged them from their proverbial surrounds, they are ham-fisted to hunt and select for their food, so it is very crucial that we offer them an adequate ration as a complete diet.

However, for a bird that is easily the third most popular pet in the US, there is surprisingly very little scientific information available today on avian nutrition. And if your knowledge of Macaw foods begins and ends with sunflower seeds, here is a guide that covers all that you have ever wanted to know about Macaw health diets, the recommended proteins, fruits, and medicinal properties of certain Macaw foods! So, read on and know just what food will turn your Macaw into a glossy looking, intelligent, and well-fed bird!
A Healthy Macaw Diet

A complete diet is A MUST for all pet birds. It should ideally include natural foods from various food groups. Any imbalance in the diet can easily lead to all kinds of illnesses. In fact, diet is the common-most reason of Macaw diseases.

Most hobbyists agree that a suitable low-fat diet for Macaws is a great kick off with balanced nutrient supplements to get a nourishing diet for them. However, one must be cautious of over usage and constraint in feeding the Macaws with a balanced diet only twice a week. Maybe you could feed your Macaw high vitamin A veggies one day and alternate that with high protein mashes the next. This way the Macaw cannot reject its diet, and even if he does reject parts of it, he must eat some nutrient that you have planned for the day.

In the natural surroundings, a Macaw’ diet contains a huge variety of nourishing green plants, from leaves, buds, springs, shoots, blossoms, and stems, to nuts, seeds, fruits and berries. Majority of the diet consists of fibrous green foods. Protein, extracted from vegetable stuff, and fats enrich a small percentage of the complete diet. As a bird keeper, you need to emulate this green food diet to keep your Macaw healthy. Unfortunately, most of us rely heavily on grains and seeds, with hardly any green foods. It is advisable that you offer your Macaw one or two green foods daily.

Next, the freshness of the food will decide the nutrient factor of the diet. You can check the crispness of the foods that you give the Macaw by nibbling them and visually give something like once-over items to them for cleanliness. It is best to
seal and refrigerate the food. Also, keep in mind that Macaws have taste choices just as humans do. What is more, young Macaws are much eager to try innovative foods than the older ones. Vary the color, size, and texture to stimulate your Macaw to try green foods.

**Introducing New Foods**

Your enthusiasm for converting your pet Macaw’s food into an ideal diet may be dampened when you realize that the bird is not keen to try new foods, and readily rejects your nutritious ideas! Start feeding your choosy bird with new ration by offering it in the morning or at late evening (when they are usually the most hungry). Here are some more guidelines for providing new foods in an interesting way to stimulate your pet Macaw to eat them:

Tip #1. **Start Young**: Young birds are more often than not excited to try new diets while older birds may be "set in their ways."

Tip #2. **Familiar Settings**: Serve new food in a platter with which the Macaw can associate itself. Always serve it with other foods, you know your bird already likes. Even if he only gets a taste of the new food by slip-up, he still might take time to settle on.

Tip #3. **Tantalizing Treats**: Offer chosen treats in a container for instance, sunflower seeds should be mixed with new food. Your bird may get a tang of the new food while digging out the treat.

Tip #4. **Morning is the Best Time**: The morning hours are the best when birds naturally look for food. It is better to offer new foods during the morning to your Macaw, and then offer him his natural food a couple of hours later.
Tip #5. **Respect Their Preferences**: Much like humans, Macaws have their unique preferences. Some birds choose raw vegetables, while others like edible and hot food supplements. Yet, others prefer them cold. Observe what your Macaw prefers to eat.

Tip #6. **Disguise the Foods**: If your Macaw stays away from the new food, how about placing it in a fastener on the wall of the cage or in a play area? By removing the association of new food with food time/food settings, you can entice the bird to try the new food.

Tip #7. **Maize on the Cob**: You will be surprised how many birds like to gnaw on it!

Tip #8. **Paint It Orange**: Birds are naturally attracted to fruits and vegetables that have a bright orange or yellow in them. Give your Macaw a mix of intensely colored veggies, in bite-sized slices either cooked or uncooked.

Tip #9. **Temptation Tricks**: Bite into a bright yellow fruit and then offer it to your pet. Chances are that he will be tempted to try the food after watching you enjoy it.

Tip #10. **Fresh Sprouts**: Freshly budded seeds are an outstanding source of nourishment. Because many birds enjoy eating them, you can use them to make the leap from seeds to greens.

Tip #11. **No Starving**: Never starve a bird into trying a new food.

**Seeds**

A diet containing mainly of seeds is insufficient for proper nourishment for the Macaws. Besides, it is too high in fat. Seeds should be fed in isolation only in the absence of other healthy food choices because in Macaw parlance, seeds are akin to junk food. Birds love them, but they are not always the best options.
Moreover, once hooked, birds can become fussy when it comes to trying a varied
diet. For most Macaws, kernels should only cover 10 percent of their regular diet
contents. Some display a penchant for definite seeds by selecting out a couple of
favorites from a seed mix. This further reduces the nutritional balance of their
diet. Nevertheless, Macaws and some Budgie Macaws are habitual seedeaters
and can go through a higher percentage in their diet, but still it is sensible to
make up about 25 percent of the seed content present in their diet supplements.

**Fresh Food and Supplements**

Most pet Macaws prefer that their diets should be a mix of a variety of nourishing
and freshly prepared foods, pellets and having small proportion of seeds in them.
Since, most of the newly picked food is easily ravished, keep in mind to eliminate
it from the cages after couple of hours.

**Vegetables**

Fresh vegetables are suggested addition to your bird's diet. Different vegetables
offer different nutrient values and a healthy mix of veggies ensures a good diet.

Favor to introduce dark yellow and leafy green vegetables like
Celery and lettuce that are high in yarn and water contents and not
very nourishing. You can either cook the vegetables, or offer them
fresh as whole, or chopped depending on how your Macaw prefers to eat them.
A better approach of tempting the Macaws to experiment with new vegetables is
to swing them from the side-to-side or clip them on the walls of the cage. You
can also offer them in chunks that bigger birds can pick up with their feet to crush
on. Whatever the case, your goal should be to get the bird to eat vegetables in as
broad a variety as possible.
**Fruits**
Just like in the case of vegetables, try introducing your bird to a wide variety of fruits. Thankfully, birds love fruits. So, try to limit them to a small piece of the normal diet, lest they exceed it. A rule of thumb is that the more deeply colored fruits are the more is the nutritional content in them. Give various tropical fruits that shape a part of the Macaws’ natural diet. A word of caution: depths or apple seeds can be noxious.

**Sprouted Seeds**
Supplementing the vegetable diet with sprouted seeds is an excellent way to add extra nutritional value to your bird’s diet. Since most birds love fresh sprouts, they are a good way to initiate your Macaw into the green diet! Newly budded seeds are rolling in vitamins and natural resources, as well as enzymes and antioxidant that make them a brilliant option to enhance the nutritive value in diet.

**Ensure Quality Proteins – Up to 20%**
Many protein sources provide poor nourishment value due to an imperfect balance of vital amino acids. However, you can always supplement short sources of protein with foods such as rice, beans, and tofu. You can also try testing with:

- Commercially produced mealworms or insect larvae. These are an excellent protein source for birds.
- Detonated or pelleted diets explicitly created for Macaws.
Increase Vitamin A by 30%

Vitamin A is an essential nutrient of Macaw diet. It is vital to keep your Macaw's skin and feathers healthy and shining. It is also significant for good eyesight, additionally helping the body brawl infection by keeping the mucous membranes healthy.

To avoid vitamin A insufficiency, which is the most common nourishing problem of birds, you must prefer foods rich in beta-carotene, the prototype of vitamin A, such as broccoli, sprout leaves, dandelion leaves, spinach, turnip greens, and collard greens. The best source of Vitamin A is vegetables, although some fruits contain higher levels of vitamin A but are ineffectual as compared to vegetable offerings. While you can provide uncooked vegetables, they are more edible when cooked or baked. Mind it, overcooking can knock down vitamin content. So remember that the darker the flesh of the vegetable or fruit, the higher the carotene content.

Get your pet veggies and fruits by about 15-20%

While veggies and fruits foods many be excessive in vitamin A, they also contain other nutritive values that are important for any psychological profit and make a good substance for mixed diet. These include: maize, pea-pods, cauliflower, leeks, beans, zucchini, green beans, asparagus, okra, banana, beets, potato, apples, pomegranates, grapes, cranberries, guava, tangerines, tomato, berries, oranges, blueberries, plums, figs, pineapple, etc.
Smooth volt face to Pellets for Picky Macaws

Formulated diets are a great option to supplement the ideal diet for pet birds. They are being planned for perfect species, and should form a part of a fairly healthy Macaw diet. If you are trying to shift your bird from a seed diet to a pellet diet, patience and persistence are two qualities that you will need in large quantities! It may take a few weeks or even months to persuade your pet to get adapted to the transition, this is solely dependent on your bird’s eagerness to make the switchover. While you can try any of the following strategies to accelerate that process, never try to starve your bird into eating pellets.

Tip #1. **Start Young**: Older birds are less willing to change their set ways. In contrast, you will find that young Macaws are more malleable.

Tip #2. **No Starving**: We cannot stress how important this is. Never starve a bird into trying a new food. It is dangerous and stressful for your pet.

Tip #3. **Spare the Sick**: Do not attempt the transition in a sick bird, whose food consumption will already be a cause of concern for you.

Tip #4. **Restrict artificial ingredients**: Try to prefer a crumb with as few artificial colors or tastes as possible.

Tip #5. **Tempting With a Treat**: If your Macaw is slow to accept the formulated diet, mix some seeds with the pellets to tempt him. Willingly, you can crush the pellets and spray them over the seeds or a preferred treat, with the hope of getting the bird to flavor the crumbs.

Tip #6. **Mornings Are the Best**: Birds naturally forage for food in the mornings. Obviously, this seems to be the right time to introduce them to new foods like pellets. Offer the more familiar foods a couple of hours later.
Tip #7. **Hand Feeding**: Try hand nourishing the crumbs so your bird feels that they are a treat.

Tip #8. **Get Him Used to New Foods**: Begin by establishing a variety of new foods like vegetables and fruits before touching on to crumbs. Acceptance to new tastes and textures assists the change to a prepared diet. However, do not overwhelm the bird with too many new things at one time. Wait for a few weeks before or after introducing another new food.

Tip #9. **Monitor Weight**: If your bird is resistant to his new diet, it is better to monitor the bird's body weight. Beware; if you find the number of feces is thinning, and the bird starts loosening its body weight more than usual in a week, switch back to the old diet. Also, keep in mind that there might be a transition in the droppings (color, texture) when you nourish him with pellets.

**Schedule for the Transition**

If your bird readily accepts the formulated diet, here is a schedule for a quick change:

- **Week 1**: Feed 75% of the calculated daily consumption in seeds, and alternate pellets for the other 25%.
- **Week 2**: Feed 50% of the daily consumption as seeds and 50% as pellets.
- **Week 3**: Supply 25% of the daily consumption as seeds and 75% as pellets.
- **Week 4**: For larger Macaws, decrease the seed element even more.
Remember, for budgies and Macaws, a diet must have seeds (25 percent), pellets (50 percent), and fresh foods (25 percent) to make the best diet. However, larger Macaws must have lower number of seed content, with pellets and fresh foods and treats that make up the major part of the diet.

**Kitchen Counter**

Here is a great recipe for morning meals or anytime meals for your Macaw.

Ingredients:

1. 1 pot full of baby carrots, winter crush, or sweet potatoes along with baked yam, squeezed or cooked properly and later mashed with carrots.
2. 3pcs of boorish whole-grain crumbled toast.
3. 2-4tbs of non-fat plain yogurt.
4. Optional: 1/8-cup high quality hand nourishing formula or a spray of a spirulina or wheat grass type supplement.

Mix and mash in large bowl to mix well. Change the consistency according to your Macaw’s preference. There is no cooking required. Add substances that are rich in nutrients, such as finely sliced collard greens, kale or broccoli flowers, griped carrots, wheat germ, oat bran, grated tofu-cheese, nonfat cottage cheese, sliced nuts or chopped currants, very hard boiled egg, pasta, brown rice, well, cooked and chopped chicken, powdered crumbs. Anything that is nourishing and nutritive!
Caution: Soft foods open out bacteria if left open in the cage. Do not use any scraps as components. Dole out a fresh batch each time you feed the Macaw.
Recommended Foods

Here is a list of suggested foods that can be used as natural medicine for our birds, as elements of a good diet:

**CHERRIES**: Cherries can cure Gout. Unsullied, frozen or even airtight foods work to clear up the aching problem of gout.

**PAPAYA**: This juicy hot fruit makes for its strong digestive enzyme called papain and the high beta-carotene contents that are willingly adaptable to Vitamin-A. Macaws consider papaya as an obvious choice to their diet that you could give on regular basis to help them digest properly. Macaws love papaya seeds for their peppery taste.

**ORANGES**: Macaws take pleasure in the taste of an orange. This fruit remains fresh and remains free of pathogens for many hours. In tropical regions, this makes a good ration for the birds to keep their body temperature normal.

**APPLES**: High in yarn and pectin, they include anti-bacterial, anti-viral, and anti-inflammatory agents, and fight high cholesterol. Most Macaws will eat apples daily.

**BEANS**: An obvious add-on food for Macaws; beans help in controlling the blood sugar, dwindle cholesterol levels, and are rich in fiber. They are high in protein when served with brown rice.
BROWN RICE: Feeding your Macaw with Brown Rice is likely to solve digestive problems. Rice is anti-diarrhea and contains anti-cancer protease inhibitors. It is a wonderful weaning food, and most importantly, Macaws prefer to eat rice in any form.

NUTS: Nuts are an organic source that makes excellent add-on foods, especially during winters when Macaws require extra strength in order to take care of their body temperature. As an anti-cancer and heart protective supplement, nuts are a valuable part of any Macaws' food intake.

SWEET POTATOES: Also popularly called yams, they offer antioxidant beta-carotene, and prevent heart disease, cataracts, and numerous cancers.

GRAPE SEEDS: A potent antioxidant (fifty times as powerful as Vitamin EWCP), you can effectively treat conditions such as feather plucking in your Macaw with it.
Food Preparation Tips

Food safety is an issue of concern for Macaw owners, since it induces outbreaks of diseases such as hepatitis, Escherichia coli Infection, and food poisoning. The most common problem in Macaws is to put fresh food and water in the bird's coop many times a day (not more than 6 hours in winters, less than 6 hours during summers). Maintain high levels of purity while preparing the bird food. This reduces the threat of infectious diseases in the end:

Wash your hands:
Wash the hands prior to preparing foods. Use an antibacterial soap to lessen the spread of microorganisms. Dry your hands with a clean cloth before you start.

Sanitize cutting surfaces and utensils:
Cut the vegetables and fruits with a sterilized cook's knife, on a fixed cutting board, both of which are sponged down and parched from top to bottom among foods. It would be shrewd to rinse out your cutting surface and undertake cleaning daily with a purifier, or a mixture of 3 teaspoons of chlorine blanch mixed in 1 gallon of water. Cleansing is a proper sanitation custom that is essential if unprepared meat or eggs have been carved on the cutting surface.

Wash Foods:
Before foods are carved, they should be carefully stained. Some add Nolvansan liquid to water; or add 1-teaspoon chlorine bleach in a gallon-full of water. Before using fruits and vegetables, they must be soaked in this liquid for approximately ten minutes and then washed under
running water for a minimum of five minutes. Ensure to look over the foods carefully before and while rinsing them to check for mould, over ripeness or brown scars. This should go devoid of saying that any meat products, which are being cooked, should be carefully washed prior to intake.

**Cook meats thoroughly:**
Any meat product that you give to your Macaw, like turkey, chicken, or beef, must be well prepared. A friend of mine told me she nourishes her birds with meats made on the barbeque grill. The proper cleaning on food becomes even more significant when you are cooking meat for your Macaw. Any meat product, be it turkey, beef or chicken must be cooked thoroughly. I must also mention that care must be taken to check for mould, over ripeness or brown scars. Evidently, food handling is not always the primary cause for transmittable agents instigated into Macaws’ health. A number of people may tell you that food handling is not the only cause for infections: chilled hamburger patties instigated, for example, the Escherichia coli infection and the recent hepatitis A was blamed on strawberries from Mexico. Besides this, the sudden incident of cyclospora (a sponge) occurred due to the Guatemalan raspberries.
Word of Caution!

Chocolate, avocado, and rhubarb are absolute no-nos for your Macaw. Also, avoid beverages containing caffeine or alcohol. All set meat products from your kitchen top or foods that are high in nitrates, or monosodium glutamate (MSG) are not apt for your Macaw. Keep your bird away from onions, germinated Lima, fava and navy beans, fruit pits and apple seeds.

Remember, that birds are intolerant to lactose. That means that no milk products, beyond a little quantity of hard cheese and yogurt, should be fed to your Macaw. Moreover, eating healthy foods and always keeping the junk foods at bay (as these are high in fat, salt, or sugar) is very important. Peanuts tainted with Aspergillums yeast are a health risk, and can cause respiratory diseases as well as being a source of aflatoxin, which is a strong carcinogen toxin. If you plan to feed uncooked peanuts, always select good quality, human crumb peanuts and do not use if there is any spot of mould on them.
Acknowledgements

The author would like to thanks the following contributors for their kind permission to use photographs of their beautiful birds in the creation of this guide:

Louise at http://www.parrotlink.com/

Arne at http://www.avianbiotech.com

Elisabeth DeSimone

Marc Morrone at http://www.parrotsoftheworld.com/parrots.html