You might never know it now but, like most people, I started out with a single bird, a male Zebra Finch. It was less than a month later when I bought a female for him. Two birds quickly became four, then six, and so on. Many years later I have a flock of around 80 finches.

I started out with a cage for each pair but after my flock grew to eight pairs, I realized I was running out of space for cages. I also found that I was spending a lot more time than I liked cleaning cages and changing food and water for the birds.

I tried buying a few large cages for my pairs to share. That led to some fighting, though nothing more serious than a few plucked feathers. At the time, I really had no idea what size cage should be used to house a few pairs of finches, but now I realize that the flights were small and that I have some very aggressive females.

After talking with local finch breeders, I decided to try to construct an aviary. This aviary would allow my finches plenty of room and fulfill my greatest wish — to be able to stand amongst my finch friends. Then the reality of the cost set in. One small walk-in aviary could cost from $500-$1,000. I do not breed birds for a living, and there was no way I could afford that expense, so I talked the
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The Mission of the AFA is to Promote the Advancement of Aviculture.

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My homebuilt aviary cost about $250. It was built over a period of two weekends and assembled in my basement because that was the only place it would fit, and because it allows me to give the birds proper lighting. It stands 5 feet 5 inches tall. I'm a short gal so I have no problem standing up in this aviary which is 4 feet wide and 8 feet long. I use hanging bird feeders for their seed, and a small fountain that supplies fresh water constantly. I also installed large removable bowls (the kind you buy for T-Stands and Parrot Cages) to hold the fruits, veggies, egg, and other treats.

If you are interested in building an aviary like mine, feel free to use my design as a guide:

**Flight Area Construction**

**Walls**

This is the main framework of my aviary. All side panels are interchangeable. Screw holes are shown as small dots on the frame. Holes on top and bottom are drilled vertically and holes on the sides are in both directions as needed.

The corners are cut at an angle and welded together like a picture frame. Height of the aviary is 66 inches but can be adjusted to your needs.

Width of the aviary is 47 and \( \frac{1}{6} \) inches. (Subtracting the diameter of structural component.)

Cover frame with hardware cloth and screw tightly into place.

**Door**

The panel with the door has the same dimensions as the wall panel. The only difference is that the door is mounted in this panel. The hinges can be any type of hinges that you can find and that will work easily with your aviary design. They must be mounted on the outside unless you want the door to swing inward.

Fit the door as tightly as possible to the frame so that none of your birds can sneak out or get stuck half way through during an escape attempt.

**Top Panel**

The top panel is one large panel. The location of all the screw holes in the illustration is where the top panel is fitted to the wall panels. The screw over the door itself may not fit and still allow the door to swing freely. I have removed the screw in that one place on my aviary for that very reason.

**Catch Area**

I don't have a catch area on my aviary because it is inside, but adding one would not be hard. Just build two...
Building Notes

Assemble panels using the 2 inch #8-32 steel screws and the #8-32 nuts

Attach hardware cloth to panels using #8 1/2 PH Wafer K-LATHE screws. The heads of these screws are large and will not go through the hardware cloth

The floor is a piece of plywood screwed to the framework with Masonite or any other waterproof material on top for easy cleaning.

Fountain

The fountain has gone through two phases. It started out as large bucket of water and a small pump that circulated water. The water ran over two small plates and drained back into the bucket through a few small holes. This, however, required someone to change the water in the bucket everyday. Finally my father and I redesigned it to constantly have fresh water running into the aviary. This is really a kludge but it does work very well for me.

First we needed some tubing. One hose is a food grade polypropylene tube that runs the water from the house to the aviary. I used the food grade tube because it will not rot or break down and poison my birds.

I also used a larger polyethylene tube to run from the fountain to the drain in the basement floor. It doesn't really matter what you use for the second tube as long as it is big enough that the seed and droppings will not clog it up.

To adjust the amount of water flow into the aviary we used a needle valve. This valve is not something you can find at your local hardware store unfortunately. I acquired mine through my uncle. From what he has told me, it came out of an old 8-track winding assembly machine. It does work very well though and the slightest turn will adjust the flow of water from a few drops per second to a steady stream.

The fountain itself is a bird bath. I bought it at the hardware store when I picked up the tubing. A few old plates and a drain finish it off.

The best advice I can give you is to experiment and be creative. As you can see by mine, aviaries do not have to cost a small fortune to build.