

DASH-OFF DINNERS

Not for Working Women Only!

Most of us, at one time or another, are pressed to get a nutritious dinner on the table quickly. And, we generally strive to make sure the meal is also tasty, eye-appealing and inexpensive. Too big an order? No, not when you break out the eggs!

Nutritious, economical and versatile eggs are nature's own convenience food. Perhaps that's why they're popular the world over. Start with eggs, then borrow from the cuisines and cooking methods of numerous nations to form menus just right for today.



EGGS AND PASTA VERDE

4 servings

Verde, Italian for green, refers to the noodles which serve as a dramatic contrast to pristine poached eggs. The egg yolks, when broken, make a marvelously rich sauce. Crusty Italian or French bread and a tossed salad would be good go-alongs. Set them out while you're bringing the water for the eggs and noodles to a boil.

8 eggs
1 package (8 oz.) spinach noodles, cooked and well drained
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
2 tablespoons cooking oil
1 teaspoon garlic salt
1 teaspoon Italian seasoning, crushed
2 medium tomatoes* coarsely chopped
Paprika, optional

In 10- to 12-inch omelet pan or skillet or 3-quart saucepan, heat 2 to 3 inches of water to boiling. Reduce heat to keep water simmering. Break eggs into medium bowl. Then slip eggs into water, holding bowl close to water's surface. Cook 3 to 5 minutes, depending on desired doneness. Meanwhile, gently toss hot noodles with cheese, oil and seasonings until noodles are evenly coated. Add tomatoes. Toss again. Divide evenly among 4 warmed dinner plates. With slotted spoon, lift 2 eggs onto each serving of noodles. Sprinkle with paprika, if desired. Serve while hot. *Peel and seed, if desired.

DELI DELIGHT SCRAMBLE

4 servings

Though there are French, German, Hungarian and kosher varieties, salami originated in Italy. And, scrambled eggs—nature's original skillet supper—are universally popular. Put them together and you have a dish that appeals to both modern tastes and timetables.

1 tablespoon butter
1 cup (8 oz.) sliced fresh mushrooms
4 ounces salami, diced
1/4 cup chopped onion
8 eggs
1/4 cup milk
1/2 to 1 teaspoon dry mustard
Parsley sprigs, optional

In large omelet pan or skillet over medium heat, cook mushrooms, salami and onion in butter until vegetables are tender but not brown, about 5 minutes.

Mix eggs, milk and mustard until blended. Pour over vegetable-salami mixture. As mixture begins to set, gently draw an inverted pancake turner completely across the bottom and sides of pan, forming large soft curds. Continue until eggs are thickened but still moist. Do not stir constantly. Garnish with parsley, if desired.

*It is better to remove scrambled eggs from pan when they are slightly underdone. Heat retained in eggs completes the cooking.



2-PAN MACARONI MEDLEY

3 servings

While the macaroni cooks in a pan, all the vegetable and protein foods you need to round out a meal cook in a skillet. Though only the bacon is actually fried, the method of cooking ingredients step by step, one or a few at a time, is borrowed from the Oriental stir-fry technique. And, the result is a delightfully different combination of Italian and all-American foods.

3 slices bacon, diced
1 package (10 oz.) frozen chopped broccoli
1/4 cup water
6 eggs
1/2 cup dairy sour cream
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
2 tablespoons instant minced onion
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1 can (4 oz.) sliced mushrooms, drained
2 cups (5 oz.) macaroni shells, cooked and drained

In 10- to 12-inch omelet pan or skillet over medium heat, cook bacon until crisp. Remove from pan, drain and set aside. Pour off drippings and set aside 2 tablespoons of the drippings. In same pan, cook broccoli with water, covered, over medium heat until completely thawed and broken apart, 7 to 8 minutes. Drain.

Beat together eggs, sour cream, cheese and seasonings. Pour reserved drippings into pan. Add drained broccoli, reserved bacon, mushrooms and drained macaroni. Pour in egg mixture. Cook over medium heat until egg mixture begins to set on bottom. With pancake turner or large spoon, gently lift and turn mixture until eggs are set but still moist.



OMELETS CREOLE

4 servings

In Latin, Creole means "creative person" and creative is an apt description of Creole cuisine. French and Spanish settlers brought with them the best of their old world cooking and added the foods they found plentiful along the Mississippi River and Gulf Coast. If you like, for complete authenticity, add a pinch of filé for texture and a few drops of hot pepper sauce for more nip. Round out the menu with okra, cooked separately or in the sauce, and rice.

6 tablespoons butter, divided
1/2 cup chopped onion
1/2 cup chopped green pepper
1/2 cup finely chopped celery
1 can (16 oz.) tomatoes
1 bay leaf
3/4 teaspoon garlic salt
1/4 teaspoon ground thyme
8 eggs
1/2 cup water
1 package (4 oz.) tiny frozen cooked shrimp

In medium saucepan over medium heat, cook onion, pepper and celery in 2 tablespoons of the butter, stirring occasionally, until tender but not brown, about 5 minutes. Stir in tomatoes, breaking apart with spoon, if necessary. Stir in seasonings. Increase heat to high. Cook, stirring occasionally, until tomato mixture thickens, about 8 to 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, mix eggs and water until blended. Set aside. Stir shrimp into tomato mixture. Reduce heat to low and simmer just until heated through, about 2 to 3 minutes. Keep warm while preparing omelets. Remove bay leaf before filling omelets.

For each omelet, in 7- to 10-inch omelet pan or skillet over medium-high heat, heat 1 tablespoon of the remaining butter until just hot enough to sizzle a drop of water. Pour in 1/2 cup of the egg mixture. (Mixture should set immediately at edges.) With an inverted pancake turner, carefully push cooked portions at edges toward center so uncooked portions can reach hot pan surface, tilting pan and moving cooked portions as necessary.

While top is still moist and creamy-looking, fill with 1/2 cup of the shrimp mixture. With pancake turner, fold omelet in half or roll, and invert onto plate with a quick flip of the wrist or slide from pan onto plate. Top with an additional 2 tablespoons of the shrimp mixture. Repeat with remaining omelets.

*It is better to fill omelet when it is slightly underdone. Heat retained in eggs completes the cooking.



FRENCH-TOASTED HAM 'N' EGG STACKS

4 servings

These savory sandwiches are a hearty version of the French Croque-Monsieur or Monte Cristo. Easy to assemble and quick to cook, they're a snap to make if you keep hard-cooked eggs on hand.

3 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 tablespoon sweet pickle relish,
well-drained
2 teaspoons prepared mustard
8 slices bread
4 slices (1 oz. each) Swiss cheese
4 hard-cooked eggs,* sliced
4 thin slices tomato
4 thin slices (1 oz. each) ham
4 eggs
2 tablespoons milk
2 to 3 tablespoons butter

In small bowl, blend together mayonnaise, relish and mustard. On each of 4 of the bread slices, place 1 slice of the cheese, 1 of the sliced eggs and 1 each of the tomato and ham slices. Spread with 1 tablespoon of the mayonnaise mixture. Cover with remaining bread slices. Secure each sandwich with 4 wooden picks, if necessary, and trim crusts, if desired. In shallow pan or dish, beat together 4 eggs and milk until blended. Dip sandwiches in egg-milk mixture, turning to coat evenly. In large omelet pan or skillet over medium heat, cook sandwiches in butter until golden brown on both sides, turning once. Remove picks, if necessary. To serve, cut in half or into quarters.

*To hard cook, put eggs in single layer in saucepan. Add enough tap water to come at least 1 inch above eggs. Cover and quickly bring just to boiling. Turn off heat. If necessary, remove pan from burner to prevent further boiling. Let eggs stand, covered, in the hot water 15 to 17 minutes for large eggs. (Adjust time up or down by 3 minutes for each size larger or smaller.) Immediately run cold water over eggs or put them in ice water until completely cooled. To remove shell, crackle it by tapping gently all over. Roll egg between hands to loosen shell, then peel, starting at large end. Hold egg under running cold water or dip in bowl of water to help ease off shell.

