

Tips to make the perfect egg

USE EGGS that are about a week or two old for hard-cooking. If you've ever found it difficult to peel hard-cooked eggs, it may have been because the eggs were too fresh. Store your eggs in their cartons in the refrigerator for about a week or so before hard-cooking for easier peeling.

PIERCE OR NOT. Although it is sometimes claimed that piercing the ends of eggs before hard-cooking reduces the likelihood of cracking, the American Egg Board has found that piercing often produces hairline cracks. However, piercing may allow some air to escape and some water to seep into the egg during cooking. Since this helps separate the egg from its shell, it may make peeling easier. If you decide to pierce your eggs, use a clean, preferably sterilized, pin, thumbtack or egg piercer to gently prick the large end of the egg. A very small hole is sufficient.

CHOOSE A WIDE PAN. Two smaller pans or cook eggs in batches. If you've ever found some softer-centered eggs in with fully hard-cooked eggs, it may be due to poor heat circulation. For best circu-

lation of the hot water around your eggs, cook them in a single layer. When too many eggs are layered one on top of the other in a pan, they're less likely to turn out evenly cooked.

COOK, DON'T BOIL. Just as tough people are referred to as hard-boiled characters, boiled eggs tend to be tough (and rubbery, too). The American Egg Board recommends a hard-cooking method that produces eggs with a more palatable texture and also saves energy. To hard cook your eggs by this method:

- Put the eggs in a single layer in a saucepan and add enough tap water to come at least one inch above the eggs.
- Cover the pan and rapidly bring the water to boiling.
- Then, turn off the heat. If you have an electric range, take the pan off the burner, too, so the water won't continue boiling.
- Leave the cover on the pan and let the eggs sit in the hot water until they're cooked. It takes about 15-17 minutes to hard cook large eggs by this method. For medium eggs, let stand about three minutes less; for extra large eggs, let stand about three minutes more, and for jumbos,

let stand about six minutes more.

COOL IMMEDIATELY after cooking. The heat retained in the water will continue to cook the eggs as long as you leave them in the water. To stop the cooking process, use a slotted spoon to transfer the cooked eggs to a pan and run cold tap water over the eggs until they're cool to the touch. Depending on how cold your tap runs, this takes about three to five minutes. This cooling process serves two purposes. By stopping the cooking process, the cooling helps to prevent the green rings that sometimes form around the yolks when eggs are over-cooked. And, by causing contraction of the egg within their shells, it helps to make the eggs easier to peel.

PEEL HARD-COOKED EGGS right after cooling for immediate use or refrigerate them in their shells in the cartons for later use. If you plan to use the eggs right away, you'll find them easier to peel right after they've been cooled. If you want hard-cooked eggs to have on hand for later use or for anytime snacks, leave them in their shells. The shells are nature's own protec-

tive packaging. Uncracked hard-cooked eggs in their shells are at their best when refrigerated and used within a week. At Easter time, though, any eggs that have cracked during cooking or decorating or have been out of refrigeration all day should be discarded.

FOR EASY PEELING, first crackle the shell all over by tapping it gently on a table or counter top. Then, to loosen the cracked shell, roll it back and forth between your hands. Since the egg's air cell is usually in the large end of the egg, start to peel there. It may help, too, to hold the egg under running cold water or dip it in a bowl of water.

CUT HARD-COOKED EGGS with a sharp knife or use an egg slicer or wedger. A slicer can be used for chopped hard-cooked eggs, too. First, place the egg horizontally in the slicer and slice. Then turn the egg so it's sitting vertically in the slicer and slice again.

Enjoy your hard-cooked eggs in salads, sandwiches, casseroles and crepes, in creamed dishes and dips, on vegetables or crackers or in soups.

Quick veggie, cheese quiche

AP — This quiche tastes fresh as just-made even though the crust is filled with cheese and vegetables is a convenient freeze-ahead. Wrap and store the pastry carefully so it does not break or crack. To serve, beat and pour in the egg-cream mixture and bake. Don't try to freeze the egg-cream mixture with the crust and vegetables; the outside of the quiche will overcook before the center is done.

VEGETABLE QUICHE

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 tsp. salt
1/2 cup shortening or lard
3-4 tbsp. cold water
1/2 cup shredded Swiss cheese
1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese
1/2 cup shredded carrot
1/2 cup sliced green onion
1 tbsp. all-purpose flour
4 slightly beaten eggs
1 1/2 cups light cream or milk
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
1/4 tsp. garlic powder

In a bowl combine flour and 1/4 tsp. salt. Cut in shortening until pieces are the size of small peas.

Add water 1 tbsp. at a time, tossing with a fork until flour is moistened. Form into a ball. On a lightly floured surface roll dough into a 12-inch circle. Fit into a 9-inch pie plate. Trim pastry to 1/4 inch beyond edge of pie plate; flute edge high. Do not prick pastry. Line pastry shell with a double thickness of heavy-duty foil. Bake in a 450° oven for 7 minutes. Remove foil; bake 3-5 minutes more or until pastry starts to brown. Cool. Toss together Swiss and cheddar cheeses, carrot, green onion and 1 tbsp. flour. Sprinkle over bottom of pastry shell. Seal, label and freeze.

To serve, combine eggs, cream, 1/4 tsp. salt, pepper and garlic powder. Pour into frozen shell. Bake in a 375° oven for 35-45 minutes or until a knife inserted near center comes out clean. Let stand 10 minutes. Makes 6 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 449 calories, 14 g protein, 26 g carbohydrates, 33 g fat, 42 mg cholesterol, 336 mg sodium. U.S. RDA: 67 percent vitamin A, 18 percent thiamine, 25 percent riboflavin, 25 percent calcium, 12 percent iron, 25 percent phosphorus.

Chocolate/peanut pie is quick-fix

AP — Need a quick-to-fix dessert that's something special? Your refrigerator and cupboard shelves probably house everything you need for this luscious layered pie. Those off-the-shelf ingredients trim measuring, mixing and cleanup time to a minimum.

CHOCOLATE AND PEANUT BUTTER PIE

3/4 cup creamy peanut butter
1/4 lb. margarine or butter
1 1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs

4-serving-size package regular vanilla pudding mix
3 eggs milk
4-serving-size package regular chocolate pudding mix
1 tsp. vanilla
4-oz. container frozen whipped dessert topping, thawed

Heat 1/2 cup of the peanut butter and margarine until smooth. Stir in

cracker crumbs; cool. Press mixture onto the bottom and sides of a 9-inch pie plate. Chill. In 1-quart saucepan combine vanilla pudding mix with 1 1/2 cups of the milk; cook and stir to a full boil. Stir in remaining peanut butter. Spoon into crust. Chill. Combine chocolate pudding mix and remaining milk; cook and stir to a full boil. Stir in vanilla. Spoon over peanut butter layer. Chill. To serve,

spread dessert topping over pie; sprinkle with chopped peanuts or chocolate curls, if desired. Makes 8 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 436 calories, 12 g protein, 46 g carbohydrates, 26 g fat, 25 mg cholesterol, 424 mg sodium. U.S. RDA: 17 percent riboflavin, 20 percent niacin, 13 percent calcium, 23 percent phosphorus.



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Make use of day-old doughnuts

DOUGHNUT PUDDING

6 day-old plain cake doughnuts
1/2 cup finely snipped dried apricots
1/4 cup toasted slivered almonds
4 slightly beaten eggs
2 cups milk
1/4 cup sugar
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. ground allspice
Almond sauce

Cut doughnuts into 1/2-inch-thick pieces; arrange in 6x12x2-inch baking dish or 8x1 1/2-inch round baking dish. Sprinkle with apricots and almonds. In a medium mixing bowl combine eggs, milk, sugar, salt and allspice. Pour egg mixture over doughnut pieces. Bake in 325° oven for 50-55 minutes or until a knife inserted near center comes out clean. Let stand 5 minutes. Meanwhile, prepare Almond Sauce. To serve, spoon some of sauce over each serving. Makes 6-8 servings.

Almond Sauce: In a small bowl combine 2 beaten egg yolks, 1/4 cup sifted powdered sugar, 1 tbsp. dry white wine, several drops almond extract and dash salt. In a medium mixing bowl beat 1/2 cup whipping cream until soft peaks form. Gently fold whipped cream into egg yolk mixture.

Nutrition information per serving: 484 calories, 4 g protein, 66 g carbohydrates, 25 g fat, 333 mg cholesterol, 421 mg sodium. U.S. RDA: 31 percent vitamin A, 12 percent thiamine, 24 percent riboflavin, 18 percent calcium, 15 percent iron, 30 percent phosphorus.

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