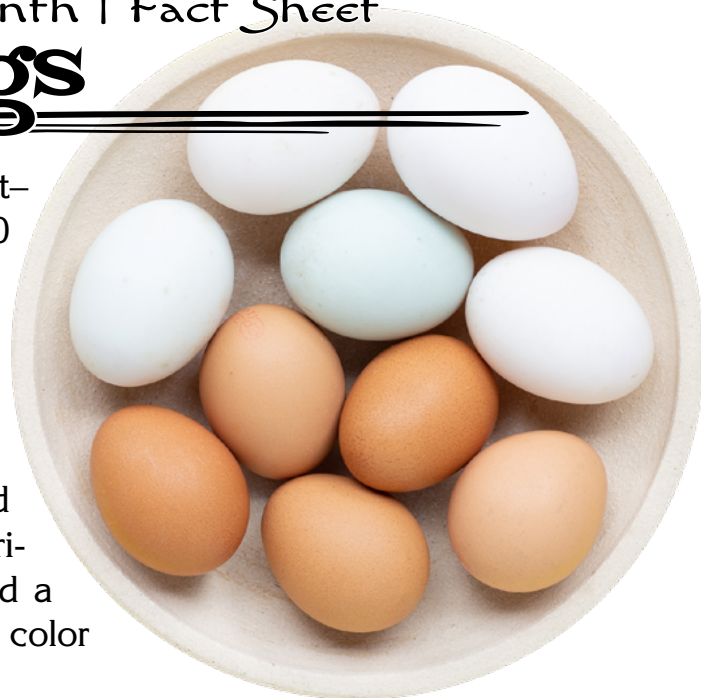




Harvest of the Month | Fact Sheet

Eggs

Eggs are among the most nutrient-dense foods containing about 70 calories and 6 grams of protein per large egg. Eggs are made up of two main parts. The egg white contains mostly water and protein while the yolk contains fat and other nutrients. Eggs can be prepared in many ways and are used in cooking and baking for a variety of purposes including as a binder and a thickener and to add richness, flavor, and color to baked goods.



Did you know?



Pennsylvania is among the top five egg-producing states in the United States.



An average hen lays 250 to 300 eggs per year.



The breed of hen determines the color of the egg's shell. The color of the yolk varies in shades of yellow depending on the hen's diet.

Selection

Purchase shell eggs from a refrigerator or refrigerated case. Look for eggs with clean, uncracked shells. Do not purchase out-of-date eggs. Eggs labeled with the USDA grade shield or mark have met standards for quality and size. There are three consumer grades for eggs: U. S. Grade AA, A, and B. Eggs are graded based on the interior quality of the egg and the condition of the egg shell. Egg grading is not mandatory. Some small producers may not have their eggs graded or weighed to US Grade Standards and therefore must label their eggs as "unclassified." Eggs served in schools must be Grade B or better. **If serving a preschool population, eggs must be pasteurized.**

Buy only pasteurized egg products that bear the USDA inspection mark. Make sure containers are tightly sealed. Frozen products should show no signs of thawing. Refrigerated products should be kept at 40°F or below. Dried egg products should not be caked or hardened.

Storage and Handling of Shell Eggs

Store eggs in their original carton in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of 40°F or below. Use them within 3 weeks for best quality. Use hard-cooked eggs (in the shell or peeled) within one week after cooking. Do not freeze eggs in their shells. To freeze whole eggs, beat yolks and whites together. Egg whites can also be frozen by themselves. Yolks do not freeze well. Eggs can be stored in the freezer up to one year and should be used within three days of thawing.

Washing eggs is not recommended and may actually increase the risk



of contamination because the water can be “sucked” into the egg through the pores in the shell. Government regulations require that USDA–graded eggs be carefully washed and sanitized using only compounds meeting FDA regulations for processing foods.

These safe handling guidelines should be followed:

- Wash utensils, equipment, and work areas with hot, soapy water before and after contact with eggs.
- Do not keep eggs out of the refrigerator for more than 2 hours.
- Raw eggs and other ingredients, combined according to recipe directions, should be cooked immediately or refrigerated and cooked within 24 hours.
- Eggs should not be eaten raw. If recipes call for raw eggs which are not going to be cooked (e.g. eggnog, ice cream) pasteurized eggs or egg products should be used.
- Cook eggs until both the white and yolk are firm.
- Casseroles and other dishes containing eggs should be cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature of 160°F.
- Serve cooked eggs and dishes containing eggs immediately after cooking, or place in shallow containers for quick cooling and refrigerate at once for later use. Use within 3 to 4 days.

Storage and Handling of Egg Products

Safe handling and storage is necessary for all egg products to prevent bacterial contamination. Here are recommendations from USDA:



- For best quality, store frozen egg products up to one year. Check to be sure your freezer is set at 0°F or lower. After thawing, do not refreeze.
- Thaw frozen egg products in the refrigerator or under cold running water. Do not thaw outside of the refrigerator.
- If the container for liquid products bears a “use-by” date, observe it. Follow the storage and handling instructions provided by the manufacturer.
- For liquid products without an expiration date, store unopened containers at 40°F or below for up to 7 days (not to exceed 3 days after opening). Do not freeze opened cartons of liquid egg products.
- Unopened dried egg products and egg white solids can be stored at room temperature as long as they are kept cool and dry. After opening, store in the refrigerator.
- Reconstituted egg products should be used immediately or refrigerated and used that day.
- USDA Commodity Dried Egg Mix should be stored at less than 50°F, preferably in the refrigerator (at 40°F or below). After opening, use within 7 to 10 days. Reconstitute only the amount needed at one time. Use reconstituted egg mix immediately or refrigerate and use within 1 hour.

Nutrition

Eggs are an excellent source of protein. The protein in eggs contains all the essential amino acids (building blocks of protein that the body needs but cannot make.) Eggs are good sources of vitamin A, which promotes eye health and immune function, and vitamin D, which promotes calcium absorption for strong bones and teeth.

School Meal Connection

Only whole eggs (shell, liquid, frozen or dried) can be credited in Child Nutrition Programs. Eggs credit as a meat alternate. One large egg credits as 2 oz equivalent meat alternate and half of a large egg credits as 1 oz equivalent meat alternate. For products other than whole eggs, refer to the Child Nutrition (CN) label or Product Formulation Statement.

Preparation

Eggs can be cooked using a variety of cooking methods including poaching, hard cooking, scrambling, frying and baking. Eggs are also often used in mixed dishes such as casseroles, baked good, frittatas, and quiches.



Recipe | Swiss Chard Frittata

48 servings (1 piece)

Credits: One serving provides 2.25 oz equivalent meat alternate.

Ingredients	Weight	Measure	Directions
Bacon Swiss chard Canola oil or vegetable oil Chopped onions Eggs Granulated garlic Kosher salt Shredded reduced-fat Cheddar cheese	1 lb	8 slices ¼ cup 2 cups 50 large 2 tsp 2 tsp 2¼ cups, divided	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preheat convection oven to 325°F or conventional oven to 350°F. Coat bottom and sides of two 2-inch full hotel pans with cooking spray. 2. Cook bacon, turning occasionally, in a large skillet over medium heat until crispy, about 10 minutes. Drain on paper towel and cut into ½-inch pieces. 3. Rinse chard but do not dry. Trim tough stem ends and discard. Cut leaves and stems into rough 1-inch pieces. Set aside. 4. Heat oil in a 16-inch skillet over low heat. Add the bacon and onions. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions are translucent, 8 to 10 minutes. 5. Stir in the chard. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the chard begins to wilt, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside. 6. Whisk eggs in a large bowl. Add garlic and salt. Whisk until well combined. Stir in 2 cups cheese. 7. Divide the egg mixture evenly between the prepared pans. Evenly distribute half the chard on top of the egg mixture in each pan. Sprinkle each pan with 2 Tbsp cheese. 8. Bake until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean and the top is beginning to brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Cut each pan into 24 squares.



Source: [VT New School Cuisine](#)



Check out the PA Harvest of the Month website (www.paharvestofthemonth.org) for sources, additional resources, and recipes.

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