

## Easy, Exciting Entrees for Two



Cooking for a mini-household can be a maxi-headache! Most readily available main-dish recipes are family-sized and not always easy to cut down. And, if your refrigerator or freezer space is minimal, leftovers can be a problem. Although more and more food manufacturers are recognizing the need for smaller packages, the selection currently on the market falls short of the variety available for bigger families.

So, how do you avoid the rut of more-expensive-than-you'd-like, but easy-to-make-for-two, entrees? Head for the dairy case! Eggs are conveniently packaged and wonderfully versatile. For starters, they can be fried, scrambled, cooked in the shell, poached and baked. And, if you're looking for a more exciting culinary adventure, eggs can be made into omelets, quiches, souffles, skillet scrambles, sandwiches and salads.

Not only are these dishes easy to make, but they can be varied endlessly because eggs go well with almost everything. Since a serving of two contains all the protein you need for a meal, round out the menu with cheese, milk and other dairy products and fresh fruits and vegetables that you can buy in just-what-you-want quantities. A number of vegetables are sold in small cans, too. And, the IQF (individually quick frozen) vegetables are especially handy since you can easily pour out part of the package and keep the rest frozen for later.

For carbohydrates, buy a small loaf of bread and save freezer space for the slices you can't use within a few days. Both rice and pasta are as easy to cook for two as they are for a larger family. Herbs and spices are terrific flavor enhancers, but they can be an expensive investment if you don't use them often. To preserve their aroma as long as possible, store them away from heat, light and moisture. Consider sharing them with a friend or neighbor. Put half a bottle's worth into a tightly sealed plastic bag for swapping.

Once you let your imagination soar, cooking for two can be an interesting challenge instead of a chore. Pick up a dozen eggs or two and start by trying the recipes here. Then, check the captions for ideas on how you can make each one an appetizing new dish the next time you're cooking for just the two of you.



Turn "ho hum" meals for two into "mmm... marvelous" with these easy-to-make and exciting main dishes. Clockwise from left top: Hearty Egg Skillet Bake, Quiche Tarts for Two, Frittata Florentine, Basque Eggs and Corn Pudding Souffles.

### HEARTY EGG SKILLET BAKE

2 servings

Designed for twosomes with big appetites, this "baked" egg dish cooks on top of the range. Next time you make it, eliminate the mushrooms and use a tablespoon or so of chopped green chiles and yellow onions in place of the celery and green onions. Spark with a dash of chili powder instead of caraway and top with Jack cheese for a south-of-the-border flavor.

- 1-1/3 cups sliced fresh mushrooms OR 1 can (4 oz.) sliced mushrooms, drained
- 1/2 cup sliced celery
- 1/2 cup chopped green onions with tops
- 1/4 cup butter
- 3 cups (12 oz.) frozen Southern-style hash brown potatoes
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon caraway seed
- 4 eggs
- 1/2 cup (2 oz.) shredded Gruyere or Swiss cheese

In 8-inch omelet pan or skillet over medium heat, cook mushrooms, celery and onions in butter until crisp-tender, about 4 minutes. Stir in potatoes, salt and caraway seed and continue cooking, stirring occasionally, until potatoes begin to brown, about 10 minutes.

With a spoon, make 4 indentations in potato mixture. Break and slip an egg into each indentation. Cover and continue cooking over low to medium heat until eggs are almost set, about 3 to 5 minutes. Uncover and sprinkle with cheese. Re-cover and continue cooking until eggs are desired degree of doneness, about 3 to 4 minutes.

### QUICHE TARTS FOR TWO

2 servings

These tarts are elegant, but ever so easy, since toast cups replace the traditional pastry crust. The second time around, substitute pimiento and green pepper for the mushrooms and onions, and Cheddar cheese and crushed basil leaves for the Gouda and dill.

- 8 slices whole wheat bread
- 4 eggs, well beaten
- 2/3 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
- OR 1 can (2 oz.) sliced mushrooms, drained
- 1/4 cup chopped green onions with tops
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1/2 cup (2 oz.) shredded Gouda or Swiss cheese
- 2/3 cup dairy sour cream
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon dill weed

Cut crusts from bread and discard or save for another use. With a rolling pin, roll bread until very flat. For each 2 slices, place 1 slice on top of another, turning 1/4 turn to make an 8-pointed figure. Roll again. Fit 2 rolled slices into each of 4 lightly greased 6-ounce custard cups, pressing to fit to cups. Brush with small amount of the beaten eggs. Bake in preheated 350°F. oven 5 minutes.

In small omelet pan or skillet over medium heat, cook mushrooms and onions in butter until tender but not brown, about 3 minutes. Spoon about 1-1/2 tablespoons of the mushroom mixture and 2 tablespoons of the cheese into each bread-lined cup. Beat together remaining eggs, sour cream, salt and dill weed. Pour about 1/3 cup of the egg mixture over mushrooms and cheese in each cup.

Bake in preheated 350°F. oven until knife inserted near center comes out clean, about 20 to 25 minutes.

### FRITTATA FLORENTINE

2 servings

The filling cooks along with the eggs in this unfolded omelet variation. When fresh spinach isn't available, skip the bacon and try sautéed chopped onion and shredded zucchini. Add a pinch of crushed oregano leaves for zip.

- 4 slices bacon, diced
- 4 eggs
- 3-1/2 cups (about 6 to 7 oz.) chopped fresh spinach, cooked and drained
- 4 thin slices tomato
- 1/2 cup (2 oz.) shredded Cheddar cheese

In 8-inch omelet pan or skillet over medium heat, cook bacon until crisp. Remove from pan, drain and set aside. Pour off all but 1 tablespoon of bacon drippings. Beat together eggs and spinach. Stir in reserved bacon. Heat reserved bacon drippings in pan over medium heat until hot enough to sizzle a drop of water. Pour in egg mixture. Cook over low to medium heat until eggs are almost set, 8 to 10 minutes. Arrange tomato slices on top. Sprinkle with cheese. Cover pan, remove from heat, and let stand until eggs are completely set, about 5 minutes.

### BASQUE EGGS

2 servings

In the Basque area of southwestern France, a zestily flavored tomato mixture is scrambled right in with the eggs for a dish called Piperade. In this version, the "sauce" serves as a topper for your choice of fried, poached or scrambled eggs. When you're in a more fancy mood, use it as a filling or topper for omelets.

- 1 can (16 oz.) tomatoes, undrained
- 1 to 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup chopped green pepper
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 4 eggs
- 4 slices Italian or French bread, toasted

Place tomatoes, pepper, onion and garlic in small saucepan. Stir to break up tomatoes. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until liquid evaporates, about 20 minutes. Meanwhile, fry, poach or scramble eggs. For each serving, place either 2 fried or poached eggs or 1/2 of the scrambled eggs on 2 slices toast. Spoon tomato mixture over eggs.

### CORN PUDDING SOUFFLES

2 servings

If you've never made a souffle, give this modern, streamlined recipe a whirl. And, if corn doesn't appeal to you, stir in about a cup of shredded, cooked and well-drained carrot and 1/4 teaspoon dill weed.

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1-1/2 teaspoons instant minced onion
- 1/8 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 cup (3 oz.) shredded Cheddar or Colby cheese
- 2 eggs, separated
- 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1 can (7 to 8-3/4 oz.) whole kernel golden corn, drained

In small saucepan over medium-high heat, melt butter. Blend in flour, onion, paprika and salt. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture is smooth and bubbly. Stir in milk all at once. Cook and stir until mixture boils and is smooth and thickened. Remove from heat. Stir in cheese until melted. Set aside.

In small mixing bowl, beat egg whites with cream of tartar at high speed until stiff but not dry. Just until whites no longer slip when bowl is tilted. Thoroughly blend egg yolks into reserved sauce. Stir in corn. Gently, but thoroughly, fold yolk mixture into whites. Carefully pour into 2 (12 oz. each) souffle dishes or casseroles. For a "top hat," hold spoon upright and circle mixture to make ring about 1 inch from side of dish and 1 inch deep.

Bake in preheated 350°F. oven until puffy, delicately browned and souffles shake slightly when oven rack is gently moved back and forth, about 20 to 30 minutes. Serve immediately.