



Harvest of the Month | Family Newsletter

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 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 Do not purchase out-of-date eggs.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." Grade A is the type most often sold in stores. Grade B eggs are seldom found in retail stores because they are usually sold to make liquid, frozen, and dried egg products.

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. Keep liquid egg products refrigerated and use within two to six days of purchase. Refrigerated liquid eggs can be placed unopened in the freezer. Eggs and egg products can be stored in the freezer up to one year and should be used within three days of thawing.



Handling

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 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.

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.

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 | Garden Frittata

Makes: 4 servings

| Ingredients | Measure | Directions |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Eggs | 4 large | 1. Beat eggs, pepper, and salt in large bowl, set aside. |
| Ground black pepper | ¼ teaspoon | 2. Microwave potatoes until slightly soft, but not completely cooked, then cube. (Alternate method without microwave: cube potatoes and boil 5 minutes until slightly soft, drain). |
| Salt | ¼ teaspoon | 3. Chop remaining vegetables while potatoes cool. Mix vegetables together. |
| Red potatoes | 2 medium, unpeeled | 4. Heat oil in a 10-inch non-stick skillet. Sauté vegetables for 5–8 minutes; add to eggs and mix well. |
| Olive oil | ½ tablespoon | 5. Pour egg-vegetable mixture into the same skillet. Cook over low to medium heat until eggs are almost set, about 8–10 minutes |
| Italian kale, or other kale variety | 4 cups | 6. Cover and let sit until eggs are completely set, about 5 minutes. Egg dishes should be cooked to 160°F. |
| Chopped onion | ¼ cup | |
| Red bell pepper | ½ | |

Source: [Produce For Better Health Foundation](#)



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

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