



Fat Cakes

Many birds in the UK face significant energy challenges throughout the winter.¹ Smaller species such as Robins and Blue Tits can lose up to 5% of their body weight overnight.²

"Many species rely on energy reserves gained during the day to survive cold winter nights."¹

Small birds have to gain almost 10% of their lean body mass in fat every day to sustain overnight metabolism³ and are therefore forced to spend much of their time foraging. Setting up a bird table can improve the chances of bird survival through cold periods⁴ especially if a variety of foods are provided including seeds, nuts, kitchen-scrap, fruit - and fat cakes.

"Birds require high-energy (high-fat) foods during the cold winter weather to maintain their fat reserves."⁵



Fat cakes can be purchased in most supermarkets -but it's also easy to make your own using a range of seeds melted into fat or lard.⁶ (Note that polyunsaturated margarines and vegetable oils should not be used.)⁷

Our butcher gives us suet (250g) which we chop and gently melt it in a saucepan. To this we add mixed seed (250g) and other scraps as available - including crushed nuts, dried fruit and grated cheese. The mixture is placed into silicone cake moulds and left in the fridge to set.



It is now a well-established ritual in our house – every day before breakfast we go out to feed the birds with mixed seed and chopped scraps – and a fat cake.

Dean

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