

EDIBLE BIRD NESTS– SO DELICIOUS!

Spring is here, and that means birds are busy at work making nests!







They make their nests using all kinds of materials, from sticks and mosses, to hair and litter.

Sometimes, they will skip the building part and instead choose a simple hole in a tree, or just a small dip scratched into gravel!

Each species of bird makes a unique nest based on their habitat and behaviours, and we can learn a lot about each bird from the nests they build.

Let's explore nests by making our very own, edible versions. Super fun, with the bonus of being able to eat them when we're done!

Here's what you need:

-  **Nest material, 2 cups** – There are a lot of options for this! You can use corn flakes or other dry cereals, oats, shredded coconut, or even dry chow mein noodles.
-  **Chocolate Chips, 8oz.**
-  **"Eggs"** – again, there are a lot of options. Anything egg-shaped and edible (and good with chocolate!) will work, like: jelly beans, chocolate eggs, marshmallows or Peeps, round nuts... be creative!
-  **Muffin tin and/or paper muffin cups**
-  **Microwaveable bowl and microwave** – or – **double-boiler/think pot and stovetop** – you need to be able to melt the chocolate chips
-  **Spoon**



Let's Get Started!

#1: Research bird nests

Before you begin, it's important to learn a little but more about bird nests. That way, you'll have a better idea of what we're creating today!

There are many kinds of birds, and that means there's a huge variety in the nests that they create. For example, many smaller bird species, like Chickadees or Swallows, like to create *cup nests*, shaped like a small bowl with the eggs nestled right in the middle.



Other species such as raptors and waterbirds favour platform nests, large structures often many times the size of the bird that built it. In the case of raptors, these nests are often used for many years at a time!

How many different kinds of bird nests are there? Using a search engine, let's do some research to find out!

Here are some birds that might be nesting near our homes right now. What kind of nests do they create?

- rufous hummingbird
- tree swallow
- violet-green swallow
- house wren
- golden-crowned kinglets
- black-capped chickadees
- house finch
- red-breasted nuthatch

#2: Melt the chocolate

Make sure you have an adult with you for this step!

Microwave: Put your chocolate chips in a microwave-safe bowl, and heat them for one minute at a time. In between each minute, stir the chocolate. Keep going until all the chocolate is melted!

Stovetop: You can use a double-boiler if you have one. If not, a thick pot can work too. You can even lift the pot an inch or so off the stovetop element and hold it in the air while the chocolate melts – you don't want to burn your chocolate! So, stir the chocolate chips constantly and monitor them to make sure they aren't burning or sticking to the bottom.



#3: Add in your nest material

Add your chosen cereal to the melted chocolate and stir it all together, until it's totally coated and mixed together!



#4: Mold your nests

You can use a muffin tin, a tin with muffin papers lining each cavity, or just muffin papers on their own. Using your spoon, scoop your chocolate and nest mixture into your tin/paper. Use your spoon or fingers to mold it into a nest shape, higher on the sides, with a dent in the middle.

Then, chill these for about 2 hours in the fridge, until they are nice and hardened.



#5: Lay your eggs

Using whatever you've selected to be your eggs, fill each nest with as many as you want. Each species of bird lays a different number of eggs, from 1 to sometimes more than 20!

#6: Eat up!

Most birds probably don't eat their nests, but we're willing to bet most probably don't make their nests out of chocolate either. Share with your family and enjoy!

Let us know how your crafting went! Share pictures of your completed bird feeders online and tag us **@thefrdc** to help us find you! Stay safe, and happy crafting!

