

## Directions on How to Make Chop

In order to make chop, you will need a large, clean bucket or pot (depending on how much you plan to make), a cutting board, several knives, a food processor (we use one purchased off of Amazon for about \$30), and storage bags.

When making chop, we typically start by placing the dry ingredients on the bottom. The reason we use dry ingredients is to soak up the moisture from the other items that are added, this keeps a nice dry mixed that stays dry after freezing and then defrosting. While making chop, you may add more of one ingredient if you find that your chop is getting wetter than what is desired, so the amounts used are going to vary based on your preferences. Some dry ingredients are also more expensive than others, so make some choices based on your budget. All of the dry items we use are uncooked, but can include several (or more) of the following:

- Almonds (human grade, unsalted, not in shell)
- Amaranth
- Barley
- Bee pollen
- Celery Seed
- Chia Seed
- Cous cous
- Cumin seed
- Dried pepper flakes
- Flax seed
- Hemp seed
- Herb Salad
- Quinoa
- Rape seed
- Twin Beaks Aviary Herb Salad
- Unsweetened coconut
- Veggie pasta
- Whole wheat oats
- Whole wheat penne pasta
- Wheat germ
- Wheat grass powder



After we have placed the dry ingredients on the bottom, we typically add the bean mix. We use a Volkmans Bean Mix that is specifically for parrots. This is typically the only ingredient that is cooked that goes into our chop mixes. Beans are toxic for parrots unless cooked and soaked, so the beans we plan to use are soaked in water overnight and then slow cooked for about 1-2 hours. The beans are cooked thoroughly, but not overcooked to the point of being mushy. Once drained and completely cooled, they

can then be added to the chop mix. Beans are not absolutely necessary for a chop mix, but are a good source of protein.



At this point, we move on to the raw vegetable portion of the chop mix. Vegetables are washed thoroughly and dried before being used for the chop mix. When making chop for the first time, you might want to stick with a small list of ingredients of about 10-15 items. For your first batch, go heavy on the greens. Kale is a great base for chop. The picture to the left shows a good

proportion and makes a batch that will feed about 6 medium sized birds for 2 months. A small amount really goes a long way with chop. If you choose to use spinach, do not use very much. While spinach is a good source of nutrients, it also has certain qualities which can block the amount of other nutrients the bird can absorb. Once you master making chop, vary your ingredients and keep two separate batches on hand that you can switch between to keep your parrots interested. We also suggest that if you are trying to convert a bird over to eating chop as part of a balanced diet that you include something in the chop you know your bird loves, such as almonds. This will encourage your parrot to try it. But don't get discouraged if you offer it once or twice and your bird says NO WAY! Be patient and keep offering chop everyday – we have had fosters that have taken upwards of 4-6 weeks to try chop, but once they do, they keep coming back for more and having them on a nutritious diet is worth it! Don't forget to offer chop for only 1-2 hours at a time, you do not want your bird eating food that begins to spoil. After that period of time, throw away any uneaten portion.

Do not expect that you will be able to find every ingredient that can be used in chop as it will depend on your location and seasonal availability – and that is OK – there is no real recipe for chop! Experiment with it and find out what your bird likes! Do not use canned foods as they harbor too much sodium for parrots. Purchase raw, fresh vegetables and if you decide to use any of the pasta listed – go easy on it as these are refined foods. We typically use these foods in our chop because most birds that come into rescue have never had fresh vegetables before and we need something in the mix they recognize and will try – chop does typically stick to or inside of the pasta, sort of “tricking” the bird into eating some fresh foods. However, if your bird is used to eating fresh vegetables, that ingredient can be left out or be removed once your bird gets used to eating chop.

Vegetables that can be used in chop include the following:

Squash (acorn, butternut, yellow)  
Arugula  
Brussel sprouts  
Bok choy  
Broccoli  
Carrots with tops if possible  
Cauliflower  
Celery with leaves  
Collard greens  
Dandelion greens  
Ginger root  
Golden Beets with tops if possible  
Jicama  
Kale  
Mustard greens  
Parsnips  
Peppers (green, red, yellow)  
Peppers (Pablano and Jalapeño)  
Purple (red) cabbage  
Swiss chard  
Turnip greens  
Watercress  
Yams/sweet potato  
Zucchini



Vegetables are chunked into roughly 1-1.5" portions and then placed in the food processor. DO NOT hold down the button on the processor and proceed to make mush – you want to use the pulse option every other second for a split second until you make small, dry chunks of vegetables. Once ready, add it to the chop bucket and keep mixing!

It is just fine if you end up with some chunks that are larger than others, especially if you are feeding a flock that has more than one species or size of parrot. It is also acceptable to use seeds that were inside of pumpkins or squash, just rinse, remove the pulp, drain and dry and then add to the mix!



Keep mixing your chop bucket from the bottom up in order to keep those dry ingredients mixed thoroughly throughout your chop.

Once your mix is complete – it is time to begin bagging. Depending on your flock size, you may want to use either sandwich sized or snack sized Ziploc bags. Once you have bagged your individual portion bags based on your flock size, place those bags into gallon freezer bags and place in the freezer. You can now remove one bag a day for defrosting and serving, whether you offer chop once or twice a day.





Now it is time to watch your fids have a field day eating healthy! ENJOY!!

