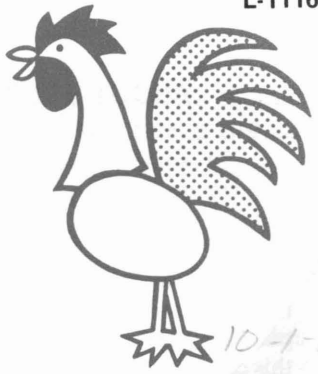


About Eggs...



POACHING

The Texas A&M University System
Texas Agricultural Extension Service
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ABOUT EGGS — POACHING

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In some ways, poached eggs represent egg cookery at its best. Only by combining eggs of the highest quality with precise cooking at proper time and temperature can result in rounds or ovals of delicately flavored perfection. As a main dish or as a recipe ingredient in world-famous gourmet dishes, poached eggs are an important part of the cuisine in this country and abroad.

In Vienna, a poached egg is called *ein verlorenes Ei* - a lost egg. This may refer to the egg disappearing temporarily under feathery "angel wings" or in a whirlpool of water. Or it may refer to the little edges that may need to be trimmed for the dish to be picture perfect. If you use an egg poacher, this trimming will not be necessary. However, some gourmet cooks prefer slight irregularity — with trimming when called for — to the regular shapes obtained by using an egg poacher.

Poaching consists of cooking the edible part of an egg in hot liquid — water, milk, cream, consomme, soup, etc. Salt and vinegar are unnecessary. The egg white coagulates at 140 degrees F.; the egg yolk, at 149 degrees F. If eggs are poached at too high a temperature, the protein becomes tough and the egg whites appear puckered or ruffled.

Water at about 185 degrees F. produces eggs with a tender yet firm texture. However, the addition of cold eggs to a liquid immediately lowers its temperature. To prevent the egg from spreading throughout the liquid, have the temperature of the liquid almost boiling when the eggs are added. The heat is then regulated to keep the liquid at simmering temperature.

HOW TO POACH EGGS

Equipment:

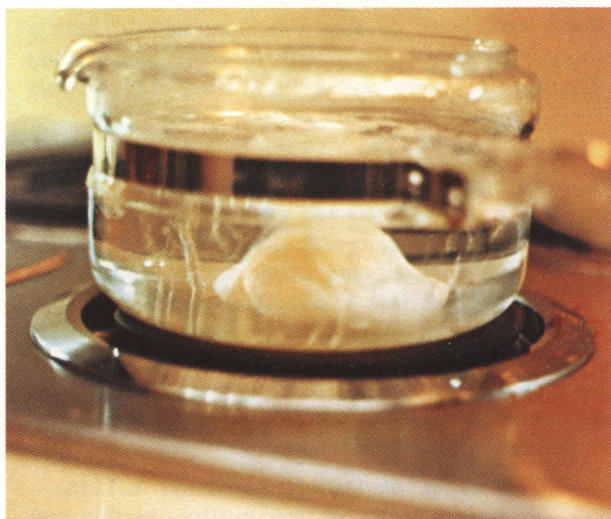
- A slotted spoon or skimmer.
- A small sauce dish or pyrex cup.
- Two or three thicknesses of paper toweling (optional).
- A shallow saucepan or skillet at least 2 inches deep. Choose one big enough for the number

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of eggs you wish to poach at one time. Pan material is not a critical factor, but remember that water stains an aluminum pan. For one serving, you will need two high-quality eggs.

1. Oil pan lightly. (A well-seasoned, non-stick, pan will not need oiling.) Fill pan with water at least 1½ inches deep. Bring water to a boil, then reduce temperature to just below boiling.

2. Break egg into saucedish and slip carefully into water, with edge of dish as near the water as possible. Regulate temperature to simmering. There will be bubbles on the bottom of the pan and a few will rise lazily to collapse just below the surface.



A properly poached egg holds together well and should be cooked slowly in simmering water.

3. Break second egg into dish and slip into water.

4. Cook at simmering temperature 3 to 5 minutes, depending upon desired degree of doneness.

5. When eggs are done, remove them carefully with slotted spoon or skimmer and in the order in which they were put into the water. You may wish to drain the egg (still held in spoon) on paper toweling before transferring it to the dish.

OTHER IDEAS

- Do not be disturbed by the “angel wings” which may obscure the egg when you drop it into the water. Sometimes, when you remove the eggs, extraneous film falls away leaving a picture perfect, oval-poached egg. In other cases, there may be edges of cooked white which need not be trimmed off except for aesthetic reasons.

- If poached eggs are not all eaten, or if you wish to “cook ahead,” they may be covered with cold water, refrigerated and held up to 2 days. When you wish to use them, reheat in hot water (below the coagulation temperature of 140 degrees F.), drain and serve. This would be a good time-management device if you plan to serve a dish where poached eggs are a recipe ingredient (eggs benedict, for example) to a number of people.

- If the recipe calls for eggs poached “round,” try this: Break an egg into a cup. In a small, deep saucepan, bring water to a boil and stir it around with a spoon until a deep whirlpool forms in the center. Slip the egg quickly into the whirlpool and turn heat to simmering temperature. Be sure water does not boil again. Poach to the desired degree of firmness and remove with slotted spoon. The egg may need trimming, depending on the quality of the egg and your skill.

- According to California studies, heat treating or precooking eggs in the shell results in more uniformly shaped poached eggs. Bring enough water to boiling to cover eggs by an inch. Keep water boiling and gently lower eggs in the shells, one at a time. Cook each egg 8 seconds and remove from the water. Don't worry if egg shells crack. Poach eggs at once or refrigerate up to 2 days before poaching.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Use moderate to low temperatures – and with proper timing. Egg white is largely a solution of protein in water. Cooking at high temperature – or too long at any temperature – causes the high-protein white to shrink, lose moisture and become tough and rubbery.

- Use only high quality, clean sound eggs; grades Fresh Fancy, AA or A for poached eggs.

- Poach eggs at simmering temperature, about 185 degrees F.

- If poached egg spreads out too much or sticks to the pan, check these points:

- Was the egg of high-quality, Fresh Fancy, Grade AA or Grade A?

- Did you rupture the albumen of the thick white in breaking the egg and transferring it from saucedish to water?

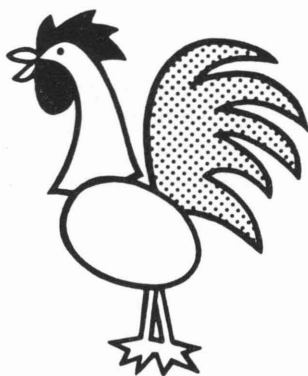
- Was the water in the pan at least 1½ inches deep?

- Was the water not hot enough to coagulate the surfaces of the egg as it was dropped from saucedish? Or did you fail to lower the temperature to simmering and thus permit the water to jiggle and tear the egg apart?

- Did you use a well-seasoned, non-stick or other type of pan lightly oiled?

- A slightly acid poaching water may help “set” the egg. Some people have obtained excellent results by combining the in-shell precooking with a slightly acid poaching water. Add a teaspoon of vinegar to the poaching water just before slipping the egg from the cup into the water.

- For a homemade “huevo ranchero” you may want to poach the eggs directly in the sauce. Remember that this sauce is acid and should be kept below boiling.



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This leaflet and all in a series of nine were adapted from "Eggs - Basic Information for Young Homemakers," American Egg Board, and other sources.

Kitchen and facilities of the Medallion Room, Bryan Utilities, were used for photographic work by permission of Mrs. Willie Belle Bogard, home service director.

Extension foods and nutrition specialists reviewed this leaflet and provided helpful suggestions.

EGGS have a fascinating history. They are among the most versatile of all foods and are said to have a thousand uses. History reveals that eggs were a food delicacy in ancient and biblical times and a staple food wherever abundant.

Ancient people considered eggs as a sacred symbol, and they believed an egg represented the world and its elements: shell, (earth); whites, (water); yolk, (fire); and under the shell (air). The breaking of eggs was a ceremony and a means of foretelling events. Men of early times hung eggs in Egyptian temples of worship. Artists glorified them in paintings and sculpture. Today eggs are still used for decorative purposes — as in Christmas and Easter ornaments and egg shell mosaics.

This series of leaflets numbered L-1114 — L-1122, covers topics of egg quality, buying and storing, six basic methods of egg preparation and eggs in the diet. Each is available from your local Extension agents.

Educational programs conducted by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service serve people of all ages regardless of socio-economic levels, race, color, sex, religion or national origin.

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