

Lifetime Learning proudly presents: THE EGG

The egg – is there any food as perfect as the egg? Containing all nine essential amino acids, vitamin E, lutein, zeaxanthin, and choline, eggs are a unique nutritional package. One large egg has just 70 calories and six grams of high-quality protein.

Aside from their stellar nutritional benefits, eggs are a kitchen staple throughout the world. Cooking them is truly a culinary marvel. The ability to transform from a liquid to a solid with the quickest of heat exposure is just one attribute that makes eggs such a special food.

As one of the least expensive sources of high-quality protein, eggs are a great choice for any meal of the day. They're a traditional favorite in the a.m., but eggs make a tasty option for lunch and dinner too. Think casseroles, frittatas, deviled eggs, and egg salad sandwiches.

You can stuff scrambled eggs into burritos. Better yet, top a bean and veggie tortilla with a fried egg. Pair eggs with other high-nutrient foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products. Add grated or finely chopped hard-cooked eggs to salads, cooked vegetables (asparagus is a tasty choice), and grain dishes.

There are many methods to cook eggs. In fact, the 100 pleats in a chef's tall white toque (hat) are said to represent the number of egg dishes a chef can prepare. The following are some fun tips to guarantee to make you an eggspert!

Please note: Most of the recipes for this Egg Class serve only one or two. Many of those can be doubled very easily, if necessary.

Some fun facts, hints and tips about eggs:

When scrambling eggs, you should cook them over a gentle heat. For softer curds, add butter or oil. Be aware that if the eggs overcook, the added liquid will separate from the eggs and make a watery dish.

Precook vegetables, seafood, or meat before adding to omelets or scrambles. Using a nonstick sauté pan or a well-seasoned cast iron skillet is a must.

Don't use the edge of a bowl to crack an egg. Instead gently tap the center of the egg against a hard, flat surface. This helps prevent pieces of the shell from getting into the egg whites and yolks.

To separate egg whites from yolks, pass the yolk back and forth between the cracked shells, letting the whites fall back into the bowl.

When making a meringue, be sure none of the egg yolks wind up in the whites. Use a metal or glass bowl with a rounded bottom for perfectly whisked egg whites.

Before cooking eggs in their shells, take them out of the fridge for an hour. Working with room temperature eggs helps prevent their shells from breaking when they hit the water.

Steer clear of eggs with hairline cracks. Cracked specimens will seep their whites into the cooking water and may not be safe to eat.

Once hard cooked, immediately remove eggs from the boiling water and plunge them into a big bowl of ice water. This not only stops the cooking process but also helps prevent unsightly green rings from appearing around the yolks.

Hard-cooked eggs are easier to peel when still warm.

Peel soft-cooked eggs when completely cool, so the egg whites have time to firm up.

The size of an egg doesn't make much difference in a dish unless the recipe indicates using a particular size.

There are three grades of eggs: AA, A, and B, with AA being the freshest and B the least fresh.

White or brown – the color of the eggs doesn't matter when it comes to flavor, nutrition, and quality.

To determine how fresh an egg is, submerge it in a bowl of water. If it sinks and linds on its side, it's considered fresh. If the wide end of the egg points up, the egg is not as fresh and may be best for baked goods. If the egg floats, it's old.

Avoid storing eggs in the refrigerator door, even if you have a handy egg holder. The constant opening and closing of the refrigerator door agitates the egg whites and causes them to deteriorate. Keep eggs in the carton they were purchased in, and store on a refrigerator shelf.

Store eggs away from strong-smelling items in the fridge as their porous shells are likely to absorb odors.

And lastly, when a new chef is interviewing for a position in a restaurant, the one dish most are asked to prepare is the classic, French Omelet.

Egg Recipes

EGG RIBBONS

It's always fun when food dresses up as other food – say a bright pile of yellow noodles that aren't noodles. Egg ribbons are a quick and easy way to add color and protein. They look impressive and are incredibly easy to make. Make sure you use a nonstick pan and keep the heat on the lower side; you don't want your brilliant, yellow eggs browning too much. When making multiple portions, stack several crepes at a time before rolling and slicing them to cut down on the work.

1 large egg
Pinch of salt
Neutral oil, for the pan

Lightly beat egg in a bowl until egg white and yolk are completely incorporated. Season with salt

Heat a medium (12-inch) nonstick frying pan over medium-low heat. Add a touch of oil to the pan and swirl to coat.

Pour egg into pan in a thin layer and swirl to coat bottom of pan, much like a crepe. Cook untouched, over low heat until egg sets and releases from side of pan, about 1 minute. Use a silicone spatula to flip egg and cook other side 10 to 15 seconds.

Slide egg onto a cutting board. Carefully roll it up and thinly slice crosswise into ribbons. Use immediately or cover and keep in the fridge for up to 3 days.

Serves 1

EGG WRAPS

5 medium eggs
1 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
Sea salt and black pepper to taste

Whisk all ingredients together with 1 tablespoon of water in a medium bowl.

Fry one-quarter of the mixture at a time in a non-stick frying pan over medium heat, as though making pancakes; cook each omelet for about 1 minute or until dry on surface and golden beneath. Turn using a spatula and cook a further 30 to 45 seconds.

Stack wraps on a plate and leave to cool. These egg wraps can stand in for tortillas. They can be filled with your favorite veggies, cheese, and protein.
Makes 4 wraps

CLASSIC FINE HERBES OMELET

The definitive French omelet features a classic combination of herbs: parsley, chervil, chives and tarragon. Feel free to use any or all of them, as your taste dictates. The recipe yields 1 serving, as omelets are best made individually.

3 eggs

¼ teaspoon salt

Pinch of ground white pepper

1 tablespoon unsalted butter

1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh flat-leaf (Italian) parsley

1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh chives

1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh chervil

½ teaspoon finely chopped fresh tarragon

In a bowl, using a fork or wire-whisk, beat together the eggs, salt, and white pepper until lightly frothy.

In an 8-inch non-stick skillet or omelet pan over medium heat, melt the butter. Add the eggs and, as they begin to set, using a fork or spatula, carefully lift the edges and gently push them toward the center, tilting the pan slightly to allow the liquid egg on top to flow underneath. Continue to cook until the eggs are almost completely set but still slightly moist on top, 3-4 minutes.

Evenly sprinkle the parsley, chives, chervil and tarragon over the surface of the eggs.

Shake the pan; if the omelet does not slip easily, carefully loosen the edges with the fork or spatula. Carefully slide the omelet from the pan to a warmed plate and, when halfway out, quickly flip the pan over to fold the omelet in half.

Serve at once - makes 1 serving.

EGG DROP SOUP

This light soup can be on the table in about 15 minutes, making it a great choice when you are in a hurry. Instead of spinach, you can substitute shredded Bok choy, bean sprouts, thinly sliced carrots or any other vegetable, depending on your preference and fridge contents. Be sure the vegetables are cut very finely so that they cook quickly and evenly in the simmering broth.

6 cups low-sodium chicken broth

2 cup thinly sliced spinach

¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg

4 eggs, beaten

¼ cup grated parmesan cheese

Pinch of freshly ground pepper

In a large saucepan over medium heat, bring the broth to a simmer. Add the spinach and simmer for 5 minutes, or until wilted. Add the nutmeg.

While stirring the soup, add the eggs in a slow, steady stream, breaking them up as they cook. Remove the soup from the heat. Sprinkle each serving with Parmesan cheese and pepper. Enjoy!

Serves 4

SCRAMBLED EGG WRAP

For a quick grab-and-go out the door meal, this simple wrap fits the bill. In less than ten minutes you have a protein-and antioxidant packed meal to help fuel your body. You can even cook the eggs in the microwave to make the

preparation faster. Simply pour the beaten eggs into a ramekin or dish and microwave about 1½ minutes, then spoon the cooked egg into your wrap.

3 eggs
Pinch of sea salt
Dash of freshly ground pepper
1 teaspoon olive oil
Two 6-inch flour tortillas
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
2 slices smoked deli turkey breast
2 large lettuce leaves
1 small tomato, diced

In a small bowl, whisk together the eggs, salt and pepper. In a small nonstick skillet, over medium heat, heat the oil. Add the eggs. Scramble the eggs until cooked through but not dry. Remove the skillet from the heat.

Place the tortillas on a clean, flat surface and spread each with 1 tablespoon of mayonnaise. Top each tortilla with 1 slice of turkey, 1 lettuce leaf, and half the scrambled eggs. Top the scrambled eggs with the chopped tomato and roll up the tortilla. Serve immediately. This serves 2

EGGS IN BELL PEPPERS

Anyone who has ever used an egg ring to make perfect round, sunny-side up eggs will appreciate the pepper ring used in this recipe.

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 large red bell pepper, seeded and cut into four ¼-inch round rings
4 eggs
Sea salt and freshly ground pepper
2 tablespoons grated parmesan cheese
4 thick slices of bread, toasted

In a large skillet over medium high heat, heat the oil. Arrange the pepper rings in a single layer in the pan and cook for 1 minute. Turn over the pepper rings and

crack 1 egg into each ring. Lightly season the eggs with salt and pepper. Cook until the egg whites are set but the egg yolks are still runny, about 3 minutes.

Sprinkle the eggs with a little of the parmesan cheese and then place the Egg-pepper ring on top of a slice of toast and enjoy. Serves 2

MONTE CRISTO EGG MELT

This is the ultimate sandwich that is deceptively simple to make and has a rich and complex flavor sure to impress. They can be quite messy to make, but once the bread soaks up the egg, it will help to hold all of the sandwich ingredients together.

4 eggs
2 tablespoons milk
Freshly ground pepper
4 slices bread
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
4 slices smoked deli turkey or ham
2 slices Swiss cheese
Cooking spray or a little olive oil

In a small bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, and pepper until thoroughly combined, set aside.

Place 2 slices of bread on a clean work surface and spread 1 side evenly with the Dijon mustard. Top each with 2 slices turkey and/or ham, 1 slice of cheese, and the remaining slice of bread.

Dredge each sandwich in the egg mixture, covering completely to coat well. In a large nonstick skillet coated with cooking spray over medium heat, add the sandwiches and cook until the bread is a golden brown and the cheese melts, about 2 minutes on each side. Remove, slice into halves and serve. Serves 2

EGG FOO YOUNG

This egg foo young variation is more American than Asian, but the general ingredients and methods are inspired from the original. Add cooked chicken, shrimp, or even cooked pork in these tasty omelets.

1 tablespoon canola oil
1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
½ teaspoon minced garlic
6 green onions chopped
1 stalk celery, chopped
2 cups bean sprouts
½ cup sliced mushrooms, your choice
1 red bell pepper, seeded and finely chopped
1 teaspoon sea salt
6 eggs, beaten
Freshly ground black pepper

In a large skillet over medium high heat, heat half the oil. Add the ginger and garlic and sauté for 1 minute. Add the green onions, celery, bean sprouts, mushrooms, red bell pepper and salt to the skillet and sauté until the vegetables are softened, about 5 minutes. Transfer the vegetables to a large bowl and add the beaten eggs. Season this mixture with pepper and stir to incorporate everything.

Wipe the skillet with a paper towel and add the remaining oil. Return to the heat and add about ½ of the vegetable-egg mixture. As the mixture cooks, lift the edges to allow the uncooked eggs to flow underneath. Cook about 2 minutes on each side or until the eggs are browned and cooked through. Transfer to a plate. Repeat the process with the remaining egg mixture. Serve when done. This serves 2

SPEEDY POTATO AND HAM FRITTATA

This frittata has all of the ingredients found in a nice hearty country breakfast in one handy dish. Timesaver tip: for speedy brunch or breakfast gatherings, prepare this dish the night before and refrigerate it, uncooked, until the next morning. The morning of the get-together, uncover the frittata and bake it directly from the fridge in a 350-degree oven for 35 minutes.

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 small sweet onion, chopped
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 2 cups cooked, diced potatoes
- 6 eggs
- ¾ cup chopped cooked ham
- 1 cup grated sharp cheddar cheese
- Dash of sea salt
- Dash of freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon chopped parsley as garnish

Preheat the broiler to high. In a large oven safe nonstick skillet over medium-high heat, heat the oil. Add the onion and the garlic and sauté for 3 minutes or until tender. Remember, start with the onions, and then after 1 minute add the garlic. Add the potatoes and sauté for an additional 2 – 3 minutes.

In a medium bowl whisk together the eggs, ham, ½ cup of the cheese, salt and pepper. Add the egg mixture to the skillet and reduce the heat to medium. Cook for about 5 minutes, until the bottom of the frittata is set and browned, lifting the edges of the cooked eggs to allow uncooked egg to flow underneath.

Sprinkle the remaining cheese over the top of the frittata and broil until the mixture is completely set and the cheese is melted, about 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow the frittata to sit for a few minutes, sprinkle with the chopped parsley and cut into wedges and serve. This serves 4

EGGS POACHED IN CURRY SPICES

Curry spices and eggs are a match made in heaven, and the eggs in this recipe soak-up the curry flavor and beautiful yellow color for a wonderful result.

6 cups water
1 teaspoon white vinegar
1 teaspoon curry powder
1 teaspoon ground coriander
½ teaspoon turmeric
¼ teaspoon ground cumin
Pinch of cardamom
Pinch of salt
Pinch of freshly ground pepper
4 eggs
2 English muffins, halved and toasted

In a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, bring the water, vinegar and spices to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low and maintain a gentle simmer.

Break 1 egg at a time into a small bowl/ramekin, pour gently into the water. Repeat the process with the remaining 3 eggs. Cook the eggs in the simmering water for 3 to 5 minutes or your desired doneness. Remove the cooked eggs with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels. Serve immediately on the toasted English muffins. This serves 2

SPICY CHEESE AND OLIVE SQUARES

If you ever needed a never-fail, always-loved recipe for events and get-togethers, this might be the recipe for you. It is simple to make and has lots of festive appearance. Customize these tasty squares with some of your favorite ingredients. Green olives, a variety of cheeses, roasted red peppers, sausage, ham or chicken are great options.

Cooking spray
1 teaspoon olive oil
1 small sweet onion, finely chopped

1 teaspoon minced garlic
4 eggs
1 cup grated sharp cheddar cheese
½ cup sliced black olives
¼ cup dry bread crumbs
3 tablespoons canned Diced green chiles
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh cilantro
Pinch of sea salt
Pinch of freshly ground pepper
Dash of hot pepper sauce

Preheat the oven to 325-degrees. Coat an 8-inch square baking dish with cooking spray, set aside. In a medium skillet over medium heat, heat the oil and sauté the onion and garlic for 3 minutes, or until soft. Remove the skillet from the heat.

In a medium bowl, mix together the onion and garlic mixture, eggs, cheese, olives, bread crumbs, chili, cilantro, salt, pepper and hot sauce until thoroughly combined. Pour the mixture into the prepared baking pan, and bake for 20 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Remove from the oven and let cool for 3 to 5 minutes, then cut into 16 squares.

CLASSIC EGG SALAD

8 hard-boiled eggs, peeled
½ cup mayonnaise
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 green onions, chopped
Pinch of garlic powder
Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

Using a box grater, grate the eggs into a large bowl; add the mayonnaise, mustard, green onion, and garlic powder. Season this mixture with salt and pepper, chill several hours.

Store unused egg salad in refrigerator for up to 5 days. Makes 2 cups egg salad

BUTTERY ASPARAGUS WITH EGGS

Serve this decadent dish as an appetizer or side dish. It is an excellent way to get asparagus into your diet.

½ cup unsalted butter

4 hard-boiled eggs, peeled

32 asparagus spears, woody ends trimmed

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

In a medium heavy bottomed saucepan over low heat, melt the butter slowly. Once the butter is melted, remove the saucepan from the heat and let stand for 2 minutes. Carefully skim the foam from the top of the melted butter. Slowly pour the clear yellow butter into a container leaving the milky solids in the bottom of the saucepan. Discard the milky solids and set the clarified butter aside.

With a box grater, grate the eggs into a medium bowl. In a medium saucepan add enough water to fill halfway up the sides. Bring the water to a boil over high heat. Add the asparagus and cook until crisp-tender, about 2 minutes.

Drain the asparagus and arrange on a serving platter in a single layer. Top the asparagus with the grated egg and drizzle with the clarified butter. Season with salt and pepper and serve immediately. Serves 4