

Chickens today lay more eggs

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Eggs serve as a basis for an extraordinarily wide range of uses. You can scramble them, fry, poach or hard boil. They are a necessity for making a good dough, and sauces wouldn't have their characteristic richness without eggs.

Next to cooking and eating outright, today's cook uses eggs mainly for their ability to foam. When an egg is beaten, air bubbles are trapped in the albumen and a foam is formed. The foaming power of the egg white makes it useful as a carrier of air for leavening. Hence it contributes to the lightness of foods. Not to be outdone, eggs also act as a coagulator. Eggs added to ground beef with herbs and spices will cause the mixture to "loaf" or form a mass. Ditto for cupcakes, cakes, cheesecakes and cookies, all of which would just crumble without the addition of the egg.

Last but not least, the egg also

acts as an emulsifier. The egg yolk acts as a dispersion of oil droplets in water. This is what makes for a silky smooth sauce like hollandaise that must have the egg beaten in to ensure true emulsification.

WE ALL KNOW that eggs carry with them the pox of having too much cholesterol. Ah, but in retrospect, the little egg is also abundant with protein, vitamins and minerals and is so easily digested that it carries a biological value of 94 on a scale of 100, the highest rating of any food for its digestibility.

Yes, I watch my intake of eggs, trying to limit consumption to no more than four per week, but I love them in all too many ways. Since I stay away from store-bought poultry but rely on eggs in so many ways, I guess you could say that as far as I'm concerned, the egg beats out the chicken every time.

Ben appetit!

From Chef Larry: ways to enjoy eggs

HOMEMADE EGG CUSTARD

4 eggs
1 cup milk/cream
½ teaspoon salt

Beat eggs thoroughly with salt. Add milk, mixing well. Pour into greased cups or molds and bake by setting molds in hot water, covered and baking in a 350-degree oven for 45 minutes.

UNBEATABLE EGG NOG

6 eggs, separated
½ cup sugar
1 pint whipping cream
2 cups milk
¼ cup powdered sugar
1 pint good whiskey
1 ounce rum

Beat egg yolks until light. Add sugar, cream and milk. Beat egg whites until stiff. Gradually add powdered sugar until stiff peaks form. Add whiskey and rum to the egg yolk mixture. Fold in ½ of the egg white mixture until well blended. Top with remaining egg whites. Let stand in the fridge for at least 24 hours.

SCOTCH EGGS

¼ cup breadcrumbs
¼ cup milk
1 cup chopped cooked ham
½ teaspoon prepared mustard
dash pepper
1 egg, beaten
6 hard cooked eggs

Mix breadcrumbs and milk in a saucepan. Heat slowly and stir into a smooth paste. Add ham, mustard, pepper and beaten egg, mixing well. Remove shanks from hard-cooked eggs. Cover each with sauce mixture and fry in hot vegetable oil 375 degrees for 2 minutes. Drain before serving.

EGG BALLS

Makes a great appetizer
6 hard-cooked egg yolks
1 tablespoon melted butter
dash salt and pepper
1 egg, beaten
½ cup dry seasoned breadcrumbs.

Mash all the ingredients except the breadcrumbs into a smooth paste. Form into tiny balls, roll in seasoned breadcrumbs and fry in a little hot oil until golden, about 2 minutes. Drain and enjoy.

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"Apples are very weather dependent," he said. Ward's quality has not been hurt by the drought. His 200 acres of trees are irrigated.

Half of Emmett's 65-acre orchard west of Plymouth is also under irrigation. Still, she said, "It's been the hardest year ever." She and husband David founded Plymouth Orchards and Cider Mill 12 years ago.

Like many U-pick orchards, Emmett's trees are dwarf, making it easier and safer for public picking. She grows five varieties, including Northern Spy, which "is picked out in a weekend," and Jonathan, "the most popular."

TOM ERWIN, whose family has owned Erwin's U-Pick and Company

Store in South Lyon for a century, replaced Jonathans because they are an "outdated" apple primarily used for processing. He has replaced them with Ida-reds.

Erwin grows eight varieties on 300 acres, including the Mutsu, which is similar to a Granny Smith and Erwin's favorites, Golden Delicious and Empire.

"People need to try all varieties. They'd find they'd like them as well as their favorites," Erwin said.

Most apples grown in Michigan are Jonathan, named after horticulturalist Jonathan Hasbrouk; Red and Golden Delicious, named for their distinct flavor, and the McIntosh, named after a Scottish farmer who founded the variety in the early 1800s.

Alan Spicer of Spicer Orchards and Cider Mill in Hartland expects picking to continue through October, with varieties like Ida-red available to the end.

Erwin expects picking in his orchards to end around the middle of October. Emmett's season is already "winding down" and should be over within a week to 10 days.

Alan Spicer of Spicer Orchards and Cider Mill in Hartland expects picking to continue through October, with varieties like Ida-red available to the end.

Like most U-pick operators, Spicer is open daily during harvesting season, at an average cost of \$9.50 a bushel. He supplies produce bags and transportation to and from the fields.

"By October, it's getting chilly. So dress warmly," Spicer advises. If not, warmed apple cider and doughnuts are available.

Try these tasty apple recipes

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3 egg yolks
¼ cup milk
½ tsp. salt

Melt butter in large sauce pan. Add ¼ cup flour and blend vigorously with a whisk. Add scalded milk, stirring slowly and gradually bring to a boil. When thickened, add apple cider and blend thoroughly. Lower heat.

Combine remaining ¼ cup flour with shredded cheese and add to soup, stirring until cheese melts. Combine egg yolks, milk and salt in bowl and mix well. Add some of hot soup to egg yolk mixture, stirring

well. Add egg mixture to large soup pot and heat, stirring constantly until egg is cooked. Do not allow to boil. Serve with garnishes.

GARNISHES

1 red apple, cored and diced
1 cup toasted croutons
¼ cup crumbled bacon or bacon bits
¼ cup grated cheddar cheese

submitted by
Marian Bilznik of Farmington Hills

HEALTH PLUS SALAD

2 red apples, unpeeled
¼ cup sliced celery
1 avocado, peeled

½ cup salad dressing, French or Russian
½ cup American or cheddar cheese, cubed
½ cup silvered, toasted almonds
lettuce

Cut apples and avocados into ¼-inch pieces. Cut celery into ¼-inch

slices. Blend apples, avocados and celery. Marinate in dressing for 20-30 minutes. Mix almonds and cheese into apple mixture. Scoop onto lettuce leaves. Garnish with unpeeled apple slices.

submitted by
Mary Kutlov of Birmingham

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