



How to make Fatcakes

Ingredients:

- Lard, suet or waste kitchen fats from cooking meats (but not turkey fat which won't set solid).
- A mixing bowl
- One Saucepan
- A Spoon
- Old yoghurt pots
- Any of the following: wild bird seed, currants,
- Sultanas, oats, bread and cake crumbs, grated cheese, peanuts.

NB:

Uneaten sandwich crusts make an excellent ingredient for fatcakes. For more advice on feeding birds with leftovers visit: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/how-you-can-help-birds/feeding-birds/safe-food-for-birds/household-scrap-for-birds/>

Method

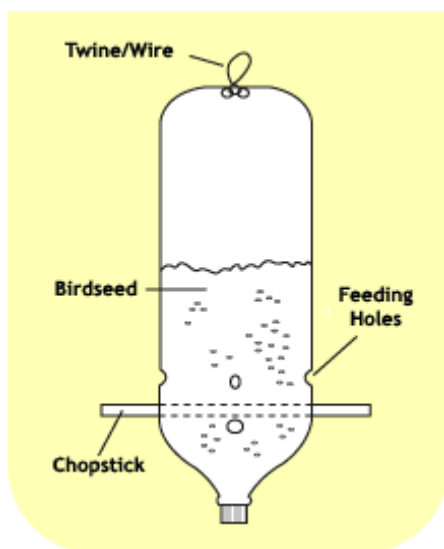
1. Fatcake works best with a ratio of one part fat to two parts dry ingredients, so collect your ingredients together in that ratio by weight.
2. Mix all the dry ingredients together in a mixing bowl. Make sure that there is space in the bowl to add more ingredients later on.
3. In your saucepan, melt the suet / lard / fat.
4. Carefully add the melted fat to the dry ingredients in the mixing bowl and stir everything together with a spoon. The dry ingredients will soak up the fat and begin to stick together.

5. Spoon the sticky mixture into the empty (clean) yogurt pots. Leave everything to cool and harden. If you wish, pierce the mixture with a piece of string before it hardens. This can then be used to tie the fatcake to a branch for hanging, or as a weight on the end of a bottle birdfeeder.

6. When the fatcake mixture is cool and hard, tip it out of the pot and use the string to tie the fatcake somewhere accessible for birds, such as a tree branch. Alternatively, place some fatcake inside a home made bottle birdfeeder.

Making a basic bottle feeder

Cut a couple of feeding holes into a bottle, thread through a twig or an old chopstick to make a perch, and fill it with seed and you have a really quick but effective bird feeder.



Care needs to be given to the placement, size and shape of the feeding holes. Ideally the holes would be placed slightly closer to the bottom of the feeder – so that when the feeder is filled with seed, most of the seed is readily accessible for eating and not idly filling the bottle. The holes need to be large enough to allow access to the seed, but not so large as to allow all the seed to fall out if the feeder is blown by the wind.

Tip

Birds tend to prefer a feeding hole that is oval shaped, being slightly longer than it is wide.

Equipment required

- One plastic bottle with labels removed and its cap left on.
- One permanent / dry marker per
- One awl, or a pair of compasses with a sharp point, or a craft knife
- One pair of sharp scissors
- String / twine or thin wire
- Birdseed
- Two twigs, unsharpened pencils, chopsticks, wooden spoons or lengths of dowel.
- Masking or Duct tape
- Optional – a stabilising weight

Method

Use the dry markers and mark on the bottle where their feeding holes and perches are going to be placed.

Carefully pierce the plastic bottles as marked with the awl or craft knife. Widen each hole so you can get scissors in to cut out the shape marked with pen.

Care should be taken when cutting out holes for perches. A small slit or cross shaped cut is likely to hold a twig or piece of dowel more firmly than a circular hole.

If you cut a hole in the bottle that is larger than desired use masking or duct tape to make repairs. If you trim the plastic to produce a ragged edge, cover any sharp areas with tape. If necessary, secure perches with tape too.

When finished, carefully fill the bottle feeders with seed, and use the string or wire to hang them somewhere appropriate.

The best designed feeders will hold the seed securely and not let it leak out of the access holes. If the access holes are too large to hold the seed, only fill the feeder partially with seed. Alternatively, pack the feeder with fatcake mixture (see above).

If necessary, attach a stabilising weight to the base of the feeder. This will prevent loss of seed in the wind, and also stop it swinging around when birds land on it to feed. Fatcake also makes an excellent stabilising weight (see above).

When you are finished with your bottle birdfeeder – please take it to pieces and reuse or recycle what you can.